

North Slope Science Initiative

Report from the Executive Director

March 2, 2005

Meetings with Oversight Group Members: Since the January 2005 meeting of the Oversight Group, I have met with all members of the Oversight Group except BLM, ASRC and DNR to discuss each agency's priorities for NSSI, ideas for better access to agency research, inventory and monitoring reports, and to develop a list of current research, inventory and monitoring activities on the North Slope. We also discussed the structure and frequency of the Oversight Group meetings. Most were pleased with the concept of agency presentations at each, and several members expressed an interest in completing the agency overviews as soon as possible. It was suggested we lengthen the next two meetings to allow four agency presentations at each. All presentations will be given in PowerPoint and will be placed on the NSSI website with the consent of the agency. Once agency presentations are completed, we should consider presentations from the university, industry and others conducting research, inventory and monitoring activities on the North Slope.

Other Meetings: In an effort to better understand how other efforts (GEM, NPRB, and others) are structured and to determine how NSSI will fit within or take advantage of the reports, databases, etc. they provide, I attended portions of the following meetings in Anchorage: Marine Science Symposium, FWS Interagency Restoration, the NAS Arctic Observing System, and the Alaska Forum for the Environment. All provided an opportunity to discuss the NSSI with interested individuals and raise awareness of its existence. I also attended the High Latitude Ecological Observatory (HLEO) meeting in Fairbanks to meet several of the university professors involved in North Slope research efforts. There are numerous groups that have been formed or are trying to form to study the arctic, climate change, and other parameters relevant to the NSSI. A list of these and a brief explanation of their mission is appended to this report.

I also attended portions of two BLM Research and Monitoring Team (RMT) meetings to learn what they have accomplished to date that is relevant to NSSI future activities and how we can use their work as we move forward. The RMT has put considerable effort into identifying priority research, inventory and monitoring needs which will give us a solid starting point.

I met with Dr. Bill Streever (BP) to learn about the research they are conducting on restoration techniques associated with mud pit, pad or road removal on the North Slope. He provided reports on approximately 50 different North Slope restoration projects. I attended a ConocoPhillips workshop on extended reach drilling, the first of a series of workshops they plan to help resource agencies increase their understanding of oil exploration and development activities. BP provides a free two day workshop for agency

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personnel, usually in August, which is excellent, and ConocoPhillips is considering how they can supplement rather than duplicate BP's efforts.

Science Technical Group Charter: The charter for the Science Technical Group was sent to Interior solicitors in December 2004. Numerous phone calls and emails have been sent to encourage the reviewers to expedite its progress to the Secretary. We will work to complete this process over the next two weeks.

Other Activities: The draft Science Strategy was sent to the RMT and Oversight Group Staff Committee for review and comment. Comments have been received but have not yet been incorporated. During the meetings with individual Oversight Group members, several thought that this document should be a "living" document subject to change as necessary, and some commented that it is a lower priority than preparing for the D.C. briefings.

D.C Briefings: We are working through Interior in D.C. to set up NSSI briefings for Interior and congressional staff. No times or dates have yet been established, but we expect to have this completed next week and will notify Oversight Group members of times and locations once they are established. I have drafted talking points and am collecting appropriate photos, graphics and information for the D.C briefings. This will be completed early next week.