

**RARGOM Board Meeting  
School for Marine Science and Technology (SMAST)  
University of Massachusetts Dartmouth  
Room 108**

**Wednesday, June 27<sup>th</sup>**

**Minutes**

**In Attendance**

J. Annala (GMRI), B. Beardsley (WHOI), T. Callaghan (Mass. CZM), K. Friedland (NOAA NMFS), A. Gangopadhyay (SMAST, UMD), S. Hale (EPA), L. Incze (USM), S. Jones (UNH), L. Mercer (Maine DMR), J. Runge (U Maine), L. Rutter, R. Stephenson (DFO, St. Andrews, by telephone), J. Trowbridge (WHOI, by invitation) and G. Wallace (UMass Boston)

**Regional News**

The meeting started at 10:10 with recognition by the chair of the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the School of Marine Science and Technology (SMAST) at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth. Each summer RARGOM holds a board meeting at a site other than the centrally located UNH and UM Boston in order to visit and learn about the activities and people at its member institutions. A. Gangopadhyay, acting Dean of SMAST, provided an overview of SMAST history, structure and research activities. This was followed by a special presentation by Cindy Pilskaln about her research on nutrient fluxes, resuspension and deposition and red tides in the Gulf of Maine.

Other regional news followed. Reports of regional news can be found on the RARGOM website ([www.rargom.org](http://www.rargom.org)) under news from member institutions. Highlights include the report from DFO of the development of an ecosystem approach to management that integrates science with socioeconomic and human dimensions and of major funding to rebuild infrastructure at the DFO laboratory in St. Andrews. At NOAA, ecosystem-based management language is absent in the latest version of the Magnusen-Stevens Act, and the new NOAA research vessel R/V Bigelow has arrived in the region. It has available berths for research scientists during groundfish surveys. R. Beardsley pointed out the need for accurate digital bathymetry for the Gulf of Maine for coastal circulation modeling, and a discussion of that followed about the work of Rich Signell at USGS and the possibilities for coordination of data compilation by the Gulf of Maine Ocean Data Partnership. U Mass Boston is looking for a Research Associate with a Chemistry background. EPA is conducting ecosystem reviews to identify and validate services and functions provided by marine ecosystems. Mass CZM is involved in seafloor mapping of the state's coastal shelf with the support of LNG litigation funding.

**Gulfwatch Review**

Gordon Wallace provided an update of the science review of the Gulfwatch Program that RARGOM is coordinating 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 final timeline calls for synthesis of reviewer's comments in September and presentation of results at a meeting of the peer review committee with the Gulfwatch principal investigators and GOMC environmental quality committee in mid October.

### **Finances update**

J. Runge provided presented the RARGOM budget update (see annex). A year-end balance of \$17, 711 is projected on income of \$30, 000 and expenditures of \$29, 800.

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

#### *Linkages from nearshore to offshore*

This session is proposed for fall, 2007. The board reviewed the prospectus (attached). The purpose of the session is to address the need for scientific understanding of connections between the nearshore habitats and the offshore Gulf of Maine ecosystem in the context of ecosystem based management. Three or four keynote talks are planned to stimulate thinking on this topic. The outcome of the session will be a working document that identifies (1) the basic and policy-relevant modeling and research needs and (2) the related infrastructure that should be built into regional observing system and ecosystem based management initiatives in order to achieve balanced stewardship of ecosystem services in the Gulf of Maine nearshore and offshore waters.

A number of suggestions and comments were made. There was concern that the theme topics may be too broad for a one day session. It was suggested that there should be attention on who should come and then establish the "hook" that will inspire them to attend. One unifying regional theme is that, because of advection, disturbances don't just affect one little community "patch" in the Gulf; rather, effects can be far-reaching. A series of questions could be drawn up that could be answered as part of the outcome of the session. It is important to get a policy driven research agenda and social sciences and policy needs be included. There should be a poster session, with posters and talk presentations available as part of the session report on the website.

L. Incze agreed to revise the prospectus to address these concerns.

#### *Role of fixed stations in the observing system*

J. Runge proposed this session for winter, 2008. There are several historical and ongoing time series resulting from regular collection of samples taken by boat at fixed coastal

stations in the Gulf of Maine. Many of these time series provide information on zooplankton and ichthyoplankton that are poorly sampled, if at all, in the present observing systems that concentrate on remote sensing and deployment of buoys. There is a need to review these time series and evaluate their significance in the context of the development of the regional ocean observing system.

#### *Climate impacts and research priorities*

A. Pershing, University of Maine and GMRI is willing to take the lead on this session that is planned for 2008. It was suggested that he be in contact with Bob Wellor, who leads the Cooperative Institute for Climate and Ocean Research (CICOR) at WHOI.

#### *Gulf of Maine Science Symposium*

J. Runge handed out a draft prospectus to initiate a region wide science symposium, following on the lines of the last RARGOM-organized event that was held in St. Andrew's in 1996. The tentative structure is a four-day meeting in Fall, 2009, with plenary and contributed talks with sessions of specific themes related to ecosystem based management approaches and climate change.

