

Regional Association for Research on the Gulf of Maine

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Minutes of Meeting

Wells Reserve, Wells, Maine - March 26, 1993

Present:

Duncan FitzGerald	Boston University
Daniel Lynch	Dartmouth College
Rich Langton	Maine Dept. Marine Resources
John Barlow	Maine Maritime Academy
Don Bradford	Maine Maritime Academy
Eric Adams	MIT
Eugenia Braasch	RARGOM at Dartmouth College
Anne Gardulski	Tufts University
Peter Auster	UConn - Nat'l Undersea Research Center-Avery Point
Gordon Wallace	UMass-Boston
Wendell Brown	UNH
Michele Dionne	Wells Reserve
Jim List	Wells Reserve
Melissa Waterman	Council on the Marine Environment

The Meeting was called to order by Gordon Wallace at 10:00 a.m., with Genie Braasch and Dan Lynch keeping the minutes.

Old Business

The minutes of the 4 December, 1992 meeting (UMass Boston) were approved as they stand.

New Business

D. Lynch thanked M. Dionne for hosting the meeting. She offered a boat tour of the Wells Estuary Reserve to RARGOM members in warmer weather.

D. Lynch introduced Genie Braasch to the group as the RARGOM Associate Director.

D. Lynch then introduced Melissa Waterman from the Augusta, Maine office of the Council on the Marine Environment (CME). She showed a 5 minute video about the organization, goals, and activities of the CME. She said that the executive office will move from Boston to Halifax in July, with Judy Cox serving as the new Secretary. M. Waterman described current funding efforts to support the CME program. In Canada, the CME is trying to obtain money from the "Green Plan"; there is designated money for an estuary program for the Maritime Provinces. Discussion then turned to the CME request for an endorsement by RARGOM for its fundraising activity with the U.S. Congress in February. She handed out copies of the funding request package and listed two reasons for approaching the U.S. Congress for money: 1). the need for stable funding, (state and provincial support has gone as far as it can); and 2). to bring attention to the Gulf of Maine as a bio region akin to the Chesapeake Bay, the Gulf of Mexico, and Puget Sound. She told the group that letters had been sent to the six appropriate subcommittees on Capital Hill. RARGOM members expressed concern that there was not an opportunity to have earlier input on the funding package. G. Wallace said that if the CME seeks RARGOM endorsement, then RARGOM would like to be part of the review /authoring process. P. Auster noted that the description of federal agencies was inaccurate and that habitat descriptions did not include deep sea organisms. W. Brown observed that one goal of the CME is to promote research, but that this fund raising effort did not place research as a priority activity. He urged the group to go forward with an agreement that would enable our organizations to collaborate more smoothly. M. Waterman indicated that W. Brown's observations were correct, in that CME program priorities were monitoring, habitat protection, data and information systems, and public education. D. Lynch summarized the sentiment of the assembled group with three points: 1). RARGOM is not a lobbying group (therefore while they would endorse the CME mission, they would not directly endorse its lobbying activity), 2). RARGOM wants to be involved in the production line of ideas, 3). RARGOM wants assurance that new resources are being sought, not a transfer of money from existing sources (thereby injecting competition for funds between collaborating groups).

Discussion then moved to the status of the 3-way agreement between the Association, the RMR Board and the CME. Two versions are currently under consideration: the 10 December, 1992 Cooperative Agreement draft and a RMR Board Joint Statement which was approved at their 17 March, 1993 meeting. M. Waterman had attended the CME working group meeting in Halifax on

3/22-3/25, where the two documents were reviewed, and she presented the opinions of that group. The CME supports the 10 December, 1992 draft because of its greater specificity. Two obstacles remain before the CME will sign that draft with RARGOM: 1). Canadian research organizations and institutions must be included within RARGOM prior to initiation of joint activities between RARGOM and the CME, and 2). the preamble of the final agreement should acknowledge that the Gulf of Maine Natural Resources Action Plan reflects a consensus perspective by the five bordering states and provinces on key issues and actions needed within the region. The reaction of the meeting was that it is a membership goal for 1993 to obtain membership from Canadian organizations (and that the CME could assist with this effort); and the action plan statement could be included in the joint document without changing its focus. Impediments to Canadian membership were discussed. E. Adams noted that participation at RARGOM meetings is already limited by time and money and that these constraints will make it difficult to assemble the entire group. G. Wallace agreed and stressed that everyone should try to attend meetings.

