
Minutes of Meeting
May 3, 2001
The Danforth Inn, Portland, Maine

Present:

Lew Incze	Bigelow Laboratory
Chris Naimie	Dartmouth College
Courtney Coles	Gulf of Maine Aquarium
Lou van Guelphin	Huntsman Marine Science Centre
Linda Mercer	Maine Department of Marine Resources
David Keeley	Maine State Planning Office
Judy Pederson	Massachusetts Institute of Technology Sea Grant Program
David Mountain	National Marine Fisheries Service
Ivar Babb	National Undersea Research Center
Eugenia Braasch	RARGOM headquarters at Dartmouth College
Gerald Pesch	United States Environmental Protection Agency
Marilyn Buchholtz ten Brink	United States Geological Survey
Larry Mayer	University of Maine
Jamie Pringle	University of New Hampshire
Dwight Trueblood	University of New Hampshire / CICEET Program
Michele Dionne	Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve
Bruce Tripp	Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution

The meeting was called to order by Chris Naimie at 10:30 a.m., with Genie Braasch keeping the minutes. Lew Incze served as the host for the meeting. Thank you, Lew.

Old Business

The minutes and action items from the last meeting, held at UMass. Boston on October 31, 2000, were reviewed. It was moved to accept the minutes from the 10/31/00 meeting. The motion was unanimously approved.

FY2001 Report

G. Braasch presented the FY2000 year end and the FY 2001 fiscal reports (see attached). She noted that the Board had approved a budget with a projected deficit for FY 2000, which was contained through additional income carried forward from FY 1999, and by reduced spending in both the compensation and operations areas of the budget. FY 2001 is also anticipated to produce a deficit and Braasch observed that, relative to other organizations with similar missions and scope, RARGOM is attempting to carry out its work plan with inadequate resources.

The Board recommended that the budget be amended to show the committed salary rate for the Board Chair (\$7,000.); Jerry Pesch will not expense these sums during his term, due to his federal employment status. The Board also urged prompt completion of the contract with the Council for their sponsorship this year.

The Board discussed and approved a new policy for generating income through its programmatic efforts. In the future, all workshop activity coordinated through RARGOM will include a 10% overhead rate to help underwrite general operating costs for the organization. It was also decided to estimate and show an "in-kind" income contribution level in the RARGOM budget to more accurately convey the level of commitment from the member institutions beyond the dues contribution.

Membership

G. Braasch reported that she has sent information and had conversations about RARGOM membership with Craig MacDonald, Director of Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary and also with Stephen Palumbi, Professor, Dept. of Organismic and Evolutionary Biology at Harvard University. Both have expressed interest in RARGOM's activities, but are not able to join at this time. Braasch also said that she recently received correspondence from Michael Sinclair, recommending the following contacts as Canadian prospects for full membership: Graham Daborn at Acadia University, Robert Moore at Dalhousie University, Garth Bengay at Environment Canada, and Bruce MacDonald at University of New Brunswick. Braasch has also spoken with Scott Kraus, who recommended the following potential associate members: Peter Borelli at Center for Coastal Studies, Steve Katona at College of the Atlantic, John Hobbie at Marine Biological Laboratory, Salem State College, Northeastern University, UMass Lowell, Suffolk University, Boston University, and the Sea Education Association. Braasch will send correspondence to these people. The Board recommended approaching GOMOOS, Inc. about membership.

Web site

C. Naimie reported that, thanks to B. Tripp's efforts, RARGOM has contracted with the MBL in Woods Hole for web page services during the upcoming year. David Remsen, manager of several other sites including the NAML web page, has agreed to serve as RARGOM's webmaster. Remsen and Braasch will be working together during the next two months to prepare and launch a revitalized and updated RARGOM site. Discussion moved to the value-added aspects of linking existing databases (GLOBEC, GOMOOS, REDIMS, CME/Gulfwatch Monitoring). The GoM Council has recently drafted an inventory list of such databases, which is an important initial step towards integration. The Board discussed the need for establishing a target, a motivational driver, to encourage people to take the next step. It was suggested that perhaps a report would serve this purpose.

Gulf of Maine NEWS

G. Braasch distributed the spring edition of the newsletter, which has the theme of marine mammals in the Gulf of Maine. She said the Scott Kraus provided suggestions for contributors to this issue and also served as a guest science editor, which worked very well. Suggestions for the upcoming year were solicited and the following topics were recommended: Collaborative Fisheries Research, Watershed clean-up projects, Mass. Bay reports, Invasive Species, Ocean Observing and Monitoring with a synthesis article about "middle-sized" efforts.

