

CONFERENCE CALL NOTES
GLOS Steering Committee Conference Call – August 11, 2005 – 10 a.m. EDT

I. Call to Order, Roll Call

Helen Brohl
Mark Burrows
Norm Grannemann
Brian Huberty
Tom Landon
Lorelle Meadows
Dave Schwab
Steve Stewart
Dick Wagenmaker

Roger Gauthier
Christine Manninen
Jon MacDonagh-Dumler
Dave Knight
Stuart Eddy

II. Secretariat Reports

a) Status of Year 3-5 Funding, NOAA-CSC Grant Cycle:

No news to date. Nothing has been received by any RA so far, although awards were to have been issued by July 1. Delays are apparently due to the NOAA grant office – word is that there are “4 staff processing several hundred applications”. Thus, this is presumably a NOAA internal bureaucratic issue, not a political one. GLOS operations are currently being covered by other funding sources at the secretariat level while the region awaits announcement of an award.

b) Legislative Update:

US Senate unanimously passed S361, enabling legislation for IOOS. It was referred to two committees in the House, Resources and Science. Companion bill HR1584 (Weldon) is in the Committee on Science at this point. Companion bill HR1489 (Gilchrest) is in the Committee on Resources and is more likely to move soon. Once it leaves Committee, 50% will probably be rewritten, so a lot of work remains. However, passage of legislation in the Senate increases pressure for a bill in final form.

Roger and Jon attended meetings July 27-28 in Washington. They met with House congressional staff from Kildee’s office and Kind’s office. Kildee is an early co-sponsor of HR1584. This was a good discussion which set expectations for upcoming activities. Staff thought both Representatives would support the legislation.

The legislation described above will likely be available for markup in late October or November.

Roger and Jon missed a meeting with the House Resources Committee, Subcommittee on Fisheries and Oceans. However, Helen Brohl was there.

They were present at a thank-you luncheon put together by SMI for staff of Senator Snow’s office, acknowledging their efforts on S361.

They also met with representatives of the Office of Management and Budget and the White House to express concerns about cost-sharing and the funding stream. NFRA will have to work more with Ocean.US to define

the federal role and components of the backbone. This is a crucial discussion, but it is not yet completely underway.

Also met with the new lead at NOAA headquarters (Marcia Weaks' boss –Mike Szabados– and Dave Zilkowski) and senior management staff to talk about regional efforts and also about Great Lakes regional issues.

They came away with a clear message from NOAA that regional associations will be competing for funds. Approaches will need to continue over the next 2 years – keep maritime interests involved by engaging Helen Brohl. Mike Zabados is a critical player and both GLOS and the maritime groups need to work together in engaging him.

c) Incorporation Status:

There is still uncertainty about how federal participation will be built into the GLOS Board of Directors and their policy design processes. The NFRA national conference call on August 4 included a briefing from Stephanie Showalter of the SeaGrant Law Center. Discussion followed, and by the time the dialogue between Stephanie and the call participants was over, the consensus was fairly positive that federal participation would prove acceptable in the end. The original Department of Commerce statements about no federal role in RA governing bodies need to be revisited. Stephanie is going to summarize her findings and distribute them to the RAs. We will incorporate them into our GLOS efforts as appropriate.

The first channel for acquiring participation from individual federal agencies will be the Great Lakes Interagency Task Force, so that where possible, a single process can be applied to multiple agencies. If necessary, the RA will work with individual agencies to fulfill requirements for their participation. We hope to avoid that due to the increase in labor and complexity.

Initial bylaws are necessary for incorporation, so no steps will be taken to register the GLOS RA with the state until these issues have been clarified with a legal advisor. Secretariat staff will meet with a private lawyer the week of August 22 and may arrange to consult with a State of Michigan attorney as well.

In addition to legal advice and careful drafting of bylaws, congressional interaction may be appropriate. If necessary, it may be possible to have a requirement for federal participation written into the enabling legislation.

d) Draft Bylaws:

Federal Involvement in RAs –

The only feedback received so far to the draft Bylaws sent out for review on July 14 came from SeaGrant. Concerns revolved around federal involvement and the process of setting up the inaugural board. The federal role in a non-federal agency's board of directors is the largest issue noted. The response from the secretariat expressed appreciation for this concern and emphasized that it is getting significant attention as all RAs have the same concern. All of the RAs are convinced they need federal participation, so this issue will get attention both regionally and nationally.

