

NSSI OG Meeting
Alaska State Office
December 04, 2007

Present

John Payne
Adrienne Pilmanis
Carl Markon
Brent Sheets
Tim Jennings
Jon Kurland
Gary Schultz
Hans Neidig
Dave Yokel

Dick LeFebvre
June Thormosgard
Thomas Lonnie
Karla Kolash
John Goll
Dee Williams
Tom Melius
Ashley Bannister

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

Welcome and introductions, Dick LeFebvre

Dick greeted the group. Members of the group stated their names and affiliations.

Introduction; Past minutes Approval; New Agenda Items:

No new agenda items.

A review of the June and November meetings was discussed. A call for more terse and precise minutes as opposed to verbatim was made. The minutes will be scaled to be more precise and will be sent out expediently. Once the OG suggests changes to the minutes and changes are made, a follow-up email with the revised minutes should be sent to the OG.

ACTION:

The June minutes were approved; The November minutes will be approved following revision based on input by OG.

Follow-up minutes will be sent to the OG once changes are made.

Minutes will be more concise and terse in content.

Director's Report:

Land cover meetings were held in Anchorage and Fairbanks in November. The meetings went well and a list of needs was composed by the field staff in the area of remote sensing. There will be a follow up with UAF tomorrow.

Sustained arctic systems in Stockholm were very interesting and they are ahead of what the U.S. has implemented in the Arctic. John brought some of the health and subsistence concerns. The Arctic Observing Network document came out today. Input is needed. GINA deals with the more local things.

John thanked the OG for meeting with him. John Goll asked if John would put together a summary once all the meetings with the agencies are complete. A summary will be completed and submitted to the OG.

The first call of nominations for the STAP closed yesterday. There are five nominees for five positions. Three of the nominees were repeat nominees. Alison Cooke has decided not to participate this year.

NSSI charter renewal came out in the FRN with Sharon Warren's assistance. The announcement closes December 17.

Tom Lonnie asked about the process. John Payne explained the process. The recommendations go from the chair to the Secretary. Tom Lonnie will also have to co-sign since BLM is the administrative agency.

ACTION:

None at this time.

Business/Implementation Plan-Presentation and Discussion:

John Payne introduced the draft NSSI business plan to the OG. He asked for the OG to review it and give constructive feedback with expanded comments. He is asking for feedback by Christmas.

John explained the process he used when developing the plan. He presented a PowerPoint presentation of the proposed plan and gave the group a handout of the objectives.

John gave an overview of the potential areas of risk and changing environment. Two handouts were discussed: Meeting Legislative Goals and Operational Progress. NSSI is currently looking for a new staff member at UAF for GINA.

The NSSI website hits have went up to 50,000 hits recently. John Goll asked if there is tracking of what pages are being hit. John Payne will ask if that can be done.

The project database is on line and available for use.

John asked for the OG to focus on what the specific goals of NSSI should be. The goals have to be pared down and be more specific.

An annual workshop was suggested for interface between the various groups. A suggestion to bring the Science Technical Committee in on the second day was made.

John Payne asked for the OG input on budget matters. He mentioned that we need to know what is going on around the world with climate change, remote sensing, etc. John suggested that NSSI should look for outside partners.

The NSSI annual report to Congress is due in August 2008 and every year after that. John asked the group to develop an outline for the Secretary of the NSSI milestones, engaging the Staff Committee in the process. The OG should validate the contents of the report prior to it being submitted to Congress. Tom Melius asked if a walking back timeline had been created. John Payne and staff are working on that. His goal is to have it ready for review by June 1.

Questions/Comments:

How will the draft plan come out? By email. Will there be a meeting to discuss it or do they give feedback by email. The OG feels they need a good product. Dick suggested scheduling a time to have a work session prior to having this report out. Karla asked where the due date came from. John said he wanted to be able to provide a more polished draft to the group. Brent said the Dec. deadline would work well. Karla suggested everyone share their input by email.

ACTION:

OG will provide their comments on the draft report by Christmas. Another meeting will be held in January to discuss a more polished draft.