CICEET

D. Trueblood spoke about the mission and operation of the Cooperative Institute for Coastal and Estuarine Environmental Technology (CICEET), a program that supports the scientific development of innovative technologies for understanding and reversing the impacts of coastal and estuarine contamination and degradation. CICEET was established as a joint partnership between the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the University of New Hampshire (UNH) in 1997 and is located on the UNH campus in Durham, NH. CICEET currently has a \$5.8M annual budget, 70% of which is targeted for research projects. CICEET projects fall into 5 different categories: Toxic Contaminants, Microbial Contaminants, Eutrophication/Nutrient Enrichment, Habitat Loss and Restoration, Data Synthesis and Integration. There is an annual review of research priorities, from which an RFP is developed. The NERRS locations are used as research sites and while the program is New England based, CICEET is national in scope, projects are funded at all of the NERRS sites across the country. Trueblood outlined the strategic planning process used by CICEET. Additional information is available on the web site: <http://ciceet.unh.edu/>

Gulf of Maine Aquarium FishResearch.org

C. Coles presented the new web site, FishResearch.org, which was launched last December with the goal of producing partnerships between fishermen and scientists. Currently, the database at the site includes 35 fishing vessels and 21 research scientists. She asked that Board members encourage their colleagues to participate in this activity. She said that the initial support to build and maintain the site was \$60K, plus additional in kind support from Aquarium staff. Further details can be found at : <http://Fishresearch.org> or by contacting Courtney Coles, courtney@gma.org.

RARGOM Assessment and Future Plans

J. Pesch introduced the afternoon discussion by remarking that RARGOM has a clear purpose, identified "clients", yet its mission isn't being implemented fully. He pointed to the success of the various workshops and publications produced by RARGOM. He also stated that the lack of regional research advocacy is an unfulfilled opportunity. He noted that development of a research plan is necessary next step and would serve to reinvigorate RARGOM. Such a document, regularly updated, is key to RARGOM's effectiveness as a regional research organization. The

process of developing and revising this plan is critical to the outcome as well. Select individuals could complete this exercise in a relatively short time frame, because the activity is academic in nature. Yet the broad based involvement of organizations is key to its endorsement and future implementation.

Pesch proposed that RARGOM be restructured, in order to reinvigorate regional-scale science and advocacy. He recommended adding an executive, policy level board of advisors, who would meet at least annually to discuss regional research priorities, develop buy-in, and create networks between institutions at the upper decision-maker level. (This model is similar to the Gulf of Maine Councilors with its Working Group).

The Board discussed the role that RARGOM might play in terms of focussing research: articulating, defining, scoping, organizing meetings as neutral brokers. Feasibility issues were mentioned repeatedly. There was skepticism expressed about the possibility of convening senior level people, particularly without adequate incentives in place to achieve that level of involvement. Rather than trying to coordinate a regular meeting of lab and research directors, it was felt that RARGOM might achieve some similar results through meeting individually with such leaders in the region.

There was discussion about the niche of regional research at the national level (both USGS and NOAA are stating that this approach is important). D. Scavia agrees with this, a national consensus is necessary. There is a new Ocean Commission. Perhaps build on existing alliances, monitoring activities are a start, take the 10/30/00 Directors' meeting to the next level. NMFS could probably help to support this... But getting people to the table hasn't necessarily led to greater research activity...

GoMOOS is an example of a direct link between a RARGOM workshop and report and funded activity. Also ECOHAB, an outgrowth of RMRP support. The region is missing the people to pitch the science to congressional people. There needs to be a polished package in order to do this... Need to prime the pump with a lot of effort prior to even making the appointment with congressional people. How are we going to do this if not through a regional research plan? It was suggested that rather than setting the goal of hitting home runs (large, "RMRP" type initiatives), perhaps RARGOM ought to attempt more doubles, achieving its goals through more modest and achievable, linked efforts, with a narrow scope, finite live span.

A set of choices emerged from the discussion:

1. Identify a regional issue that galvanizes public support, is narrow in scope, with a finite time frame
2. Articulate a broad set of regional mandates with a national coalition.

