

NSSI STAP Meeting
Alaska State Office
September 27, 2007

Present

John Payne, NSSI
Adrienne Pilmanis, NSSI
Matthew Sturm, USACRREL
John Kelley, UAF
Bob Winfrey, NPS
Dave Yokel, BLM
Caryn Rae, Conoco Philips
Allison Cook, BP

Bob Shuchman, MTRI
Doug Kane, UAF
Dan Reed
Andrew Balsler, UAF
Robert Suydam, NSB
Gary Schultz, ADNR
Bill Streever, BP
Wendy Loya, Wilderness Society

All handouts (agenda, list of tasks, etc.) and presentations referenced in these notes are located on the NSSI website: www.northslope.org

Welcome and introductions, John Kelley:

John Kelley greeted the group. Members of the group stated their names and affiliations.

Overview of NSSI, John Payne:

John Payne gave a PowerPoint presentation overview of NSSI that highlighted these topics:

- The NSSI timeline to date
- The NSSI goal.
- Section 348 of Energy Policy Act.
- Status of NSSI positions
- Accomplishments to date
- Plans for future actions

What we have done:

- Placed four gauging stations in the NPRA.
- The Project Database is installed at this point with minimal input from other agencies to date. It is very important that all members have project input into the database to insure accuracy. A complete project database will help insure maximum cooperative efforts and help avoid unintended duplication.
- Land-cover protocol development and change detection program agreement has been signed with Ducks Unlimited.
- Water Quality Remote Sensing was bid on and contracted to MTRI.
- Two workshops given: Caribou and GIS/Remote Sensing. We have a good start on understanding the caribou data, but the goals of the workshop were not met to the extent of differences in mitigation between federal and state leases were not discussed toward understanding those differences.

- Established close relationships with UAF and other institutions toward the goal of understanding their programs and relating agency needs.
- The STAP was invited to the interagency arctic policy committee meetings as a non-member.

What we still need to do:

- Identify multi-jurisdictional opportunities. The staff committee has made some limited progress on this one, but we still have a long way to go.
- Add value through all levels of organization. It is clear member agency field personnel and managers do not have a sufficient level of understanding of NSSI and its goals and objectives.
- Address science and management challenges across multiple disciplines and agencies. Many agencies and disciplines are still “stove piping” information. This makes locating and sharing of such information difficult at best. Many local managers and staff have “localized” needs that are not being addressed. Can NSSI address local needs and still be effective on a larger scale?
- Improve access to on-going research and traditional knowledge.
- Deal with any misperceptions of what NSSI is. OG directs us to bridge the gaps between the agencies.

What we need to continue to do:

- Encourage and facilitate collaboration and cooperation among agencies to minimize duplication of efforts.
- Identify priority inventory, monitoring and research needs not currently addressed by mandates and increase access to that information. The Energy Policy Act mandates NSSI in this regard.
- Facilitate collaboration between Interagency Staff Committee and STAP. This would help STAP better understand agency mandates and programs that could result in utilizing the STAP in a more proactive manner.

A discussion ensued and a member of the group stated that there is a general misconception about what NSSI does. It was also mentioned that some people assume that BLM is the funding agency for NSSI. This is not accurate. BLM provides oversight and executes the budget, but the money comes from designated funding within the Secretary’s budget.

A conversation on what the STAPs role is ensued. John Kelley stated that according to the charter the STAP is here to answer questions that the OG has, not provide them with information we want them to hear. Although historically the STAP has come up with the things, not the OG, we need to go by the charter. The group asked why there is not a steady flow of questions from the OG to answer. John Kelley said that in trying to follow the charter, unless the OG gives the STAP questions to answer, the process stagnates. This is a learning process. State and Federal agencies working together and asking this panel for advice is a new concept. This board is supposed to be neutral in dealing with issues. John Kelley said that John Payne’s job is to encourage the OG to use the STAP more. Trust has to be developed and a decision of how to translate information to the OG has to be made. It was also mentioned that the group needed

clear direction from the OG. **ACTION ITEM: INCREASE THE AWARENESS OF THE STAP WITH THE OG AND PROVIDE MEANINGFUL TASKS FOR THE GROUP.**

The Director and staff committee are working on protocols to help engage the STAP in meaningful ways. We are trying to have a staff committee meeting prior to OG meetings to make sure any proposals are heard and viable feedback is provided to the STAP. Robert Suydam said one of the things that will help the STAP be better informed is more information within the group being distributed by the STAP Chair. John Payne said he would work with the STAP chair to make the assignments more visible and information flow better between members.

