

GLOS Steering Committee Conference Call Minutes
Thursday, June 17, 2004
10:30 a.m.

Roll Call

Bob Allen
Cathy Ballard
Samuel Batzli
Y Keith Bedford
Y Mark Bobal
Stephen Brandt
Y Mark Burrows
Y Joseph DePinto
Marc Gaden
Norm Grannemann
Paul Horvatin [Glenn Warren]
Y Brian Huberty
Y Thomas Johnson
Y Tom Landon
Y Lorelle Meadows
Scott Painter
Jeffrey Reutter
Y Dave Schwab
Harvey Shear
Y Stephen Stewart
Y Richard Wagenmaker
Marcia Weaks
Jennifer Werner
Y Roger Gauthier
Y Christine Manninen
Y Stuart Eddy
Chris Guenther
Dave Knight
Thomas Rayburn
Paul Scholz

General Updates

Dave Schwab spoke twice at the Great Lakes Research Conference, at a 2:00 pm session and at the 5:00 pm session he was scheduled for. Approx. 40 people each time.

Roger Gauthier presented at the Coastal Engineering Research Board in Traverse City June 8. 85 or 90 people took part. There was a good discussion, incl. details of the process. There was good interest in the legislative authorization material.

Dave Schwab – IOOS released a new draft of its implementation plan on the Ocean.US website. Also, an Executive Order was signed creating a Great Lakes Interagency Task Force chaired by GLNPO; GLOS should be topic as this evolves.

Roger Gauthier – A number of responses to the Ocean Commission policy report have been developed over the past month. A long document was prepared by GLC staff; the IJC provided lengthy input emphasizing integration; there was a response from the Council of Great Lakes Governors; a letter from the GLC is on that agency's website (send link to SC).

Secretariat staff – check whether responses from other agencies will also be public domain.

National Federation of Regional Associations: No real action yet. First formal meeting set for August 30 – September 2. August 30 and September 1 will be RA-oriented; September 2 will be mostly Ocean.US and federal agencies.

Ocean.US: Secretariat staff is considering a monthly newsletter to members of the Regional Interest Group. This is an outreach step intended to foster inclusion among agencies and groups at all levels; the Secretariat is aware of some groups that are forming committees about GLOS but not contacting the GLOS Steering Committee for information.

2nd year funding for GLOS development has been approved (ca. \$100K) – this will allow continued planning, agency coordination fundamental Regional Agency development through September, 2005.

Member Updates

Mark Burrows – Held a briefing for IJC Commissioners last week. Noted that GLOS fits with the Earth Observing System and needs to stay aware of that effort. Also, there is an EOS Meeting in Windsor this coming in November – GLOS representatives should attend.

Incorporated a couple of new slides into the standard GLOS presentation. The topic of Canada as fuller member came up. Herb Gray wondered whether Canada had addressed GLOS at a high enough level to get funding. A press release on May 19th from Dave Anderson supported the executive order from Bush on 5/18 to implement GLOS. It looks like Ontario supports Canadian involvement with GLOS.

Roger Gauthier – Several agencies need to be brought into the process before completion of the Business Plan – EPA, Corps of Engineers, Dept. of Fisheries and Oceans, Environment Canada. Would it be helpful to have a 2- to 3-page handout on GLOS and the Business Plan for distribution?

Mark Burrows – Will send a copy of his updated presentation. If Roger has a targeted list of priorities/actions for the IJC, that should be prepared so Mark can start working/advising on it.

Roger Gauthier – Governance comes to mind first. The IJC needs to be a significant player in that topic and GLOS as it evolves.

Mark Burrows – Another meeting is coming in July; bring GLOS to the IJC then?
Also, can we set up a parking area on the GLOS website for Powerpoint presentations?

(Side note: Make Communications a standard agenda topic.)

Mark Burrows – The Council of Great Lakes Research Managers agreed to a thematic workshop on open water Oct 30 – Nov 3. Mark needs to talk with the GLC about workshop organization, use of funds, etc.

Roger Gauthier – That meeting will come after the Business Plan is complete; Mark, Tom Johnson, Harvey Shear, etc. need to see to it that the Business Plan incorporates an appropriate list of needs from the CLGRM's perspective.

A Regional Data Exchange conference for the Great Lakes is being put together for Oct. 26-28 in Detroit. Support funding was received from GLNPO and an agenda being developed. GLOS will need to be a significant presence there.

Legislative Update - IOOS Funding Bill (S-1400)

(S1400 rewrite)

Roger Gauthier – The House now has the bill for IOOS to rewrite: Ocean & Coastal Observing Systems Act. Their version is simplified compared to the Senate, but spells out roles somewhat better. Budget amounts are being changed to match the Ocean Commission report.

Significant changes:

Instead of seeking authorizations through 5 or 6 fed agencies, this version seeks to send all money through NOAA with a section of the law allowing movement of funds among federal agencies, as long as it takes place in accordance with business plans.

Only a few days remain in the current legislative session – it's questionable whether the legislation can be brought forward and acted upon.

Separate bill, HR958 = NOAA authorization for hydrographic services. This went through the House but not the Senate. It includes support for a co-op network, though there is no explicit mention of Great Lakes in that section. Great Lakes are mentioned in section 106 regarding support for Great Lakes water level measurements.

Roger Gauthier – Has concerns about the split of RA resources across the country.

