

## **Summary of North Slope Science Initiative Visit to Washington, DC, March 16-20, 2009**

First, I want to thank both Dick Bouts and Karla Kolash for arranging the majority of meetings for the week. Both Dick and Karla were highly effective in contacting the various offices and scheduling times. I want to also thank Dick for staying with the group all week and keeping us apprised of last minute schedule changes. John Goll, representing the DOI members of the Oversight Group, John Farrell, representing the U.S. Arctic Research Commission, and Karla Kolash, provided a well-rounded and varied group of interests for all of the meetings.

Packets were prepared for each of the meetings that included:

- 2008 Report to Congress
- Letters of Concurrence from the North Slope Borough, Arctic Slope Regional Corporation, and Alaska Departments of Fish and Game and Natural Resources for the report
- Letter of Support for the North Slope Science Initiative from the Alaska Departments of Fish and Game and Natural Resources
- March 2009, North Slope Science Initiative Newsletter
- Brochure describing the North Slope Science Initiative

A number of requests were received for additional copies of the Report to Congress. These will be provided through Dick Bouts' office.

Overall, while each meeting was a bit different in presentation, the reception to the group was very good. Questions from a number of meetings were focused on the value added of cooperation, coordination and collaboration, not only with members of the North Slope Science Initiative, but with outside entities such as industry and non-governmental organizations. The North Slope Borough and U.S. Arctic Research Commission both suggested the NSSI could benefit substantially from stability in staffing and funding. Discussions with several groups about the emerging issues brought considerable interest, again with a focus on the value added beyond a single agency or entity. There was also a lot of interest in the work with GINA in the form of data availability and project tracking. The water quality and hydrology work with the University of Michigan, Michigan Tech and Department of Energy also created interest in the value of collaboration and coordination.

Kim Elton had a very keen interest in how the NSSI functions and how it can help the department better identify the science needed for management. He was especially interested in the emerging issues and asked to be included in the progress reports. The department is trying to provide a greater focus on the use of science in land and resource decision making and felt the value of having all of the DOI Bureaus part of the NSSI would help in the future.

Our meeting with the National Science Foundation (NSF) was to encourage better communication between the NSF principal investigators and the NSSI. The idea was to have the various principal investigators begin to address the management questions from the emerging issues as appropriate to their individual grants. The NSF agreed to work toward a more comprehensive program and asked if the NSSI could help to "educate" their principal investigators in ways they could do better bring a broader perspective to their work. Both the NSF and the U.S. Arctic Research Commission encouraged continued activity by the NSSI as part of the Interagency Arctic Research Policy Committee.

