

Regional Association for Research on the Gulf of Maine

Headquarters: Dartmouth College
Thayer School of Engineering
Hanover, NH 03755 USA
telephone: (603)646-3480
facsimile : (603)646-3856
email: braasch@dartmouth.edu

Minutes of Meeting

Shoals Marine Laboratory, Isles of Shoals, Maine June 20, 1997

Present:

Lew Incze	Bigelow Laboratory for Ocean Sciences
Chris Naimie	Dartmouth College
Chuck Greene	Cornell University
Jim Morin	Cornell University/Director, Shoals Marine Laboratory
Eric Adams	Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Ivar Babb	National Undersea Research Program/University of Connecticut
Scott Kraus	New England Aquarium
Donald Scavia	NOAA's Coastal Ocean Program
Eugenia Braasch	RARGOM headquarters at Dartmouth College
David Townsend	Regional Marine Research Program
Bob Wall	Regional Marine Research Program/Maine Sea Grant
Gerald Pesch	United States Environmental Protection Agency
John Boreman	United States National Marine Fisheries Service
Larry Mayer	University of Maine
Ted Loder	University of New Hampshire
Michele Dionne	Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve
Bruce Tripp	Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution

The Meeting was called to order by Lew Incze at 11:00 a.m., with Genie Braasch keeping the minutes.

Old Business

1996 Gulf of Maine Scientific Symposium

Publication: G. Braasch reported that plenary papers have been received from all but one author, (that person is expected to complete his contribution by the end of June), the Executive Summary is in process as well. Braasch has subcontracted a portion of the report preparation to a graphic designer, who is currently preparing the page layouts (a notebook with the current text was displayed at the meeting for members of the board to look at). The publication is approximately six months behind schedule, the completion date for the report has been revised to September, 1997. A second summary, synthesizing the conference results for a broader, non-scientific audience of regional decision makers, was endorsed by the policy board at the Dec. 1996 meeting as proposed by the steering committee, but no action has been initiated on this report as yet.

Actions to take:

1. G. Wallace will draft the Executive Summary and will circulate to the Steering Committee for review on or before July 18, 1997.
2. G. Braasch will distribute text (via email) of the four working group reports to all Steering Committee members for their reference prior to 7/18/97.
3. The steering committee will review the Executive Summary via e mail July 18-22, comments are to be sent to G. Wallace. Changes are to be incorporated into the final document by July 25, 1997.
4. G. Braasch will coordinate the publication production of the symposium final report over the following few weeks, with a goal to distribute the report by the anniversary of the '96 conference.

1997 Management/Science Workshop

The workshop was held June 2-3, 1997 at the Migis Lodge on Sebago Lake, Maine. Attendance (43 people) was lower than planned, due to late schedule changes on the part of some invitees that couldn't be filled. There was a good Canadian/U.S. and scientist/manager balance; the workshop was characterized as a productive and informative meeting by participants. Three co-chairs, (representing the different endeavors and perspectives that were explored in the context of the workshop, i.e., science, management and policy) lead the planning and were each responsible for a particular phase of the workshop: Dr. Donald Gordon, Habitat Ecology Div.,

Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Canada, Halifax (science), organized the plenary and served as a speaker during that session; Dr. Michael Connor, Massachusetts Water Resources Authority, Boston (management), gave the charge to the working groups and was one of five working group session facilitators ; and Dr. Steven Ballard, Director, Margaret Chase Smith Public Policy Center, University of Maine, Orono (policy), lead the final synthesis discussion on Tuesday morning. The co-chairs, working group facilitators, and steering committee members drafted the workshop report summary prior to their departure. S. Ballard served as editor of the document. G. Braasch distributed the draft report to all present. There was considerable discussion about some of the workshop recommendations to the research community, the public service component and the translation of research results into more readily understandable reports for the non-scientist; after a round table of reactions, it was recognized that this type of cultural change is difficult to achieve. For example, even if the funding agency explicitly calls for translation of research results, faculty are resistant to the activity because "doing science" takes a higher priority (this is part culture but also part reality, as funding and tenure decisions depend more heavily on scientific accomplishments than on public service). Also, lack of resources to make compensation possible for academics who provide services such as scientific advisory board consulting remains a broad problem.