The observation was made that in order to achieve federal support, issues need to be linked to their impact on constituents, it is necessary to link problems with the research. It was concluded that lobbying was best left to other groups. RARGOM is most effective as an independent organization that effectively convenes and produces credible reports (a regional NRC). These reports have become valuable products, enabling documentation for the existing fund raising activity; the sense of the group was to let each member organization conduct its own research support efforts as a follow-on to RARGOM activity. The absence of a coordinated, cohesive approach continued to concern several board members. The Coastal States Organization and the Ocean Governors Group were two entities mentioned as effectively working to influence existing programs. There was an expressed need for synthesis and analysis of the research results -- this was a widely supported notion. Also, packaging and distributing such efforts to key decision-makers and staffers. No decisions were made about whether RARGOM would pursue the strategy of advocating for regional research funding vs. advocating for regional research programs/science. There was general consensus that hiring a person to serve as a science translator, perhaps funded through the GoM Council, but serving as a RARGOM staff person, would be an excellent investment.

RARGOM's Organizational Capacity

C. Naimie outlined the recommendations of Wayne Weiner, Human Resources, Dartmouth College, based on a conversation that Weiner had with G. Braasch in November 2000. Weiner's recommendations to RARGOM, for Board consideration, included:

1. Increase the salary for the Executive Director position by 20%, effective January 1, 2001.
2. Fund the Executive Director position on a full time, not a half-time basis.
3. Hire a full time, administrative level person immediately to assist the Executive Director.
4. Plan to support two additional, full-time personnel in the near future to staff programmatic and communications activities.
5. Increase membership dues to provide the necessary resources to support these additional personnel costs. A 20% dues increase for FY 2002 is suggested as an initial change.

Naimie also described the current space constraints at the Thayer School of Engineering, saying that while there is a commitment to continue to offer the office space currently occupied by RARGOM, however, expansion as recommended by Weiner, isn't feasible at this site.

Several issues were discussed by the Board members:

1. Regarding the need for additional space, does the Board want to approach other member organizations about their interest and capacity for serving as the host institution?
2. Does the Board support increasing the salary of the Exec. Director?
3. Does the Board support adding staff? (particularly for the science translation function)

In response to the issue of seeking a new host institution, the Wells NERR has new office space and could possibly house RARGOM activity. It also provides a central, coastal geographic location, with steady federal support.

Given the current projected deficit for FY 2001, deficit reduction is an immediate priority. Expansion of RARGOM's program was also considered necessary and desirable. However, it seemed unlikely that member institutions would support a dues increase as a mechanism for launching new initiatives. It was thought possible that some member institutions might be able to provide some staffing assistance (in a distributed fashion) to the RARGOM effort.

Next steps include preparing a proposal for restructuring the Executive Director's job description into two or three new positions, and outlining the cost implications of shifting activities, moving operations. It was also suggested that RARGOM approach federal agencies that have a strong translation mission, to provide support over a longer period of time, as a mechanism for strengthening a regional informational infrastructure.

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

Minutes of Meeting
May 4, 2001
The Danforth Inn, Portland, Maine

Present:

Lew Incze	Bigelow Laboratory
Chris Naimie	Dartmouth College
Laura Marron	Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment
Lou van Guelphin	Huntsman Marine Science Centre
Linda Mercer	Maine Department of Marine Resources
David Keeley	Maine State Planning Office
Judy Pederson	Massachusetts Institute of Technology Sea Grant Program
David Mountain	National Marine Fisheries Service
Ivar Babb	National Undersea Research Center
Eugenia Braasch	RARGOM headquarters at Dartmouth College
Gerald Pesch	United States Environmental Protection Agency
Marilyn Buchholtz ten Brink	United States Geological Survey
Jamie Pringle	University of New Hampshire
Michele Dionne	Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve
Bruce Tripp	Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution

RARGOM Deficit Reduction (discussion continued from prior day)

The Board discussed ways in which to put RARGOM on firmer footing as a organization and also how to grow the regional research activity. It was noted that Sea Grant Directors, federal agencies such as USGS, EPA, NOAA/NMFS, large consulting firms and foundations all have a mandate to disseminate information about the Gulf of Maine. Thus, there is an important niche for regional organizations to provide input on critical issues to decision makers at the federal level. There was support for the idea that we work to build a larger role for RARGOM as information disseminator to wider audiences through the GoM NEWS, workshops, and conferences. RARGOM could provide a coordinating mechanism, for blending projects that are funded through various programs into reputable, peer reviewed synthesis reports. It was felt that there would be strong political support for this, based on some congressional contact within the group. RARGOM might approach the federal agencies, show its products, and ask for long-term support (i.e., 5-10 years), offering to produce special theme issues of the Gulf of Maine NEWS which address issues important to the user community.

