

**Arctic Regional Hydrographic Commission (ARHC)
Tromso, Norway, October 9-11, 2012**

INF Paper on Mariners Routeing Guide

Submitted by: NOAA Office of Coast Survey (USA)
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Executive Summary: The ARHC was charged with developing a demo version of a Mariners Routeing Guide in 2010. Demo versions were presented at the ARHC-2. Subsequent discussion has produced consensus that the MRG would be a contribution to navigation safety. The USCHC-35 recommends proceeding with a geographically defined MRG to address navigation needs in the Arctic. The MRG can be improved over time once the mariner has an opportunity to view the product and offer comments and suggestions.

Related Documents: AMRG Terms of Reference
Minutes of the ARHC special session (April 2012)
Minutes of the 35th Meeting of the USCHC (May 2012)
Survey Results of MRG Questionnaire

Related Projects: none

Introduction / Background

The ARHC-1 established the MRG working group to

- Identify and decide which information to be presented in the Mariners Routeing Guide for the Arctic.
- Identify and decide the best way or way's to present the information in the Mariners Routeing Guide for the Arctic.
- Create a demo version of the Mariners Routeing Guide for the Arctic.
- Present a printed version of the Mariners Routeing Guide for the Arctic.
- To present a report to the ARHC. This report should include a description on the current status, recommendations on how to proceed with the Mariners Routeing Guide for the Arctic and if deemed necessary an action plan with specified time schedule for future ARHC actions.

At ARHC-2, the United States, Canada presented both digital and print demos of various options. Following the ARHC-2, the Russian Federation distributed valuable information concerning Northern Sea Route policies and regulations.

Canada and the U.S. provided additional comments on the MRG in Spring 2012.

During the International Hydrographic Conference in April 2012, an ARHC special session was held and the MRG was discussed. See meeting minutes. The action was to distribute a questionnaire to the member states which was completed in summer 2012.

At USCHC-35 in May 2012, the design and need of the AMRG was discussed at length. Key points included:

- Robert Ward would offer the IHB to host the MRG, if the ARHC wishes.
- Release of a prototype MRG would stimulate stakeholder feedback and reflect well on the contributions of the ARHC to the mariner community. Releasing a prototype MRG would represent a contribution to risk mitigation and in UKHO experiences, this has been well received by the mariner in other regions.
- Canada noted putting a first draft into the hands of the potential users would provide valuable feedback.

Please see USCHC-35 meeting report for a more thorough summary of discussion.

The USCHC concluded discussion identifying four actions:

- Make recommendations to ARHC for a new title for the AMRG proposal
- Define clearly what the intentions of the product are and what it is not
- Make recommendations to ARHC on how this product can be maintained
- Make recommendations to the ARHC on where and how it be hosted for access.

Denmark distributed an ARMG questionnaire to ARHC member states in July 2012. Results will be reviewed at ARHC-3.

Analysis/Discussion

There is currently no route planning guide available in the Arctic. In its initial meeting, the ARHC member states charged themselves with the development of a mariners routeing (or planning) guide to help meet the needs for route planning for future navigation in the Arctic.

Release of a prototype product in the near future will stimulate input to continually improve a mariners routeing (or planning) guide over time with the feedback of the mariner and user-community.

Based on discussions in the preceding year, it appears issues identified at ARHC-2 and subsequently can be addressed and expectedly resolved at the ARHC-3. This would allow member states to begin working on final technical design steps toward the release of version 1 to the public in 2013.

Conclusions

An MRG has been found of need and benefit to the mariner. There is precedent to the release of preliminary MRG as a short term navigation risk mitigator from which subsequent design improvements may be undertaken.

Recommendations

The United States recommends setting a deadline to release a .pdf version (i.e. “chart”) mariners routing guide by ARHC-4, the geographic extent and content of which to be confirmed at the ARHC-3 in discussion and in light of member state questionnaire.

Justification and Impacts

The MRG will provide immediate utility to mariner safety in selected portions of the Arctic as a situational awareness.

Action Required of ARHC

1. To note this report.