

Director's Report
North Slope Science Initiative

March 1 – April 24, 2008

The North Slope Science Initiative (NSSI) Director and Deputy continued to work closely with the Science Technical Advisory Panel and the Senior Staff Committee to define the management questions, data needs and challenges in reference to the **Emerging Issues** section of the 2008 Annual Operating Plan. A significant amount of progress has been made toward the first three of the general subject categories (permafrost, coastal and riverine erosion, and caribou). While no recommended priorities for addressing these have been discussed, the breaking down of the general list has proven to be a good strategy. Ideally, over the next few months, a complete matrix of management questions, data needs and challenges can be formulated and recommended priorities developed for planning to address over the next two, five and ten year outlooks.

The week of March 31 – April 4, 2008 was spent in Washington, DC with representatives from the Oversight Group (Tom Lonnie, Karla Kolash, Ken Taylor and Dick LeFebvre) visiting both legislative staff and senior Department of the Interior individuals. A separate trip report has been prepared that discusses the visit in detail.

The renewed Science Technical Advisory Panel Charter was signed by the Secretary of the Interior on April 9, 2008, and now must be filed with Congress (a copy of the renewed charter is posted on the NSSI website (www.northslope.org)).

The two nomination packages for the ten (10) open appointments for the Science Technical Advisory Panel have been reviewed by the Secretary of the Interior. Letters have been prepared for the Secretary's signature for eight (8) re-appointments and two (2) new appointments. The formal appointment letters are expected to be sent out from the Secretary's Office later this month.

A Senior Staff Committee meeting was held on April 16, 2008, in Fairbanks. The purpose of the meeting was to develop management issues/concerns/challenges for permafrost, coastal and riverine erosion and caribou. The products from this meeting are included in the Draft Fiscal Year 2009 Annual Operating Plan.

Two meetings were held with the Alaska Director of the National Weather Service to address some parallel issues and needs. The recommendation to the Oversight Group is to appoint the National Weather Service as an advisory member to the NSSI. Such an appointment would provide better coordination and integration between NOAA Weather Service initiatives, Alaska Oceans Observation System, Sustained Arctic Observing Network (SAON), Geographic Information Network of Alaska (GINA) and other programs.

Announcement will be made in early May 2008 recruiting a full-time GINA technician to work with NSSI in the Director's Office. This will provide a greater opportunity for agency representatives to work with GINA, and communicate needs related to data, data sharing, and

data and information distribution. Office space and support is being provided by the Bureau of Land Management.

Two significant agreements are currently in the review process. The gauging station interagency agreement between NSSI and USGS is undergoing Department of the Interior Solicitor review and the website administration has been announced on www.grants.gov.

The next Oversight Group meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, June 10, 2008, in Barrow. We are currently working on arrangements for a visit to the new Barrow Arctic Science facility for Monday afternoon, June 9, 2008. Agenda items for the Barrow meeting will include a review of the Department of the Interior Climate Change Strategy by Tom Armstrong, USGS, a presentation on working with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation by Krystyna Wolniakowski, Western Partnership Director, and the first draft of the Congressional report.