NSSI Program Staff:

Adrienne Pilmanis is on detail until February 9, 2008.

A vacancy for vice Adam Melhorn, Natural Resource Specialist position, GS 7/9/11 was advertised. It was advertised as a thirteen month term position. John would like to re-advertise. Tom said he would feel comfortable with a four year term to be extended each year.

John addressed the group with the NSSI staffing issues. The staffing is currently as follows:

Executive Director

Senior Technical Specialist position- Adrienne filling role, this would be a 12-13 term position if filled.

Staff Assistant- This is not a permanent position. Currently part-time staff assistant shared with BLM DSD.

Tom Melius suggested that a meeting with the agency staff would assist in this process. John Goll also said this would be a demonstration of coordination to Congress.

ACTION:

The Executive Director will submit a business plan, and work/travel plan to the OG by Christmas for review.

A collaboration meeting will be held late-March/early April with the Staff Committee group to discuss NSSI direction. It is hopeful that the business plan and annual work/travel plans will be completed by then and can be incorporated into the meeting.

The OG will review the business plan and submit revisions to the Executive Director for a finalized business plan.

John Payne will complete the work/travel plan with guidance from the OG.

The Executive Director will draft an agenda for the meeting.

STAP Task # 1-Handout:

John discussed the STAP Task # 1 handout. This handout outlines the monitoring efforts the STAP feels are important. This includes long term monitoring. A question was asked if this list was comprised thinking there was already studies going on. John said that the STAP Task # 2 would take on-going studies in to consideration. Tom Melius said he feels the first list of 12 should be solid before we proceed to the next step. He asked how to make sure we get the most comprehensive list possible. John said he feels the STAP and OG could look at the list and make suggestions on how to prioritize the list. The OG would like to see the comprehensive list. A question on what criteria would be used to make those decisions. The OG would like an explanatory paragraph as to why they chose the items they chose. John noted that request. John reiterated that the list was not done in priority order and was meant to be a suggestion for the OG. Karla suggested that having a STAP sub-group be present to explain the list. John Goll said he sees the list as a good overview to start with. John said it was suggested that change on the North Slope be monitored during the Remote Sensing meetings. This is already being done in other countries. This could be done in the U.S. through coordination with NWS. This is the type of collaboration that NSSI should take part in.

ACTION:

OG wants an extended list and discussion to follow to cut the list down to a realistic size.

OG wants explanations on the list of why and what work is already being done.

Establish and utilize standard protocols.

John Payne work with John Kelley to expand the list and with the Staff Committee to make the list more deliverable.

Open Action Items:

John is in the process of setting up a schedule for OG meetings.

The task list for the STAP committee was assigned on November 1. Some have been addressed, but some of the committees do not have lead representation yet. A discussion ensued. The OG asked why the Executive Director does not function as the lead. The consensus of the group is that there needs to be direction for the Staff Committee and the Executive Director should be the Chairperson. If not the Executive Director, a member of the Committee should be appointed as chair.

Budget for NSSI

Website: John and Adrienne are working on getting the bid out.

GINA: In the budget packet

ACTION:

The Executive Director will act as the Lead for the Staff Committee until they find a lead to provide direction and organization for the group.

The OG wants meetings agenda/items at least one week in advance.

Old Tabled Agenda Items/Other Items Discussed:

The open items were reviewed and will be reiterated prior to each meeting.

ACTION: None at this time.

Upcoming Meetings:

The OG Meeting scheduled was discussed. During this interim period of time, the group should meet more often. Once the business plan is developed, meetings could be less often. John also suggested the joint meeting with the Staff Committee and STAP should be in Fairbanks. The group also discussed the annual OG meeting that should take place in Barrow. Dick LeFebvre asked John to bring a proposed meeting schedule to the joint meeting for review. A suggestion was made for an OG meeting late January-early Feb. to discuss business plan and finalize. A joint meeting would then be held in March or April.

ACTION:

Another OG meeting will be held late January or early February to discuss and finalize the business plan.

The joint meeting will be held in March or April.

John will add an executive session time period to each agenda for future meetings.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:37 a.m.