
Minutes of Meeting

May 22, 2000

University of Maine Darling Marine Center, Walpole, Maine

Present:

Lew Incze	Bigelow Laboratory
David Aiken	Canadian Department of Fisheries and Oceans
David Keeley	Maine State Planning Office
Josie Quintrell	Maine State Planning Office
Christian Krahforst	Massachusetts Coastal Zone Management Program
Susan Snow Cotter	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
Mike Sissenwine	United States National Marine Fisheries Service
Larry Mayer	University of Maine
Gordon Wallace	University of Massachusetts at Boston
Frank Bub	University of New Hampshire
Michele Dionne	Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve
Bruce Tripp	Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution

The meeting was called to order by Jerry Pesch at 9:00 a.m., with Genie Braasch keeping the minutes. Larry Mayer served as the University of Maine host for the meeting and provided an overview of the Darling Marine Center faculty and their research interests.

Old Business

It was moved to accept the minutes from the 3/10/00 meeting. The motion was unanimously approved.

Workplan 2000: standing committee activity and plans

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 distributed copies of the current issue of the *GoM NEWS* which focuses on aquaculture in the region. The 1999 Bibliographic Search has been completed and is in production. She then presented overviews of potential topics and authors for the next two issues; the summer will highlight monitoring/ocean observing activities and the fall will feature marine mammals. The board endorsed the plans and provided some additional suggestions regarding people to contact. They also recommended that web-based publications be added to the annual bibliographic list.

RARGOM web page update

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

The Board discussed the need to make statements on the web page regarding the nature of the scientific content. The group agreed that it is important to distinguish between an individual author's opinion, peer-reviewed science, and a group-endorsed RARGOM contribution. It was proposed that some clarifying statements be created to accompany the web text, either certifying RARGOM approval or serving as a disclaimer. For example, an individually authored *Gulf of Maine NEWS* article archived on the web might include "The following views are expressed by XXX and represent the opinions of the author(s). This text has not been peer reviewed." In contrast, a RARGOM workshop report statement might convey "RARGOM strives for accuracy and objectivity. The following recommendations are made by the Regional Association for Research on the Gulf of Maine on these issues with the expressed goal of neutrality." The group also endorsed the idea of establishing a small editorial board to review the science presented on the RARGOM web page. No further actions were taken though, regarding soliciting people to serve in this capacity.

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, F. Bub

Time frame: ongoing

C. Naimie reported that the REDMS website has been updated to reflect the feed back that he has received from the RMRP investigators earlier this year. The status is well short of 100% participation. F. Bub also reported that there is not much activity in the REDIMS area as it is currently unfunded. He said that he would look into this with Chris. G. Braasch reported that she has recently been in conversation with Paul Boudreau, DFO, the Council's Data & Information committee chair, and that RARGOM has been invited to participate in a Fundy Forum on-line discussion about regional data and information needs on Monday, May 29th.

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

SWATH

B. Tripp reported that the SWATH Coastal Research Vessel project has now received a \$5M gift towards construction of the 105- foot vessel (of the total goal of \$8M needed for completion). The decision has been made at WHOI to begin the construction design phase, with anticipated completion in the spring 2002.

The board wished to indicate that there is broad regional support and approval for this project. They decided to draft a letter to WHOI Director Dr. Robert Gagosian and RADM Richard Pittenger, indicating RARGOM support,

and expectations for future use. Additionally, the letter will seek a role for RARGOM in the construction design phase.

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:

Ivar Babb has developed a draft "Yellow Pages" proposal for an internet based relational database which would be posted on the RARGOM web page and would include contact information about researchers along with key words about their expertise. This was briefly discussed in Ivar's absence, and the group agreed that the concept looked good. J. Pederson and G. Braasch will follow-up.

GoM Council on the Marine Environment

The Board reviewed the letter of request for \$10K annually (FY 2000-2002) from RARGOM to the Council on the Marine Environment dated March 22, 2000 which outlines joint activities between the two organizations. D. Keeley lead a discussion about each of the activities listed in the letter. "Activities of mutual concern taking place during the year 2000 by RARGOM include

- hosting a workshop about Gulf of Maine monitoring,
- developing a database of scientists' research expertise,
- discussing ways to make regionally coordinated scientific advisory services available to decision-makers,
- participating in the development of the Council's revised Action Plan,
- coordinating a workshop toward the development of a Gulf of Maine observation system, and
- facilitating regional information and data management."

