

Director's Report, North Slope Science Initiative  
Activities from January 24 through May 18, 2012

The 2011 Report to Congress was signed by the Secretary of the Interior in early February. Now, the work begins for the 2012 Report.

Two positions were filled during this period: Kelsey McQuigg was selected for the half-time staff assistant position. She has a full time position that is shared with both the NSSI and the BLM Alaska State Director. Denny Lassuy was selected for the NSSI Deputy Director position and reported for duty in mid-March. The funding for this full time position is split between the BLM and the North Slope Borough. Denny comes back to the NSSI after a two-year absence. This time he is full time with NSSI.

At the August Oversight Group retreat it was strongly suggested the NSSI look at the possibility of staffing of a public affairs specialist. Through the BLM's Office of Communication, the NSSI has been able to secure the services of a part-time communications expert that is a graduate student at Alaska Pacific University in Anchorage. Matthew has been working on social media and website revision for the NSSI since coming on board in February. He is also working on his Master's Degree at Alaska Pacific University.

#### Arctic Communication and Coordination

The DOI continues to hold monthly conference calls for communicating Arctic information between the various DOI Alaska bureaus and the Washington, DC DOI offices. The majority of these calls are about communicating international efforts with such entities as the Arctic Council. The NSSI participates in these monthly calls.

The NSSI has been selected as the co-lead with the Kingdom of Denmark on the Terrestrial Biodiversity Monitoring Program for the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF), a subgroup of the Arctic Council. The first coordination meeting was held in Copenhagen, Denmark in early May. All eight Arctic countries and permanent participants will ultimately round out the international team. The permanent participant is from the Inuit Circumpolar Conference-Alaska. The international team is moving forward under a very tight schedule with a final circumpolar monitoring plan due in December 2012. Each country has developed an internal team of experts ranging from four to 12 members. The U.S. team has representation from 8 members as of this writing including several from NSSI member agencies. The first international workshop was hosted by the Kingdom of Denmark, in a small community outside of Copenhagen on October 10-13. Bud Cribley and Cheryl Rosa participated in the workshop. Bud and Cheryl are both Oversight Group members, and both bring senior level expertise for their respective organizations. A second international workshop was held in Anchorage on May 15-17, 2012. This workshop had representation from all of the Arctic countries, plus considerable participation from Alaska agencies and non-governmental entities.

To date, a background paper and a workshop report from the Danish workshop have been published and are available at the CAFF Secretariat website (<http://www.caff.is>).

NSSI is co-chairing the U.S. Arctic Observing Coordination Meeting with the University of Alaska Fairbanks and Cold Regions Research Laboratory at Wood Hole on March 20-22, 2012. The U.S. meeting is considered preliminary to the 2013 International Arctic Observing Summit which will bring representation from all Arctic countries. Special thanks to Bob Winfree (NPS/Oversight Group) and

Philip Martin (Arctic LCC and STAP member) for help in organizing this successful workshop. The workshop report is currently under review and will be available shortly.

The Arctic Council, at the May 2011, Ministerial meeting in Nuuk, Greenland, agreed to move forward with a proposal by the U.S. to develop an Arctic-wide ecosystem based management program. This significant program advances with the understanding humans and human activities are part of the Arctic ecosystem, and those activities must be part of the overall ecosystem management. The co-leads for this initiative are the U.S., Sweden and Iceland. For the U.S., NOAA has the co-lead for the marine environment and DOI for the terrestrial environment. The first meeting was held on October 18-19, 2011, in Washington, DC. NSSI was asked to be part of the U.S. delegation and participated at the October meeting. A second meeting was April 16-19, 2012, in Gothenburg, Sweden. The Swedish meeting brought together several Arctic Council Working Groups, including the Protection of the Marine Environment (PAME), Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program (AMAP) and the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF). The second workshop focused on definitions and refining recommendations that will be presented to the Arctic Council Ministerial meeting in May 2013. The third, and final meeting of this working group will be in late October 2012, in Norway (<http://www.arctic-council.org>).

The NSSI has been participating in the intergovernmental effort for Alaska Arctic Permitting and Science that was set up by Presidential Order and Co-Chaired by the Deputy Secretary of the Interior and U.S. Arctic Research Commission. A third meeting was held in Washington, DC on April 30, 2012. The focus of this meeting was to invite participation from organizations outside of the federal government. Representation included North Slope Borough (Robert Suydam – NSSI STAP), Arctic Slope Regional Corporation (Richard Glenn – NSSI Oversight Group), Alaska League of Municipal Governments and several non-governmental organizations including the Oceans Conservancy, PEW Trusts-Arctic, and Audubon. No clear way forward was defined at this meeting, but scenario planning and long-term monitoring for both the Alaska arctic and the greater circumpolar arctic were key subject areas. Also important was a discussion on “structured decision making,” which, in theory, would work across administrative boundaries to better organize planning efforts and provide a more comprehensive outlook for the North Slope and the marine environment.