

GOMINFOEX meeting
September 29, 1999
Wells Reserve, Wells, Maine

Attendance

Paul Boudreau (DFO), Paul Schroeder (Umaine), Carla Moran (NAMA), Denise McCullough (Fundy Marine Resource Center), Warren Gash (GOMC), Jeannie Meggison (GOMMEA), Dave Lincoln (MA Fishermen's Partnership), Ted Diers (NH Coastal Prog), Tim Stojanovic (NOAA), Dan Farrow (NOAA), David Keeley (Maine SPO), Dan Walters (Maine GIS), Tim Smith (Wells Reserve), Patrice Farrey (NEAq), Seth Barker (ME DMR), Chris Wentzell-Brehme (Island Institute), Andy Boyd (Island Institute), Maggie Mooney-Seus (NEAq), Joe Pelczarski (MA CZM), Aviva Rahmani (via conference call)

Agenda

An update on Gulf of Maine Council meeting and general project update roundtable were added.

GOMINFOEX Web update

Neaq webmaster anticipates GOMINFOEX website will be up soon. It is important that this site get posted immediately. It is confusing for people to try to go to gominfoex.org and find the neaq.org website.

GOMINFOEX Logo update

Aviva Rahmani submitted two ideas for potential GOMINFOEX logos. These images will be scanned and posted on the GOMINFOEX website.

Suggested changes to the images to help it convey the "Gulf of Maine" theme included drawing the lighthouse in the shape of GOM, placing the lighthouse in the center of GOM instead of a circle, drawing an image of the GOM on left side of the circle as a graphic rendition to convey land and water; adding some natural land in the background (for example replace breakwater with some rocky shore).

The logo should be updated, with changes posted on the web.

Fishermen's Website (Dave Lincoln)

Pulled together 500+ links using Microsoft Frontpage '98. Each page on the site has a 12 category navigation bar on left side, an internal search engine, and its own set of links. Annotations for links will be added. The site is only 200kb (1/8 of disk) and cost only time.

The purpose of the site is to provide a user-friendly site for fishermen that is applicable and keeps people coming back. There is a balance of U.S./Canada information. Expected delivery date is late November 1999. It was suggested that a test site be posted so that people can make comments before it is put "out there". The site will be maintained through the Mass Fishermen's Partnership.

Should site be posted on GOMINFOEX? GOMINFOEX is intended to be a distributed integrated system, relying on sillyword search. GOMINFOEX was created to raise awareness, not to post sites. GOMINFOEX could link to fishermen's site. This project may be appropriate to link projects directly

from GOMINFOEX site, bc it is a direct result of this effort. If it is hosted on GOMINFOEX, it must be set up so that GOMINFOEX is not responsible for maintaining it. The Frontpage program has “verify hyperlinks” options which checks url’s and identifies dead links, but it will be important to check links to make sure you know where they are going.

This Fishermen’s site will be posted on GOMINFOEX domain. Paul Boudreau will work with David Lincoln to submit an article highlighting this website in next issue of GOM Times.

Sillyword Update

The experiment has been disappointing. Currently only 12 pages are found, but there are at least another 12 which have had the sillyword for at least 6 months. *Infoseek* finds sites which do not contain the sillyword, while others do not find pages with sillyword.

Commercial search engines are searching only 10% of the web at a time. There is a new search engine coming that will search 30% at a time. Search engines are looking to make money. Do we want to identify one search engine and pay money to locate sillyword?

Strategies to improve success include submitting sillyword to as many search engines as possible; not posting sillyword more than 3 times in the page; searching GOMINFOEX with quotations and without; searching “gominfoex” and “Gulf of Maine”. Perhaps the sillyword is not silly enough – we may want to think about changing it in the future. **Dave Lincoln will do a little research strategies to improve the success of the sillyword.**

We haven’t widely advertised the sillyword, except for the inner circle. We should deal one on one with people to get GOMINFOEX on their site. **If you know anyone who should be participating in the sillyword, let him/her know.** We will continue with the status quo.

Community Self-Discovery

Paul Schroeder has a recording of each Action Committee meeting.

Community Self Discovery is a “concept without a definition”. Communities, however defined, have various means to define themselves and grow into larger networks. Over the summer, Paul Schroeder wrote an article, which will be in *Urban Research Journal*, exploring community self discovery through concepts of access to information, public/private information, information outflow and how people can find out more about themselves by exploring the information that is out there. This article is posted on the web at <http://www.spatial.maine.edu/~schroedr/outgoing/urisa99frx.htm>.

