
Minutes of Meeting
June 11, 1999
University of New Hampshire, Durham, New Hampshire

Present:

David Aiken	Canadian Department of Fisheries and Oceans
Chris Naimie	Dartmouth College
John Allen	Huntsman Marine Science Centre
Linda Mercer	Maine Department of Marine Resources
Judy Pederson	Massachusetts Institute of Technology Sea Grant Program
Ivar Babb	National Undersea Research Program/University of Connecticut
Scott Kraus	New England Aquarium
Eugenia Braasch	RARGOM headquarters at Dartmouth College
Gerald Pesch	United States Environmental Protection Agency
Kevin Friedland	United States National Marine Fisheries Service
Ian Davison	University of Maine
Gordon Wallace	University of Massachusetts at Boston
Jeff Turner	University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth
Ted Loder	University of New Hampshire
Steve Jones	University of New Hampshire
Michele Dionne	Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve

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 3/19/99 meeting. The motion was unanimously approved.

Strategic Planning

The morning discussion was devoted to reviewing and revising the Articles of Association and the related draft Strategic Plan document. The resulting revised documents are attached and will be distributed to all of the representatives for final approval. A related document, the Standing Committee descriptions, needs to be revised, so that the tasks of the committees, the membership, and the time frames are updated and outline implementation of the priorities in the Strategic Plan.

Comments by board members made about the specific Goals are listed below:

Goal 2. Very important for the RARGOM headquarters to regularly distribute research announcements, workshops and meeting information in Canada and the US. Key membership benefit in RARGOM. Genie pointed out that the RARGOM@mac.dartmouth.edu group email address can be used by all -- use of this address isn't limited to sending messages to her first and she encouraged all reps to participate and to inform colleagues about this as well.

Goal 3. Why weren't people informed about the Coastal GOOS workshop held recently in Maryland?

Goal 4. Web page design needs to be revised and updated regularly. Links to all major research programs need to be added. The suggestion was made to possibly expand the RARGOM meetings into 2 days, so that a day could be devoted to presenting science.

Goal 5. Need to become more proactive re. distribution of scientific information to other groups.

Goal 6. (task #7). REDIMS didn't end up serving as the data archival source for the RMRP as it was intended.

There was discussion about providing incentives for researchers to participate in data set sharing and building a regional information system (concurred that financial support is necessary). There is a need to garner multi-agency

involvement in this effort. The NAML/LabNet initiative was mentioned as a project that will link data of labs on a national basis (with NOPP support). It was agreed that there is a need to survey the RARGOM member 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 person at each institution to link with.

Goal 6. (task #8). The goal of increasing Canadian involvement was discussed. D. Aiken pointed out that membership benefits need to be conveyed at two levels in most Canadian organizations. At the individual researcher level, it does seem not difficult to interest people at a variety of Canadian institutions. But at the administrative/decision-making level, it is a more challenging task. Opportunities for research collaboration were cited as the most compelling reason for joining RARGOM. Also, in the US, a collaborative approach is now increasingly used between Federal Agencies to tackle complex problems. RARGOM is seen as one mechanism for such collaboration. John Allen mentioned that Acadia University is in a good position to join RARGOM as a full member, as it has received v. significant support for research on the Bay of Fundy. Dalhousie University and Environment Canada were also mentioned as top priority institutions to continue to approach. The URI, Bates, Bowdoin, Colby, and UNE are other potential members that need to be revisited.

Research Topics of High Regional Interest and Need

Discussion did not take place, as the strategic planning topic took longer to cover than anticipated.

Workshop Proposal Status and Review

Several workshop topics were reviewed, including:

- Monitoring.

J. Pesch outlined three levels activity of an integrated monitoring program: (1) inventory what's being done in order to generate a picture of what's happening (i.e., remote sensing, modeling), (2) focus on a particular resource (this is the level at which EPA typically operates - resource management for decision makers), (3) site intensive study (where lots of research questions are framed and answered). Pesch distributed a proposal for a monitoring workshop and solicited reactions to that proposal. The group consensus was that this was an important and timely workshop topic. While EPA has offered some initial funding of \$10,000. for this effort, broad based support should be sought and probably would be available. K. Friedland indicated that NMFS would probably provide some support; M. Dionne likewise thought that the NERRS would also contribute.

It was suggested that a white paper be prepared, describing the current long-term research programs in the GoM (10-20-30-40 yr. scope). For example, there may be NMFS studies designed for other purposes, but this work might also provide applicable data to a monitoring effort (i.e., bottom trawl surveys). It was suggested that RARGOM issue a call for papers. Such an approach might generate some information about programs that we might not be aware of.

The issue of defining the GoM was raised, and for the purposes of the monitoring scheme, it was decided to include open water, estuaries and coastal ocean, watersheds, as well as atmospheric inputs.

