

**RARGOM Board Meeting  
University of New Hampshire  
6 April, 2007**

**In attendance:** J. Annala, I. Babb, T. Callaghan, S. Hale, J. Pennock, J. Runge, L. Rutter, G. Wallace

**Regional news (Details can be found on the member institution news section of the RARGOM website- highlights provided here)**

Todd Callaghan provided an update of activities at the Mass. Office of Coastal Zone Management. Two funding opportunities (Gulf of Maine Action Grants and Priority Coastal Wetland Restoration Projects) were announced. Other activities discussed were: the CZM/USGS *seafloor mapping* project, a *habitat classification* study for northern Massachusetts, a *water quality and eelgrass restoration* project, a Rapid Assessment Method for *salt marsh restoration*, an *invasive species assessment*, *wetlands restoration* project, and an *evaluation of 37 storm water BMP's* that were installed as part of the Coastal Pollutant Remediation Program (only 27% were found to be functional)

Todd also presented the proposed allocation of the State of Massachusetts environmental assessments in relation to the licensing of the LNG ports (Neptune and Northeast Gateway) off the n. Massachusetts coast and the siting of wind turbines (Cape Wind). A total of \$22 million was allocated from the LNG fund and \$5 million from the Cape Wind project (see appendix). It was suggested that those with interests in areas that were funded (for example the New England Aquarium for biological impact studies) contact the appropriate recipient of funds.

Gordon Wallace described the new *Center for Environmental Sensing Networks* at the University of Massachusetts Boston and the development of a *high resolution forecasting circulation and hydrographic model for Boston Harbor and Massachusetts Bay*, under the direction of Meng Zhou.

**Website report**

L. Rutter and J. Runge provided an update of the newly designed RARGOM website. Since the introduction of the new design in September, the website has received 17,078 visits, averaging about 3,400 per month in 2007, and 58,654 hits overall. Regional event listings, including RARGOM activities, are provided on the home page, as well as a link to a description of NERACOOS, for which four RARGOM representatives currently serve on its advisory committee. Visitors can click on five categories: Theme Sessions, Regional Research, Directories, Opportunities and Archives. Some of the pages such as Research and Policy issues under Regional Research still need content development, particularly in relation to regional modeling and ecosystem based management, for which there is the possibility of collaboration with COMPASS (see below). The website capacity for board representatives and individual members to revise contact information

was demonstrated. The Gulf of Maine map will be revised to include all present association members.

Discussion addressed further development and refinement. It was pointed out that several sites already list student and job opportunities; and RARGOM should link to these sites rather than try to replicate content. An email could be sent out to board members notifying them of new employment opportunities. RARGOM will likely not be the primary source of funding opportunity announcements, but could nevertheless focus on regional opportunities as they arise, again with email alerts to board representatives. It was noted that some institution contact listings accessed by clicking on the map are inappropriate or outdated. The possibility of providing seminar schedules, for those departments and institutions that can provide them at the beginning of each quarter or semester, was discussed. These could be listed on a separate page, although RARGOM must be careful not to exceed its resources to maintain and renew this list once it is set up. The possibility of posting a database showing research activities of individual members was put on hold. The focus needs to be on service to the community without duplicating preexisting efforts.

### **Finances update**

The final budget summary for 2006 is appended to the minutes. The balance for the year is \$17, 511.26, representing carryover from 2005 plus total income (dues and theme session registration) of \$19,200 less expenditures of \$20,749.58, including \$2,874.75 for website migration and redesign. The projected budget balance for 2007 is \$16, 211.26 based on projected income of \$28, 500 from dues and the Gulfwatch review and expenditures of \$29,800.

J. Runge arranged for the RARGOM account to remain at UNH after his move to the University of Maine/Gulf of Maine Research Institute. UNH has agreed to administer the account without indirect charges and Andy Rosenberg (Ocean Process Analysis Laboratory at UNH), who supervises Lynn Rutter, has graciously offered to serve as account manager. This will allow RARGOM to pay the program coordinator salary through UNH and to use the UNH events website to organize theme session registration and member dues payment.

In addition, J. Pennock will serve as fund manager to a RARGOM workshop account awarded through NH Sea Grant by the NOAA Center for Sponsored Coastal Ocean Research for the Cliff House modeling needs workshop and follow up sessions on regional modeling needs and ecosystem based management. The remaining funds in this account (approx. \$18,000) will be used to support the upcoming theme sessions and partially support J. DuPrie to develop the RARGOM website.

