

**North Slope Science Initiative
Oversight Group
July 19, 2107
Anchorage, Alaska**

Oversight Group Members

Present

David Rogers, ADFG - OG Chair
Amy Holman, NOAA
Bert Frost, NPS
Dee Williams, USGS
Ed Fogels, ADNDR
Jim Kendall, BOEM
Sarena Selbo, USFWS - for Greg Siekaniec
Ted Murphy, BLM
Scott Marsteller, DOE - by phone
Cheryl Rosa - by phone

Absent

Bud Cribley, BLM, sent regrets
James Robinson, USCG, sent regrets
Mark Fesmire, BSEE, sent regrets
Kaja Brix, NOAA, sent regrets
Leanna Mack, NSB – for Taqulik Hepa
Taqulik Hepa, NSB, sent regrets
Richard Glenn, ASRC

North Slope Science Initiative

Sara Longan, Executive Director
Mark Miller, Deputy Director

Visitors

Cyndi Jacobson, USFWS CAFF
Wendy Loya, USFWS ALCC

Meeting Notes

10:00 - Chair David Rogers, opened the meeting with a welcome and introductions of all OG members and visitors.

10:10 – Executive Director Sara Longan shared NSSI Updates including the first issuance of the NSSI Newsletter, provided to all meeting participants. The development of the Newsletter is in response to team and partner input, in an attempt to be more transparent and communicative about NSSI work and accomplishments.

Discussion: Dee Williams offered feedback – job well done, nice format, substantive, suggested using larger font. Request that it come out earlier before future OG meetings. Sarena Salbo asked - who is the audience? Sara explained the OG is the primary audience, but the Newsletter aims to inform the public and NSSI partners. Chair David Rogers - likes it too - but prefers fewer words. Cyndi Jacobson suggested providing hyperlinks to affiliated or related reports in the document. Sara Longan noted the electronic version does have links - e.g., where links to the NSSI Catalog will help keep users informed on Catalog updates and data entries. Ed Fogels suggested a section be dedicated to perhaps include a topic: “What's going on right now (for NS resident audience)” to share upcoming science projects and associated field activities. Amy Holman shared that NOAA efforts are underway to better inform the public on scheduled and upcoming research cruises.

Executive Director Sara Longan shared on-going efforts to compile the annual report to Congress. NSSI has evaluated past reports and solicited feedback from many NSSI participants who have suggested that the format be reconsidered (e.g., too long in past). A draft report will be circulated to the OG by mid-Aug for their review and input, at that time, a 3-week review period will begin. A final draft version will be completed by mid to late-September and submitted to DOI for final processing.

10:30 - Oversight Group, Updates from NSSI OG Members

Executive Director Sara Longan referenced SO 3352: many have recognized that NSSI's cornerstone mission is embedded in supporting science coordination needs to help fulfill the majority of the initiatives described in the SO. **Ted Murphy** shared SO implications and agency updates for BLM -

- NPRA Integrated Activity Plan: DOI directed BLM to look at the IAP and consider how to proceed with lawful review and development of revised IAP for NPR-A, and with maximizing tracts offered for sale during next NPR-A lease sale.
- DOI directed USGS with development of a plan for updating O&G reserve estimates in NPR-A and ANWR 1002 area. If ANWR opened, BLM would be responsible for subsurface.

Member Dee Williams shared USGS is the lead for Section 4b - plan for updating the resource assessments for NPRA and ANWR. Dave Houseknecht Senior Research Geologist is lead, located in Reston VA. The primary goal is to update the geologic resource assessments with the objective of increasing development interest in these areas. There will be public review meetings in Anchorage, Houston, and elsewhere. USGS presented the NSSI OG with a menu of possible options / costs.

Sarena Salbo: FWS issued permit to Dave Houseknecht to allow work in ANWR 7/25 - 8/5 -- some helicopter access, hiking, rafting.

