

MINUTES

NSSI OVERSIGHT GROUP MEETING

December 17, 2005

Anchorage, Alaska

Fish and Wildlife Service, 1100 East Tudor Road,
Mary Smith Media Center, 3rd floor 10:30 am – 4:30 pm

In attendance:

Board Members

Henri Bisson, BLM, Co-Chair	John Goll, MMS
Marcia Blaszak, NPS	Rowan Gould, FWS
Lawson Brigham, USARC	Jon Kurland, NMFS/NOAA
Doug Buffington, USGS	Wayne Regelin, ADF&G, Chair
Ed Fogels, DNR	Brent Sheets, DOE

Staff and Others

Ann Claerbout, NSSI	John Payne, BLM
Leslie Holland-Bartels, USGS	Ken Taylor, NSSI
Tim Jennings, FWS	Bob Winfree, NPS
Suzanne Marcy, NPS	

Wayne Regelin, Chair, opened the meeting at 10:30 AM with introductions of those in attendance. Ken Taylor welcomed Ed Fogels, representing Alaska Department of Natural Resources (DNR), as a new Oversight Group (OG) member. Ed will replace Dick LeFebvre as the DNR representative to the OG. Doug Buffington announced his retirement from USGS as of Jan 3, 2006. An official letter designating Leslie Holland-Bartels as the USGS representative for the OG will follow.

Wayne Regelin made a motion for the approval of the October 4, 2005 minutes. The motion was seconded by Rowan Gould. There were no objections.

Ken Taylor gave an update on NSSI activities since the last OG meeting. Substantial effort by NSSI staff during October and November went to soliciting and receiving nominations for the Science Technical Group (STG), responding to nominees, and preparing the nominations for review by the Oversight Group. NSSI staff attended the GAP Analysis Conference in Reno, Nevada and met with experts on the University of Alaska Fairbanks GINA GIS system to further investigate North Slope data layer and remote sensing issues.

In a discussion of future goals for NSSI, Lawson Brigham stressed a need for NSSI to reach out to and be introduced as a collaborative model for the international community. He suggested that Ken Taylor and the OG Chair brief the International Arctic Research Commission in the near future.

In a discussion of the NSSI budget, it was determined that OG members need clearer pictures of agency contributions.

Action: Ken Taylor and John Payne are to present a detailed budget at the next OG meeting.

Action: Ken Taylor is to develop an agenda and workplan for the future of NSSI. This plan should identify issues and three products or deliverables that the NSSI will be able to accomplish in the next year. Accomplishment goals for subsequent years should then be addressed.

Doug Buffington noted that individual agency priorities for the North Slope were unclear. Rowan Gould added that agency staff needs to be more engaged in identifying priority issues. An executive workshop would serve to clarify agency issues so that the STG could more effectively advise staff on these future priorities for land management decisions. Ken Taylor suggested a 2 day meeting in early April with one day devoted to OG issues meeting and another day for NSSI staff to work with OG staff.

Action: Ken Taylor is to develop a memo asking OG members to assign agency staff to determine their highest priority decisions of the future and associated scientific gaps that might prove to be a barrier to the decision making process. If needed, agency staff should have the approval to work with subordinate managers in identifying the needs to support sound science for future land management decisions.

There was much discussion on the intended roles and responsibilities of the STG. Wayne Regelin suggested the STG could be divided into sub-groups for the assignment of specific tasks. Lawson Brigham and Henri Bisson suggested future STG assignments could include the development of a broader, regional-level monitoring strategy for the North Slope. Henri Bisson suggested that the STG be assigned to work with OG staff on the NSSI Science Strategy, keeping the current draft's identified priorities intact. Leslie Holland-Bartels suggested that the STG should serve as advisors the OG on important gaps in North Slope science. For example, the STG could identify the issues in themes such as hydrology, which might be problematic for agencies over the next 10 years if available research remains at current levels. Collaborative efforts on agency priority research areas could then proceed with more unified goals and work to address some of these important information gaps.

Action: John Payne should interface Altarum hydrology equipment with that of DOE (Brent Sheets), in order to increase collaboration on hydrology research.

There was no comment from the public. The public portion of the meeting adjourned at 12:00pm. The afternoon portion of the meeting was an Executive Session, where the OG agreed on recommendations to the Secretary of the Interior for the NSSI Science Technical Group.