

**North Slope Science Initiative
Science Technical Advisory Panel and Senior Staff Committee Meeting
International Arctic Research Center, Fairbanks, Alaska
Feb. 8-10, 2016**

MEETING NOTES

ATTENDEES

STAP Members

Robyn Angliss
Robert Bolton
Linda Brewer
David Cairns
Lorene Lynn
Gerald McBeath
Robert Meyer
Scott Pegau
Robert Shuchman
Robert Suydam
Sheyna Wisdom

Senior Staff Committee

Melissa Head, ADNR
Lois Dalle-Molle, NPS
Dee Williams, BOEM
Donna Wixon, BLM
Qaiyaan Harcharek, NSB

Oversight Group

Bud Cribley (BLM)
Scott Carr (for Mark Fesmire, BSEE)
Mark Storzer (for Jim Kendall, BOEM)

NSSI Staff

Denny Lassuy
Dee Williams
John Payne
Jason Taylor
Jess Grunblatt
Maureen Clark

Public

Olivia Lee, UAF
Bob Rich, ARCUS

Monday, February 8, 2016

1:30 – 1:45 PM Open Meeting, Review/Approve Agenda

Robert Suydam (former STAP Vice-Chair) agreed to serve as chair until current Chair Scott Pegau arrived. All STAP members present indicated they had provided the required financial disclosure statement and had taken the required ethics training.

1:45 – 2:05 PM NSSI/STAP/SSC Roles Review - Denny Lassuy

Denny provided background on the history of NSSI, patterns in the use of Arctic resources, NSSI's involvement in various local to pan-Arctic science forums, and how its role in providing science to decision makers fits in with both the State of Alaska's Arctic Policy and the White House's National Strategy for the Arctic Region. He described the function of the STAP and its

advisory role to the Oversight Group. He also gave a brief overview of how the Emerging Issue Summaries came about and how the development of those summaries led to the Scenarios Project that STAP and Senior Staff Committee members would be participating in over the next two days. Robert Suydam provided additional background on pre-NSSI actions that helped lead to the formation of NSSI.

2:05 – 3:00 PM New & Current STAP/SSC Familiarization-All

All those present provided background on their education, areas of expertise, their work history and their continuing interests in order to help new and continuing STAP members become familiar with whom they would be working. Denny provided brief background information on those STAP members who were not present.

3:00 PM BREAK

3:15 – 3:45 PM Scenarios Project Update - Olivia Lee

Olivia Lee (UAF), Principal Investigator for the NSSI Scenarios Development Project, provided an overview of the project. The focal question for the project, defined by the Oversight Group, is “What is the future of energy development, resource extraction and supporting activities on the North Slope and adjacent seas through 2040?” The core purpose of the project is to identify the research and monitoring needed to inform management decisions under the range of scenarios identified in answering that focal question. Dr. Lee provided a brief recap of the two previous workshops which identified a range of plausible development scenarios and explored the physical, biological and social implications of those scenarios. She noted the third and final workshop was focused on identifying and prioritizing the key future research and monitoring efforts that would be appropriate for those scenarios. She said products from the project would include a full report, summary report and outreach materials. The project is expected to be completed by the Fall of 2016. Denny noted that a number of agencies and organizations from local to circumpolar are anxious to see the results of the Scenarios Project and learn how those results may translate into action.

3:45 – 4:15 PM Summary of Research Vessel/Subsistence User Communications Protocol Discussion – Robert Suydam, Robyn Angliss, Dee Williams

Robert Suydam began the discussion by reiterating the concerns that have been raised about the impacts to subsistence hunters from aircraft, many of which are used by researchers. He said there is a very high level of frustration with this issue in North Slope communities and he noted that while many of the scientists are working for industry, many are also working on behalf of NSSI agencies, including NSB, as well as NSF. He noted that, per the OG request at a meeting last Spring in Barrow, he is working with Robyn Angliss and Linda Brewer to develop a protocol that would help researchers avoid these conflicts. Robert said there is also growing concern with large research vessels showing up near communities during whaling season. He said the Arctic Waterways Safety Committee (AWSC) is working on a Standard of Care document intended to help research vessels avoid these conflicts. That document is expected to be completed in March of this year. Compliance would be voluntary. Robert said NSSI may be particularly well positioned to learn from the AWSC effort and use those lessons to help deal with the aircraft issue.