STAP and SSC Updates: **Executive Director Sara Longan** shared an update on the FRN calling for STAP nominations, which is now tentatively scheduled to be published 1 Aug. Deputy Director Mark Miller is working with the STAP committee to tentatively schedule the next potential STAP, Nov 7-8 in Anchorage, pending final confirmation. Dee Williams asked if there would be a discussion describing NSSI's relationship and re-engagement with the NSB. Chair David Rogers voiced same interest and concern about NSB relationship. Sara Longan

shared that efforts to strengthen NSB relationship are on-going and have been productive, to date. Re-engagement efforts include discussion of an Arctic infrastructure development workshop later in agenda

Legislative, Budget, or Transition reports from Agencies: **Ted Murphy** explained Bud Cribley has been reassigned to FWS as Senior Energy Advisor in DC, but without a reporting date. **Sarena Salbo** shared FWS has had 5 SES re-assignments but none directly affecting AK. FWS budget proposed by President - 18 pct reduction, which includes Science Applications and the four AK LCCs, proposed to be zeroed out in FY18. House budget reinstates this funding in mark-ups. FWS is focusing on ensuring data protection and continuity in data availability. **Dee Williams** asked about the status of the NSSI budget – **Sara Longan** - NSSI has in the past received approximately 1% of BLM AK budget, but will report more specific updates on FY18 budget during future OG meetings. **Ted Murphy** added – NSSI historical budget range has been ~\$600k to \$1M.

Member Amy Holman shared the Director of North Pacific Fisheries Council will be new head of NMFS. **Member Bert Frost:** NPS has had one SES reassignment, not affecting the Alaska Region. **Member Ed Fogels** stated this will be the last NSSI OG meeting, Ed is leaving state service; no decision on replacement to NSSI OG. **Sara Longan** thanked Ed for his strong support of NSSI and for his mentoring. **Member Dee Williams** shared that while USGS geologists are working on the updated resource assessment, biologists are working to update synthesis on what is known about ANWR terrestrial wildlife, **John Pearce** is a point of contact

11:15 - NSSI Priorities and Example Next Steps

Infrastructure Development Workshop (potential next steps for scenarios initiative). **Sara Longan:** from last OG meeting and feedback from OG members and partners, NSSI has been asked to focus on infrastructure development planning process, in-part, to help fulfill next-steps on the previous Scenarios Planning efforts. A workshop that focuses on agency and community science coordination needs to inform future arctic infrastructure development is requested. The same workshop could also help address issues as they relate to aviation conflict avoidance, to get a better understanding of the issue. A~2-d workshop held in Anchorage, mid-late fall has been suggested by the NSB. The current vision is that NSSI would host and facilitate, possibly co-hosted by NSB and DNR. **Member Jim Kendall** shared concerns about proposed timing, given multiple upcoming federal actions that will require community engagement (5-yr OCS plan scoping process, GMT2, Liberty EIS, etc.) **Jim Kendall** suggested perhaps February 2018. **Member Dee Williams** likes focus around infrastructure topic. Suggests that AGDC and the AK LNG project be involved. **Wendy Loya** offered - if local input / participation is desired, the workshop should be held in Utqiagvik - or perhaps a 2-part workshop where the first workshop is located in Anchorage, with a follow-up workshop held in Utqiagvik to collect additional community participation. **Jim Kendall** suggested partnering with ARCUS or USARC to provide a livestream of the workshop to arctic partners in DC. Chair **David Rogers** gave permission to NSSI to continue advancing the planning efforts to hold an arctic infrastructure development workshop, scope, location, and time TBD.

Amy Holman - NOAA is exploring with engineering community on how to update the Environmental Atlas. **Cheryl Rosa** responded that USARC working on this as well.

Cumulative Impacts Analysis. **Sara Longan:** NSSI is asked by agencies and many partners that NSSI facilitate the planning and/or development of a standardized Arctic Cumulative Impact

protocol / methodology. Some ideas have included asking the SSC to work with STAP on a AK-based guidance document for CI analysis. NSSI is partnering with ALCC on this topic for planning purposes.

