

Regional Association for Research on the Gulf of Maine

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Minutes of Meeting

Center for Marine Science and Technology (CMAST), University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth
New Bedford, Massachusetts December 18, 1997

Present:

Lew Incze	Bigelow Laboratory for Ocean Sciences
Chris Naimie	Dartmouth College
Ivar Babb	National Undersea Research Program/University of Connecticut
Eugenia Braasch	RARGOM headquarters at Dartmouth College
David Townsend	Regional Marine Research Program / University of Maine
Peter Auster	Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary
Gerald Pesch	United States Environmental Protection Agency
Page Valentine	United States Geological Survey
Greg Lough	United States National Marine Fisheries Service
Gordon Wallace	University of Massachusetts at Boston
Jeff Turner	University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth
Brian Rothschild	University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth
Ted Loder	University of New Hampshire
Michele Dionne	Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve
Joe Coburn	Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution
Richard Pittenger	Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution
Bruce Tripp	Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution

The Meeting was called to order by Bruce Tripp at 9:00 a.m., with Genie Braasch keeping the minutes.

Old Business

G. Pesch moved to accept the minutes from the 6/21/97 meeting. The motion was unanimously approved.

1996 Gulf of Maine Scientific Symposium

G. Wallace reported that the conference report is ready to go to press. Whitman Communications Inc., Lebanon, NH has been selected as the printing company for the job. G. Braasch contacted Jack Wiggin at the Urban Harbors Institute for advice about the size of the production run and distribution; he has provided a database of the 1991 WHOI conference report recipients. 1,200 copies of the publication will be printed. Free copies will be sent to meeting participants, employees of RARGOM member institutions, regional libraries and regional policy makers/congressional staff. Others who request a copy will be asked to purchase the volume at cost plus the mailing charge (RARGOM will cover the staff time involved).

A second summary, synthesizing the conference results for a broader, non-scientific audience of regional decision makers, was endorsed by the policy board at the Dec. 1996 meeting as proposed by the steering committee, action on this report is pending additional support.

Actions to take:

1. G. Braasch will prepare a distribution plan and will distribute to the policy board for approval.
2. G. Braasch will coordinate the distribution of the publication as soon as it is produced (anticipated January 1998).

1997 Ocean Observing Systems Workshop

I. Babb and L. Incze summarized the workshop, held November 5-6, 1997 at the New England Aquarium, Boston, MA. 55 people attended, primarily from the New England region. The workshop considered the needs for ocean observing systems from three spatial scales: local, regional and national. Plenary speakers opened the program, setting the stage for later working group discussions which focused on each scale.

Local: LEO-15 program, Scott Glenn, Rutgers University

Regional: Data Assimilation in the Coastal Ocean, Phil Bogden, Univ. Conn.

Integrated Coastal Ocean Observing Systems and Models, Observations in Support of Models, Wendell Brown, UNH
Models in Support of Observations, Dan Lynch, Dartmouth College

National: A Gulf of Mexico Perspective, Vernon Asper, Univ. Southern Mississippi

A Canadian Perspective, Peter Smith, BIO

Implementing Coastal GOOS, Andy Robertson, NOAA

Working groups met on the second day. Jon Witman, Brown Univ., led the local discussion, David Mountain, NEFSC/NMFS, moderated the regional discussion, and Vernon Asper, Univ. S. Mississippi, chaired the national discussion. Workshop products include a report which is being drafted, and L. Incze has drafted a letter of intent to National Ocean Partnership Program (NOPP) for a planning grant which was mailed on 12/18/97.

Actions to take:

1. Establish a standing committee to move this ocean platform strategy forward.
2. Plan future workshops to develop consensus about critical instrumentation/measurement needs in the GoM.

