
Minutes of Meeting
March 10, 2000
University of New Hampshire, Durham, New Hampshire

Present:

Lew Incze	Bigelow Laboratory
Chris Naimie	Dartmouth College
Linda Mercer	Maine Department of Marine Resources
Evan Richert	Maine State Planning Office
Christian Krahforst	Massachusetts Coastal Zone Management Program
Judy Pederson	Massachusetts Institute of Technology Sea Grant Program
Eugenia Braasch	RARGOM headquarters at Dartmouth College
Gerald Pesch	United States Environmental Protection Agency
Marilyn Buchholtz ten Brink	United States Geological Survey
Kevin Friedland	United States National Marine Fisheries Service
Ivar Babb	University of Connecticut/NURP
Gordon Wallace	University of Massachusetts at Boston
Jeff Turner	University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth
Wendell Brown	University of New Hampshire
Ted Loder	University of New Hampshire
Kenneth Foote	Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution

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

Old Business

It was moved to accept the minutes from the 10/15/99 meeting. The motion was unanimously approved.

Strategic Planning

The RARGOM Principles and Goals were unanimously approved by the Policy Board (see attached document).

Workplan 2000: standing committee activity and plans

Goal 1A: Regional Research Topics of High Regional Interest and Need

The charge: Prepare an updated regional research plan for the years 2000-2005. This plan should be based on the outcomes of the Gulf of Maine Scientific Symposium and Workshop, 1996, and on the Gulf of Maine Research Plan, 1992, as well as other current research initiatives in the Gulf of Maine region (such as the U.S. Georges Bank GLOBEC program). The plan will identify and current knowledge gaps, set priorities for future research and monitoring activities, develop recommendations, and recommend a process for reviewing achievements.

Committee members: Judy Pederson, (other members are needed).

Time frame: 12 months with final draft 3 months after monitoring workshop, quarterly meetings with committee.

J. Pederson said that it would be productive to look at some regional research plans that have been developed by other groups (i.e., Great Lakes Research). The group also discussed inviting an agency leader to attend the next RARGOM meeting. Suggestions included federal agency leaders such as Andy Robertson (NOAA monitoring), Kevin Summers (EPA monitoring), and state agency directors such as George LaPoint (MDMR), John Nelson (NH), and representatives from Massachusetts and the Maine DEP.

L. Mercer reported that the MDMR is in the process of developing a research plan for the state of Maine. Her agency would like to have RARGOM review this document. A series of meetings will be held during April to solicit input, with a draft document anticipated for June.

It was also suggested that development of a RARGOM research plan will build on the monitoring workshop recommendations, so that work on the plan might best begin during the summer. Also, the RMRP overview summary would help to develop the next round of a regional research plan and this document is not yet completed.

Goal 1B: Program: Monitoring Workshop

J. Pesch reported that the workshop planning is into its final stages, invitations have been mailed and speakers and working group discussion leaders have been identified. He provided an overview of the workshop proposal, saying that productive dialogue between scientists and managers is a key element to the program design. The anticipated final report will focus on how to better build bridges between the communities for effective information exchange. He also anticipates that a research agenda will emerge from this meeting for the scientific community and that continued collaboration between the management, ngo, and research groups will be fostered.

G. Braasch provided an update on the workshop registrations and the fundraising, noting that while there was still work to do to meet the targeted goals in each of these activities, both seemed to be on track.

Committee members for the monitoring workshop include: J. Pesch (EPA), Carlton Hunt (Battelle Ocean Sciences), Peter Hennigar (Environment Canada), John Allen (Huntsman MSC), Linda Mercer (Maine DMR), Christian Krahforst (Mass. CZM), Judy Pederson (MIT), Curt Mason (NOAA/COP), Don Scavia (NOAA/COP), David Dow (NOAA/NMFS), Chris Nash (NH Office of State Planning), Gordon Wallace (UMass Boston), Jeff Turner (UMass Dartmouth), Steve Jones (UNH), Michele Dionne (Wells NERR), Bruce Tripp (WHOI).

Time Frame: The workshop will be held April 12-14, in Woods Hole, MA.