The Board would like to disseminate the workshop report widely. G. Braasch reported that the current plan is to use the regular RARGOM and CME distribution channels (see actions). RARGOM has registered for an exhibit booth at Coastal Zone '97, an annual conference targeted to managers, being held in Boston, July 21-24, 1997. RARGOM will use this opportunity to communicate the outcomes of the workshop as well as acquaint people with RARGOM's mission and activities. G. Braasch also raised the notion of incorporating the workshop report as an appendix to the 1996 GoM Scientific Symposium report, noting that the delayed production of that volume has opened this possibility. For a marginal additional cost, this incorporates the outcomes of both programs, which were conceived as a series, into one report volume, and a single publication is more likely to be archived by libraries (the short length of the '97 workshop report might jeopardize inclusion in such collections). The '97 workshop report was written to stand alone as a short, readable working document, and the sense of the Board was to distribute it in this fashion, as well as incorporate it into the other report.

Actions to take:

1. Send draft report comments to G. Braasch by June 27, 1997. Finalize the workshop report and send to D. Gordon, DFO Canada, for printing by July 1, 1997.
2. G. Braasch will complete the fund raising for the workshop, through follow-up on pledges.
3. G. Braasch will coordinate and conduct a distribution plan for the report. Initially, RARGOM reps need to distribute to relevant researchers and decision makers within their institutions. L. Incze will discuss further distribution to regional political appointees w. E. Richert.
4. G. Braasch will send out thank you letters to the co-charis, steering committee members, and donors.
5. D. Townsend and L. Incze will encourage S. Ballard to use the workshop report as the basis for a short article to be submitted to a scholarly policy journal.
6. G. Braasch will add the workshop report as an Appendix section to the 1996 GoM Scientific Symposium report.
7. RARGOM Board members will report back to the next meeting about recommended workshop initiatives that can be pursued in the context of their home institutions.

Association-Board-Council Annual Meeting

L. Incze reported that a meeting was held on June 1st at the Migis Lodge to review the activities of these organizations per our Joint Statement agreement. L. Incze, B. Tripp, and G. Braasch (representing the Association), B. Wall and D. Townsend (representing the RMRBoard), and E. Richert, D. Keeley, and L. Taylor (representing the GoM Council on the Marine Environment) all attended. In addition to information exchange, discussion focused on ways to keep the June workshop initiatives on everyone's agenda. E. Richert said that he is proposing a R&D initiative to Maine Gov. King, promoting the notion that research is an essential activity (and an important employment sector to develop) for a healthy state economy. The CME secretariat office will be at the Mass. Coastal Zone Management Office of the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, Boston, for the year beginning July 1, 1997. Susan Snow-Cotter is the contact person. The liaison office remains at Maine State Planning, L. Taylor has accepted a position at Maine DMR, a new person will be appointed shortly.

Actions to take:

1. L. Incze will work with E. Richert on a joint campaign to promote public, academic, and agency support for a closer, funded, relationship between science and management.

Council on the Marine Environment June meeting report

G. Braasch attended the June 10-11 working group meeting in Campobello Island, New Brunswick, to report about the outcomes of the June 2-3 workshop. (CME supported the workshop with a \$5,000. planning grant). Braasch commented that the dominant business of the working group meeting was to review the funded projects for FY '96-'97 and FY '97-'98. Discussion of these activities led to exploration of whether these projects have made a difference in terms of environmental impact. Criteria for funding the '97-'98 work plan elements are: link with the CME Action Plan, build on '96-'97 outputs, or unusual opportunities (outside of the Action Plan, but important nonetheless. Braasch also reported that L. Hildebrand (Environment Canada) brought a proposal for an Ecosystem Charter to the meeting (see attached), believes that this was good independent confirmation of one of the June workshop recommendations. She distributed copies of the charter proposal, asking that Board members review it in order to decide whether RARGOM could have a role in drafting this document. Braasch also reported that the CME data and information committee will meet later this summer and that review activities are underway for EDIMS (a MIT graduate student, John Evans, is conducting that work).

RARGOM requested \$5,000. for FY '97-'98, with in the intention to pursue activities that are in the mutual domain of the two organizations: assessment of the regional data & information management systems (REDIMS), development of a series of articles discussing the management/science interface (following on the June workshop), and maintaining regular contact with the CME liaison office (see action item from ABC meeting above). The remaining EPA dollars are due to be expensed in the next funding cycle, the Council has initiated fund raising activity through hiring a staff person to coordinate the development of a Business Advisory Committee (BAC). Communication has improved with the designation of a permanent liaison office & staff person (Laura Taylor), and with consistent effort to participate in the other organization's meetings.

B. Tripp attended the June 12-13 Council Meeting, also held at Campobello Island. He confirmed that Council discussion conveyed a split in opinion between pursuing external fiscal resources to promote Council objectives (via the BAC), or whether these objectives should be met with internal resources found within the various jurisdictions.

