

# **North Slope Science Initiative**

## **Interim Report**

**Ken Taylor, Executive Director**

**September 6, 2006**

Draft changes to the charters for the Oversight Group and the Science Technical Group to make them parallel to the 2005 Energy Policy Act were developed for Oversight Group approval, reviewed and modified at the June 15<sup>th</sup> meeting and finalized for this meeting.

Recruitment for the NSSI assistant position was completed in early July, and nine applicants were interviewed. We had several well qualified individuals compete for this position, most from out of state. We selected Adam Mehlorn who is currently completing his M.S. in Natural Resources and Environmental Management. Adam has been working on accuracy assessments of the Hawaii Gap Analysis Program and has a strong background in special and hydrological GIS analysis. Adam will begin working with us October 2.

Interest was expressed by industry representatives conducting off-shore seismic work this summer in the Beaufort and Chuckchi Seas in working with the NSSI to coordinate off-shore studies addressing information needs of the resource agencies.

Logistics for an NSSI cooperative research effort between Altarum Institute, University of Michigan, BLM and ConocoPhillips to investigate new water quality sampling techniques were completed. All participants went through a day and a half of North Slope training required by industry prior to working on their leases. This project was successfully completed July 29-August 4 in the vicinity of the Alpine field and will be reported on during this meeting.

At the conclusion of their last meeting, the Science Technical Group requested another meeting which is scheduled for October 11 & 12 in Fairbanks at the BLM conference room. It was apparent at the last meeting that some education related to required and voluntary monitoring by industry at various phases of exploration and development is necessary, and much of the agenda will be devoted to this. Establishing a sub-group to address socio-economic and traditional ecological knowledge issues as requested by the Oversight Group was not possible at the last meeting due to absences of some key members. This will be addressed at the October meeting.

Considerable effort was expended soliciting agency contributions to the NSSI administration budget to get us through this fiscal year. The North Slope Borough provided \$30,000, the Alaska Department of Natural Resources provided \$20,000, and an NPR-A assistance grant to the North Slope Borough provided an additional \$12,500 in SFY 2006 through DNR and \$12,500 in SFY 2007 through the Ak. Dept. of Fish and Game.

## **Conferences**

None.

## **Meetings/Briefings**

Attended the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Energy Committee meeting June 20, Denver, CO.

Attended NSSI Science Technical Group meeting June 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>, Fairbanks.

Briefing on NSSI given to USGS Director of the Water Program, June 22, Anchorage.

Briefing on NSSI current activities given to the Commissioners of the U.S. Arctic Research Commission, June 29, Anchorage.

Briefing on NSSI given to USGS Director of Biology, July 27, Anchorage.

Briefing on NSSI given to BLM Western Regional Science Coordinator, July 27, Anchorage.

Nature conservancy discussion of upcoming climate change workshops and potential NSSI participation, August 8, Anchorage.

Met with John Kelley and Matthew Sturm (Chair and Vice-Chair of the Science Technical Group) to review products for Oversight Group presentation and plan agenda and speakers for the October Science Technical Group meeting. Met with Mark McNay, Alaska Department of Fish and Game staff contact to discuss populating the project database when software completed, August 14, Fairbanks.

Alaska Oil and Gas Association meeting with Assistant Secretary Johnny Burton, Congressional Quarterly Summit; Energy Exploration: Economics, The Environment and National Security, August 17, Anchorage.

Alaska Oceans Observing System meeting with NOAA directors to discuss AOOS progress in ocean sensors, relationship to International Oceans Observing System and coordination on data management, August 17, Anchorage.

Attended NOAA presentation Charting the Course for Ocean Science Research Priorities for the next decade, August 23, Anchorage.

Attended USGS presentation on permafrost, carbon and hydrologic flux study in the Yukon River region, August 24, Anchorage.

Met with North Pacific Research Board Staff to test the NSSI project database software they developed, August 25, Anchorage.

Attended Secretary's Conservation Listening Session in Fairbanks and met with BLM regional staff to discuss the functions and direction of NSSI and the relationship between BLM's RMT and the Science Technical Group, August 28, Fairbanks.

Attended U.S. Arctic Research Commission meeting with Iridium staff, university and agency personnel to discuss potential uses of current and future Iridium systems for arctic research needs, August 28, Anchorage.