Status of Science Technical Advisory Panel Membership, John Payne, John Kelley:

John Kelley announced that John Payne is the new Director of NSSI and congratulated him. Appointee terms were discussed as follows:

- The initial appointees were for 1, 2 or 3 years.
- The revised charter has not been published in the Federal Register. Along with the charter revision is a call for nominations for the one year appointments.
- A second call for nominations will be made for the two year appointments after the Federal Register is published for the one year nominations. This is a Federal Advisory Committee Act requirement
- Hopefully, appointments for both the one and two years nominations will be made in early January 2008.
- Five persons were put in for 1 year terms, these are expired already (January 2007).
- Five for two years up in January 2008.
- Five were for three years, expiring in January 2009.
- Five alternate names were also forwarded in the original call for nominations.
- The Secretary has the final decision on who serves on the board.
- We can voluntarily ask for people to extend their terms until the charter is complete. The Director has polled all members with expired terms to voluntarily extend. No one has declined to serve.
- New appointments will be for three years from the original appointment expiration.
- Every year there will be a call for nominations for five people.
- Every two years a reauthorization of the charter has to go out. This is a Federal Advisory Committee Act requirement.
- Those who want to serve a second term will have to re-apply.
- **ACTION ITEM:** John Payne will notify all persons who are affected .
- Dan Reed asked about the requirement for conflict of interest statements.
- **ACTION ITEM:** John Payne will look into this for validity. These go to the ethics office for the Secretary.

A discussion ensued. Bob Winfrey said this is a program we are trying to build. There has been a lot of turnover in the OG and this affects the STAP. Getting a budget and federal regulations is a significant step in the right direction. It has been a challenge. This group will function at its best once the OG presents questions that we can address from a broad perspective.

The charter was discussed at length. There were numerous concerns on the limitations of the charter for this group to provide advice to the OG when it is not solicited by the OG. Maybe the charter needs to be changed to reflect an ability to present unsolicited advice. **ACTION ITEM:** Bob Winfree suggests that John Payne present the proposed direction for the STAP to the OG and try and get their approval.

Membership was discussed at length. A member asked the reasons why some participants were not at the meeting. John Payne said he has not heard any of the members say they wanted to leave and was told they had other commitments. Robert Suydam said he has heard that kind of talk within the group. He feels this is a call for this group to begin making progress so it is not completely lost. Caryn Rae commented on the OG meetings. She has been to a few meetings

and did not have confidence that the OG could provide direction, they seemed reactive. She feels it would be helpful to go over the last OG meeting to see where they are at **ACTION ITEM: SEND NOTES OF OG MEETINGS TO STAP. THESE ARE ALSO POSTED ON THE WEBSITE AFTER THE OG APPROVES THE MINUTES.** Matthew Sturm said this could be more successful if we could suggest ways we could be utilized to the OG. Doug Kane said there is very little communication back and forth between our group and the OG. Caryn Rae brought up the point that there was previous discussion on having at least one yearly meeting between the OG and STAP. **ACTION ITEM: INVITE STAP MEMBERSHIP TO JOINT MEETING IN THE NEAR FUTURE.**

Fiscal Year 2007 Budget Review, John Payne:

- The goal is to have a business plan for the group.
- NSSI budget is not a line item budget
- DOI was under a CR all of 07.
- NSSI projects put on hold because of the budget situation.
- Amount obligated for gauging stations was \$170, 000. Two stations will be placed in ANWR, one in NPRA, but a one-day subcommittee meeting is planned for the NPRA location. **ACTION ITEM: PLAN A ONE DAY SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING TO DISCUSS NPRA GAUGING STATION PLACEMENT.**
- OG made a decision in June to carryover leftover FY 07 funds to FY 08.
- Carryover amount was \$762,000.00