Discussion from the Incorporation Status topic continued, and it was noted that GLOS plans call for six federal agencies to be engaged. It is unclear at this point whether the Department of Commerce statement being dealt with was a formal legal opinion or an administrative interpretation based on assumptions about the term "corporation" and profits to any person sitting on a board of directors. The original question may have been asked inappropriately, but the issue is important, so the topic needs to be revisited. As mentioned above, it was suggested on the national call that a workaround may include writing a requirement for federal participation into any authorization bills.

Brian Huberty noted that examples already exist: The Farm Service Agency and the Commodity Credit Corporation (USDA owned and run) are corporate entities with heavy federal participation.

If necessary, the bylaws can include requirements that federal participants recuse themselves from money-allocating decisions.

Dave Schwab stressed that the roles and responsibilities of the regional Boards of Directors imply a need for federal participation. The organization's non-profit status should also remove some restrictions. And federal agency representatives need not be involved in fiduciary actions. All good points, but all we can do is assemble them, then throw everything at the feds for action.

Helen Brohl has not had time yet to review the bylaws, but expressed interest and was urged to do so.

The SeaGant Law Center information about tort responsibilities will require minor changes to the bylaws as well. Editing will continue.

e) Observing System Components:

Lake St. Clair Light Upgrade –

Two letters were sent to Paul Moersdorf (NOAA NDBC) regarding the region's vision of the buoy network in the Great Lakes. Copies will be sent to the whole Steering Committee today and posted to the GLOS web page. The first letter offers insights regarding where moorings and upgrades of c-man stations are needed, anticipating the addition of ADCP onto existing platforms over the course of 2005 and 2006. An analysis by Dick Wagenmaker is part of that schedule, and the support effort looked for nearly doubling the c-man stations in the region.

The second letter was a more detailed discussion of the Lake St Clair light. Meteorological observations were to be pulled at end of the fiscal year, but arguments were made that they are needed for spill response modeling and other actions (meteorologic, hydrologic, biologic sensors). As of now, NOAA plans to maintain that for another year plus add current sensors.

Dave Schwab emphasized that prioritizing NOAA enhancement activities is exactly what the RA should be doing – helping with regional focus for federal agency efforts.

Water Level Gaging (Tom Landon) –

New station at Menominee, WI coming this fall;

New meteorologic station at Keewaunee, separate from the existing water level station (which is located about a half mile away)

New CORS (Continuous Operational Reference Station for permanent GPS) installed at the Cleveland water level station – important for location information at the station, also for users looking for differential GPS in the area (mariners, navigation, etc); also of long-term use for crustal movement detection. These stations can also detect potential precipitation, which helps with weather forecasting.

Starting in August, NOAA will be coordinating with the Canadian Geodetic Survey to do a complete survey of water level stations in region, both Canada and US. Setting this up was a two year effort and it's good to see it moving.

NOS received a request from the NOAA Great Lakes Environmental Research Lab, requesting current meters and additional study on the Detroit River.

Question/potential action item from Helen: Could the GLOS website include an inventory of updates/actions on lakes, and perhaps be used to track these? Christine's response – the new GLOS website

(www.glos.us) will do so. In addition, several voices urged that agencies start marketing activities through GLOS, which would build public awareness of both the agency efforts and GLOS itself.

Monitoring enhancements at the Blue Water Bridge were delayed until spring, while updates at the Cuyahoga River will probably still go through this fall. The delay at the bridge impacts modeling efforts for the St Clair River, Lake St. Clair and the Detroit River, but at the same time the Lake Carriers Association and the Western Great Lakes Pilots Association pushed for work around Cleveland and will value the benefits. Discussion of who was pushing for what made clear that this was another valuable role for GLOS – as a forum for discussions about lakewide priorities.

