

BLM NPR-A Subsistence Advisory Panel Meeting

April 14, 2011, Wainwright, AK

Summary of Workshop, Recommendations, and Public Presentations



SAP Representatives & BLM employees during afternoon workshop.

The NPR-A Subsistence Advisory Panel consists of representatives from seven tribal governments and the North Slope Borough, and provides a forum for government-to-government consultation regarding activities in NPR-A. The Panel reviews plans by industry and other projects authorized by BLM in NPR-A. The pace of scientific study has picked up on the Slope, and the residents are very interested in the researchers' activities and findings.

Subsistence Advisory Panel Representatives present:

Joseph Sage, Chairman, Native Village of Barrow
 Qaiyaan Opie, Iñupiat Community of the Arctic Slope
 Eli Nukapigak, Native Village of Nuiqsut
 Danny Pikok, Jr., Native Village of Point Lay
 Andrew Hopson, Naqsraqmiut Tribal Council (Anaktuvuk Pass)
 Ira Ungudruk, Native Village of Wainwright

BLM Arctic Field Office Employees present:

Lon Kelly, Manager
 Dave Yokel, Wildlife Biologist
 Ben Nageak, Barrow Field Office Natural Resource Specialist
 Stacey Fritz, Anthropologist/Subsistence Specialist (SAP Coordinator)

Guest Presenters:

Todd Brinkman, Wildlife Biologist, University of Alaska Fairbanks
 Bill Morris, Fisheries Biologist, Alaska Department of Fish and Game
 Bruce St. Pierre, ConocoPhillips Alaska Inc.
 Glenn Ruckhaus, Arcadis/FEX

Subsistence Advisory Panel Workshop (9 -11 am; 1-4 pm)

The April, 2011 Subsistence Advisory Panel (SAP) workshop focused on carrying out recommendations made at the last meeting (December, 2010 in Barrow) regarding the SAP's expanded role. It was decided at the December meeting that the SAP must expand to include all activities that impact subsistence in the NPR-A, not just oil and gas activities. In particular, the SAP wants to have access to and be able to disseminate information about scientific research projects occurring in the NPR-A.

As the first order of business at this workshop, **SAP members approved amending the wording of the SAP bylaws to include the group's expanded role.** Several methods of meeting this goal were introduced and discussed:

- 1) *Poster-size spreadsheets of BLM-permitted projects in the NPR-A*
 - Drafts of this poster ("2011 Science Projects in the NPR-A") were presented to the SAP. The poster includes information on who, when, where, what, the number of people, the access method, the number of take offs and landings, and the field camps for the projects BLM has permitted for the 2011 summer/fall.
 - SAP representatives approved of the format and decided that copies should be hung at ICAS in Barrow and in the ICAS village offices as well as at libraries, the BLM office in Barrow, city offices, the NSB Wildlife Department, the village Search and Rescue Bases, the village Bingo Halls/Community Centers, and schools.
- 2) *Because the bylaws state that the SAP is to maintain a repository of subsistence-related information, a discussion ensued about the nature of this repository and it was decided that a website would be the ideal format.*
- 3) *Recognizing the power of social media (particular on the North Slope) and realizing that a SAP webpage would be of little utility without networking, the Panel recommended a SAP facebook page to disseminate information, share relevant links, advertise meetings, etc.*
- 4) *Sharing links to other databases of arctic research*
- 5) The SAP was given a demonstration of the University of Texas's ARMAP website (<http://armap.utep.edu/armap2d/>) and information about other databases for arctic research (BOEMRE's AK Environmental Studies Ongoing Program index <http://www.boemre.gov/alaska/ess/index.htm> and the North Slope Science Initiative's website <http://www.northslope.org>). The SAP decided that these links should be included on the posters and disseminated more widely through the website and facebook page.



Danny Pikok, Jr.,
Native Village of Point Lay



Andrew Hopson
Naqsaḡmiut Tribal Council
(Anaktuvuk Pass)



Qaiyaan Opie
Iñupiat Community
of the Arctic Slope

In response to a request at the last meeting, an updated **list of every recommendation the SAP has made to BLM** since its inception and the corresponding response or solution to that recommendation was provided to Panel. Representatives requested that they be provided with the updates to this list at every meeting.

In response to a request made by SAP Chairman Joe Sage, approximately a dozen copies of “*A Field Guide to Common Wildlife Diseases and Parasites in Alaska*” were distributed to each representative. Danny Pikok, Jr., of Point Lay, encouraged the Panel to ensure that the copies made it to subsistence cabins.