The group discussed whether there is there support at the national level for regional science and how to structure it (not using the RMRP model). They also recognized the need for development funding for creation of a regional research plan.

Discussion turned to the need to document the RARGOM member institutional in-kind contributions, to demonstrate commitment beyond the dues contribution. Representatives agreed to submit estimates of the value of their activity to RARGOM to G. Braasch so that she can then generate a composite estimate for the region. Reports which describe/estimate the value of marine research, R & D, innovation to the region will also be utilized in building the case for supporting RARGOM.

Various board members offered to approach the appropriate people in their spheres (see Action Items at the end of these minutes for specific assignments). Foundations mentioned which might support the research plan activity are: Davis, Kendall, Sloan. The Donner Foundation provided seed money for 3 years to the Coastal States Organization.

RARGOM Mission Statement

The Board reviewed the mission statement and approved several changes in the text. The updated mission statement now reads:

The Association fosters quality scientific research on the Gulf of Maine through increased communications and collaborations among the region's institution and agencies. The Association stimulates, facilitates, and advocates scientific research focused on the Gulf of Maine as a natural system.

Regional Research Plan

J. Pesch opened the discussion by outlining a process for updating the regional research plan.

Guiding Principles

Plan should

- be regional in scale, addressing the Gulf of Maine as a natural system
- build on prior activities, as well as on-going efforts
- be relevant to current needs and priorities for both the management and research communities
- rely on partnerships, requiring or enhancing collaboration in the research community
- represent an integrated design reflecting the integrated nature of the Gulf of Maine as an ecosystem

This document is intended to foster and support proposals and solicitations for research programs in the Gulf of Maine.

Outline of the Research Plan

Forward (RARGOM mission statement & information, plus a brief essay about regional marine research as a powerful economic force)

- 1) Retrospective - a review of what has been done; what is being done; how this information integrates to describe the Gulf of Maine as a system; what is known; what is not known; the relevancy of this information; who are the users; what are the short comings; what are the payoffs; articulation of benefits
- 2) Needs and Priorities - from a big picture perspective, what are the leading or emerging issues, the driving forces for both managers and researchers in the Gulf of Maine.
- 3) Regional Context - describe the Gulf of Maine as an ecosystem. Define the approach, the components, and the boundaries.
- 4) Issue-based Design - identify the critical management and research questions based on the needs and priorities section. Focus these questions within the regional context.
- 5) Research Needed - to answer the issue-based questions. Evaluate the components of each research effort in terms of appropriateness of this research area for study, importance of study in this area to the achievement of predictive capability, time frame reasonable expectation of results, complexity of the issue. This feasibility matrix might be presented in a table as was done in the original RMRP.
- 6) Results - Coordination, translation, dissemination of results.
- 7) Benefits - in the spirit of adaptive management, the anticipated results of each research effort should be tied to some measure(s) of success so as to evaluate the process and learn as we do go.

Appendices:

- Characterization of the value of growing Research Programs, Economic Benefits
- Marine Monitoring Programs in the Gulf of Maine, showing how they contribute to the knowledge base
- Workshop reports
- others

Process of Creating the Plan

1) Writing - this document is intended to “stimulate, facilitate, and advocate scientific research focused on the Gulf of Maine as a natural system.” To be successful it needs to be used by most if not all research and resource management organizations around the Gulf. These organizations should participate in creation of this document so that when it is completed they own it. Therefore, the writing process needs to be open and inclusive. It is anticipated that the sections on Issue-Based Design and Research Needed will be crafted by small workgroups reflecting the interests and expertise needed for particular, focused issues. The other sections will be written by a few “volunteers” and then circulated for comments. The section on Needs and Priorities will be based on existing surveys of both managers and researchers. Additional surveys will be done if thought to be needed.

The final document is intended to be clear and concise, no more than about 30 pages. It will parallel the Gulf of Maine Council’s Action Plan in layout and format, that is simple, easily understood, with an appealing design.

2) Review - the credence of this document will depend on its content of clear thinking and sound science. An independent technical review panel, such as those used by many science-based agencies, would provide assurance of the documents quality when it's done.

3) Marketing - an implementation strategy to grow research support in the Gulf of Maine. This could be done by: influencing existing programs; bolstering existing programs; and bringing in new programs.

4) Renewal Cycle - advocacy for research support in the Gulf of Maine should remain active and deliberate. Therefore, this plan should be regularly evaluated and revised on some set schedule.