Community Self Discovery Protocol is a check list of local community resources. The act of pulling it together will reveal who is effective in local area on specific issues and help build a community of people who have information on local issues. It is not a formula checklist because every community is unique.

The Bay of Fundy Resource Center may serve a good model. It is an organization within the community that represents a number of different groups, does lots of things and builds community awareness.

Sustainable Community Indicators

Sustainable Community Indicators Program (SCIP), developed by Environment Canada and CMHC, provides a analysis, reporting and information sharing tool for community groups. As it stands, SCIP has a definite urban character with little or no information appropriate to coastal communities.

Nonetheless, it is an extremely useful tool to help community groups:

- understand data quality;
- learn basic analytical skills;
- present standardized reports; and
- share information with other community groups.

The text that comes with the program explains the process of exchanging exported material with other users over their web site or for that matter any other electronic medium. Indicators, as well as basic data, can be exchanged.

SCIP is designed to make the addition of new data easy. Basic data for analysis, as well as example indicators and maps, can be added to the system database. The program uses basic tools like MS Excel for analysis and MS Word for reporting. Two basic versions of the system are available: a user version protects all core data and indicators; and an administrator version where even core indicators and core data can be changed. It would be most useful to obtain access to the administrator version so that core indicators describing the coastal zone can replace some of the urban-based indicators. This would substantially alter the look and feel of the program for coastal community users.

Two pilot projects should be developed to test the suitability of SCIP for coastal community groups. The Clean Annapolis River Program (CARP) based in Nova Scotia would be an excellent Canadian group to run a pilot. Previous studies have identified suitable environmental databases to incorporate into SCIP and the CARP people have extensive experience themselves to lend to the pilot project. It should only require about 5 person days to incorporate some new environmental data sets into SCIP. Ideally, a pilot study would also be conducted in the United States in conjunction with NOAA to examine the programs suitability for accessing the extensive web-based NOAA data sets and local data from a different jurisdiction.

Discussions are underway to determine the level of interest and participation of different Canadian federal departments, including Environment Canada and Fisheries & Oceans Canada. Identifying sources of funding to assist community groups carry out a pilot study would be helpful at this stage.

This may lead to a potential GOMINFOEX project. It would entail an investigative process between communities and the software developer to identify indicators to serve as a tool to help communities identify and interpret data, identify priorities, use for planning, etc. One or two sites interested in exploring this would probably be enough. They could link into initiatives that are ongoing right now.

National CZM reauthorization may include performance and environmental indicators, so this may be something that will be coming from the states. Delaware has a set of indicators to ensure that anything that happens in the coastal zone has to result in a net environment gain in their CZM legislation. Maureen Park, a consultant based in Massachusetts, has been funded by EPA to produce a manual of sustainable indicators. She has hundreds of indicators and how they are used. NOS' CA/DS is very interested in this. The state of Maine has moved to performance based budgeting, therefore, communities are moving towards that. College of the Atlantic is expanding their community, and a project called "State of the Islands", to explore some of these concepts in the MDI island community. **Paul Schroeder will check with Gordon Longfellow (COA) to see if this software/idea would fit into something that they are already doing.**

GOMMEA Survey

Gulf of Maine Marine Educators Association wants to do an OOTF follow-up workshop for educators, but will first survey educators to identify a GOM educators needs assessment. **GOMMEA is holding a conference at Southern Maine Technical College (SMTTC) on October 8, during which they will conduct a survey.** The survey is based on first OOTF survey, but is geared towards educators. In addition to the GOMMEA meeting, the survey will be distributed through sister Massachusetts, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick groups. They are hoping for 200-300 survey returns. An electronic version could be posted to get more people. GOMINFOEX may take this survey and adapt it for other user groups.

Aviva exhibit

Aviva Rahmani joined the Action Committee meeting via conference call to discuss her Gulf of Maine interactive travelling modular exhibit idea. While this is still in its conceptual stage, she envisions a floor with a map of the Gulf of Maine. Visitors will be able to walk out onto the map and activate the map through their movement. They would be adding their footsteps to the experience of the degradation of the Gulf of Maine. There would be screens available which show the current state of the Gulf of Maine, with other screens showing the best and worst case scenarios. The audience would interact with the exhibit to choose which actions would move them to the best case scenario vs. worst case scenario.