Dave Schwab – Focus first on getting a regional association going. That needs to be the Steering Committee's main priority.

Mark Burrows – Is the funding written as “year + 1”, “year + 2”, etc., so the dollars remain available?

Roger Gauthier – The legislation is written so that “funds shall remain available until expended”.

Tom Landon – Could Marcia Weaks comment about HR958? \

Roger Gauthier – Co-ops needs to be seen as “a component of a subsystem of GLOS”, so GLOS needs to stay aware and supportive. The GLOS business plan is not in place yet, but earmarks probably are the funding method we will have to work with. Some exist and have momentum (see Roger for a list), but if rationales exist for others, bring them up.

Subsystems and Costs

Latest costs document is the May 24 draft.

Dave Schwab – Looking at the budget, he sees many things that are likely part of NOAA or other agencies, but also many that are likely to come to the region for distribution. The Steering Committee needs to look at earmarks for individual agencies vs. earmarks for the Regional Associations within IOOS.

Also, how far do we try and take this with earmarks? Other regions have subsystems being funded through earmarks. Do we need to separate out and highlight items that need to be funded/earmarked through the RA?

Roger Gauthier – Costs in the document submitted to Ocean.US were laid out for the region as a whole, and the original threshold for the total costs was 1/10 of the planned IOOS budget. Parts certainly will be funded through the IOOS backbone, so the total request within the region may end up being for far less than listed in this document. Education, communication and data distribution will probably be almost entirely regional. Large parts of the other cost categories will probably be

funded as parts of the IOOS/federal program backbone. Have we done enough, looked broadly enough?

Mark Burrows – Does the extent to which separate federal systems create the backbone imply a future governance problem? The RA can't have control over whole system at that point.

Roger Gauthier – The many ways in which the Great Lakes is an atypical region need to be considered and/or highlighted throughout this process. It is multi-state, freshwater, bi-national; it has a good set of coordinating associations and bodies;...keep the list growing.

Dave Schwab – The region doesn't have a dominant university leading coastal observations research. Judging by work taking place in other regions, that is a hindrance to earmark funding.

Can the draft funding document stand as a framework for developing a business plan? Can we go forward with what we have?

3 groups seem to emerge and give overarching organization to the set of systems described:

Physical systems;

Modeling systems;

Governance and Outreach systems:

Roger Gauthier – This also could be looked at as:

Open lake and inshore data;

Modeling;

Integration;

Governance

Mark Burrows - A word of warning: Information integration is a heavy lift, and expensive (it almost always runs 3 times as long and ends up 3 times as expensive as planned). Did we underestimate? For instance, did we include the cost of a programming effort to get all the computer systems to talk to each other?

Dave Schwab – Part of that will depend on how NVOADS is set up. Our estimates are low if the integration work is largely left to the regions.

Christine Manninen – The amounts and when they peak for each category seem uneven. For instance, ecological forecasting seems like it should peak later? The peaks seem scattered, maybe they need to be reexamined.

Roger Gauthier – Research needs to happen first in some cases (gap analysis, sensitivity studies), then come the implementations. In other cases, individual lakes get attention for a couple of years, then that need drops off and dollars can be used elsewhere.

There is no RA at this point, so the Steering Committee needs to be getting budget requests into the queue. Are we asking for enough? Are we asking for it in the right places?

Dave Schwab – Likes the numbers. What does exist looks to him like federal numbers only, no regional breakdown. The NFRA meeting is not coming until 8/30-9/2. Maybe we will get RA numbers then.

It looks like we need to identify specific, short-term items for earmark priorities that don't go in as part of the Business Plan. Those get developed in concert with the Business Plan and submitted from the Steering Committee.

RG – The GLC put forward GLOS-oriented congressional priorities, e.g. Lake Erie monitoring through Jeff Reutter and Tom Landon; others can be done as identified.
The way the budgeting language from Ocean.US is set up, if funds are authorized but not budgeted, we move everything to “year +1”

Mark Burrows – Would like to see measures of success for the Regional Association as a Business Plan component under governance. It should be spelled out, so that it is obvious to higher levels of management/funding that this has been taken into consideration.

Dave Schwab – Performance metrics will be built into Regional Association governance as part of the certification and renewal process. Component builders thus have compliance to consider as part of their planning.

Steve Stewart – There is a regional SeaGrant network meeting coming this fall. GLOS is to be a topic. Christine Manninen is already invited to attend.

Roger Gauthier – We should get as many Steering Committee members there as possible, Dave Schwab or Roger at a minimum. Outreach success will come largely through the SeaGrant network.

Thematic (Focus Group) Meetings

Open Water – set for Oct. 30 – Nov. 3 (see above)

Remote Sensing – to take place in Madison, WI. Sam Batzli setting up; Stuart will contact asap to help finalize.

Hydraulics and Hydrology – will meet in Detroit, mid-September

Modeling – probably no formal meeting. Idea exchange will take place via conf calls and e-mail.

Keith Bedford is coordinating.

Also, the RDX conference in Detroit. GLOS can be the subject of at least one breakout plus a plenary session.

Steering Committee In-Person Meeting - late August?

Based on input from today’s call, the meeting would fit best the week of August 23-27, preferably mid-week. Therefore, the tentative schedule is

Tuesday afternoon and Wednesday, August 24 and 25, in Ann Arbor.

Next Call

July 15, 2004 @ 10:30 a.m. EDT/9:30 a.m. CDT