One of the recommendations from the recent GulfWatch review was that it is important to first pose the research questions and then for monitoring programs to develop the data collection based on those topics. One topic mentioned in this regard was "sprawl in the coastal zone and the resulting impacts".

It was suggested to incorporate a review of the Mass. Bays/MWRA as an additional day of the meeting. Analyze the MWRA program using NRC guidelines. (i.e., why it worked, what it would take to build a successful program along these lines). This analytical process might help to identify generic framework elements that would contribute to a successful regional program design.

The topic of whether this workshop should be primarily science-based or incorporate managers as well was raised. It was agreed to include all sorts of people involved in monitoring. The suggestion was made to invite a speaker from Plymouth, England, to add an international component.

Steering Committee members for the monitoring workshop currently include: J. Pesch (EPA), Wayne Barchard (Environment Canada), Peter Hennigar (Environment Canada), Linda Mercer (MDMR), Judy Pederson (MIT), Don Scavia (NOAA/COP), Jeff Turner (UMass Dartmouth), Steve Jones (UNH), Michele Dionne (Wells NERR), Bruce Tripp (WHOI). It was recommended that someone from the NOAA Essential Fish Habitat area should also participate.

- Lower Trophic Level Species Management workshop.

L. Mercer reported that this program is languishing and that there have not been further plans made at this time.

- Large Vertebrate Populations in the Gulf of Maine.

S. Kraus, New England Aquarium, indicated that the workshop, being retrospective in nature, is of a lower priority in his mind than the monitoring workshop.

Guest Speakers: Research Presentations

Research presentations were made by UNH faculty members Dr. Frank Bub (modeling) and by Dr. Rob Robertson (socio-economic research of potential aquaculture end users).

Publications/Communications

G. Braasch reported that the summer newsletter is underway and will focus on the EcoHab program. The fall issue is still in the planning stages, possible ideas include an aquaculture theme and also policy formation at the regional and federal resource management offices.

It was agreed that the Web page is in need of updating and that this is a key information and promotion activity to attend to. I. Babb said that NURC has put considerable resources into this area recently and offered to provide help with this task.

Membership

Paul Howard, Executive Director, New England Fisheries Management Council, has asked to join RARGOM as an associate member. This request was approved.

Other potential members were identified: Acadia, Bates, Bowdoin, Colby, Dalhousie, Environment Canada, Harvard, UNE, URI.

Announcements

DFO: John Loch has left his position as Regional Director, Michel Sinclair is serving as the temporary Regional Director until the spring 2000.

MDMR: there are some fisheries positions open. An announcement of these jobs will be distributed soon via the RARGOM email list.

UMass Boston: a coastal planner is sought for next year.

1999 Budget and Fiscal Report

G. Braasch said that all full member institutions have paid their dues; there are two remaining associate member institutions that haven't paid yet, but this income is anticipated within the month. Expenses are on track as budgeted.

Other Business

The next meeting will be held on October 15th. K. Freidland and F. Juanes offered to host the meeting at UMass Amherst.

An agenda item for that meeting will be a discussion of federal advocacy (Judy Pederson will discuss this topic with Scott Kraus in the interim).

The meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Eugenia Frey Braasch
June 14, 1999

Action Items

Strategic Plan

- Genie: contact Lew, Bruce, Page regarding their input for Strategic Plan.
- Judy: contact Wendell Brown regarding OOS committee and recent Coastal GOOS workshop in MD.
- All representatives: review/comment on the revised RARGOM Strategic Plan and related document on Standing Committees.
- All representatives: send Genie email regarding your recommendations.
- Genie: incorporate the comments and distribute: (1) a revised Articles of Association Appendix A, (2) a final Strategic Plan draft, (3) a revised Standing Committees document for approval by the Policy Board.
- Genie: revise the RARGOM organizational survey, distribute to the representatives for review, to possibly include in the next newsletter.
- 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.
- Chris Naimie and Bruce Tripp: prepare a discussion paper about Data & Information for the October 15th meeting.
- Genie: prepare a plan for revising the web page (Ivar Babb offered to provide help with this).
- Judy Pederson and Scott Kraus: discuss federal funding sources.
- Genie: assemble a list of potential member institutions and her contact information, then distribute to the representatives for review and update of contact possibilities.

Monitoring Workshop

- Finalize steering committee membership and create email list for correspondence during program planning.
- Finalize workshop prospectus.
- Genie: Prepare budget.
- Genie, Jerry, Judy: Prepare fund raising strategy and packages.
- Organize 1st steering committee planning meeting.
- Analyze the MWRA program using NRC guidelines. (i.e., why it worked, what it would take to build a successful program along these lines). This analytical process might help to identify generic framework elements that would contribute to a successful regional program design.