Schedule (goal is to complete the plan by December 2001)

June-July: Retrospective, Regional Context, Issue-based Design sections drafted, reviewed, finalized.

August-September: Issue based Priorities - identified via a survey, with follow-up work group discussion.

October: Issue Priorities finalized, Research Needed and Implementation Strategy sections drafted, reviewed finalized.

November-December: Final draft prepared, produced, and distributed.

Additional Announcements

Invasive species in the Gulf of Maine workshop, sponsored by NEAMGL and NERRS, MIT Sea Grant, NOAA, will take place in September in Monterey, CA. J. Pederson and I. Babb will serve as the leaders in this activity. The Board endorsed this activity.

D. Keeley reported that the Maine Technology Institute, CICEET, GoM Council are undertaking a project for scientists and managers that seeks to identify technology and instrumentation needs. Once a need is established, a device will be created, tested in the GoM and other regions nationally. Does RARGOM wish to partner in this effort by helping to identify people to approach for survey and focus groups activity? The Board supported this activity.

J. Pederson said that the MIT Sea Grant and NE Aquarium will be conducting a Marine Protected Areas workshop on June 5-6, 2001 in Boston, and asked for recommendations for invitees. George LaPointe, MDMR, and Jon Whitman, URI were suggested. J. Pederson will send an email reminder to rargom@mac.Dartmouth asking for additional nominations.

B. Tripp updated the group about the WHOI SWATH project. Bids for construction of the vessel were twice what was anticipated, therefore the project is currently on hold.

I. Babb articulated the need for a logo for RARGOM. He offered to generate some designs through his resources at UConn and will bring them to the next Board meeting for consideration.

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Eugenia Frey Braasch
May 11, 2001

Action Items

Regional Research Plan

1. May 2001: J. Pesch, C. Naimie, D. Keeley, G. Braasch will establish project plan and benchmark dates.
2. June-July 2001: Retrospective, Regional Context, Issue-based design sections drafted, reviewed, finalized.
3. August/September 2001: Issue-based priorities identified via survey, Pesch will write the plan sections, which will be distributed for comment and approval.
4. October 2001: Issue priorities finalized, Research Needed and Implementation Strategy sections drafted, reviewed and finalized.
5. November 2001: draft plan circulated to RARGOM and other stake holders for review.
6. December 2001: final draft presented to GoM Council on the Marine Environment

RARGOM Organizational Capacity

1. May 31, 2001: G. Braasch will draft a series of job descriptions which meet the work load of RARGOM, and could potentially distribute the work of RARGOM among staff at the member institutions.
2. June 15, 2001: J. Pesch will draft a concept paper about restructuring RARGOM.
3. May 31, 2001: J. Pesch and I. Babb will draft a planning proposal for "RARGOM as neutral regional convener".
4. June 1, 2001: G. Braasch will generate a list of GoM NEWS past themes & topics.

Annual Science Award

1. Next RARGOM meeting: L. Incze will prepare a proposal for this activity and present it to the Board.

Membership

1. June 30, 2001: G. Braasch will follow-up on the recommendations for potential new members by sending solicitation & information mailings.

Budget 2001

1. Monthly: G. Braasch will prepare & distribute fiscal reports.
2. May 31, 2001: Board representatives will provide G. Braasch with an estimate of their annual cost of participation in RARGOM (travel, time, etc.).

Fund raising

1. J. Pesch will approach EPA.
2. M. ten Brink will approach USGS and the US Army Corps.
3. D. Mountain will approach NMFS.
4. L. Incze will approach NOS/ Don Scavia.
5. B. Tripp will approach Ken Brink at WHOI.
6. I. Babb will approach ONR.

GoMOOS Workshop

1. L. Incze will report to the GoMOOS Board re. workshop outcomes and recommendations.
2. Sept. 1, 2001: L. Incze and G. Braasch will coordinate and produce the final report preparation.

Gulf of Maine NEWS

1. G. Braasch will complete & distribute the current issue, then put this activity on hold until adequate funding is secured to support it.

Web Page

1. May & June: G. Braasch will work with D. Remsen to overhaul the RARGOM web site.

Gulf of Maine Aquarium

1. Representatives will alert colleagues about the fishresearch.org web site.

GoM Council

1. RARGOM will secure the contract for sponsorship support this year.
2. May meeting: J. Pesch will attend and will report to the Council about the research plan update activity.
3. G. Braasch will coordinate the other RARGOM commitments to the Council.

