

GLOS Steering Committee, Feb 18 2004 – Conference Call Minutes:

Item 1: Role Call

Sam Batzli
Kathy (Cunningham) Ballard
Keith Bedford
Mark Bobal
Mark Burrows
Stuart Eddy
Roger Gauthier
Paul Horvatin
Brian Huberty
Tom Johnson
Christine Manninen
Tom Rayburn
Jeff Reutter
Paul Scholz
Dave Schwab
Richard Wagenmaker
Marcia Weakes
Jennifer Werner

Everyone is encouraged to remember the listserv – glos-sc@great-lakes.net – as a channel for content discussions. Conference calls can be for confirmation/clarification of direction and, hopefully, limited to approximately one hour in length.

Item 2: Business Plan Outline

Secretariat Staff needs to re-send the Business Plan Outline document distributed just prior to the Jan. 15, 2004 Steering Committee conference call, and to update the GLOS website at <http://www.glc.org/glos> to include this and other documents, a steering committee roster, etc. There was some confusion about the document being referred to in this section, and several people focused on the Governance Straw Man document from Item 4 below.

Further discussion is probably needed, but it is being postponed for now.

Item 3: Assignments for Information/Systems Inventory

(reference = SustainabilityFeb04.doc)

Goal of this item: To elicit help from SC members in creating a record of data/information systems that exist already.

Dick Wagenmaker will compile the information received from SC members.

The format for this cataloging effort will be finalized over the next week. Elements may be drawn from the IOOS Data Management and Communications Plan (IOOS-DMAC) (http://dmac.ocean.us/dacsc/imp_plan.jsp) as well as from websites that already exist for other regions. A template will be assembled as quickly as possible, and it is duly noted that it is important to align with other Regional Associations as part of streamlining this organization and its integration into broader IOOS effort. The DMAC mentioned above will be an important guideline.

Categories of users and their questions/needs (the second box on schematic in the reference document) will feed objectives and longer term plans. A template will be coming for that as well. Identifying data sources and associating them with user communities (as with GAP analysis) is part of this needs evaluation process.

GLOS needs to be more than the sum of its parts – data sources exist already, but value needs to be added. How to do that? What values to add? Again, interaction with user communities will spark ideas.

To what level is the data inventory taking place at this stage? Federal only? State also? Data sets and periods of record relevant to an IOOS-related observing system are of primary interest at this point. Other data sets or types of records with limited need or usability may not be worth including, but we cannot know that. Where an inventory exists, we should try to incorporate it. In all cases, metadata is the topic at this point – what's out there, without actually gathering the data itself or connections to it.

Products and product ideas can be added at any point, but are also expected to evolve as the observing system evolves.

Guidelines for the inventory and related procedures – can ideas and content can be sent to listserve? (Details are pending.)

An inventory format will come out by Friday, 2/27. A straw man of observing system features and data is believed to exist. Data sources, needs and other ideas can be added over following two weeks. Those will be compiled by next call.

Item 4: Governance Options

(From the beginning of the call:

Tom J. – It is unclear what we are doing about governance. Going with existing group? Or holding an open competition at the appropriate time? (No RFP is called for from the GL community called – are we assuming that the GLC will run this?

Tom R – MOUs in Year 2 need more emphasis

Roger G – This document is starting point for a possible structure. The full approach is not yet clear, but this puts options out to which people can react. From that, we will end up with a direction.)

Is the non-profit corporation with a Board of Directors and a dedicated staff the right idea? The Steering Committee needs to look for objections and explore possible alternatives. After Year 2, the structure of GLOS will morph somehow. Part of the Business Plan is to determine the nature of that change and begin setting it up.

What are the plusses and minuses to the straw man version?

An independent director and staff with funding for these positions ensures that organization continues. No funding or some other support avenue (e.g., within an existing organization or shared among several organizations) will make it much harder to ensure continuous commitment to the GLOS effort.

The MI Lighthouse Project was mentioned as an example: It was set up as a non-profit with several federal agencies involved (Coast Guard and others). This was problematic for the federal organizations with respect to funding pursuit. Also, such a project/organization needs staff to get things done. Are there specific lessons from this or, perhaps, the Upper Lakes Environmental Research Network?

Other structural questions: Would GLOS own equipment? Would the organization play an advocacy role?

What are probable sources of funds? NOAA programs?

Paul S. – 18 federal agencies are involved at this point, mostly elements of NOAA so far. OMR, NWS are beginning to contribute. Heads of agencies are supportive, so there is a good “alignment of the stars” at this point. (Does this imply NOAA as a source of long-term funding?)