Actions to take:

1. Develop recommendations for a coordinated regional data and information system for the GoM (white paper report due to 1997 Nov. RARGOM Board meeting and Dec. CME Council meeting).
2. Collaborate in the development of the RARGOM www server for scientific and public users to access GoM scientific information.
3. Strengthen the science/management/policy content of the GoM NEWS and GoM Times. As an added component, a column or feature article will be produced in each issue which highlights the management implications of the scientific research and discusses science-management issues.
4. Develop recommendations to assist State and Provincial managers in implementing the Action Plan.

New Business

L. Incze framed the afternoon discussion by posing the question, How should RARGOM move ahead in its efforts to promote funded research in the Gulf of Maine? What do we need? A proposal, pending from previous RARGOM Board discussions, includes the creation of permanent RARGOM Committees to take the lead on specific issues. These committees are intended to be small working groups that will maintain the momentum of RARGOM effort between regular meetings. Committee membership will be drawn from member institutions, not just the institutional representatives. A committee would function as an "virtual, executive committee", drawing on the talent and expertise of a large group of people who only need to be involved in committee work on an "as needed" basis.

Buoys subcommittee

Members:

Charge:

L. Incze asked whether we currently have adequate platforms. He cited the recent National Weather Service decision to slate the Boston and Portland operational weather buoys for non-repair (among 30 similarly designated). Incze said that he has written a personal letter to Al Beeton (NOAA) about the buoy situation. D. Scavia noted that a NRC committee is being formed to study the buoy situation from the weather service perspective. The Board recommended that Lew should also draft a letter on behalf of RARGOM, addressing the question of how the perspective of the oceanographic community will be represented in the NRC review, whether these buoys could be maintained less expensively for research (rather than weather operational buoys), the importance of protecting the long term data stream, and the placement/distribution of buoys for research purposes.

The Board endorsed a related workshop activity to take place this fall. The concept is to produce a position paper on buoys and time series needs for the GoM. This would be an open meeting, people involved in discussions thus far include: Ivar Babb, Ken Brink, Wendell Brown, Brad Butman, Jim Irish, Lew Incze, Rich Signell, Dave Townsend. A suggestion was made to broaden the scope of the meeting to discuss time series data, some of which might be buoys, and this seems to tie in well with the next phase of GLOBEC Georges Bank activity. Another idea is to expand the data collection beyond pure physics to include biology. The sense of the meeting was that there are timing issues, long term (time series, broader data sets) vs. immediate needs for providing input to the NRC report.

Actions to take:

1. Lew Incze will draft a letter and circulate for comment, then send a letter to Al Beeton.
2. The Board supports the concept of a workshop this fall. I. Babb will circulate a proposal as it currently stands (coordinated by W. Brown).

Ships subcommittee

Members: I. Babb (UConn/NURC) and B. Tripp (WHOI) agreed to lead this effort. The committee ought to have at least one member from each RARGOM institution. This will place greater organizational and time demands on the committee chair, but will make information gathering easier and more thorough. The committee will decide how it wants to tap into expertise at some of the institutions with large ship and "other platform" operations, that is, by enlisting additional members to the committee or simply having the committee member(s) from those institutions providing the necessary linkages.

Charge: Report on the availability and capability of current and planned vessels 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 at least 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.

I. Babb reported that the University of Connecticut has approved \$1.5 M for a new 76'6" research vessel. He distributed the design specifications, noting that it will be built by Washburn & Doughty, East Boothbay, ME. Sea Trials are planned for April/May 1998, and the goal is for a daily rate of \$2,000.

B. Tripp reported that the WHOI SWATH vessel design has been supported (90' vessel, all season capability, rapid response), but construction is not yet funded. Researchers are invited to provide information about what the boats needs to be able to do at sea.

S. Kraus noted that a recent study by Chip Ryther describes the fisheries buy back program, vessels retrofitted to serve research needs.

L. Incze noted that the R/V Kingsbury (which transported the members of the meeting to the Isles of Shoals) is available for charter from early October into April. The daily rate is currently \$600./day plus travel.

There is a need to inform the community about what's happening on this front.

Actions to take:

1. Update the community about recent ship information via GoM NEWS and the RARGOM www site.
2. B. Tripp will put his vessel information database on line.

Data and Information subcommittee

Members: C. Naimie (Dartmouth College),

Charge: The committee will examine the current state of internet availability of data for GoM researchers. 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?