### **Planning for theme sessions for 2007/2008**

*Along-shelf and across-shelf linkages between nearshore and coastal ocean ecosystems.* Conveners are L. Incze, G. Wallace, J. Runge and K. Leyden. The proposed venue is Boston in September/October. A draft prospectus (attached) has been prepared. The meeting would start at 09:30 with 3-4 keynote talks allowing ample time for questions.

The afternoon would break for discussion sessions to address session topics. A reception and poster session would be held from 17:00-18:30.

#### *Regional Modeling Center follow-up*

This session is planned as a sequel to the Rargom workshop on modeling needs in relation to the observing system held in July, 2005. J. Runge reported that he is representing RARGOM on a steering committee to plan an Ecosystem Based Management-Modeling and Observing system workshop (EBM-MOS) in the fall, 2007 or early winter, 2008. The workshop would be sponsored by WHOI's Ocean Life Institute and Coastal Ocean Institute in collaboration with RARGOM and perhaps COMPASS and other regional organizations. The intent of the workshop is to help transition science into action (management and societal needs), one of the themes that the Cliff House workshop addressed in its report. Specific goals of the meeting are to: 1) provide a forum for communication between groups interested in EBM-MOS in the northeast; 2) engage key political and funding agency decision makers and 3) link end users and relevant scientists/ engineers to show potential to develop end-to-end prototypes.

#### *Climate impacts and research priorities*

Andy Pershing has been approached and is willing to organize a session on this subject. Timing would be in early 2008.

#### *Gulf of Maine Science Symposium*

The need for a regional science symposium has been expressed in previous board meetings, reflecting a community interest in a regional science meeting to follow on the Science Symposium and Workshop convened by RARGOM at St. Andrews in September, 1996 (RARGOM Report 97-1). The symposium would highlight advances in understanding the Gulf of Maine and its ecosystem over the past decade and could address regional research priorities in the context of ecosystem based management and climate change. The symposium could be four days in length, similar to the last event. The time commitment and preparation required was recognized, and it was agreed that funding would be needed to engage someone to organize the symposium and its proceedings. A working committee consisting of John Annala, Jon Pennock, Gordon Wallace and J. Runge was set up to investigate funding sources and sponsors to report back for the next meeting. Possible timing is spring or early summer, 2009.

#### **Gulfwatch Review**

Gordon Wallace provided an update on the review of the scientific results of the GULFWATCH program (1993-2006), which RARGOM is conducting for the Gulf of Maine Council. The world class list of expert reviewers consists of John Farrington (WHOI), Walt Galloway (EPA), Jocelyne Hellou (Fisheries and Oceans Canada), Tom O'Connor, William Robinson (Univ. Massachusetts Boston), Jim Shine (Harvard School of Public Health), Bruce Tripp (WHOI), with Gordon Wallace as chair. Linda Mercer is serving as the GOM Council Project Manager. The review is far-reaching, examining the findings, methodology, cost effectiveness, goals and future program design and direction. The schedule calls for preliminary overview of the reviewer comments for the Council meeting on June 14 and preparation of a final report by early August. Because of the

great volume of information, the report contents have been divided up among reviewers by review topic.

**Update on regional initiatives for ecosystem based management and coastal ocean observing. RARGOM's role in the evolving regional landscape.**

The discussion began with a presentation by J. Runge on a number of regional organizations and initiatives associated with the development of an observing system and ecosystem based management for the Gulf of Maine and southern New England Bight. These include:

