

# **North Slope Science Initiative**

**Interim Report  
Ken Taylor, Executive Director  
March 15, 2007**

A considerable amount of time and effort was spent on budget related issues resulting from the effects of the Continuing Resolution during this period. At the request of the Secretary of Interior's Office, we developed a budget for the remainder of FY 2007, FY 2008 and FY 2009. We were requested to budget NSSI administrative costs separate from project costs. Included in the project budgets were only those items that were identified as NSSI priorities during the 2004 workshops held in Anchorage, Fairbanks and Barrow, issues discussed by the Oversight Group over the course of their meetings, and those that were identified as priorities by the BLM Research and Monitoring Team.

To date, funding for NSSI remains uncertain for FY 2007, and we have been proceeding very cautiously with expenditures. We have, however, a number of accomplishments to report. At the last meeting of the Oversight Group we were instructed to proceed with organizing a Remote Sensing/GIS workshop and a North Slope caribou research and monitoring workshop. The Remote Sensing/GIS workshop was held in Fairbanks February 6 & 7, 2007 at the University of Alaska, and was attended by 40 people. The purpose of this workshop was to hear from the "end users" in the arctic research, inventory and monitoring community, what their information needs were in order to further refine the data layer list for the GINA system, to discuss potential decision support systems, and to investigate remote sensing platforms for particular applications. Prior to the workshop, an NSSI Remote Sensing 101 course was held in Anchorage and was attended by 42 people from agencies, industry and the university. The course was repeated in Fairbanks following the workshop and was equally well attended. Feedback on both the short course and the workshop was very positive.

The caribou workshop was attended by approximately 50 people representing all the North Slope herd managers and most of the researchers currently working on North Slope herds. The first day was devoted to presentations on current herd population status and trend, current monitoring activities, research activities primarily aimed at monitoring effects of oil and gas development activities, and the progress made on the priorities identified in 2002 at the last caribou workshop sponsored by the Alaska Oil and Gas Association. Three breakout groups were established the second day of the workshop to review state and federal stipulations designed to avoid or mitigate effects of oil and gas developments on caribou populations. The purpose for this review was to review stipulations for consistency, identify those that were "science-based" and those that we not, determine what level of risk might be associated with those that are not "science-based", and to determine what data needs (including time and cost) would be necessary to address them. The workshop concluded prior to accomplishing all of this, but

considerable progress was made. A summary of the workshop will be available on the NSSI workshop along with the presentations given.

The problems with the software for the NSSI project database have been resolved, and we are currently in the process of populating the database. We do not, however, have a web page design for this database that is user friendly. We have not yet investigated the cost of having one created.

### **Conferences**

Alaska Marine Science Symposium, Jan. 22 & 23, 2007, Anchorage  
Alaska Forum on the Environment, Feb. 12 & 13, 2007, Anchorage  
7<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Climate Change, Feb. 19 & 20, 2007, Fairbanks

### **Meetings/Briefings**

NSSI briefing to UAA Institute of Social and Economic Research, and discussion of potential collaboration on socio-cultural North Slope, November 21, 2006, Anchorage.

Circumpolar Biological Monitoring Program, sponsored by Arctic Council, Circumpolar Arctic Flora and Fauna, Nov. 27 & 28, 2006, Anchorage.

Alaska Shorebird Working Group annual meeting, USFWS, Dec. 4, 2006, Anchorage.

NSSI update to BLM Resource Advisory Committee, Dec. 14, 2006, Anchorage.

US Arctic Research Commission Town Hall Meeting, Jan. 23, 2007, Anchorage.

Arctic Policy Group teleconference update on Interior and other agency IPY activities, Jan. 29, 2007, Anchorage.

Met with representatives of Shell, ConocoPhillips and BP at ConocoPhillips to discuss the Geographic Information Network of Alaska (GINA), Jan. 31, 2007, Anchorage.

NSSI agency staff contacts meeting held at BLM Fairbanks Field Office, Feb. 5, 2007, Fairbanks.

NSSI Remote Sensing/GIS Workshop, UAF, Feb. 6 & 7, 2007, Fairbanks.

NSSI Remote Sensing 101 Shortcourse, UAF, Feb. 8, 2007, Fairbanks.

NSSI briefing on water quality assessment project presented to Alaska Monitoring and Assessment Program sponsored by Dept. of Environmental Conservation, Feb. 13, 2007, Anchorage.

NSSI caribou workshop on research/monitoring North Slope herds, Feb. 21 & 22, 2007,  
Fairbanks.

Endangered Species Act workshop, US Fish and Wildlife Service, March 5-8, 2007,  
Anchorage.