Most of the activities on the list were in process and met with Board approval. Through discussion, it emerged that the language of item #3, "discussing ways to make regionally coordinated scientific advisory services available to decision-makers", proved inadequate. The implications for providing scientific advice by individuals at some of the RARGOM member institutions aren't casual. Consulting also potentially involves governance issues and other responsibilities beyond the mandate of RARGOM. The group decided to change the language to "facilitating access to scientific advice and expertise".

There was also lengthy discussion about how to most effectively participate in the next Action Plan revision/development, recognizing that the Council could play a role in helping to secure research funding for a specific set of topics at both the federal and state/provincial levels. Shaping the strategy for this, whether it should be framed according to issues or regions, was discussed at length. The Action Plan will retain its current framework, but the Council is open to additional new ideas. Specificity is desired. It was recommended that management concerns and research questions be paired together. The time frame for involvement is the next 6-9 months. Gordon Wallace, Jerry Pesch, Michele Dionne, Lew Incze, and Ted Loder will plan to attend the summer Council meeting and become involved in this activity. Prior to the July meeting, they will email the other RARGOM representatives, outlining the current 5 major issues in the Action Plan, soliciting feedback. They will organize conference calls to discuss priorities.

Goal 1B: Program: Monitoring Workshop

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 was held April 12-14, in Woods Hole, MA.

J. Pesch reported that the workshop went well. He provided an overview of the workshop, the final report is in preparation, Pesch regards the report as a continuation of the RARGOM Report Series, the target audience for this document will be the management community. The report will be developed through a series of iterations, with ample opportunity for feedback from the working groups to their discussion leaders, and also between the steering committee and Jerry. He plans to have a draft ready for the July Council meeting.

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

Michael Sissenwine, Director of the NOAA Northeast Fisheries Science Center, Woods Hole, MA, addressed the group. He said that he is a big believer in long-term data/time series and that the NEFSC contributes substantially to this data resource annually. He outlined the many different activities underway at the NEFSC, saying that there is currently (and historically) substantial involvement in the GoM and Georges Banks. He provided a hand out which describes the NMFS work, other agency activity, and provides the rationale for a GoM regional demonstration project for a sustained ocean observing system. Sissenwine believes that the GoM essentially has a system in place; that many key elements are already operational, but perhaps need better integration in order to make the whole operate more effectively. He posed the question to the group, "What are the marginal things that need to be shored up?" Data synthesis, accessibility, protocols, and cross-referencing of data sets emerged as an area needing attention. Coastal and estuarine components need to be included along with blue water regions of the GoM. Sissenwine asked for Board endorsement for this approach, proposing that (a) he advocate for support of this regional demonstration project at the federal level within NOAA and (b) RARGOM convene a meeting of the science program decision makers in the GoM. The group reviewed the objectives of the meeting (see attached) and discussed the invitation list briefly, before deciding that the meeting should include "big thinker" visionary level people and should be kept fairly small in size. The Board unanimously endorsed the plan for RARGOM to take the lead in planning and organizing the meeting toward the goals as stated. The Board also indicated that they appreciated and supported Sissenwine's activity at the federal level and thanked him for his efforts.

Gulf of Maine Ocean Observing System (GoM OOS) Project

L. Incze and Josie Quintrell, Maine State Planning Office, provided an update about the GoMOOS project. The final proposal has been submitted, a site visit occurred on May 16th, which codified the intentions of the project and endorsed the activity. Funding looks likely, they are still waiting for final approval, but hope for a June 1st start date. Next steps include hiring an Executive Director (a national search is underway), and outreach for regional membership is in process. The GoMOOS Board seeks formal representation from RARGOM.

The group also discussed the workshop activity, thinking that the fall could be the appropriate time to hold the meeting.