A lengthy budget discussion ensued. There was concern that some people feel that STAP members are benefiting from NSSI funds and that the group needs to operate transparently to avoid this perception. John Payne stated that the OG typically handles budget matters, but they are a matter of public record. He further stated that since the STAP, then called the STG, was developed, projects have been adopted on a competitive basis. All projects now have to go through grants.gov to be considered. Once John gets it from grants.gov, an internal panel has to look at it and make sure it meets the requirements. If it does not, it is sent back. A suggestion was made that people who are involved in projects probably should not be involved in the group. John Kelley said this such perceptions are taken very seriously and the recent interests was handled very well. The general consensus was that the group needs to be careful of how they are perceived by the public. People advising should not be here to plug their own agencies' programs, but to make sure we have the best program possible. If we are supporting the sciences' needs instead of an agencies own agenda, we should be fine. Robert Suydam reiterated that the group should be privy to what the budget is and what it is being used for so the group can provide the best advice possible. John Payne said that how the budget is allocated is the OG's responsibility, and the STAP should not be constrained by budgets in the sense that advise should be forwarded without budgetary constraints unless the OG directs otherwise. It is the responsibility of the OG to make budgetary decisions, not the STAP. Robert Suydam said that if this panel comes through with advice, there should be some projected cost figures. That point was agreed upon.

The 07 budget was \$2 million. BLM is takes 10% for overhead. The \$1.8 million left will be distributed widely. The budget is still a moving target since it remains within allocated funding within BLM it is discretionary. The Department of the Interior recognizes the BLM as the administrative agency for NSSI and is considering a "line-item" directive that would serve to

solidify NSSI budget. If NSSI is fully staffed, approximately \$550,000 will go to administration. However, because of the relative “softness” of the budget, BLM does not want to hire permanent staff for NSSI. This is also being worked on at the DOI level.

Organization of the Advisory Panel and Sub-Committees (Accomplishments), John Kelley

The various sub-committees were discussed. John Kelley said we need to get a closer relationship with the OG and determine how we can be more effective. Monitoring is a very important component. Robert Suydam passed out information on monitoring (**ACTION ITEM: INSURE HANDOUT IS PART OF MINUTES**).

The Caribou and Remote Sensing Workshops were successful. UAF deferred most of the cost for the workshops. The Caribou report was challenged by FWS and BLM for a few unsubstantiated recommendations, thus a final proceedings document is still being worked on. The overall proceedings are on the website: www.northslope.org

Bob Shuchman said the Remote Sensing Sub-committee was more formal. He has notes. Sub-committee determined that they needed external participants from UAF. They researched it and it was reported to the OG. There was a set of deliverables for GINA. They were presented to the OG. Bob will write an executive summary. He would like it to be submitted to the STAP for markup prior to submitting to the OG. He made sure that there is no conflict of interest within the project. The group did the job they were tasked with. Robert Suydam said it is the perception of a conflict of interest that is the problem. The results will be posted on the website: www.northslope.org

Caryn Rae said a presentation of the monitoring objectives and what is being done to address them would be very helpful.

Project Database: Money was not expended. **ACTION ITEM: ADRIENNE WILL WORK WITH NPRB TO FINALIZE THE PROJECT DATABASE.**

Website: This was not funded in FY 07 because of the workload under grants.gov. It will go through a competitive process.

GIS is a long-term process. The energy companies were asked to use the money they use for University Studies to assist funding this. It was brought up that Ken Taylor (former NSSI Director) had said that industry would not be asked to provide financial support. Caryn said it was not additional monies; it was money that was going to the University anyway. It was just designated for this program for this purpose. Bob Winfree said that is why coordination is so important. NSSI cannot dictate to industry what to do, but to provide an avenue of coordination.