Goal 1B: Program: Annual Science Meeting Proposal

L. Mercer presented the concept of RARGOM convening an informal yearly opportunity for scientists to present their current research results. She believes that there is a need for such a meeting where regional research issues can be presented in an interdisciplinary fashion. She also thinks that this will strengthen individual scientist involvement in other RARGOM areas, such as serving on standing committees and contributing to the GoM NEWS. The idea was endorsed. Some suggestions were offered regarding the design of the meeting. A March time frame, a central location, encourage graduate students, model the meeting on the NEERS meeting, a single day event. The issue of balance between poster session and oral presentations was discussed.

Goal 2A: Regional Research Advocacy

The charge: Strengthen efforts for advocacy of regional science at the federal level; also to establish closer ties with appropriate state, provincial and regional organizations and agencies to improve support for research and utilization of research expertise and results.

Committee members:

Time frame: on-going

J. Pederson expressed that she and Jerry, because of their employment affiliation, are unable to pursue this goal for RARGOM. She asked for other RARGOM Board members to offer to take a more active role.

Goal 3Ai: Buoys & Ships

The charge: Develop long term plans for vessel use and availability in the Gulf of Maine. The committee will assess the complex issues of research vessel use in the GOM, consider over-all vessel availability for educational and research use, determine what the scientific user needs, create a scientific equipment list, establish a plan for replacement for the next few years, and prepare long term recommendations. Report on the availability and capability of current and planned vessels and platforms to support research in the GoM. Assess and report on the community's needs and hopes for support in view of current, anticipated and desired research directions. Federal and non-federal (e.g., university, consortium) vessels should be considered. The committee will have to decide just how detailed the first cut of this evaluation ought to be; clearly, the task could be enormous, and reasonable limits will have to be decided. The Policy Board feels that there is a shortage of shared information on what is being planned; there is probably also a shortage of affordable and suitable vessels for work outside normal federal channels.

Defining these needs would be valuable RARGOM function, better served by a broad consortium than by any single

or small group of institutions. Broader distribution of information on non-federal vessels, especially, may help potential users as well as providers.

Committee members: J. Allen, I. Babb, L. Incze, D. Townsend, B. Tripp, G. Wallace.

Time Frame: 12 months

Gulf of Maine Ocean Observing System (GoM OOS) Proposal

L. Incze and E. Richert presented summaries of their activities over the past year developing the Gulf of Maine Ocean Observing System proposal (see enclosed description). This proposal, with collaboration from the State of Maine Senator Snowe's office, is expected to receive \$6M funding over 2 years, FY200-2001.

Incze said that the idea for this project derived initially from broad remote sensing interests in the State of Maine. The decision was made to focus on the marine system and to create an observing system that meets a wide range of user needs. The proposal has been co-authored by N. Pettigrew (Univ. Maine) as the lead PI, with L. Incze and C. Roesler as co-authors (Bigelow Laboratory) as well as some other investigators. ONR has been the primary federal entity supporting this effort, with other agencies also providing a NOPP-type review of the proposal (CORE, NASA, NOAA, NSF). A National Federated System is envisioned for the USA, with nested regional coastal and blue water systems. The Gulf of Maine region is to be the initial pilot project area. Meetings are planned to establish common protocols and standards around the country.

E. Richert explained that this is an effort to put the infrastructure in place that supports a variety of user groups, the research community is one such entity, industry, recreational and military users are also anticipated. The goal is to benefit the greatest number of users with the smallest number of measurements. Richert also asserted that while the project is Maine initiated and based at this point, the intention of the GOMOOS Board is for the activity to become a regional effort, and for RARGOM to be a partner.

There are as yet, many uncertainties about the regional nature of this effort and RARGOM's future role in it. Discussion moved to the need for more details about the project and the process by which the funding was obtained, prior to making any decisions about RARGOM's relationship to GOMOOS. The lack of details and the fact that no proposal draft has yet been distributed hampered the discussion, in that the group did not know the specifics about the plan. GOMOOS sought endorsement from RARGOM without involving RARGOM in the planning process or conveying the details of the proposal. It was of deep concern to the Board that RARGOM played no advisory role in the development of the proposal, particularly because broad regional scientific input had characterized the November 1997 workshop where the principle elements for such a system were articulated. It was noted that RARGOM had a role in the initiation of the activity, by convening the November 1997 workshop, but that the proposal development was not an open process. Incze responded that the goal is to improve the understanding of the Gulf of Maine and that RARGOM would have a role as one of several users for the system design, possibly as the convener of a future workshop and other meetings that will shape the GOMOOS.

