

NSSI OG Meeting  
University of Alaska Fairbanks  
April 24, 2008

Oversight Group

John Payne  
Tom Melius  
Thomas Lonnie  
John Kurland  
Ken Taylor

Dick LeFebvre  
Brent Sheets  
Jon Kurland  
Denny Lassuy

Staff Committee

Dave Yokel  
Deb Rocque

Public

Dan White  
Bob Schneider

Oversight Group Members Absent:

Marcia Blazack  
John Goll  
Karla Kolash  
Lawson Brigham  
Leslie Holland-Bartels

All handouts and PowerPoint's referenced in these notes are located on the NSSI website.

**Welcome and introductions, Dick LeFebvre**

Dick welcomed the group and had everyone introduce themselves. This is his last meeting as Chair. Tom Melius become the Chair on May 20, 2008..

**Open for Nominations for Co –chair:**

Dick announced this has to be a non-federal person. Nominations were discussed.

**ACTION:** Karla Kolash was nominated and voted in unanimously.

**Congressional Report:**

A sub-group will be formed to oversee the development of the report.

**ACTION:** John Payne, Dick LeFebvre, Tom Lonnie, Ken Taylor, and Lawson Brigham will form the sub-group.

**Review of the February minutes:**

The minutes and their edits were discussed. Dick asked for comments or corrections. Needed corrections were noted.

**ACTION:** Tom Melius moved to approve the minutes and Ken Taylor seconded the motion, The minutes were approved.

**Director's/DC trip report:**

John Payne reported on the trip to DC. He reported the following:

Henri Bisson will attend the Arctic Council meeting in Norway this week. He asked for a briefing paper and brochures on NSSI for this meeting.

John had some meetings with Laura Furgione, Director of the National Weather Service, Alaska Region, on climate change monitoring. It is felt that she would be a good advisor to the NSSI. Tom Melius asked if the charter would have to be changed to add her. John said it could be amended.

A GINA staff member will be on board at the State Office to interface with agency staff and get GINA up and running by September. This should occur in May.

The USGS and DOI Climate Change Strategy will be out sometime this summer. They will be using the interface with GINA and NSSI. This should increase the visibility of GINA in the future. Dan Smith, USGS Anchorage, will be their data base person. He will be the database interface with USGS and GINA.

The STAP appointment letter have been completed and sent to the Secretary for signature.

The Barrow meeting will be held on June 10 instead of June 11. An overview of the Barrow Science Center will be held on June 9. John encouraged the group to make hotel reservations ASAP due to the summer season. He needs a count of who will be going up on the 9<sup>th</sup>.

**Questions:**

The question was asked of how the emerging issues were identified. Denny explained the process. The STAP was overwhelmed with taking on all 13 issues at once and asked to tackle a few at a time. During the Staff Committee meeting last week, the group went through the first three issues (permafrost, coastal and riverine erosion and caribou) to better outline management concerns related to these issues. These management concerns summaries will be provided to the STAP at their May 9<sup>th</sup> meeting for further discussion. The planned result will be a series of brief

descriptions that combine the management concerns and the science needed to address them over the short-, medium -, and long-terms. These will then be used by the Oversight Group to set NSSI priorities for future information gathering and sharing. .

It was asked if there is a timeline for this strategy. There is not a specific timeline at this point. The STAP wants to be responsive to the OG, but their STAP role is a collateral duty for them, so progress will be steady but incremental.

Dick LeFebvre gave the DC trip report. John Payne, Karla Kolash, Tom Lonnie, Ken Taylor and Dick met with several congressional staffers, DOI staff and staff from various other agencies to spread the word about the initiative, its accomplishments and to gain support. A level of support that was not previously there has been secured. The Murkowski staffer understood and was very supportive as was Senator Stevens' staff. Lynn Scarlett and Steve Mosher were very supportive of the initiative. There will be continued and increased emphasis on accomplishments and it is felt this will increase support. The Business Plan and Annual Operating Plan were distributed. Ken Taylor added there have been Congressional staffing changes since the last time they were in DC. John reiterated the importance of staying in touch with those persons to continue to push the initiative. John said the upcoming months will be crucial, even if the administration stays Republican. Tom Melius suggested the district Congressional staff receive the same information. Tom Lonnie said the DC trip should at least occur annually. He also said having state, federal, and local representation was very important. During the meeting with Dale Hall, it was apparent that there is a great need to keep the Assistant Secretary's Office involved in the initiative to secure adequate funding. With global climate change being a hot topic, they want to see more from this group. John Payne said the only negative comment about NSSI was that there was not a conservation representative on the STAP. This has since been corrected. Tom Melius was unable to attend, but felt the DC trip was valuable. A full report is available on [www.northslope.org](http://www.northslope.org)

#### **Status of the Science Technical Advisory Panel:**

The charter has been signed for the STAP. It only had minor language corrections. The Secretary signed it on April 9, 2008. It will expire in April 2010.