An initial organizing committee comprising John Annala (chair), Stephen Hale, Rob Stephenson and Jeffrey Runge was formed. They will seek out organizing committee members from other regional organizations (e.g. COMPASS, Sea Grant, NOAA). The organizing committee will meet over the summer with the charge of setting a date and venue for the meeting, determining a budget, identifying funding sponsors, and establishment of a scientific steering committee. They will report back to the board at the next board meeting in the fall.

#### *Ecosystem based management opinion page*

J. Runge reported on a collaboration with COMPASS (Verna DeLauer) to disseminate via the RARGOM website perspectives on ecosystem approaches to management in the Gulf of Maine. The concept is to solicit commentaries of 1000-2000 words in length with the option of 1-2 figures and references that address issues related to the establishment of regional EBM approaches. Keynote presenters at the COMPASS/RARGOM workshop held in New Hampshire in March, 2007 would be approached first, followed by perspectives that may be invited or contributed. The content would be minimally edited by a RARGOM/COMPASS committee for content and format. It may be desirable later to compile the perspectives into an edited publication which could be useful in the context of the Science Symposium planned in 2009. J. Runge, J. Annala and L. Rutter will meet with V. DeLauer over the summer to advance this initiative with publication of the first perspectives for the beginning of 2008.

### **Report on developments toward establishment of the Northeast Regional Association for Coastal Observing Systems (NERACOOS)**

J. Runge, one of the RARGOM representatives on the NERACOOS Advisory Committee, started with a brief summary of the history of NERACOOS. The initial proposal to establish NERACOOS was awarded from the NOAA Coastal Services Center in 2005 for a duration of 3 years. Evan Richter (USM) is lead PI, and co-PIs are P. Bogden (GoMOOS), J. Campbell (UNH), D. Mountain (NMFS), N. Pettigrew (U Maine) and R. Weller (WHOI). The proposal called for establishment of the governance structure by the end of 2007 and launching of the Regional Association in early 2008. A summary of the proceedings of NERACOOS through January, 2007 is provided on the RARGOM website. The Advisory Committee met in April and is scheduled to meet again on August 1<sup>st</sup>. There have been several developments, most notably the proposal for an alternate governance structure put forward by an “Academic Consortium” comprising the major state land and sea grant universities (UCONN, URI, U Maine) plus WHOI, the Bedford Institute of Oceanography, and U Mass Dartmouth. The alternate governance structures will be a subject of discussion and the next Advisory Committee meeting on Aug. 1. Decisions on the final structure of NERACOOS will be made by an executive committee consisting of the original PIs on the proposal (J. Trowbridge replacing R. Weller) as well as Art Allen (USCG), Paul Currier (NH Dept. Env. Services), Ted Diers (NH Dept. Env. Services), Jim Edson (UCONN), Avijit Gangopadhyay (U Mass D), Al Hanson (URI), Ron Rozsa (CT DEP) and Peter Smith (BIO).

In the meantime, a proposal has been submitted on behalf of NERACOOS to take advantage of IOOS funding opportunities arising in the wake of the loss of regional earmarks. John Trowbridge (WHOI), lead PI on the proposal submitted to NOAA in April to sustain funding of NERACOOS ocean observing activities, graciously accepted an invitation to present the proposal and announce the outcome of the NOAA review. The PI institutions on the proposal were: BIO, UMaine, GoMOOS, UNH, WHOI (lead), NOAA/NMFS, UMassD, URI and UConn . The proposal goals were to :

- Preserve the accomplishments of the past: continued operation of selected elements of existing observing system, chosen for best service to end users and continued regional development
- Use new technologies to enhance present capabilities: establishment of end-to-end capabilities for 3 priority areas identified by NERACOOS: inundation, water quality, harmful algal blooms
- Plan for the future: observing system design by means of observing system simulation experiments (OSSEs) and systems engineering

The proposal requested \$ 9 Mil over three years. The awarded is for 1.2 million in year 1, with years 2 and 3 levels dependent on Congress. John outlined the breakdown of funding and tasks of the various institutions.

The next meeting of the Advisory Committee is on August 1, 2007. Another proposal to continue development of the Regional Association will be submitted at the end of August.

### **Selection of next RARGOM chair**

J. Runge announced at the previous board meeting that he would be stepping down as chair at the end of his third term. John Annala, chief scientific officer at the Gulf of Maine Research Institute, stepped forward after that meeting and he was nominated for chair by J. Runge by email ahead of the present board meeting. J. Runge gave a strong recommendation for John at the meeting. John would be a strong and forward looking leader for RARGOM during this period of significant regional change with respect to ocean observing, ecosystem approaches to management, and development at the land-ocean interface. John has considerable experience on science and management committees and in conference organization, and can incorporate RARGOM responsibilities into the stream of his activities as science director at GMRI. After a short discussion, the board voted unanimously in favor of his nomination. The transition will take place on January 1, 2008.

### **Varia**

The need to revise the association's articles of association was briefly discussed. It was decided that a subcommittee consisting of J. Runge, J. Annala, G. Wallace and K. Friedland would review the present articles of association and make recommendations for changes at the next board meeting.

### **Next meeting date and venue**

The next RARGOM board meeting will be held at UNH in November. A tentative date was set as November 16. Lynn Rutter will send this date around to all board members to determine availability and either confirm or determine an alternate date that can maximize attendance.