J. Pederson reported that she appreciates that RARGOM has been provided a potential role in this proposal. She noted that advisors always desire to be more than advisors. To date, Pederson said that the official RARGOM response has been a letter stating that RARGOM is clearly supportive of the concept of regional, ocean observing, as evidenced by the RARGOM Report 98-1. However, as a matter of principle, RARGOM strives to be an open, inclusive organization, committed to regional marine research. The GOMOOS effort thus far has been a contained, State of Maine based endeavor. Given its mission and goals, RARGOM offered some guidelines that must characterize its potential participation with GOMOOS.

1. RARGOM seeks to provide opportunities to academic institutions and government to plan and promote regional research focused on the Gulf of Maine as a natural marine system and would envision working with GOMOOS on providing a forum to do so. RARGOM membership is diverse and we facilitate meetings that are nonpartisan, multidisciplinary and open to interested parties.
2. RARGOM, through its newsletter, disseminates scientific and technical information to a broad audience on a regular basis. We do this based on the belief that it is important to translate and transmit scientific findings about the Gulf of Maine to other researchers in related disciplines and also to non-researchers (managers, regulators, members of non-governmental organizations, media professionals, legislative bodies, and the general public).
3. RARGOM is a Canadian/US enterprise, reflective of the joint stewardship of the Gulf of Maine ecosystem by these two countries.
4. RARGOM convenes meeting, workshops and symposia that serve as a communication opportunity for members and interested non-members. We envision working with GOMOOS to convene workshops that provide opportunities for exchange of information. By facilitating meetings, through RARGOM, participation will be enhanced by non-Maine residents.

The question was raised, "How does this benefit regional research?" Richert responded that this system will provide infrastructure to support research. The issue of how existing NOAA platforms, monitoring buoys will mesh with this new initiative was raised, how to avoid overlap and duplication. Richert responded that with NOAA serving as a partner in this, there is not concern regarding duplication of effort. This project represents a shift away from a single agency model towards a multi-agency effort, based at the regional level.

The process by which the funding was acquired was also discussed at length. Mark-ups, earmarking, and plus-up approaches were spoken about. It was felt that even the perception of ear-marked funding is a problem for RARGOM, particularly so, if ear-marked for use at a single RARGOM member institution. A critical aspect of the funding seemed to be whether or not the funds were newly generated or shifted away from other programs. Also, the non-competitive nature of the selection of researchers who will be involved in the GOMOOS development is a serious design flaw.

The differences between a corporate and academic governance model for operating the system were also touched on (contracts & deliverables vs. grants & results).

Membership aspects were also addressed. Members of the RARGOM Board expressed the opinion that GOMOOS not proceed with its fee-based membership approach, saying that this puts GOMOOS and RARGOM in direct competition for funds in the region. Richert responded that membership fees represent commitment as well as operating income and this is an important aspect of the design. The issue of whether GOMOOS users would be required to be members was raised. Member influence on what gets measured and how was raised. Questions of access, the needs of those who don't have the resources to join, the potential undue influence of industry, and how to generate a regional perspective through consensus (for example, how would Canadian needs be integrated into this system, given its base in the State of Maine). It was asserted that a system of this type needs a well thought-out set of questions that address the fundamental science - what are these?

Recognizing that monitoring data is a valuable resource, one board member stated that it is antithetical to research. Another existing program, NEON (National Ecological Observatory Network) was mentioned. The issue was raised regarding how to integrate the GLOBEC Georges Bank data, and Incze responded that this area was specifically avoided in order to enable that data stream continue.

Goal 3Aiii: Data & Information

The charge: Examine the current state of internet availability of data for GoM researchers and other users. 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? A meeting is suggested, to obtain feedback from a small involved committee (rather than the community at large), to address the EDMIS/REDIMS interface in a coordinated manner with the CME effort, GIS, and to determine long term steps (criteria for data bases, funding for maintaining the system once the current RMRP money is spent).

