



Facilitated by the U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution

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INTRODUCTION

The North Slope Science Initiative (NSSI) asked the U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution (the Institute) to facilitate a two-day retreat to help the Oversight Group reflect upon its past accomplishments, define the future direction of the NSSI, and improve its functioning and operations. The following are work products from that successful retreat.

PARTICIPANTS

Oversight Group Members:

Bud Cribley, State Director of Alaska, Bureau of Land Management

Dan Fitzgerald, Special Counsel, Mayor's Office, North Slope Borough

Ed Fogels, Deputy Commissioner, State of Alaska, Department of Natural Resources

James Kendall, Alaska Regional Director, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management Regulation and Enforcement (BOEMRE)

Jon Kurland, Assistant Regional Administrator for Habitat Conservation, Alaska Region, National Marine Fisheries Service

Carl Markon, Deputy Regional Director, Alaska Area, U.S. Geological Survey

LaVerne Smith, Deputy Regional Director, Alaska Region, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Doug Vincent-Lang, Chair, NSSI; Special Assistant to the Commissioner, Alaska Game and Fish

Robert Winfree, Vice-Chair NSSI; Director, Alaska Region, National Park Service

Executive Director Staff:

John Payne, Executive Director, NSSI

Jason Taylor, Acting Deputy Director, NSSI; Landscape Ecologist, Bureau of Land Management, National Operations Center

Facilitators:

Debra Drechsel, Senior Program Manager / Senior Facilitator, U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution

Patricia Lewis, Senior Program Associate, U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution

NORTH SLOPE SCIENCE INITIATIVE THREE-YEAR STRATEGY

Developed by Oversight Group
8/25/2011

BASIS FOR FOCUS STATEMENT

The North Slope Science Initiative's (NSSI) mandate is broad. In developing a focus for the next three years, the Oversight Group considered local, state, and national priorities (for example, the North Slope Borough's goal to sustain resources and the local indigenous culture, the Governor's Secure Alaska's Future Initiative, and the White House Energy Blueprint) and NSSI's potential role related to science needs in the Arctic. The Oversight Group recognizes NSSI's unique capacity to contribute to issues related to resource development on Alaska's North Slope.

FOCUS STATEMENT

NSSI's focus for the next three years will be to identify future development scenarios on Alaska's North Slope and to prioritize the collection, and ensure the communication, of scientific information and contemporary and traditional local knowledge needed for sound and timely decision making.

OVERVIEW OF GOALS

The **Oversight Group** acknowledges the excellent work of the **Executive Director, Senior Staff Committee and the Science Technical Advisory Panel** in developing the **Emerging Issues and Connectivities** papers. The **Overarching Priorities** from the **Connectivities** paper guided the NSSI Oversight Group in reaching decisions regarding future direction which are outlined below. (Note: The language in *italics* comes from the Connectivities paper. [Emphasis added.]

- **Overarching Priority 1:**

*Systematic assessment of the range of **potential development scenarios** for twenty years into the future in a manner that will contribute to refinements of specific research priorities*

Overarching Priority 1 will be covered in Goals 1 & 2 (described below).

- **Overarching Priority 2:**

*Systematic assessment of the range of **potential climate scenarios** for twenty years into the future in a manner that will contribute to the refinement of specific research priorities*

- **Overarching Priority 3:**

*Enhanced and well-organized collection of **climate and weather data** across the North Slope in a manner that will facilitate improved regional climate modeling, verification of climate models, and the application of data in research projects.*

Overarching Priorities 2 and 3 are being addressed by the Arctic Landscape Conservation Cooperative, the Alaska Climate Science Center, and others. NSSI will address these climate-related overarching priorities in the context of resource development by coordinating with these entities.

- **Overarching Priority 4:**
*Regional **coordination** of existing **long-term monitoring** projects*

Overarching Priority 4 will be covered in Goal 3.

- **Overarching Priority 5:**
*Renewed and systematic efforts to **improve communication among managers, residents, and scientists** through initiation of frequent “place-based” workshops*

Overarching Priority 5 will be covered in Goals 4 & 5.

NSSI GOALS

The Oversight Group identified five primary goals for this three-year plan. Each of the goals provides a direction for moving forward and the Oversight Group designated sideboards for developing objectives. Some goals also specify several objectives. The Oversight Group agreed that the Senior Staff Committee will identify a plan for moving each goal forward along with objectives to achieve each goal and convey those plans and objectives to the Oversight Group for review.

GOAL 1: Identify future development scenarios on Alaska’s North Slope, including on-shore and off-shore

Sideboards

- Timeline: Twenty (20) years into the future
- Scope: Oil, gas, minerals, and associated infrastructure; shipping, tourism; defense; ports; fishing; various development projects
- Resolution: Significant development (above the site scale)
- Define data limitations (e.g., intended use, scale, uncertainties, etc.)