Decisions regarding serving on the GoMOOS Board, establishment of a workshop steering committee and the workshop goals are on hold, pending funding approval.

Census of Marine Life

L. Incze reported that about 50 people attended the workshop recently held in Woods Hole, organized by Ken Foote (who attended the March 10th RARGOM meeting to describe this activity). The original focus of the program was on the larger organisms and on the well-known holoplankton, such as the copepods and euphausiids. However, many scientists at the meeting stressed the need to consider other trophic levels as well, such as bacteria, protozoa, and the benthos. A survey of the Gulf would be expensive, and the benefits will have to be worked out carefully in order to gain support from a broad community. Benefits would include public education and new scientific opportunities. G. Braasch will request that the RARGOM distribution list be used for the final report.

Goal 1B: Program: Annual Science Meeting Proposal

C. Krahfurst presented a proposal to convene an informal annual meeting for scientists to present their current research results. Some suggestions were offered regarding the design of the program. A special session coupled with the meeting was endorsed. The potential for a combined meeting with NEERS was also supported, as a possible alternating year scenario. 15 minute presentations, rather than the proposed 10 minute talks, were preferred. Posters were also endorsed as a good venue for presentation. The Board unanimously endorsed the proposal. Linda Mercer and Christian Krahfurst have stepped forward to serve on the steering committee. Other members are sought.

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: L. Incze and G. Wallace as past chairs, are serving on this committee.

Time frame: June 30, 2000.

L. Incze and G. Wallace have discussed RARGOM current affairs and potential candidates individually with each Board member. Several board members were mentioned with enthusiasm, but no one has agreed to serve at this point. The primary issue seemed to be timing. Board members indicated that new blood and involvement is needed. There is at the same time a continuity issue, in that it takes time to become acquainted with the nuances of the regional marine science issues. The group agreed that this is an exciting and important time for RARGOM to play an important role in the region and that dedicated and talented leadership is needed. No resolution was achieved at the meeting. Gordon and Lew agreed to work with Genie, Judy and Jerry to complete this process.

FY2000 Report

G. Braasch presented the FY2000 summary (see attached). Membership dues alone do not provide enough income to balance the budget. The GoM Council has indicated that they will consider a request from RARGOM for \$10K/year over the next 3 years. Other sources of income are also necessary in order to achievement of several workplan goals.

Appreciation

Incze and Wallace presented J. Pederson and J. Pesch with framed prints featuring coastal images, thanking them on behalf of the RARGOM Board for their service as Chair and Vice Chair of RARGOM during the past 2 years. J. Pederson gave G. Braasch a pin that depicts a group of diverse people, saying that it "symbolizes your efforts to recognize and accept our individuality and represents your commitment to keep us functioning as a whole - united in purpose".

Other Business

Details for the next meeting were not discussed.

The meeting adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Eugenia Frey Braasch
May 25, 2000

Action Items

Web Page

1. G. Braasch will continue to develop the page with help from member staff.
2. Volunteers are needed to serve on a small editorial board to review science presented on the web page.
3. Clarifying statements regarding authorship/ideas/opinions need to be drafted for Board approval at the next meeting.

Scientific / Technical Advice

1. J. Pederson and G. Braasch will provide feedback to I. Babb regarding the Yellow Pages proposal.
2. G. Wallace, L. Incze, J. Pesch, M. Dionne, T. Loder offered to attend the July CME meeting and work on the development of the revised Action Plan.

Monitoring Workshop

1. J. Pesch will draft the final report based on contributions from the working group leaders and steering committee.
2. G. Braasch will oversee the production and distribution of the document.

Annual Science Meeting

1. L. Mercer and C. Krahforst have offered to serve on the steering committee. Others are invited to participate.
2. Planning meetings will establish the program design and venue.
3. The steering committee will report to the Board with a detailed proposal at the fall meeting.

Nominating RARGOM Chair and Vice Chair

1. L. Incze and G. Wallace will continue their search for RARGOM leaders, and will present a slate to the Board endorsement via email by July 1, 2000.

SWATH

1. G. Wallace will draft the letter and circulate to the other Board members for review.
2. G. Braasch will coordinate the final preparation and delivery of the document.