Black Brant Study: The OG made the decision to forward fund this project with a sunset date of 2008.

Fisheries workshop: Not planned for FY 07, but may be for FY 08.

Hydrologic Gauging Stations: Given \$170,000.00 for three stations.

Digital Landcover: Awarded \$50,000.00 for contract with Ducks Unlimited to develop protocols.

Water Quality Assessments: Money was obligated to a contract in FY 07, but because of the late acceptance of the contract no work was accomplished in FY 07. This project will have a field component implemented in FY's 08 and 09.

A discussion ensued. Bill Streever asked what motivated NSSI to come to industry in 2007 and ask for additional monies to support GINA. John Payne said it was because there was no budget yet and a concern with getting GINA funded. Bill Streever pointed out that all companies operating within Alaska do not hold the same interests. NPRA is a case in point. There is a definite company culture. Alaska Oil & Gas Association (AOGA): Energy Companies are all members. This could be a vehicle for proposals to industry. There a various culture to address.

Wendy Loya: There are also other groups within Alaska who work with government agencies who have interest in GINA. John said that was an original concern with how to involve the non-governmental organizations in the initiative.

Expectations and Functions of the Advisory Panel, John Kelley: Tasks for STAP:

John Kelley presented the group with a handout on the proposed expectations of the advisory panel and a list of task to be completed. The group reviewed this and discussed the potential tasks.

Task 1. Mandates of NSSI:

- Group priorities: To collaborate and coordinate to bring forth issues of inventory, monitoring and research.
- Monitoring issues are on the table now.

A discussion ensued. Bill Streever is confused on this because it seems to focus solely on the NPRA and he thought NSSI was looking at the entire North Slope. Yes. Caryn said that long term monitoring data should be considered in this too. Everyone's list will be somewhat different. We cannot fund everything. We have to decide what the priorities are. Discussion ensued. Robert Suydam said this process could take a long time. John Kelley would like to have a workshop on monitoring. It is different than research; it is long term and requires sustained funding. Monitoring was discussed at length. John said the BLM Research Monitoring Team have provided some background work in relation to NPRA that may be useful for this exercise. These need to be sorted out and prioritized in some way.

Assignment to the group: John Kelley wants the group to come up with a priority list for the OG.

ACTION ITEM: Due Date: October 26, 2007

ACTION ITEM: Task 2. Reports on topics in task 1 to include justifications for monitoring.

The following points on monitoring were brought up:

- Justifications for monitoring decisions, perimeters and commonalities that may exist between the topics should be addressed
- Matthew Sturm suggested two separate lists, monitoring and over-arching list.
- What protocols used to monitor should be set forth
- Length of monitoring system must address pattern appropriately. Example: Whatever is monitored should be important all across the North Slope.
- Determine what and how long you monitor.

A lengthy discussion on monitoring ensued. Wendy Loya said that all the science used will end up in the NEPA process (land use authorizations proposed by federal entities, or having federal nexus, are subject to the NEPA process) so it is real important for this group to understand the group's role in this process. This group would be used as a method of continuously updating this information. Robert Suydam said we have to prioritize our list within a transparent framework due to high visibility issues, legal issues, etc. John Kelley said this should be done by January 08 so the list needs to be limited. Dan Reed said in monitoring we should not be addressing causality. John Kelley said we would be looking at things in the long term i.e.: 5 years etc. Additional studies would have to be done to determine the cause of any trends or phenomena observed: hypotheses could be developed. Discussion ensued: This process is to provide the OG with a priority list of what to monitor each year. We are on a five-year business plan. This process will provide buy-in for the OG. Bob Winfree said the staff committees would play an important role in this process since they are the individuals that will have the insight into their respective agency mandates. Bob Winfree said there may be a need for some trend analysis for some of this monitoring. A 2-day meeting to compile on this information in January would be a good idea. Task one will go to OG in November. Task two is rationale. Robert Suydam said this is a substantial approach. Matt Sturm suggested the STAP put the recommendations to the OG in a formalized way in task one. Get buy-in and go to the next step. Address the broad issues first. John Kelley suggested that he and John Payne work on a draft letter explaining the task. Task one would just outline the fundamental principles of any monitoring process. A good definition for monitoring is needed. John Kelley wants a sub-group to do this.