The two documents were then distributed and given side-by-side examination by the meeting. The RARGOM group looked for ways to blend the two documents in order to propose a final draft that all parties could endorse. It was felt that the change in title from Cooperative Agreement to Joint Statement, and the rearrangement of the statements that define the parties are non-substantive in nature and the RMR Board version could be used, but the final sections that describe the actions that the parties agree to take are different enough in content to need further negotiation. In particular, D. Lynch argued for inclusion of the required annual management meeting to coordinate programs. The assembled group recognized that signing this agreement is crucial to implementation of this year's action plan and that it needs to be accomplished as soon as possible. Therefore, it was agreed to delegate the final negotiations to G. Wallace and D. Lynch, as the current RARGOM officers, and it is anticipated that this task will be completed during April.

M. Waterman handed out the CME/RARGOM joint actions recommendations for 1993-94. (see attached). She will coordinate activity with G. Braasch.

Actions to take:

1. send list of targeted Canadian members to M. Waterman (all members via G. Braasch)
2. negotiate, revise, and sign the joint statement (G. Wallace, D. Lynch)
3. provide advice to CME re National Academy of Science workshop (all members via G. Braasch)

D. Lynch reported on the 17 March '93 meeting of the RMR Board. He attended representing the Association, and arrived after the discussion about the 3-way agreement, but presented the RARGOM workshop series proposal and requested funding for this. There was a convergence of interest in funding the Habitat and Circulation Modeling topics and the Board agreed to think about funding each workshop at about an \$18,000. level. D. Lynch wants to continue to develop this workshop proposal document and market it to other funding agencies (regionally focused philanthropic groups) so that the entire workshop plan can be implemented. D. Lynch also reported that the Data Management workshop has become independent from the others that RARGOM had developed last fall. Don Phelps (EPA Narragansett), who serves on the RMR Board, is currently chairing this event and it is anticipated that the Board will fund it. RARGOM members W. Brown and M. ten Brink have been asked to serve on the planning committee. W. Brown spoke about the status of the Data Management workshop planning to date. He said that Data information sits at the interface of the RARGOM/Board relationship. G. Wallace stressed that if key members of RARGOM are involved, then RARGOM needs identity as a participant in the process. W. Brown agreed, but believes that the process and enforcement of this should be clearly outlined between the two organizations and not rest with him as an individual. There was general discussion about RARGOM/RMR Board collaboration on workshops, with concern that RARGOM might initiate ideas and concepts but not achieve recognition for its effort if the Board or other organizations fund and convene the events. D. Townsend's change in affiliation was also discussed (it was reported that he will be moving from the Bigelow Lab, and its RARGOM representative, to serve as the Executive Director of the RMR Board this spring). M. Waterman's reaction to the RARGOM workshop proposal was solicited and she indicated that the CME could easily support a workshop series such as this. D. Lynch suggested that a the Board member could serve as advisor on the planning committee of each workshop that they fund, but that RARGOM researchers should run the program. RARGOM sponsorship is a key issue. It was reiterated that the 3-way agreement needs to be signed. Discussion returned to the Data Workshop because W. Brown said that the next planning meeting will be held on 4/2/93. It was decided that G. Wallace will clarify RARGOM status next week and report to W. Brown prior to the meeting. R. Langton reported that the Habitat planning group will meet in the next 2-3 weeks to continue their planning. G. Wallace suggested that a privilege of RARGOM membership should be guaranteed access to workshops. J. Barlow seconded that opinion.

Actions to take:

1. contact Bob Wall for clarification about whether the Data Workshop will be a RARGOM affiliated event and what the time line is for a decision about funding the workshops for 1993. (G. Wallace)
2. discussion of workshop planning and funding should be added to the agenda of the 3-way negotiation meeting in April. (G. Wallace, D. Lynch)

The meeting adjourned for lunch at 12:15 p.m. M. Waterman left after lunch.

