

NSSI Oversight Group Meeting
International Arctic Research Center, Fairbanks, Alaska
Feb. 11, 2016

Members Present

Bud Cribley, BLM
Cheryl Rosa, USARC
Mark Storzer (for Jim Kendall, BOEM)
Scott Carr (for Mark Fesmire, BSEE)
David Payer (for Geoff Haskett, USFWS)
Steve Masterman (for Ed Fogels, ADNR)

NSSI Staff Affiliates

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

Members On Phone

Durelle Smith (for Aimee Devaris, USGS)
Leigh Welling (for Bert Frost, NPS)
Kaja Brix, NOAA/NMFS

STAP

Bob Meyer

Guest Presenters

Bob Rich, ARCUS
Olivia Lee, UAF

Welcome and Introductions

Participants introduced themselves.

Review/Approve Minutes of Previous Meeting

Members reviewed the minutes of the previous Oversight Group meeting and had no changes. Minutes approved.

Director's Report/OG Updates

- Acting Executive Director Denny Lassuy distributed recent monthly updates, which fill the purpose of the Director's report. If anyone isn't getting these reports please let us know. USGS requested that Durelle Smith of USGS be added to the monthly update email list.
- The Report to Congress has made good progress. It has been approved and sent to the Hill.
- The Model Arctic Council, for which NSSI urged North Slope student involvement, will take place during the Arctic Science Summit Workshop in Fairbanks next month.
- We just wrapped up a successful final Scenarios workshop and had a good meeting with the STAP. Robyn Angliss is the new chair of the STAP and Bob Meyer is the vice chair.

STAP/SSC Meeting Readout

STAP Vice Chair Bob Meyer introduced himself and talked about the outcomes of the STAP meeting:

- the STAP's desire to invite several non-NSSI organizations, for example, National Science Foundation, North Pacific Research Board and the Office of Naval Research to participate in future meetings.
- the STAP suggested the next meeting be held in Barrow sometime in late April or early May and include inter-agency coordination on research and monitoring plans for 2016 and 2017.

- 11 of the 14 STAP members were able to participate in the meeting. Louis Brzuzy has notified NSSI that he has been reassigned and will not be able to serve on the STAP. Denny will explore the possibility of appointing an alternate.
- STAP and SSC discussed perceived conflicts between North Slope communities and researchers who use aviation and marine vessels to carry out their work; including a discussion of current efforts to develop a “Standard of Care” (communications protocol) to avoid such conflicts.

The group decided to move directly into a discussion of this issue since it was the next agenda item.

Update: At-Sea Research Communications Protocol

Dee Williams noted that marine traffic is becoming an issue of concern for North Slope communities. He said the issue was discussed at a recent Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission meeting, and a number of troubling suggestions arose – including things like that all research activities be suspended for a period of time while protocols are developed; all researchers must notify AEWC one year prior to beginning research; and that research be prohibited within a 25-mile buffer zone from the coast. He expressed concern at the change in tone coming from AEWC.

The Arctic Waterways Safety Commission is developing a “Standard of Care” document (basically a communications protocol) intended to address these concerns. The AWSC will meet in Juneau March 2-3 to discuss the draft document. Kaja Brix suggested NSSI agencies may want to have some input into the development of the waterways protocols. (Note: Denny subsequently distributed to all NSSI OG, STAP, and SSC members for comment). Bud Cribley suggested that now might be the time for NSSI to move forward on facilitating a deeper discussion aviation conflicts and the development of a similar approach to a communications protocol. Denny noted that this was precisely the nature of the discussion during the STAP/SSC meeting and that Robert Suydam, Robyn Angliss, and Dee are tracking the development of the maritime protocol to learn how it may serve as a starting point in addressing concerns about the impacts of aircraft used by researchers.

Summary/Discussion of Scenarios Workshop/Project

Olivia Lee provided a summary of the Scenarios Project, including the final workshop. The Scenarios Project explores the plausible future of energy and resource development on Alaska’s North Slope and adjacent seas to identify the long-term science needed to manage resources effectively. In the just-completed workshop eight groups focused on what the research and monitoring needs would be for the priority scenario implications identified in the prior workshop. Olivia said the project has had great participation with over 150 participants from 42 different entities engaged through the three workshops. Other comments about the workshop:

- Olivia said the project team has a lot of analysis ahead of it and will try to provide a summary to the STAP and/or OG before its next meeting.
- Cheryl Rosa mentioned that IARPC is starting its five-year planning process and noted that the results of the workshop would be helpful to that process. (note: Denny plans to follow through on this by participating in the IARPC session at the upcoming Arctic Science Summit Week.)
- Similarly, Bud Cribley said the Scenarios Project has highlighted the potential implications of development to communities on the North Slope and that we need to develop a communication plan for the project and look at the calendar for opportunities to share the results.

- Bob Rich of ARCUS offered to help share the results of the project in D.C. and through ARCUS's extensive connections with other science organizations.

Presentation on ARCUS

Bob Rich – The Arctic Research Consortium of the United States (ARCUS) is a 25-year-old nonprofit organization dedicated to connecting Arctic researchers across boundaries. It is a consortium of organizations engaged in Arctic research, supported mainly by agency grants, with NSF as its primary funder. Members come from many sectors including academia, government research organizations, local and state agencies and indigenous organizations. It has a board of directors and a staff of 15. ARCUS works to bridge across organizations and across different disciplines. It maintains a directory of Arctic researchers and does a lot of polar science education, including a monthly webinar series. ARCUS would like to partner with NSSI, for example by assisting with communications efforts on the Scenarios Project and helping review the aviation and marine protocols for researchers. The OG members and alternates in attendance agreed NSSI membership in ARCUS seemed like a good fit and directed Denny to move forward on a \$1000 annual NSSI membership in ARCUS for the coming year.

Sharing NSSI Science Priorities

Jim Kendall (BOEM) had suggested this agenda item as a general discussion of how NSSI members could help each other share and highlight their science priorities. However, in his absence, Dee Williams (BOEM Environmental Studies Program & Acting NSSI Deputy Director) addressed the group, sharing a proposal to access Traditional Knowledge holders on the North Slope. He is proposing a BOEM study with an allocation of \$100,000 over two years to create a cooperative agreement structure. He is looking to NSSI and the North Slope Borough Division of Wildlife Management to support the project. He has already discussed the approach with Taqulik Hepa who supports it. BOEM would provide the funding while NSSI would help bring clarity that the project is multi-lateral and potentially useful to the broader science community, not just BOEM. NSB would gather the relevant experts and will administer the tasks that are mutually agreed upon. Tasks are still open to discussion and negotiation. John said this could help NSSI address one of its legislated objectives that calls on NSSI to “maintain and improve public and agency access to ... contemporary and traditional local knowledge” (Energy Policy Act of 20015, Sec. 348). Since those participating in the meeting by phone did not have a copy in hand, and some present were not yet fully clear on the details of what the project may entail, Bud suggested the decision could be revisited (perhaps by email or conference call) within a few weeks rather than waiting until the next full OG meeting.

Roundtable

- John Payne will be meeting with the vice provost of research at UAA on Arctic issues.
- Durelle Smith said Amy Devaris is the new USGS Alaska Regional Director, replacing Carl Markon. Devaris was formerly with the National Weather Service.
- Leigh Welling said ARCUS is providing support for an NPS Science Summit the week of Oct. 17 in Fairbanks, in celebration of the NPS centennial.
- Maureen Clark asked if NSSI members want to continue producing a calendar. Cheryl Rosa suggested a photo contest to provide content. Bud asked for a cost estimate for a calendar printed by a commercial printer.

Adjourn to Executive Session