Assignments to the group: John Kelley appointed Matt Strum, Caryn Rae, Robert Suydam, Dan Reed, and Bill Streever to the sub-committee to come up with an outline of the fundamental principles of the monitoring process to include a good definition of monitoring. They will have this in a week. AKA "Preamble?"

Task 2.5 Bob Winfree – do an analysis of projects that are doing these things already

Due Date: January 10, 2008

Task 3. This task cannot be completed until the OG gives direction.

Task 4. Prioritize data sets and advising GINA continuously on needs. This step is dependent on funding. This assignment was previously given by the OG, but a sub-group is needed to continually give this guidance. This is particularly needed for flora and fauna. Action item It will involve key players to understand these issues and address best practices.

Due Date: Establish immediately and continuing indefinitely.

ACTION ITEM: Task 5. The STAP Chair is to establish a sub-committee to recommend a location for the authorized hydrologic gauging station in the NPRA

ACTION ITEM: Task 6. Develop a subcommittee to provide advice to the OG to provide a land cover database for the North Slope. This will involve collaboration with Ducks Unlimited in the development of protocols.

Assignment to the group: Invitations will be made to the STAP chair and select members to participate in the protocol development

Due Date: By mid 2008.

Questions:

Caryn Rae asked about the role of the interagency staff group. John Kelley said their role was to oversee the Science Plan. This staff group has worked independent of the STAP to this point. John Payne wants direct interfacing with this group in the future. Robert Suydam asked how that would work. John said the details have not been worked out yet. Caryn Rae suggested that the sub-committees within their agencies meet on a regular basis. She asked for a list of the persons in the staff committees and John Payne will provide the list.

Alaska Monitoring and Assessment Program (AMAP), Doug Dasher, Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC):

A PowerPoint presentation was given on the Alaska Monitoring Program. It may be viewed on the website: www.northslope.org

Questions:

Bob Winfree asked if the sample points are set points. Doug Dasher said not all of them are. This gives them the ability to come back and decide what sites are permanent; rotating panel designs can be accomplished. Some of the sites were random samples.

Bill Streever thanked Doug Dasher for the presentation.

Long Term Monitoring Perspectives (BP), Diane Sanzone:

Bill Streever introduced Diane and introduced the subject and objectives of her presentation.

Diane presented a PowerPoint presentation on BP's long term monitoring practices. Diane used to work for the National Park Service. There is a lot of data from the last four years.

Questions:

John Kelley commented on the importance of time scaling in these studies and asked how BP arrived at that in their studies. Diane said they kept it simple and used a matrix approach.

Caryn Rae asked what kind of data management system BP uses. Diane said they would like to create their own GIS data base that could be fed into the NSSI database at some point. They

would also like coordinate the development of their? database with GINA. Caryn said Concoco Philips has developed a protocol for sharing metadata. IT has to be in a certain format to be accepted. She can share that with others who need it. Protocols are crucial. Matt Sturm asked why a clearinghouse does not exist yet. The National Science Foundation is beginning to take that on. In the Arctic Observatory Network (AON) discussions, that has always been a big part of the discussion. It is largely due to egos. Bill Streever said there seems to be a shift in thinking now. Collaboration is becoming more common.

The group discussed how they see monitoring within NSSI. The group consensus was that it should be a coordinating entity, not a monitoring entity. Matt Sturm said the two different models should be looked at. A project database is important. GINA will be used to store information and to be able to withdraw it when needed. Caryn Rae said if one of our tasks is to provide oversight for the studies being done in the North Slope, we need to know what information is being gathered. There are currently 57 met sites on the North Slope.

Back to tasks for advisory panel:

Public Comments:

Wendy Loya stated that there are two reports out on climate change. They were both very critical of Federal agencies incorporation of climate change impact on their programs. GAO report is available in hard copy form from John Payne.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:27 p.m.