- The Northeast Regional Association of Coastal Observing Systems (NERACOOS). The purpose of NERACOOS is to develop a vision for an integrated observing system for the Northeast region and to coordinate the existing and new elements of the current coastal ocean observing programs. NERACOOS is described in more detail on the RARGOM website.
- The Regional Ocean Science Council (ROSC), a Sea Grant initiative to identify and address research needs in support of the development of integrated regional ecosystem-level management in the Gulf of Maine. J. Pennock, the New Hampshire SeaGrant director, talked about the ROSC to the board. One of its goals is to foster coordination and cooperation of ongoing state, regional and national programs to develop and continually update a research plan focused on addressing and delivering the scientific information necessary to implement successful regional ecosystem-level management strategies. The Council intends serve as a stimulus for implementation of the plan by identifying and developing funding streams to support regional research that will foster informed management (text adapted from the ROSC website).
- The Northeast Regional Ocean Council. In August 2005, the New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers (NEG/CEP) established The Northeast Regional Ocean Council (NROC) to facilitate the development of more coordinated and collaborative regional goals and priorities, and improve responses to regional issues. NROC is comprised of governor-appointed representatives and volunteer participants. The primary intent of NROC is to link together and cultivate regional ocean management and science institutions and programs for the Gulf of Maine, Long Island Sound, and southeastern New England. NROC's most important "audiences" are the six New England governors, the federal agencies that comprise the Subcommittee on the Integrated Management of Ocean Resources (SIMOR), U.S. Congress, and the Oceans Working Committee. At the outset, NROC will focus on four core ocean management areas: ocean energy resource planning and management, ocean and coastal ecosystem health, maritime security, and coastal hazard response and resiliency (text adapted from the NROC 2007 workplan).
- The Communication Partnership for Science in the Sea (COMPASS). COMPASS is a collaborative effort to advance marine conservation science and communicate

scientific knowledge to policymakers, the public, and the media. Launched in 1999, COMPASS' mission is to accelerate the pace of solutions to important marine environmental problems. The goals of COMPASS are to: catalyze and support the development of marine conservation science to address policy needs, ensure that scientific findings and insights are accessible and relevant, and facilitate strategic communication and outreach opportunities for scientists to inform decision-making. COMPASS is funded by a number of private charitable foundations, including the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, Resources Legacy Fund Foundation, and Meyer Memorial Trust. In New England, Verna DeLauer is the regional COMPASS representative. She worked with the Massachusetts Ocean Partnership and other groups, including RARGOM convene a workshop to develop a policy relevant science vision for Ecosystem Based Management for the Gulf of Maine, held at the New England Center on Mar 27-28, 2007.

- The Ocean Life Institute and Coastal Ocean Institute at WHOI have interests in the development of the regional observing system. A workshop on Modeling & Observing System (MOS) and Ecosystem Based Management (EBM) for the Georges Bank/Gulf of Maine region is planned for late fall, 2007 or early winter, 2008.

J. Runge asked for advice and perspectives of the board members about the role of RARGOM in this evolving regional landscape. He pointed out the unique nature of RARGOM as a truly regional association, not rooted in any particular institution or agency, whose mission is the promotion of research on and stewardship of the Gulf of Maine. RARGOM has had an important historical role in the development of a regional observing system (GoMOOS, for example, has its roots in a RARGOM workshop held in 1998) and is widely recognized for its contributions by the community. RARGOM members are on the advisory board of NERACOOS and participate in most other regional workshops and boards, and RARGOM has cosponsored a number of the recent regional meetings. It therefore seems well placed to continue to play a significant role in the development of a unified regional face on issues of the observing system and ecosystem based management. The discussion that followed focused on the strengths of the association (theme sessions and connections to the regional science community) and doing these sessions well. Expansion of RARGOM's role into efforts to coordinate research and observing activities requires more resources ("horsepower") than are presently available to the association. Where possible, enhancements to the science content of the RARGOM website would be useful, as well as continued evaluation and attention to the services it provides to the community. There is a possible collaboration with COMPASS to enhance website content on regional ecosystem based management activities and with NAML to develop regional advocacy for science in the political process.

#### **Announcement of search for the next RARGOM Chair**

J. Runge announced that he will be stepping down after his third term expires. The timing for a new chair is good, given the potential to develop the RARGOM website, theme sessions and role in facilitating development of regional observing and ecosystem based

management activities. His intention is to transition responsibilities to the new chair by the end of 2008. He proposed that, in addition to the announcement at this meeting, a general call be put out to the RARGOM members, with discussion of candidates scheduled for the next board meeting. A vote will be taken at either the June meeting or the fall meeting, depending on the number of candidates and discussion at the June meeting.

**Next meeting date and venue**

The tradition has been started that every summer meeting features one of the member institutions. This summer we will visit the SMAST Campus of the University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth, which is celebrating its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. The meeting is tentatively scheduled for the last week in June, subject to availability of the board.