**ACTION:** In the future, the charter will be more tightly tracked once it is sent to the Secretary.

#### **Oversight Group Charter Additions:**

A discussion on adding the National Weather Service as an advisor to the Oversight Group. John feels this would be of great benefit especially since NWS is already planning long-term needs for Alaska. Ken Taylor moved to accept them as an advisor and Tom Melius seconded.

**ACTION:** The National Weather Service will be added as an advisor to the Oversight Group.

Ken Taylor recommended involving DEC and EPA in meetings, not necessarily as advisors. The Coast Guard could also be involved. John Payne has had some dialogue with the Coast Guard. They will also be bringing a cutter up in the summer and offered to assist with some studies.

**ACTION:** The possibility of adding the DEC, EPA and Coast Guard in advisory roles will be discussed at further length during the next meeting. Presentations on what these agencies' roles would be and their views of NSSI's role will be presented. Letters will be sent to these agencies, inviting them meetings in the future.

### **Review of Draft FY 2009 Operating Plan:**

Dick LeFebvre recommended keeping this document as a living document until the meeting in September. John Payne reported on the meeting frequency of the STAP and Staff Committee. The budget was based on the early planning target allocation. This could change depending on interfaces with congressional staff, etc. John said the NSSI needs to be more conscious of eventually bringing on a legacy staff. The vice Adam Melhorn position has been delayed until at least June. Filling the position in FY 09 will be contingent upon the budget. He also wants it to be a living document. Future comments are welcome. This report will be used for Congress and yearly after that. There were two new items added, an Oil and Gas Best Practices Symposium and a Fisheries Workshop. NSSI will work with the Alaska Chapter of the American Fisheries Society to plan a half-day session at their meeting in the fall of FY 08, and would use that session as a springboard to plan the NSSI sponsored North Slope Fisheries Workshop for the fall of 2009. John would like comments so he could have a second reiteration of the plan for the June meeting.

Jon Kurland noted that the efforts of the Staff Committee and STAP to define the management concerns and science needs to provide a basis for NSSI prioritization was central to the NSSI purpose. Consequently, he felt the fact that this is underway needs to highlight in the annual operating plan and Congressional report.

### **FWS – Arctic Strategy- Conserving Fish and Wildlife populations in a changing landscape:**

Deb Rocque presented a powerpoint presentation to the group (to be posted on the NSSI website).

### **Questions/Comments:**

There is clearly opportunity for collaboration between the FWS Arctic Strategy and the NSSI. It was mentioned that there may be a way to tie the NSSI Science Technical Advisory Panel into this effort since they have some past monitoring experience in this area. It was stated that there is collaboration at the field level, but it is good to see it at the managerial level as well.

**ACTION:** Deb will send John and Denny notification of any upcoming scoping meetings and notes from any scoping meetings they may have missed. NSSI will do its best to facilitate collaboration between agencies and academia in a manner that help this effort succeed.

### **North Slope GIS Land Cover Matrix resulting from request of the OG:**

A matrix of the various Land Cover initiatives (LandFire, Ducks Unlimited, GAP and GINA) was requested by the Oversight Group at the last meeting. The matrix was handed out and a copy is available at [www.northslope.org](http://www.northslope.org)

**ACTION:** None

**Oil and Gas Best Practices Symposium:**

John Payne briefed the group on the proposal for an Oil and Gas Best Practices Symposium that Bill Streever, STAP, proposed. John said the Canadian government has a strong interest in working with NSSI to have a productive symposium in 2009. They want NSSI to co-sponsor.

**Questions/Comments:** Tom Melius asked what NSSI's role in sponsorship would be. John said they have been asked to assist with travel costs and assistance in developing the agenda. It is projected to be a maximum \$50,000 commitment. The group would like to see the exact costs. John suggested that NSSI find a third party they could pass the money to. John Kurland asked who has sponsored them in the past. The Oil and Gas industry and Canadian government have been past sponsors. The agenda would be more geared to the North Slope. Dick LeFebvre would like to see a draft agenda before the NSSI endorses. John Payne said they would have to establish a sub-committee to create an agenda and it probably would not be done until the fall. Brent Sheets said in the past about 200-300 people have attended these workshops. Tom Lonnie asked if it would identify both on-shore and off-shore exploration. The workshop would address both. He cited a workshop done in Wyoming, through the Western Governor's Association that did include agency, industry, NGOs and academia involvement. Bob Schneider asked how this would be different from the large oil and gas symposium AOGA has each September. John Payne does not know at this point what the specific differences it would be, but it would be longer, about four days. Bob asked if the outcome would be establishing best practices to be used by the agencies. Tom Lonnie said in the past they would develop best practices and these were of great use to lessees and permittees. The agency also considered them as part of their national process when implementing an EA/EIS. John said it could also be a vehicle to view new technologies that can be employed. Denny said that though nobody had yet specifically noted it, the Borough would also need to be involved. Dick recommended that more facts be gathered and be discussed further at the next meeting.

**ACTION:**

Bill Streever (STAP member) is requested to follow up more on this issue. Specifically, an outline for a potential agenda. This will be discussed further at the June meeting.

**Public Comment:**

None

**Executive Session:**

Meeting was adjourned at 10:40 a.m.