Ships

Dick Pittenger and Joe Coburn described the status of the current WHOI vessel fleet and the development of a New England Coastal Research SWATH vessel, stressing that while WHOI will own the vessel, they seek to instill a sense of regional collaboration regarding its scheduling and operation. The R/V is being developed to serve as a survey boat and has the capability to carry 8-12 scientists at an anticipated daily rate of \$3-5K. While WHOI is funding the up front planning, input has been sought from the regional user community about design requirements and intended uses for the boat. D. Pittenger presented a model of the boat, its key design features are that this is a stable, steady platform that can be operated by a small crew to make the vessel affordable to researchers. A naval architect is on line, the time table projects model tests to be held during 1998, contract design, bid, construction, tests and trials are anticipated to take place during 1999-2000. Pittenger reported that several RARGOM institutions have expressed interest in use of the vessel. A lengthy discussion explored the notion of forming a consortium for operation of the vessel. Guidelines for operations and scheduling have been drafted (see attached), the intention is to be more flexible than the UNOLS approach, will still adapting UNOLS safety regulations. Costs associated with the consortium plan are crew salaries/benefits, maintenance, consumables, dry docking, and rental of dock space. Pittenger noted that UNOLS membership may be desirable for access to NSF funds for maintenance, the downside is loss of scheduling control. It was suggested that RARGOM might approach UNOLS to see if their scheduling practice might be adapted - managed on a regional basis, rather than at the national level.

Actions to take:

1. Community feedback about potential vessel use is desired by the end of February.
PI's should submit a 1 page description of typical cruise requirements to:
Richard Pittenger, Associate Director for Marine Operations, WHOI, Woods Hole, MA 02543 tel. (508) 457-2000 ext. 2597.
2. RARGOM will co-sponsor a workshop to explore the issues involved with forming a consortium and to draft consortium guidelines, to be held at WHOI. D. Pittenger offered to assist with this meeting. D. Townsend will organize RARGOM input.

Ivar Babb reported that the new University of CT 76' research vessel fits a size niche just below the SWATH described above. It is under construction now at the Washburn and Doughty shipyard in East Boothbay, Maine. The design emphasizes stability and precise low speed handling and positioning capability (see attached description for details). Sea trials are scheduled to begin in May, the expectation is that the boat will be on line next summer. The GoM is the target area for the vessel and customers are sought: there are 12 berths for extended science missions (7-8 scientists can be accommodated), the daily rate for a 24 hr. day is \$2,500. with 4-5 crew members; up to 45 people can be on board for day trips, the daily rate for an 8 hr. day is \$1,250. with 2 crew members. For additional information please contact:

Robert DeGoursey, MS&TC Operations Manager, tel.: 860-405-9102, email: msiadm04@uconnvm.uconn.edu

Research Vessels Database

B. Tripp reported that a database of research vessels can be accessed on the Rinehart Coastal Research Center web site: www.whoi.edu/coastal_research/

Actions to take:

1. Provide Bruce with feedback about the content and organization of the information (btripp@whoi.edu).

Data and Information subcommittee

Members: C. Naimie (Dartmouth College), Rich Signell, USGS, Karen Garrison, UNH

Charge: The committee will examine the current state of internet availability of data for GoM researchers. This addresses prior plans, and a request from W. Brown to perform a users' evaluation of REDIMS -- Does it provide all the linkages it should? What topic areas are neglected? Is the community of GoM researchers using it as much as they could? Do more people need to be made aware of it? What recommendations should be made for the future?

C. Naimie said that he and Rich Signell have been working with the CME data management staff (Dan Martin and Rafael Herz) about modifications to the REDIMS/EDIMS systems. He described 4 categories of data and information needs: data from original research projects funded by RMRP sources, data from original research projects funded by non-RMRP sources, modeling activity, and Gulf of Maine information sources (such as the vessels database at WHOI Rinehart CRC).

Naimie recommended that "we need to get our own house in order", and that feedback from users is desired by the end of February. He plans to survey the community using an interactive computer method. The needs of managers for translated data was discussed at length. G. Pesch noted that some EPA work is in progress which could be a model for our effort: EPA environmental status reports from the Chesapeake & Delaware region, NY/NJ harbor areas, and in the GoM estuaries fringing the Gulf. P. Valentine said that index pages are v. useful for conducting searches on the web.

The RARGOM web page was also discussed, there is much updating to be done.

Actions to take:

1. RARGOM members and RMRP researchers provide feedback to C. Naimie and R. Signell by the end of Feb. re. REDIMS.
2. L. Incze and B. Tripp have organized a small meeting (in coordination w. CME DIMC committee) to assess the status of data and information management system needs regionally, hosted by W. Brown at UNH on Feb. 7, 1998.
3. REDIMS - PIs data entry into the system, at minimum, generate a list of RMR investigators and their projects.
4. Deliver recommendations in the form of a white paper to RARGOM and CME for discussion at their June 1998 meetings.
5. B. Tripp will work w. G. Braasch on establishing priorities for updating and maintaining the web page.