Committee members: C. Naimie, B. Tripp

Time frame: ongoing

C. Naimie reported that he has distributed a letter to investigators who participated in the RMRP regarding archiving of data collected under that program. He has received some responses and will follow-up over the next few months. Discussion returned to the GOMOOS project and its data and information needs. It was suggested that this effort might build on REDIMS. However, GOMOOS data will be real time, it represents a very big effort and an RFP will be prepared to solicit work in this area.

Marine Census Project

K. Foote is conducting a planning project, hoping to gather potential PIs this spring for a meeting to discuss a pilot marine census of the Gulf of Maine and Georges Bank, proposed for the two-year period of January 1, 2002 - December 31, 2003. The Census of Marine Life is a research initiative by the marine science community, with the nominal goal of performing a global census of marine life, aiming to describe and understand the distribution, abundance, and diversity of marine animals. The pilot census would also include exploratory transects through the Slope Water to the north wall of the Gulf Stream, with surveying of Bear and Physalia Seamounts of the New England Seamount Chain. Six major challenges are envisioned: (1) harnessing state-of-the-art techniques and platforms for a core program of synchronous observation and sampling of fish, size range 5-100 cm, macrozooplankton, 2-20 cm, and mesozooplankton, 0.2-20 mm, in the context of their environment; (2) establishing the feasibility of synchronous observation or sampling of other marine organisms, including sea mammals, other large pelagics, marine birds, cephalopods, gelatinous zooplankton, benthos, and microscopic pelagic animals; (3) collecting and combining the various data to define the ecosystem; (4) surveying deep-water organisms in Slope Water; (5) quantifying biodiversity; and (6) achieving numerical accuracy. To begin to address these

challenges, and to establish a model for planning and conducting pilot censuses, the Sloan Foundation has funded a planning project. Elements include: (1) identifying the precise interests of the research community and securing commitments to the pilot census; (2) determining requirements on observation and sampling systems; (3) promoting development and refinement of state-of-the-art instrumentation to bring this to the operational level; (4) formulating a survey strategy and operational plans; (5) outlining the suite of analyses required for reducing the census data; and (6) estimating costs and level of effort. It is appreciated that the pilot census has a particular intrinsic value because of the huge productivity of the region and the severely depleted states of the cod and haddock stocks.

Goal 4A: Communications

The charge: Identify timely and diverse topics for informal scientific contributions to the newsletter, solicit articles and authors accordingly; provide a quick internal review of submissions as an aid to the authors.

Committee members: R. Schlitz (NMFS/NEFSC), Jim Hopkins (Bigelow Lab).

Time frame: Three or four issues annually

G. Braasch said that the next issue of the *GoM NEWS* will focus on aquaculture in the region. The following winter issue will highlight monitoring activities in the GoM. The 1999 Bibliographic Search has been completed and is in production. Marine Mammals was suggested as a possible theme for a future issue.

RARGOM web page update

Committee members: Chris Naimie, Kevin Friedland, Ivar Babb, and Jerry Pesch.

G. Braasch reported that she has obtained a new web page met address (<http://www.rargom.org>). She met with Edgar Kleindinst and Bruce Tripp at NEFSC in November regarding priorities for the revised web page architecture and design considerations. Kleindinst prepared a new draft version of the page and is waiting for feedback on next steps. The Board urged prompt action for this strategically important area.

Goal 5B: Provide Scientific and Technical Advice to the region

The charge: To provide scientific and technical advice and planning for federal, regional, state/provincial, and local agencies and organizations as requested. Develop the draft scientific consulting proposal (10/16/98) into a document that describes the concept in greater detail, so that financial support for this activity can be sought.

Committee members:

Time frame:

G. Braasch prepared a concept paper "Improving the Access and Translation of Scientific Results for Manager in Decisions Affecting the Environmental Quality of the Gulf of Maine." This topic was discussed at the annual Council - RARGOM meeting held in Portland on 1/4/00. A model project, LINK Reserch.org, is currently underway on the web. Braasch will check on the outcomes of this effort as plans develop for RARGOM's outreach. NURC offered to help set up the necessary searchable links on the RARGOM web page to facilitate this effort.

Chris Paloni, USGS "Ask a Geologist Program", might be interested in working in this area with RARGOM.