C. Naimie said that some RMRP supported researchers have not yet shared their data through entering it into the REDIMS system. It was noted that in some cases this is a v. large task, and that people had no sense of the commitment they were making when they agreed to comply with the RMRP request to make data available. A meeting in August was suggested, to obtain feedback from a small involved committee (rather than the community at large), to address the EDMIS'REDIMS interface in a coordinating 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). C. Greene noted that Cornell has done a lot of work in this area and would share some of the tools that have been developed. M. Dionne (NERRS), G. Pesch (EPA), and I. Babb (NURP) also said that their institutions have put resources into this area, and could serve as consultants.

Actions to take:

1. Conduct a small meeting in August (in coordination w. CME DIMC committee) to assess the status of data and information management system needs regionally.
2. REDIMS - PIs data entry into the system, at minimum, generate a list of RMR investigators and their projects.
3. Deliver recommendations in the form of a white paper at RARGOM and CME fall meetings (see CME Action #1 above).

Publications/Communications subcommittee

Members: R. Schlitz (NOAA/NMFS/NEFSC) has agreed to serve as a scientific editor for the Gulf of Maine NEWS.

Charge: The editor and committee will identify timely and diverse topics for informal scientific contributions to the newsletter, will solicit articles and authors accordingly; will provide a quick internal review of submissions as an aid to the authors; and will perform these functions on a schedule in coordination with G. Braasch.

Actions to take:

1. B. Tripp will meet with R. Schlitz to assemble a list of committee member suggestions (approx. 4 members total).
2. G. Braasch will work with this committee to plan the scientific articles in the upcoming issues of the GoM NEWS.
3. The committee will outline topics for the management-science column (see CME Action # 3 above).

Guest Speaker: Dr. Donald Scavia, NOAA's Coastal Ocean Program

D. Scavia began his comments with two observations.

1. There are two projects in the GoM that serve as distinct, but equally valid, models for approaching regional research: 1). ECOHAB addresses an issue (harmful algal blooms), regions compete for funding to investigate this topic, 2). GLOBEC Georges Bank Project selected a region to investigate, invited lots of proposals for research and the program was created from the best of these.
2. A reorganization plan has recently been delivered to Jim Baker, which creates an office of Coastal Ocean Science (\$70-\$75M budget) that oversees monitoring, assessment, and translation activities. Scavia will serve a Director and Chief Scientist for NOS, his goal is to open up the generally agency-oriented programs to the academic community. (Note that Sea Grant and NURP are currently not parts of this new COS Office). In Scavia's view, opportunities from this restructuring include increased involvement/input from the academic community, and enough budget dollars to make things happen and to attract more money.

The discussion turned to regional research approaches, which in Scavia's view, are being driven by management entities trying to approach problems more effectively. Features of these initiatives include: larger spatial scales, longer time scales (not 2 yr. projects, but LTER/LMER-like work), multiple stressors, and involving the human dimension (human impacts on the environment as well as how humans respond to the environment - the economic analysis dimension). Scavia also highlighted the need for focus on implementation of the initiatives, saying that 1). most projects have a prediction endpoint in mind, requiring that investigators think about the full science spectrum, "what are you going to predict and why"; this is especially important in bringing scientists and managers/policy makers together - "what kinds of predictors will help managers do their job?" and 2). partnerships are very important - between disciplines (i.e., natural and physical sciences and social sciences), between academic and federal researchers, between funding agencies, between regions (these programs "sell" well in Congress and the current Administration - need to bring these aspects together for a successful regional program). Scavia endorsed the notion of regional research, he felt esp. that the RMRP process had produced excellent regional research plans (discussion ensued on the pros and cons of the RMRP approach, which participants agreed was different from either of the two programs mentioned above in that it was regionally driven - the problems might not be known at the national level, yet still are important to pursue, within a national framework, also the RMRP approach allowed opportunities for individual investigator proposals (there is flexibility in this system). It was noted that Sea Grant might fulfill this regional niche, but currently doesn't, due to state issues focus, and that the lack of unified support for RMRP as it was structured compromised the successful development of that program. There were concerns expressed about Sea Grant being the funding channel. Cost of ship time was raised as an area needing resolution when addressing future regional research endeavors. It was suggested that CORE and NRC might provide an independent view on the issue of regional programs.

Actions to take:

1. D. Scavia would like to hear the academic community's views on RMRP. R. wall suggested a NRC review of RMRP/GoM Program, this idea was supported, but it was noted that it will take approximately two years to achieve this.

The next meeting of the RARGOM Board will be held in November (date to be decided) at UMass Dartmouth.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Eugenia Frey Braasch
June 24, 1997