New Business

Publications/Communications subcommittee

Members: R. Schlitz (NOAA/NMFS/NEFSC) has agreed to serve as a scientific editor for the Gulf of Maine NEWS.

Charge: The editor and committee will identify timely and diverse topics for informal scientific contributions to the newsletter, will solicit articles and authors accordingly; will provide a quick internal review of submissions as an aid to the authors; and will perform these functions on a schedule in coordination with G. Braasch.

R. Schlitz, B. Tripp, and G. Braasch met in September to outline content ideas for the next issue, discuss the editorial/review guidelines and the communication needs of RARGOM. They agreed to a schedule for 1998 for submission of articles to Ron for review as follows: Feb. 1, May 1, August 1, and Nov. 1.

Actions to take:

1. R. Schlitz has been working to assemble a committee - requests for suggestions need response from member representatives.
2. G. Braasch will work with this committee to plan the scientific articles in the upcoming issues of the GoM NEWS.
3. The committee will outline topics for the management-science column.

RARGOM Leadership / Nominating Committee

The terms of L. Incze as Chair and B. Tripp as Vice Chair will conclude on June 30, 1998. Both had been approached prior to the meeting and asked if they would be willing to serve an additional term (standard practice to ask). They reported at the meeting that they both felt that their schedules were overloaded and that they would be delighted to turn leadership over to a new Chair/Vice Chair team. They also felt that new faces, energy, ideas and styles would be good for the organization. They recognized that the number of

individuals eligible for leading the organization is not large and that perhaps no one would be able to accept at this time. Lew and Bruce said they would be willing under those circumstances to serve one more year each, but not a full two-year term. They felt it was important for the organization to be able to replace leadership on a regular basis. John Allen (Huntsman Marine Science Centre), Ted Loder (UNH), Pesch (EPA), and Gordon Wallace (UMass Boston) volunteered to serve as the search committee.

Actions to take:

1. The search committee will contact RARGOM representatives to assess the leadership needs of RARGOM and to generate ideas for candidates.
2. The search committee will identify a slate of "Chair and Vice Chair" or "Chair and Vice Chair elect" by the June 1998 meeting for Board approval.

Guest Speaker: Dr. Brian Rothschild, CMAST Director, and Researchers from UMass Dartmouth

B. Rothschild provided an overview and tour of the Center for Marine Science and Technology (CMAST) facility at the University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth which opened in October 1997. The research at CMAST concentrates on the watershed, embayments, and estuaries along the coastline of New England and on the waters of the adjacent U.S. continental shelf. There are 26 faculty members associated with CMAST, research efforts are focused along cross-cutting themes: ocean prediction and monitoring systems, fishery management science, advanced aquaculture systems, coastal zone systems (Buzzard's Bay and environs), and ocean communications, tracking and control (the CMAST facility houses a 93,000 gal. acoustic and optic tank and Rothschild envisions a wide variety of experimental work to be possible with this equipment). Three CMAST scientists then made brief presentations about their current research: J. Bisagni (Eddy Induced Flow of Scotian Shelf Water), A. Gangopadhyay (Ocean Modeling), J. Turner (Red Tide).

RARGOM 1997 Annual Report, 1998 Budget and Workplan

G. Braasch distributed a draft of the 1997 Annual Report. She asked that comments and corrections be forwarded to her by 12/31/97. She also provided an update of the 1997 Budget, noting that 1997 was an unusual year for RARGOM as she has been primarily involved with completing activity on a large project (the St. Andrews conference proceedings) and helping to organize the follow-on workshop held in June; her salary expense has been largely offset through these programmatic contributions during 1997 and a \$20,000. reserve surplus is projected as a result.

L. Incze presented the 1998 Budget which showed an increase of \$1,500.; he proposed a modest membership dues increase to pay for this, saying that such a dues increase (4%) is less than inflation and that he recommended funding the annual core operation through dues. He asked that the Board establish principles for use of the reserve funds created by the 1997 surplus. After lengthy discussion, the group voted unanimously to hold the 1998 membership dues at the same rate as 1997, to use some of the 1997 surplus to cover the budget increase for 1998, and to use the balance of the carry over funds for programmatic purposes. It was also agreed that approval of reserve fund dispersal is required by the Board members for amounts over \$1,000.

The Board endorsed the 1998 revised budget and workplan (see attached).

The next meeting of the RARGOM Board will be held in June (date to be decided, week of June 22-26) at the Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve, Wells, Maine.

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Eugenia Frey Braasch
December 23, 1997