GOAL 2: Identify information needs (reference NSSI’s Focus Statement above) for management decision-making relative to development scenarios in Goal 1

Sideboards

- Characterize environmental baseline, post-project, cumulative effects, trends
- Identify information needs across agencies (e.g., coastal erosion)
- Provide recommendations on which Emerging Issues should be addressed

Objectives

1. Review Emerging Issues and determine which are most relevant to decision making (relative to Goal 1)

2. Create matrix of management information needs (from Goal 2) and Emerging Issues (from Goal 2, Objective 1) that have aspects related to development decision making
3. Identify which aspects (from Goal 2, Objectives 1 & 2) are already addressed or are in-progress; identify gaps in an effort to fill information needs; identify potential opportunities for filling information gaps (i.e., via agency effort, engaging external scientist, etc.)

GOAL 3: Coordinate long-term monitoring relative to development scenarios (from Goal 1) and information needs (from Goal 2, including objectives) and the Emerging Issues

Sideboards / Objectives

- Identify inventory of existing monitoring efforts (monitored or intended to be monitored for ≥ 10 years)
- Identify gaps in needed monitoring
- Identify which variables should be monitored over what period(s) of time

GOAL 4: Improve coordination and communication among managers, residents, and scientists

Sideboards / Objectives

- Build upon lessons learned and recommendations from Barrow Workshop
- Identify workshops and dialogues needed to help move forward with Focus Statement
- Interpret science in a way that is relevant to local people and decision makers
- Identify outlets and appropriate communication vehicles to reach the intended audiences (e.g., radio, Internet, mailings)

GOAL 5: Develop NSSI marketing plan for multiple audiences

Sideboards

- Develop hard (handouts, factsheets, fliers) and soft copy (radio, web, video, etc)
- Engage marketing, public relation and publication specialists (from within agencies)
- Develop a “report” or other product that is uniquely identified with/as NSSI

Objectives

1. Provide recommendations to the Oversight Group on how to enhance NSSI’s identity as a comprehensive information source through:
 - Continued support of the Geographic Information Network of Alaska (GINA) catalog

- External dissemination
 - Enhance internal operations
2. Design a suite of recommended hard copy (paper) short communication vehicles that the NSSI Director and the Oversight Group can use to further the exposure of the NSSI at various public and governmental levels of knowledge
 3. Produce some recommended soft copy (radio programs, podcasts, videos) that can be used in public media venues

REAFFIRMATION

In addition to the forward looking goals established here, the Oversight Group recognizes the importance of the continuing work of the NSSI staff, and reaffirms its support for ongoing projects: for example, the NSSI catalog, projects database, and website.

NSSI ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

At the NSSI Oversight Group Retreat, members reviewed the roles and responsibilities previously identified by the Oversight Group members in their interviews with the U.S. Institute, and reached agreement on a set of roles and responsibilities for each of the following groups:

- I. The Oversight Group
- II. The Executive Director
- III. The Senior Staff Committee
- IV. The Science Technical Advisory Panel

I. Oversight Group

- A. Sets direction for NSSI and cascades that direction through member agencies
- B. Lays out a clear vision and sets goals and expectations
- C. Serves as the decision maker for NSSI priorities and activities
- D. Provides executive level leadership
- E. Provides a forum for looking forward
- F. Approves NSSI's annual Report to Congress

II. Executive Director

- A. Identifies decision points for Oversight Group
- B. Implements the Oversight Group's decisions
- C. Carries out direction from the Oversight Group through coordination with the Senior Staff Committee, Science Technical Advisory Panel, and others
- D. Manages the NSSI budget
- E. Promotes NSSI
- F. Develops NSSI's annual Report to Congress
- G. Speaks on behalf of NSSI but not on behalf of member agencies
- H. Consults with the Oversight Group Chair when the subject matter may be outside the normal operations of the initiative. For example, a request may be made of the NSSI for a response to a task that may conflict with a member agency (ies) policy or operations. The Executive Director and Chair may consult with other members as appropriate to draft the appropriate response.