There is currently no formal proposal for this idea. It would need funding to move it forward. Aviva should focus her idea and prepare a one-pager to help Action Committee members identify opportunities to move this forward. This proposal could be floated to the listserv for comment. Action Committee members will keep this project in mind for future.

Strategic Plan

NEAq drafted a Strategic Plan to pull together the goals and objectives for the GOMINFOEX group, and begin to develop a workplan. The Strategic Plan will remain a working document. The Strategic Plan, revised with comments from the Action Committee, will be posted on **Error! Bookmark not defined..** Everyone is invited to review and comment on the document.

e-Atlas

Island Institute secured funding to produce an electronic atlas, instead of republishing its paper atlas. It is targeted to Island Institute's historic audience. It is a value added product (bring in data, add value, and use it to tell stories in an interactive format) and will be implemented in phases. They have hired new staff to work on the project. They are moving forward with the project, keeping open to collaboration with NOS. This Fall, they will select some products like an internet map server to demonstrate e-atlas with existing data (lobster, herring, cod spawning grounds). The first step is to get historical data up and then, potentially offer a hyperlink to schools where they update their student monitoring of water quality data, particularly Island students involved in the Gaya software project. They should have something for people to look at early next year. E-atlas website with mockup of the user interface is located at <http://www.islandinstitute.org/gis/html/e-atlas.htm>.

The Institute is looking to GOMINFOEX for help in data acquisition to make atlas more comprehensive. Scale of data will vary depending on what's available. They have dedicated staff to keep it maintained and up-to-date.

There are a group of non-profits in New Hampshire who are looking to do a similar system using Granite GIS system. They want to use existing data layers and then overlay their localized data on the maps. USGS in Woods Hole is working on a similar system for Stellwagen which shows underwater video. They want to get it onto ESRI map server. The NERRS system is putting up data bouys to get real-time data – including children's water quality data up would create a two-way flow of information.

NOS UPDATE

NOS presented a hand-out with a summary of current funding proposal ideas. The GOMINFOEX is welcome to use any idea that hasn't been funded. In particular, they require matching funds for a habitat project (#4) to get it off the ground if there any interest. Their project "An Interactive Tool for Collaborative Geo-spatial Problem Solving over the Internet" (#3) has been funded and will be tested in the Gulf of Maine. ESRI is developing a lot of tools necessary to conduct this. For additional information, contact Dan Farrow at NOS.

Out of the Fog II

We need a few people to take the lead to pull this together over the next 6-9 months. If we are to hold an OOTF II, we need to decide upon the goal of the workshop, determine target audience, timing and location. We need to be ready to use the conference to solidify our long-term goals/objectives and to produce a workshop product to serve as a framework to get buy-in for the future of GOMINFOEX. We may want to consider focus groups to work through web technology pieces to test out ideas as a way to do needs assessment. Try to piggyback of various group's agendas. We should send a note to to outofthefog listserv or specific groups to find out what conferences, meetings, etc are coming up.

We need to write-up a Terms of Reference for OOTFII. It is important to emphasize that we are not going back to answer original questions. The outcome of OOTF II will be a detailed framework. If we emphasize our progress, we can attract more/different people to the process. **Paul Boudreau will draft OOTFII TOR and post to the outofthefog listserv.**

Paul Boudreau received seed funding for OOTFII from the GOMC. Suggestion to conduct OOTF II in conjunction with Coastal Zone Canada 2000, September 18-22, 2000 in St. John, New Brunswick. CZ Canada 2000 expects 9,000 people from all over the world. Could make a presentation to CZ group and then go into smaller groups. There is also a youth conference associated which could be a good draw for educators. Educators need to be informed of schedule in previous June to be available. Should GOMINFOEX present at Coastal 2000 even if we don't piggyback on that meeting?

Other suggestions: piggyback onto a GIS-type conference.; OOTF II as a stand alone conference. Southern Maine Technical College (Portland) is a good place to hold a conference. The Samoset Resort is too expensive. A border community may be appropriate to emphasize the nature of project – perhaps the Huntsman in St. Andrews. February - May should be a good time for fishermen because a lot of the inshore areas will be closed. April may be good for teachers due to school vacation.

