

Regional Association for Research on the Gulf of Maine

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Minutes of Meeting

Lincoln Public Library, Lincoln, Massachusetts December 10, 1996

Present:

Lew Incze	Bigelow Laboratory for Ocean Sciences
David Aiken	Canadian Department of Fisheries and Oceans
Chris Naimie	Dartmouth College
John Allen	Huntsman Marine Science Centre
Eric Adams	Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Eugenia Braasch	RARGOM headquarters at Dartmouth College
Gerald Pesch	United States Environmental Protection Agency
Page Valentine	United States Geological Survey
Greg Lough	United States National Marine Fisheries Service
Francis Juanes	University of Massachusetts - Amherst
Gordon Wallace	University of Massachusetts - Boston
LeBaron Colt	University of Massachusetts - Dartmouth
Michele Dionne	Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve
Bruce Tripp	Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution

The Meeting was called to order by Bruce Tripp at 10:00 a.m., with Genie Braasch keeping the minutes.
The minutes of the 16 May meeting (University of Massachusetts Boston Harbor Campus) were approved as they stand.

Old Business

Gulf of Maine Scientific Symposium

G. Wallace reported that the symposium was well attended and that participants were enthusiastic about both the program content and conference arrangements. Details about the meeting participants are documented in the 1996 Annual Report. G. Braasch amplified on those statistics, saying that the formal evaluations completed on the final day by 40% of the participants positively endorsed the program (see attached). Thanks were extended to the Canadian hosts, chaired by John Allen (Huntsman). A gift and card of appreciation was signed by the board members for Brenda Waiwood (DFO/SABS), who provided full time assistance during the meeting. The board also gave their thanks to Gordon Wallace for his leadership, and to G. Braasch for her management of the event.

Publications: Plenary papers have been received from all but four authors, (those people are expected to complete their contributions by the year end), two of the four working group reports have been completed; putting the publication schedule approximately one month behind schedule, but conceivably still leaving enough time to complete the report by April, 1997 as planned. Jack Pearce has contributed a brief comparative analysis of the results of the 1991 and 1996 scientific meetings, which Wallace intends to incorporate into the Executive Summary, emphasizing "success stories" from the past five years. The concept of a second summary, synthesizing the conference results for a broader, non-scientific audience of regional decision makers, was endorsed by the policy board as proposed by the steering committee.

Fiscal Report: G. Braasch presented an update on the conference fiscal report (attached), noting that income is still being received as budgeted, that substantial in-kind support was received from RARGOM member institutions, and that expenses are also on track as planned. Braasch noted that speaker costs were contained because many speakers were funded by their home institutions, and some people were not able to participate for the entire meeting. The board recommended the presentation of the budget be modified to integrate these in-kind contributions into the net figure, enabling a more accurate cost per participant figure to be generated. Braasch said that the conference documentation will help the Association to more accurately plan future conferences of this sort.

Actions to take:

1. G. Wallace & B. Tripp will work with their institutions to finalize the accounting for their institutional pledges.
2. G. Wallace will write the Executive Summary once he receives the working group reports, probably in January, 1997.

3. G Braasch will coordinate the publication of the symposium final report over the next few months, with a goal to publish prior to the '97 Management/Science workshop.
4. The steering committee will hold one final meeting in early March to review and discuss the conference publications.

'97 Management/Science Workshop: The first steering committee meeting was held on November 15, 1996 at the New England Aquarium in Boston, Massachusetts, chaired by Gordon Wallace. A draft description of the workshop goals and objectives was distributed at the meeting, reviewed, and endorsed (attached). J. Allen reported on discussions of the Dec. 5-6 meeting of the Council on the Marine Environment in Fredericton, NB. The planned workshop was perceived by the NGO community as "exclusionary", and the CME asked that RARGOM consider opening up the workshop participation to a larger group. Participation is currently planned to be limited in order to facilitate small group discussion and problem solving. The proposed size limit of 35-40 participants was discussed at length, with concerns raised about the potential participation of representatives from all RARGOM member institutions, plus the steering committee, preventing other qualified people from coming. Suggestions were made to consider increasing the size of the workshop to 50-60 people, to review the Habitat workshop participation list, and also to clearly outline pre-conference expectations, perhaps to require that participants come with a prepared product. The intention to design a working meeting of managers and scientists was an agreed objective. Laura Taylor, Maine State Planning Office, is helping to identify a conference site in the Portland area. It was noted that the planning process is already behind schedule. The next steering committee meeting will be held on Feb. 7th at the meeting site in Portland.