III. Senior Staff Committee

- A. Is chaired by the NSSI Deputy Director
- B. Identifies the environmental issues and needs as assigned by the Oversight Group through the Deputy Director
- C. Advises their respective Oversight Group member
- D. Compiles input and information from across their respective agency; serves as a liaison between their respective Oversight Group member and their respective agency
- E. Reviews Science Technical Advisory Panel work and gives feedback to the Oversight Group

Additional comments provided by the Oversight Group regarding Senior Staff Committee engagement:

- Oversight Group members will clearly communicate to their respective Senior Staff Committee members and their supervisors:
 - The value of NSSI and time to contribute will be allocated accordingly
 - The Senior Staff Committee's role is critical
 - The tone is "collaboration"
 - To respond to the Deputy Director's requests
 - Senior Staff Committee members carry out NSSI's tasks and assignments

IV. Science Technical Advisory Panel (description of duties from Charter)

- A. Provides advice to the Oversight Group on proposed inventory, monitoring and research functions
- B. Advises the Oversight Group on scientific information relevant to the Oversight Group's mission
- C. Reviews selected reports to advise the Oversight Group on their content and relevance
- D. Reviews ongoing scientific programs of NSSI member organizations on the North Slope at the request of the member organizations to promote compatibility in methodologies and compilation of data
- E. Advises the Oversight Group on how to ensure that scientific products generated through NSSI activities are of the highest technical quality
- F. Periodically reviews the North Slope Science Plan and provides recommendations for changes to the Oversight Group
- G. Provides recommendations for proposed NSSI-funded inventory, monitoring, and research activities to the Oversight Group
- H. Provides other scientific advice as requested by the Oversight Group

Other comments provided by the Oversight Group regarding the Science Technical Advisory Panel:

- The duties set forth in the Science Technical Advisory Panel's Charter need to be acknowledged by NSSI
- Oversight Group provides clear direction and clarifies assignments; the Executive Director conveys these assignment, in more detail, to the Science Technical Advisory Panel
- Oversight Group should identify areas of expertise needed on Science Technical Advisory Panel in order to achieve goals and recruit scientists with that expertise to submit applications

ADAPTING TO / MITIGATING CLIMATE CHANGE TO ACCOMPLISH STEWARDSHIP GOALS

Retreat participants discussed how NSSI and other key organizations relate to one another in regard to adapting to/mitigating climate change to accomplish stewardship goals. Participants clarified that NSSI and the Arctic Landscape Conservation Cooperative operate in two different systems and have two different foci as outlined below. In addition, NSSI and the Arctic LCC (and other organizations) coordinate and cooperate with one another on climate related activities.

System in which NSSI operates:

- National
 - Permitting
- Regional
 - North Slope Science Initiative (development, inventory, monitoring, research)

System in which the Arctic Landscape Conservation Cooperative operates:

- National
- Regional
 - Alaska Climate Change Executive Roundtable
- Field/Landscape
 - Arctic Landscape Conservation Cooperative (science to inform conservation application, conservation, climate change)

Other key entities involved with climate change:

- NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION'S proposed National Climate Service
- U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
 - Eight regional Climate Science Centers (modeling etc., "basic" research, not "applied" research—but will have application).

"Climate Science Centers provide climate change impact data and analysis geared to the needs of fish and wildlife managers as they develop adaptation strategies in response to climate change." [DOI Secretary Salazar's ORDER NO. 3289, Amendment No. 1 dated February 22, 2010]

ACTION ITEMS

COMPLETED:

- **Roles and Responsibilities**
Who: Pat and Debra send John bullet points of roles for Oversight Group, Executive Director and Senior Staff Committee; John rewrites them and sends them out to Oversight Group
When: Week of August 29
- **Send draft retreat summary to the Oversight Group for review**
Who: Debra and Pat
When: September 2, 2011
- **Review and give input on the draft retreat summary to Debra and Pat**
Who: Oversight Group
When: September 8, 2011
- **Finalize retreat summary and send to Oversight Group**
Who: Pat and Debra
When: September 15

TO BE COMPLETED:

1. **Review the Charter and develop a first draft of revisions for Oversight Group review**
Who: John Payne
When: Send draft revisions to Oversight Group one week before Oct 2011 Oversight Group meeting, when it will be discussed. Finalize at January 2012 Oversight Group meeting.
2. **Send final retreat summary to Senior Staff Committee and schedule meeting with Senior Staff Committee** (possibly concurrent with Science Technical Advisory Panel).
Who: John Payne
When: By September 22
3. **Senior Staff Committee sends action plans to Oversight Group to accomplish five goals within three years** (assuming no new funding)
Who: SSC
When: One week before January 2012 NSSI Meeting
4. **Oversight Group meets and discusses how to implement the action plans**
Who: Oversight Group
When: January 2012 OG meeting
5. **Revisit budget and staffing at October 2011, October meeting**
 - Pursue “details” from other agencies such as DOI and NOAA

- Recruit university researchers
- Hire public affairs , communications, tech transfer positions (1 FTE)
-Transfer funds from NSSI Operations
- Convene meeting of all Communications staff from member agencies and parse assignments

Who: John Payne

When: Ongoing

CONCLUSION

Retreat participants recognized the success of the retreat and reaffirmed their appreciation of NSSI's value and their commitment to NSSI.