Robyn noted that the issues with aircraft are both terrestrial and marine. In addition, there are concerns that those unfamiliar with the North Slope don't understand the complexities of land ownership and it may be more likely they would have conflicts. She noted the importance of making sure researchers know the points of contact in villages and are made aware of land ownership issues.

Dee said he recently returned from visits to villages on the North Slope and saw the high degree of frustration with the situation. He said it was his impression that villagers feel scientists are at the heart of the problem and that the status quo is not acceptable. He noted there has been talk of a five- to 10-year moratorium on research on the North Slope and a ban on research within 25 miles of the coast. Some whaling captains have also suggested that AEWC should require notification one year prior to the start of a research project. Dee noted that BOEM, NOAA, AEWC and logistics providers have been involved in discussions with the Arctic Waterway Safety Council on the Standard of Care document and would be meeting again, potentially to finalize the document, in very early March in Juneau. Dee, Robert, and Robyn all indicated that they may attend the meeting in Juneau (as have Oversight Group members Cheryl Rosa from USARC and Kaya Brix from NOAA/NMFS).

Denny agreed with Robert that this presents a great opportunity for NSSI to learn from the AWSC effort and asked that NSSI-affiliated attendees at the March gathering keep NSSI apprised of the development of the maritime protocols, suggesting they might help pave the way for the development of protocols regarding the use of aircraft on the North Slope.

4:15 – 4:30 AM **Election of new STAP Chair & Vice-Chair –All**

Outgoing chair Scott Pegau talked about the responsibilities and time commitment required of the Chair and said whoever served next would have an opportunity to make a valuable contribution to NSSI. Robert Shuchman nominated Robyn Angliss to serve as Chair. Robyn agreed to serve. Bob Meyer volunteered to serve as Vice Chair.

Robyn asked about three items:

- Can other non-NSSI agency representatives participate on the Senior Staff Committee? She noted it may be useful to include participants from National Science Foundation since the foundation funds many projects in the Arctic. Other options included representatives from the Office of Naval Research and North Pacific Research Board. Denny noted that while the SSC itself is limited to representatives of NSSI member agencies (as liaisons for their respective OG members), there is no reason that representatives from such agencies could not be invited to participate in STAP/SSC meetings. The STAP recommended that NSSI invite such groups to the next meeting.
- Next steps regarding the Emerging Issue Summaries – There was discussion on completing the accomplishments review and potential updating of the Emerging Issue Summaries. Denny noted that due to the hiatus in STAP operations that resulted from a slow nominations process, he had had to take on the task of completing several of the reviews of the Emerging Issue Summaries to assess progress made in addressing the recommendations in those original summaries. He noted that the NSS Catalog had proven very handy for this task and that the latest NSSI Report to Congress summarized the status of those findings. He also noted that the intent of the Oversight Group,

beyond the summary of accomplishments for the Report to Congress, was that the outcomes of the Scenarios Project should inform any further refinement of research and monitoring priorities – i.e., after the Scenario Project concludes this summer may be an appropriate time to reconsider all, or some subset of, the Emerging Issue Summaries. Jason Taylor added that the BLM’s North Slope Rapid Ecoregional Assessment (REA) would also be identifying data gaps that could be useful to a review of the summaries. He suggested a presentation on the REA might be useful for the STAP.

- Meeting Schedule – There was discussion of reinvigorating the science coordination meeting, perhaps focusing on both 2016 and 2017 since it may take place fairly late in the 2016 planning season. It was noted that these meeting are also useful for updating the project tracking database in NSS Catalog. It was suggested by Robert Suydam that the next meeting be held in Barrow, preferably in late April or early May. Denny said he would work closely the NSB to identify the most workable dates for a Barrow meeting.

4:30 – 5:00 PM **Public Comment**

No public comment was offered, so an agenda item on ARCUS was added.

Bob Rich, Executive Director of the Arctic Research Consortium of the U.S. gave a brief overview of the history and role of ARCUS, a nonprofit consortium of institutions that have a commitment to Arctic science. His presentation raised the issue of how ARCUS may serve as an effective link with national and international research and research coordination bodies (e.g., NSF, IARPC, USARC, etc.) and how that linkage could be used to improve researcher awareness of things like the evolving communications protocols discussed earlier in the meeting.

05:00 PM Adjourn

Feb. 9-10, 2016

STAP participated in NSSI Scenarios Project Research and Monitoring Workshop