Upgrade efforts are continuing for data collection platforms (DCPs) at all water level stations. Some delays have been encountered, but things are moving ahead. Upgrades allow transmission via the GOES satellite every 6 minutes, which saves money over phone transmissions and may also improve reliability.

The Great Lakes Coastal Forecasting System was incorporated into NOS – Erie and Michigan are hopefully coming this fall. The system allows forecasting 60 hours ahead for levels, temperatures and currents. It will improve nearshore marine forecasts. This is a marketable success story – Mark could be asked to write up a story, which could be spread over GLIN to the public (which, it was noted, includes congress).

Do we have an official GLOS press contact? Or a single source for news releases? Not yet – this would be good to establish in conjunction with the new website.

A pilot program to study high-frequency radar in the Great Lakes will start in 2006 if funding can be found. At a minimum, the work could study limitations of this sensor. Note that Lorelle Meadows can provide background already and will know more about what to do next. Definitely engage her as a next step. Lorelle's contact information was sent to Tom Landon to ensure that he has it.

GLOS staff can follow up on a statement from Mike Zabados about expanding outreach efforts over the coming years. NOAA is not better off alone – urge them to get GLOS involved as an outreach channel. Follow-up comments from Dave Schwab and Steve Stewart noted that an education function could/should go beyond communicating accomplishments to the public. The concept should include getting information from the public back into the agencies involved to better establish plans and directions, and maybe also to and from different parts of same agency.

Web page development (Christine Manninen) –

Templates for a new GLOS-specific website are on the existing project website at

<http://mds.glc.org/glos/images/weblayout1-lowres.jpg>

<http://mds.glc.org/glos/images/weblayout2-lowres.jpg>

The GLOS.US domain has been purchased and will serve as the GLOS home page, which should improve profile of GLOS and render it an entity of its own in most people's eyes. Industry Day registration will be included at glos.us (further discussion below).

f) Regional DMAC initiative:

A briefing is coming to Dave Schwab via GLERL's role in the general DMAC structure. This meeting will take place in Boulder, CO. Information to follow.

g) Industry Day (Jon M-D)

Proposed for Gleacher Center, Chicago, IL, end of October.

Main topic areas:

Observation System Initiatives – legislation, NFRA roles for industry, etc.

Systems Opportunities – industry/government partnerships, remote sensing, information integration and delivery, etc.

End User Needs Panel – industry and navigation users, municipal water management, recreation, border security, etc.

Planned as a one-day event with opportunities for discussion, good engagement of participants;
Andy Clark is working with the GLC to plan the event (he has been part of similar efforts in other regions)

Include the Council of Great Lakes Industries as co-promoter?

Support will be coming from Ocean.US as part of its national series of industry days

h) Future Events:

August 19, Lake Michigan crossing:

ASPRS boat trip, Eastern & Western Regions – includes a GLOS presentation

September 19, Washington:

NFRA meeting – Jeff Reuter was given this role early in GLOS, but has not been engaged in the last year.

Another person is needed. Helen? Someone else from the call?

September 20-23, Washington:

Ocean2005 Conference

September 21-22, Wallaceburg, ON:

Lake St Clair Conference – includes a breakout on observing and modeling

September 28-29, Ann Arbor, MI:

GLC Annual Meeting - includes Commission support of IOOS legislation

October 6-7, Rochester, NY:

GLRC Executive Committee session – includes recommendation for initiation of IOOS/GEOS in the Great Lakes region

October 24-26, Baltimore, MD:

OOSTech 2005 – DMAC technology conference

November 1-3, Washington, D.C.:

DMAC Steering Committee

November 1-3, Chicago:

EPA workshop on GEOSS/IOOS landscape characterization

November 2-3, Green Bay, WI:

State Of Lake Michigan/Beaches Conference – includes remote sensing, nearshore monitoring

Proposed for November 4, Green Bay, WI:

GLOS Remote Sensing Workshop

III. Other Business

Next Conference Calls:

Planned for the second Thursday of each month @ 10 a.m. EDT (Sept. 8, Oct. 13, Nov. 10).

Next call confirmed for September 8, 2005 – 10:00 a.m. EDT.