

2009 Annual Report
North Slope Science Initiative
Science Technical Advisory Panel

Fiscal Year 2009: Report of Activities of the Science Technical Advisory Panel

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Report to be posted on the North Slope Science Initiative website: www.northslope.org

The uncertainty of funding experienced in fiscal year 2008, continued into fiscal year 2009 with follow-on Continuing Resolutions. However, four official meetings were called for the North Slope Science Initiative, Science Technical Advisory Panel (STAP): January 28-30, 2009, April 14, 2009, July 9-10, 2009, and September 9-10, 2009. The minutes of all meetings are posted on the North Slope Science Initiative website: www.northslope.org.

The STAP has been significantly challenged to bring forth recommendations on large, generic emerging issues such as permafrost, coastal erosion, depleted sea ice, changing arctic fire regime, species of interest, lake drying, etc. Likewise, the Senior Staff Committee has been challenged with identifying member agency/governments information or data that they will collectively need to increase the confidence in their decisions for the future. The STAP has worked diligently throughout the year to develop emerging issue papers. These papers have remained in DRAFT form, but will be released to the NSSI Oversight Group Chair in October 2009. Initial topics have been expanded upon and now include such subcategories as “species of interest,” such as marine mammals and their prey, caribou and migratory birds. One additional major category was added this year for consideration by the STAP: Arctic contaminants. As always, the STAP is advisory to the DFO and the Oversight Group and any advice or recommendations forwarded are for the consideration of the membership of NSSI as a whole.

Significantly, the STAP reviewed and provided advice on three specific projects that are coordinated through the NSSI. The remote sensing/GIS subcommittee has been made a standing subcommittee to provide continuing feedback on the development and implementation of the Geographic Information Network of Alaska. The recommendations the STAP have provided have been carefully considered during the design phase of this important decision support system. Another subcommittee has been established to provide recommendations on the content and operation of a Project Tracking System (PTS). The PTS is now operational and is available through the NSSI website, www.northslope.org. A subcommittee has been formed to provide recommendations on developing a North Slope-wide land cover database. This subcommittee has been instrumental in providing advice to the DFO on how best to implement a usable land cover database.