Institutional Leader

Paul Boudreau presented GOMINFOEX to GOMC DIMC working group. GOMINFOEX proposal to GOMC to serve as an institutional leader should emphasize linkages to past work (EDIMS, REDIMS). We will have 30 minutes to present at GOMC meeting on December 8, 9, 10 in Portsmouth at the Sheraton. Paul Boudreau volunteered to do presentation, but will need help pulling it together and presenting. The more in attendance, the better it looks for GOMINFOEX. We must clearly define what we mean by “institutional leader” and our expectations. It is imperative that we are clear about what we are asking for.

The group had differing ideas about defining an Institutional Leader and their role: the institutional leader should serve as an advocate; GOMC should be a “leader”, but that doesn't make it a GOMC project. This project has passion because people in this room have passion. If passion remains with people who come to meetings, there is no real need for an institutional leader; the leadership comes from within. We need someone to loosely identify the group with, to handle administrative stuff and serve as secretariat for the group. We need an institutional leader to help us identify and attract funding. We need an institutional leader to help push political buttons. We are a virtual organization -- we don't really exist except for a website, because we are a collaborative. If press needs to know who GOMINFOEX is, we need to have something concrete for people to identify with. We must consider an institutional leader vs. endorsement. We need a focal point vs. being a virtual community.

What is the role that the GOMC can potentially play? GOMINFOEX is not ready to adopt an official framework. The DIMC is set-up to move the GOMINFOEX through the slow periods.

Institutional Leader Duties should include making sure the process keeps going, champion the project, do the logistics, keep the process going. We have a critical need for someone to do the behind the scenes stuff, pushing people to follow-up and handle administration. The functional role beyond secretariat is to breakdown barriers, still a lot of proprietary data out there – need to breakdown barriers and help further the goals of information exchange

David Keeley and Paul Boudreau will work to flesh out idea of institutional leader to decide what to present to GOMC. The presentation to GOMC should be to provide them a synopsis of this past year's accomplishments, ask for continued DIMC to support, ask individuals to become involved with anything they have to offer – just to participate.

We want them to actively promote what we are doing, rather than ask for a flat endorsement. Suggestions including requesting \$x,000 towards funding the GOMINFOEX through the DIMC; to continue support to DIMC to keep the effort going; to make their environmental information available in a usable format; to serve as an open information advocacy group; or to make open access of information a policy.

GOMINFOEX group must speak with one voice. Ensure we post Mission, overview, list of contacts (send message to listserve asking if people mind being listed as a contact) on homepage. **Dan Farrow will draft Operating Principles, different than Terms of Reference, based on TOR and Mission, etc. to state what we do.**

NOS User Survey

Dan Farrow and Tim Stojanovic presented a draft user needs assessment survey. User needs assessment will help decide whether GOMINFOEX is a “pie” or a “stew”. There are many different ideas on the table.

There are lots of existing databases in GOM, so there is no need to reinvent the wheel. Integrated approaches already exist through EDIMS, REDIMS, ACZISC, CID (coastal services center/coastal information director), and Island Institute atlas. There have been several user needs surveys completed. These surveys tried to answer whether we really need a gulf wide info exchange and which aspects of system we should start developing.

Do we need another survey? How should we administer it? We need to know what we are going to do with the survey data. Who is going to analyze these surveys? We want to get a good cross-section of respondents through this survey. Identify the groups we want to administer the survey through. Encourage as broad participation as possible.

Would people be willing to administer this survey over the course of a year to do the survey? The survey provides an opportunity to get a lot of solid information guidance. We could send it to the outofthefog listserve. Post survey electronically (GOMC – post and fill out). Where to mail completed surveys?

If we can't get appropriate distribution of survey, we could consider a two track survey: one that goes out broadly to get a quantitative base of information AND more qualitative surveys to get different information to learn qualitative/hands on/lessons learned. The results would need to be analyzed together. We need to think more about the survey before it is administered.

New England Aquarium will organize a survey conference call which will include Paul Boudreau, Denise McCullough, Maggie Mooneys-Seus, Patrice Farrey, Dan Farrow, Tim Stojanovic, Joe Pelczarski, David Keeley, Ted Diers, Warren Gash.

Other

Use GOMC calendar and outofthefog listserv for related meeting announcements.

Proposal on east-west highway across Maine (New Brunswick to New York State). Cuts across the entire watershed, people need information. The kind of issue we may want to look at in the future which cuts across stuff.

GOMMEA meeting at SMTC in October.

Magnuson Fishermen's meeting at New England Aquarium in December.

Next meeting

Next meeting will be scheduled before GOMC meeting in December.