Actions to take:

1. Confirm chairs of the steering committee: Steve Ballard (L. Incze), Mike Connors (confirmed by G. Wallace), Donald Gordon (confirmed by D. Townsend).
2. Approve the workshop prospectus (Steering committee via e mail).
3. Select a location, and meeting dates (G. Braasch & L Taylor).
4. Draft a participation list (Workshop Chairs working w. steering committee).
5. Draft budget and begin fund raising (G. Braasch).

The board discussed whether the Management/Science prospectus workshop was too restrictive. They considered the comments from the CME and the Island Institute that the plans were too narrowly focused. After discussing this issue, the policy board reaffirmed that the '97 management/science workshop should remain small so that it can come up with some real mechanisms for a small part of the problem, rather than holding a general discussion about the much larger problem. The board agreed in principle that outreach was needed and that RARGOM would contribute to a meeting that had a broader theme (the integration of science, management and NGO activity). The sense of the meeting was that there is a need for outreach to the NGO community as well as broader contact with the management & policy sector. The level of commitment to this workshop was also explored, whether RARGOM should be convenor or co-convenor, sponsor or co-sponsor. The group agreed that the Association should continue to build its visibility so that, as an organization, it is sought out for advice, review and input concerning the region's problems.

Actions to take:

1. L. Incze will correspond with CME outlining the program participation rationale, and policy board agreement that RARGOM will held to coordinate an additional workshop.

Council on the Marine Environment December meeting report

J. Allen attended the Dec. 5-6 meeting in Fredericton, New Brunswick as a "local" RARGOM representative and reported to the councilors about the outcomes of the St. Andrews meeting. (CME supported the symposium with a \$10,000 grant). Allen commented to the RARGOM board that some councilors were unclear about their affiliation with RARGOM, thinking that because they supported the conference, that they were also members of the Association. Communication remains an issue between the two organizations, but it is improving with the designation of a permanent liaison office & staff person (Laura Taylor), and with consistent effort to participate in the other organization's meetings. Copies of the CME Action Plan were distributed. Bernard Theriault, Minister of Fisheries, New Brunswick, and this year's Secretariat, expressed interest in building improved relations with RARGOM. The sense of the meeting was that it continues to place a high priority on A-B-C communication and that it is important to deal with the CME leadership directly. This is an opportune time to promote Canadian involvement and membership growth in RARGOM, and to become more aware of Canadian research concerns.

Actions to take:

1. L. Incze will set up a meeting with Bernard Theriault to discuss RARGOM affairs vis a vis the CME and Province of New Brunswick.

New Business

1996 Annual Report

Comments from the board were received on the 1996 Annual Report which was distributed prior to the meeting. The report was then approved as amended (attached).

1997 Budget, Membership and Workplan

L. Incze presented the 1997 budget, proposing a modest increase from \$47,100. in 1996 to \$48,050 in 1997. This increase is accommodated by a second sponsor, the CME, which authorized \$5,000. in support of RARGOM at its June 1996 meeting. Incze proposed using this modest increase to boost the travel line from \$1,500. to \$3,000. so that he can promote regional research at relevant meetings and meet with US federal level agency staff and the CME secretariat (Canada) to make the case for regional research. Expenses will be contained through no cost of living increases for staff, and tight control on other spending. Dues are to remain at 1996 levels.

Membership for 1997 remains stable, with one new Associate member, The Island Institute, planning to join. Other membership prospects include: Environment Canada, the US Army Corps of Engineers. There is potential for full member status from the National Undersea Research Program in 1998. There was a lengthy discussion about specific benefits to stress regarding RARGOM membership when describing our activities to fiscal decision makers in the member institutions. It was recognized that representatives, both new comers to the board and those who have served for a time, all need a concise statement and summary of membership benefits to use at their home institutions.

Incze characterized the 1997 workplan as a year of solidification, rather than one with many new initiatives. He then reviewed the topics outlined in the agenda, asking for reactions from the board members.

Funding: the sense of the meeting was that, in the wake of the RMRP, future funding for GoM research will come from a variety of sources, and that RARGOM may have a role in a). publicizing research results, and b). promoting communication with user communities, and c). promoting research support.

Organizational strength: communications is key to conveying the value of the services that RARGOM provides, internally to its membership and in its external outreach.

Actions to take:

1. Prepare a statement to help emphasize RARGOM benefits and role. (Incze & Tripp will draft and distribute for comment).