Chair David Rogers asked - do we have capacity for this? – is it realistic to think all agencies will buy into this? Sara Longan suggested, based on NSSI partner feedback, DOI should consider developing a standardized protocol. Clarifying and/or standardizing the Arctic Cumulative Impact (CI) process can serve multiple purposes, including:

- Help address past NS residents' and public comments on existing process
- Bolster agency decision making via standardization

Cyndi Jacobson asked - are you (NSSI) going to suggest a process and a timeline? Sara Longan - yes. **Wendy Loya** - a huge topic to tackle. Agrees that this could be very informative to management agencies but also researchers. NSSI should facilitate, a possible outcome from the efforts could answer how to best target / allocate research dollars. Ted Murphy: questions the concept of a science coordinating committee grappling with a management / NEPA process, offered that this is more of a DOI initiative rather than an NSSI initiative. Sara Longan - Yes, this is an important concern. **Member Jim Kendall**- suggests the process would have to be intimately involved with Solicitor's office. In principle, it sounds like a good idea. **Member Dee Williams** - agrees with Jim's point of view - worthy topic, but offers these points for clarification:

- Need to define sideboards.
- What authority would resulting document be presumed to have?
- May be overtaken by events - i.e., the proposed Joint Management Area concept
- Also need to start with results of recent DOI Arctic CI workshop.

Sara Longan – thanked Dee for reminding the team of the past Arctic CI workshop, where a one-page summary describes the need for more communication / coordination / collaboration among agencies, to help focus on and address current issues as they relate to cumulative impact assessments in the Arctic. The outcome of the Arctic CI workshop and summary notes also recommends that NSSI have a role. **Jim Kendall** - perhaps guidance document could function as a 'touch-stone' clarifying the guidance would be a go-by, non-binding. **Chair David Rogers** - no full green light yet, but encourages further exploration and warrants further discussion. Sara Longan– will re-circulate the one-page summary of the recent Cumulative Impacts workshop held in ANC, co-led by BLM and USGS. May need further clarification from the OG on NSSI's role based on the request from the agencies. **Bert Frost** – shared some hesitation on advancing a CI guidance document, agreed with Ted that this effort could be better suited for DOI to take lead on. Bert also recognized that NPS NEPA planners attended the Arctic CI workshop where the agency comments were provided and compiled in the on-page summary report.

Outcomes from Industry Roundtable Sara Longan: industry used to be present / active participant in NSSI, but this participation has lessened over the years. NSSI members and partners suggest re-engagement with industry, to also solicit possible interest for future STAP nominations. NSSI was invited to attend an industry round table hosted by BP and held in ANC, May 2017. NSSI was encouraged by the full participation from multiple NS operators. Industry members asked multiple questions about NSSI, several participants shared encouragement and underscored the

mutual interest in having NSSI closely coordinate science priorities among agencies, the public, NS residents, and industry. Industry offered a suggestion for NSSI to coordinate the review of dated required environmental studies, issued during planning, permitting, or NEPA activities to evaluate for relevance and potential synergies across multiple agencies - - avoid duplication, where possible. After OG discussion and concurrence, **Chair David Rogers** gave NSSI the approval to proceed.

11:45 - Cyndi Jacobson – CAFF Updates

Cyndi described her current role as CAFF Chair and provided an overview of the program.

The Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program (CBMP) is a CAFF cornerstone program. The AK Partners Group is established to help inform federal agencies and the State of Alaska of CAFF and CBMP activities. The next AK Partners Group meeting is July 27th at the FWS office. The CAFF brochure was provided, giving a high-level overview of CAFF's primary goals and objectives. Four CAFF working group meetings will be held in AK during the next two years; first in Bethel in Sep 5-7, 2017. More information will be provided during up-coming AK Partner Group meetings

Closing Remarks

Sara Longan asked for OG interest in meeting frequency, should we meet quarterly? Jim Kendall and group agrees to quarterly. Sara / David - need to continue working to re-engage ASRC. Future OG meeting should deliberate on the next OG co-chair position.

The meeting adjourned at 12: 10 PM