Jeff R. – What about making this a formal part of NOAA? Perhaps an arm of GLERL? Would it be advantageous to be part of NOAA?

Paul S. – Not a wise move, because it implies that NOAA is the only source of funding. Budgets are weak at least through ‘05, ‘06 and ‘07. NOP agencies have ended up out of the loop as a result of such a move. It also handicaps links to private sector.

Dave S. – Considered the option of linking to NOAA, but there are too many complexities, at least at the beginning.

Roger G. – Said his early emphasis on “de-federalizing” maybe not have been well phrased, but it is still important. The funding base needs to extend over broader realm. And an advocacy arm of some kind will be needed, at least for bringing equipment into the region.

Dave S. – What about the idea of a permanent paid position to lead GLOS? Please pursue that via the listserv.

Keith B. – Said he was concerned about the potential politicization of the process/organization. Should the technical component be split off from political component?

Several people offered that the Advisory Board probably fulfills the roles of direction setting and political/technical separation.

Keith B. – Also expressed a concern that in some ways, this has the appearance of one more layer of bureaucracy.

Dave S. – Stressed that it is also possible to make a good case for the benefits.

Brian H. – One applicable model that brought benefits might be the TVA. Can we examine that for possible ideas? (Also, the GLC as state-federal compact organization that has some benefits in its record.)

Item 5: Sustainability

It was said and repeated that federal funds will be important, no matter what. However, Congress and participating agencies will also be interested in other options/sources.

Tom J. – Push option 1. There will be no point in pursuing GLOS without solid federal funding

Keith B. – Is regional involvement from the Great Lakes Protection Fund possible? Or achievable? Could they serve as a channel to the federal government in one direction and to the states in the other?

Responses:

Tom R. – Excellent idea. The GLPF is driven by state needs and governors’ mandates.

Jeff R. – This kind of activity of interest to them. By the same token, they don’t usually fund for the long term. An extended commitment is probably unlikely.

Tom R. – Year 3/startup funds would be a good starting point.

Jeff R. – That’s probably possible.

Dave S. – Sustainability is important for the Business Plan. Otherwise, it isn’t one.

Jeff will start this dialog with the GLPF in an upcoming phone call at 11:30. (Does the GLOS Secretariat need to follow up on this?) He also noted that there were earmarks in Congress for SECOOS as well as for each individual state in that region. Maybe for education and outreach? We need to get after those funds for GLOS as well.

Tom R. – This is not a complete list. There may be lots of other ideas. Perhaps a trust fund? Keep adding to list!

Roger G. – The final picture will probably include parts of several of these options. Innovative elements of funding streams or combinations are needed.

Keith B. – We may need the other part of the “business model” being used, the part that sets us apart from the other regions. That might help drive funds into the system.

Dave S. – Maybe not something that sets us apart from the other coasts?

Tom R. – Maybe what we need to stress is the things that set us apart from others within the GL region. (An emphasis on why this is a good investment.)

Item 6: Meeting Schedules

Recent meetings/GLOS discussions:

January, 2004:

- Great Lakes Captains Association, Traverse City, MI
- Marine Community Days, Cleveland, OH

February, 2004:

- Science Vessel Coordination Workshop, Traverse City, MI
- Science Advisory Board/GLWQA, Ann Arbor, MI

Upcoming meetings/GLOS discussions:

Feb 20 – Secretariat staff to meet with IJC Secretaries from the CGLRM, GLWQA and IAQB

Feb _ - Conference call with Great Lakes Air Deposition Project Management Team

Mar 22-24 – IOOS Education Summit w/ MI Sea Grant (Charleston, VA)

Mar 29-30 – Regional Observing Workshop (Washington, DC)

May 3-4 – GLC Semi-Annual meeting (Cleveland, OH)

May 5-6 – Great Lakes Sustainability Conference (Cleveland, OH)

May 4-6 – EMAP Conference, USEPA and states (Newport, RI)

[GLOS Thematic Workshops – objectives/logistics to be developed]

Thematic workshops: Need to be determined over next 2-3 weeks.

Overall meeting? Possible Nov 1-5? Intended to gather data/information managers, creators, users and other interested parties. \$20K has already been requested from the IJC. Other agencies will need to contribute as well.

An IOOS Regional Coordination conference call is coming up – an FAQ list is needed/wanted for that call. Also, congressional activity related to federal sustainability of IOOS – SB1400, Ocean Observation and Coastal Systems Act. Background information is coming re this discussion. Cost sharing may make a big difference to sustainability for all regional associations.

Next call:

March 17 at 10:30 a.m.