Goal 6: RARGOM organizational strength and management

Nominating committee for officers

The charge: To conduct the search process for the Chair and Vice Chair positions on the Policy Board in accordance with association goals.

Committee members:

Time frame: June 30, 2000.

J. Pederson has contacted L. Incze and G. Wallace as past chairs, to serve on this committee. They have agreed to do so and will discuss potential candidates individually with each Board member.

Goal 6: RARGOM organizational strength and management

Membership committee

The charge: 1. To identify institutions that could be members of the association and solicit membership involvement from their Chief Executive Officers. 2. To develop and conduct periodic assessments of association services to its members.

Committee members:

Time frame: on-going

G. Braasch reported that 11 Canadian solicitations were sent out in November. DFO has responded, indicating that they will raise their level of membership commitment to RARGOM from Associate to Full Member. No others have responded to date. The Woods Hole Research Center was suggested as a potential member.

FY2000 Budget and Fiscal Report

Braasch presented the FY1999 summary and the proposed FY2000 budget (see attached), which represents level-funded activity for the coming year. Membership dues alone do not provide enough income to balance the budget, let alone support the achievement of several workplan goals. The GoM Council has indicated that they will support RARGOM with \$10K/year over the next 3 years. Other sources of income are necessary.

L. Mercer said that the Board needs to reconsider the dues structure. She recommended raising membership dues, and possibly creating a 3 tier structure, with Federal level, Academic level and an Associate level.

J. Pederson said that in budgeting for workshops, in addition to the direct workshop costs, RARGOM as a matter of policy should build in an O/H rate to create a contingency fund for other RARGOM activities. She suggested a rate of 10%.

Announcements

Northeast Consortium Proposal (see <http://www.northeastconsortium.org/nec/description.html>)

Exploring Transboundary Arrangements for Management of the Gulf of Maine Ecosystem, Focus on Sewage, Toxics and Coastal Development, St. John Trade Centre, St. John, NB. June 19-20, 2000. Contact Heather Tausig, New England Aquarium, htausig@neaq.org

Other Business

G. Braasch said that RARGOM's 10th anniversary year will be 2002. She brought up this topic to initiate discussion about ways in which to mark the event. Many Board members felt that achieving our current goal of establishing a strong Internet presence would represent a strong achievement. Some also thought that it would be time to hold a larger regional scientific meeting again to learn about the outcomes of EcoHAB and GLOBEC Georges Bank as well as other research activity.

The next meeting was proposed for May 22 at University of Maine Darling Marine Center.

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Eugenia Frey Braasch
March 17,2000

Action Items

Strategic Plan

- Extend an invitation to an agency leader to attend the next RARGOM meeting.
- Chris Naimie offered to explore who might become involved in drafting a regional research plan from the GLOBEC group.
- Others who are interested in helping to prepare the regional research plan should contact J. Pederson.
- All representatives: Survey your institutional labs to determine what data sets exist, what form it is in, who will provide the role of converting data into information for others to use, and identify the key data and information person at each institution to link with.
- All representatives: send input regarding data archiving to B. Tripp and C. Naimie.

Monitoring Workshop

- J. Pesch will speak with the working group leaders about ideas for discussion facilitators for their sessions.
- G. Braasch will coordinate the details of the workshop operation, registrations and fund raising.
- The steering committee will meet on 4/12 to go over final details and decisions regarding the program.

Annual Science Meeting

- L. Mercer, C. Krahforst, G. Braasch will develop a proposal and budget to bring to the next board meeting.

GOMOOS

- E. Richert will distribute the proposal to G. Braasch by 3/17/00.
- G. Braasch will then oversee the proposal distribution to the RARGOM Board via email.
- The Board will advise G. Braasch about whether RARGOM should serve as a workshop convener on this proposal by 3/24/00.
- The Board will email and possible conference with J. Pederson and G. Braasch, regarding a decision about future partnership and a formal relationship with GOMOOS.

Nominating RARGOM Chair and Vice Chair

L. Incze and G. Wallace will present a slate at the next meeting for endorsement.

Membership Dues

G. Braasch will bring policy proposal to the next meeting for consideration and approval.

Workshop Budgeting

G. Braasch will develop a workshop budget policy for the next meeting.