Communications program: electronic communication is improving within the Association, helping it to conduct its daily affairs, and the RARGOM home page is developing into an important part of the communications mix. Members of the board strongly endorsed the need for tangible products, such as the GoM NEWS, reports, a membership brochure, and an organizational logo. It was recognized that there will need to be additional help to achieve the regional presence that the Association aspires to through reaching further into our own institutions for additional support when needed. G. Braasch discussed the status of the GoM NEWS, asking for evaluation of the newsletter, indicating that there is a need for a scientific editor(s), to solicit and coordinate the lead articles in the GoM NEWS. Institutional representatives and their colleagues are needed to help in this activity. The frequency of newsletter publication was also discussed, and the sense of the meeting was that we should continue to deliver three issues a year (winter, spring, fall), at 12-16 pages. Additional products and development of the communications activity will depend on additional fund raising activity this year. The publications sub committee has not met to develop a 1 page assessment of need and feasibility for a regional journal, as discussed at the May meeting. The sense of the board was that the GoM NEWS should be the primary mechanism for conveying research news at this point, and that launching a journal was too ambitious for the Association at this time.

Actions to take:

1. Incze will ask Ron Schlitz if he would be willing to serve as the scientific editor, encourage him to form an editorial committee consisting of one person from each member institution, NOT the RARGOM representative (the idea here is to spread the involvement). David Aiken will think about a possible Canadian counterpart.
2. Ask publications committee for a status report at the next meeting (B. Tripp).

Infrastructure W. Brown, who chaired this subcommittee, has resigned as the RARGOM representative. L. Incze noted that the charge of this committee was too broad, and suggested breaking it into three areas for future activity:

- 1). coastal monitoring/buoys, 2). ships, 3). EDIMS/REDIMS. The board approved this idea. In regard to ships, B. Tripp said that WHOI has funded an architect to begin design on a SWATH vessel with 1-5 day cruise range.

Actions to take:

1. Incze will develop a draft charge for the first two topics. Members of the committee will be found at various institutions once the goals are established.
2. C. Naimie will discuss the evaluation needs of EDIMS/REDIMS with W. Brown. An announcement about this activity could appear in the winter GoM NEWS.

Workshops: the concept of a 3rd workshop to discuss NGO, science, management interface was endorsed by the board. The program might take place in the fall 1997, but no one has been designated to chair this planning process and the consensus of the meeting was to serve as a collaborator in this effort. Other workshops planned for 1997 were outlined: the Island Institute workshop to be held in May 8-10 in Portland, Coastal Zone '97 to be held July in Boston, M. Dionne also said that a workshop on saltmarshes is planned to take place at the Wells Reserve. The need for a RARGOM presence at these programs was discussed and agreed to.

Actions to take:

1. G. Wallace will explore what will be needed for the Coastal Zone '97 meeting.
2. M. Dionne will write a prospectus for the saltmarsh workshop for distribution to the region.

1997 RARGOM meetings

The tradition of meeting at various regional institutions, in order to become acquainted with the member institutions was an important RARGOM focus, and should be continued, even if it required more travel. Discussion about frequency of meetings resulted in the conclusion that scheduling a winter, spring, and fall meeting is desirable. It was agreed to combine the final steering committee meeting of the GoM Ecosystem Dynamics conference with the next policy board meeting, over 2 days in early March. A May meeting is anticipated, place and time to be determined in March. The Shoals Marine lab was suggested and met with interest as a potential spring meeting site. The fall meeting will be held about the 2nd week of November at the UMass Dartmouth campus. Interim business will increasingly be conducted via electronic and other channels.

Actions to take:

1. Set up the meetings in consultation with policy board members (G. Braasch).

Other Business

Commission for Environmental Cooperation meeting was held at UNH, Nov. 20-22. G. Wallace attended, and reported that while the CEC is a land-based oriented program, this workshop reinforced outcomes from several of the recently sponsored RARGOM workshops, and that it would have been good if the RARGOM presence at this meeting had been stronger, and the RARGOM workshop reports had been available to those in attendance. Outcomes of the workshop include the recognition that the structure of decision making in the region between manager, NGO rep, and scientist plays a role in priority setting, and that many issues facing the region involve science and require an active scientific role. \$150,000. designated for pilot studies will be released in the GoM region, to be developed in conjunction with the CME. One clear conclusion from the discussion is that RARGOM's presence & what it can offer to the process of scientific exchange with the management community is not well enough known and this will require extra effort and resources. In terms of resources, people attending these meetings who wish to carry and distribute publications from RARGOM all require support that we currently do not have.

Actions to take:

1. Obtain workshop report from Judy Pederson & distribute to RARGOM reps (G. Braasch).
2. Send RARGOM reports to distribution list provided by G. Wallace (G. Braasch).

Policy Board

G. Wallace made the motion and P. Valentine 2nd the motion to accept the 1997 Budget and Workplan as discussed at the meeting. These motions were unanimously approved.

The next meeting of the RARGOM Board will be held during the first week in March.

The meeting adjourned at 3:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Eugenia Frey Braasch
December 12, 1996