

Director's Report, North Slope Science Initiative
Activities from May 6 through July 13, 2010

Old News + Good News

The Secretary of the Interior signed the Science Technical Advisory Panel (STAP) appointment letters. All six nominees are now appointees! Welcome back Doug Kane, Matthew Sturm, Bob Shuchman and Sue Moore for another three years. Also welcome two new members to the STAP, Warren Matumeak, representing Traditional Knowledge and Jerry Brown, "Dr. Permafrost," from Woods Hole. This has been an 18-month process, but we endured!

Every two years, under the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), the STAP Charter must be renewed and filled with Congress. The old STAP Charter was up for renewal in May 2010. The renewal package was forwarded to the Department of the Interior on January 15, 2010. In what seems like record time (as compared to the STAP appointment process), the Charter was signed by the Secretary of the Interior on June 28, 2010, and filed with Congress on June 29, 2010! We are good for another two years.

It's that time of year again, the 2010 Report to Congress has taken up considerable time. I want to especially think the senior staff committee for their input and review of two drafts. The final draft is now with the Oversight Group. As in years' past, I will be seeking letters of concurrence from the state, North Slope Borough and Arctic Slope Regional Corporation.

I want to express a special thanks to Dick LeFebvre, Deputy Commissioner, Alaska Department of Natural Resources (ADNR) for his dedication to the NSSI. Dick served as the first non-federal chair in 2007 and 2008 and worked with me to bring much needed direction to the initiative. Dick retired from ADNR on June 20, 2010 and from his service to the NSSI.

Emerging Issues, NSSI Conference Proposal and Connectivity Paper

During the April 26-27, 2010, STAP meeting work continued on developing additional emerging issues that will include socio-economic, restoration and reclamation and fisheries. The STAP also revised their proposal for a NSSI conference in 2011, as well as continued work on the emerging issue connectivity paper. The next meeting of the STAP will be in mid-September in conjunction with the AAAS Alaska Chapter meeting.

Data Integration and Project Tracking

The STAP data subcommittee has been working directly with GINA on cleaning up the data side of the portal and now has the most current records from the various data administrators. Jess has been working to develop a new interface for the data and project tracking sections of the NSSI/GINA program and this is now operational.

On the Project Tracking side, there are over 1100 project records are now available. The NSSI is now working to geo-locate each of the entries. Keeping the project records current continues to be an institutional challenge. Internal to the NSSI membership maintaining records of current projects ranges from a simple electronic "integration" between individual tracking systems to manpower queries and spreadsheets. The annual senior staff committee coordination meetings help the NSSI secure records

from those entities that have no internal tracking systems, but such records must be entered manually. External to the NSSI membership, we have complete operability between the National Science Foundation and the NSSI, but, as with the NSSI membership, there is project discovery that often requires manual query and input.

Department of the Interior – Arctic Communication

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.

Meetings and Coordination

Thanks to the support provided by the U.S. Arctic Research Commission, I was able to attend and participate in the Oslo IPY Science Conference in June. Two NSSI papers were presented: one on the organizational structure of the NSSI and the other on emerging issues. Both papers were well received with a number of follow up questions after the presentations. It turns out that Norway has something very similar: Norwegian Institute for Nature Research (NINA). The similarities between the NSSI and NINA are striking and future correspondence will help benefit each of the initiatives. The Oslo meeting was attended by 2300 polar scientists; the largest gathering of polar researchers in history. Perhaps most importantly was the participation of 500 early career polar scientists. I was also pleased to see participation by several STAP members,

The Second United States and Canada Oil and Gas Research Forum is scheduled for Calgary, Alberta, Canada, November 30 through December 2, 2010. An organizing committee has been established and the planning efforts are underway. The NSSI is on the organizing committee and is a principal sponsor. The Canadian government has underwritten a substantial portion of the forum by providing \$200k. Budgets permitting, the NSSI will be providing additional funding. The organizing committee has developed a draft outline for the forum, and are currently working on filling in that outline with invited speakers.