G. Braasch presented a prototype of a four page newsletter ("Gulf of Maine NEWS"). It features research news about the Gulf of Maine from RARGOM members and provides a distillation of regionally specific research news from national sources. The

newsletter design includes an opinion column on the front cover (members will contribute brief essays to this space on topics of concern to the membership); two section headings describe the inside contents of the newsletter: "Research" (Association news, regional events, and news from national programs such as NSF, NOAA, EPA, USGS, etc.) and "Resources" (funding opportunities, schedules of research vessels, reports and publications received); the back cover serves as the calendar for meetings, workshops, and proposal deadlines. Plans are to produce the newsletter on a quarterly basis. The first issue is expected out in April. Contributions and suggestions from RARGOM members are strongly encouraged and are essential to its focused content. The group endorsed its concept and discussed the type of ship information that was important to include.

G. Braasch raised the issue of attendance at RARGOM meetings and the content of the agenda. She asked how a balance might be achieved between discussion about administrative concerns and research issues. It was decided that invited presentations from members and outside guests (such as M. Waterman at this meeting) would be of interest. Location of meeting sites was discussed and a balance between southern, northern, and central locations will be attempted in order for members to become acquainted with each others institutions and research programs and to not put the burden of long distance travel on the same people all the time. Tentative dates were set for the next two meetings. The summer meeting will be held on Monday, June 21st, and will be hosted by the Undersea Research Center at UConn Avery Point, CT. P. Auster will coordinate the meeting and will present a brief description of his research activities. The fall meeting will be held on Friday, October 8th, and will be hosted by the Department of Marine Resources at their new lab in West Boothbay Harbor, ME. (It is planned to coordinate with the Habitat workshop scheduled at that location around that time).

D. Lynch then asked for research updates. It was noted that the RMR Board RFP deadline had been March 19th. Applicants should expect to hear in two months about the funding status of their proposals. D. Lynch also said that the GLOBEC final field program will be delayed until 1995. (???something about \$4 million RFP from NMFS - Georges Bank- digestion??) P. Auster distributed a handout describing NURC-UCAP 1993 sponsored research projects in the Gulf of Maine and their operations schedule for July through September 1993. (see attached) He noted that the Underseas Center has portable ROVs that other researchers can use and he has descriptive information about these. G. Wallace said that there is an RFP for \$700,000. (??? wide variety of transport - Jonathan Garber for Don Phelps - \$35,000,000. EPA Eat Region) W. Brown suggested that research funding opportunities be placed on an electronic bulletin board as soon as possible. He would like to see an interactive directory that can be updated by users so that it will be as current and relevant as possible.

Actions to take:

1. set up an interactive directory of research funding announcements with RARGOM members-only access.

Membership status was reviewed. Suggestions were made regarding potential organizations and individual contacts. D. Lynch said that a solicitation mailing package was ready for distribution and should be used.

The meeting adjourned for all but the policy board.

The fee structure of membership dues was discussed. There is concern about the discrepancy between the ability to pay (based on size of institution & budget) and the desire to contribute (based on number of researchers with Gulf of Maine focus at an institution regardless of institution size) and anticipated value (perceived/actual benefits of membership). R. Langton moved that the fee structure be reviewed and presented at the next meeting. E. Adams seconded the motion.

Actions to take:

1. identify and create projections of member institutions for 1993-94 fiscal years. (E. Braasch)
2. determine a formula based on two categories of membership and add a clause to consider special cases, i.e. state policy as "Generally, the fee structure will be ..." (D. Lynch, E. Braasch)

The 1993 workplan was presented for review. D. Lynch noted that it is effective to have the activities and budget cycle of RARGOM based on the calendar year and the terms of officers made on an academic year. This creates planning and fiscal stability during times of transition. G. Wallace agreed and asked G. Braasch to consider extending her appointment beyond D. Lynch's term. G. Braasch appreciated the positive endorsement and suggested that discussion of her position be postponed until her performance could be reviewed at a later date. G. Wallace moved to accept the 1993 workplan. P. Auster seconded the motion.

The meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Eugenia Frey Braasch
26 March, 1993