The Panel continued a discussion on the **job requirements of subsistence monitors** who work for industry or on scientific research projects. While they do not feel that the SAP should create a rigid job description for subsistence monitors, the Panel decided that the positions must include:

- daily communication between the monitor and the community
- fluency in the Iñupiaq language
- a subsistence monitor who is actually someone that hunts and fishes in the area
- training in the use of GPS, satellite phone, and computers for the monitor
- orientation for the company or research group, by the subsistence monitor, on the role and responsibility of the monitor



Eli Nukapigak
Native Village of Nuiqsut



Dave Yokel
*BLM Arctic
Field Office biologist*



Ira Ungudruk
*Wainwright Traditional
Council*

Subsistence Advisory Panel Public Meeting (7 – 10 pm)

The public meeting opened with introductions, an invocation, and a report on the afternoon’s workshop by Qaiyaan Opie.

Industry Presentations

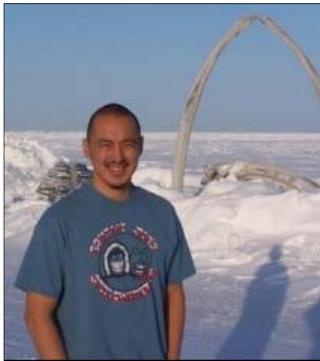
Bruce St. Pierre of ConocoPhillips Alaska Inc. gave a presentation on the company’s work this season plugging and abandoning the Puviaq well.

Glenn Ruckhaus of Arcadis/FEX gave a presentation on FEX’s plugging and abandonment of three wells (Aklaqyaaq #1, Aklaq #2 and Aklaq #6) in Northwest NPR-A. Phase 2 of the project consists of final site clean-up and agency inspections, beginning this summer.

In early 2010, the company put its federal acreage in the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska and the foothills of the Brooks Range mountains up for sale, but recently announced plans to let the leases expire.

BLM Update

BLM's Arctic Field Office Manager, Lon Kelly, gave a presentation on the status of the all-NPR-A Integrated Activity Plan/EIS and described the cooperating agencies, tribal consultation efforts, and the range of alternatives currently being finalized. Kelly also updated the Panel and audience on the Department of the Interior secretarial order on Wild Lands, implementation of which is stalled because Congress denied funding. Lastly, Kelly briefly described the ongoing cleanup project at the Wainwright DEW Line site.



Joe Sage, SAP Chairman
Native Village of Barrow



Lon Kelly
BLM Arctic Field Office Mngr.



Ben Nageak
BLM Barrow Field Office

NPR-A Research Updates

Todd Brinkman, University of Alaska Fairbanks wildlife biologist, gave a presentation on "The Subsistence Resource Availability Project: Wainwright, Alaska: Documenting Local Knowledge on the Status and Trends in Availability of Subsistence Resources." Brinkman described the ongoing research project which has been conducted with hunters in Wainwright and several other villages over the past year and a half. Some findings indicate that changing climate and environmental conditions may not diminish the numbers of animals in the region, but that access to hunt some animals (bowhead whales, in particular) may become increasingly difficult.



Todd Brinkman, *UAF*



Wainwright SAP meeting audience

Bill Morris of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game presented the new "Kuk and Kugrua Rivers Systematic Fish and Habitat Survey," which is a cooperative project between Fish and

Game, the BLM, the North Slope Borough, and the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management. The project is designed to document fish population data (age/weight relationships, population size, etc.) in the rivers and may include a small radio telemetry component to delineate seasonal habitat. The researchers intend to return to Wainwright periodically to present their results and gain feedback from local fishers.



Bill Morris
AK Dept. of Fish & Game fisheries biologist

SAP Representatives Community Updates

Each SAP representative thanked Wainwright for inviting them, explained their history with the SAP, and spoke about the central subsistence concerns of their respective communities or organizations.

- **Eli Nukapigak** spoke about **Nuiqsut**'s concerns that contamination around Umiat, Olitktok, and other DEW Line sites could be affecting subsistence fish and game and expressed hopes that such sites would be cleaned up. He also expressed concerns that modern oil industry posed similar threats to resources.
- **Qaiyaan Opie** spoke about the current programs underway at **Iñupiat Community of the Arctic Slope (ICAS)**. Opie feels that her life experiences have prepared her well to work as ICAS's Natural Resources Director, where she manages native allotments, the EPA's IGAP grants, and the creation of a community conservation plan. With this work and her position on the SAP, she feels she is fulfilling the mission of ICAS – to act as stewards of the land, resources, and subsistence way of life.
- **Joe Sage**, Chairman of the SAP and Wildlife Director at the **Native Village of Barrow**, reported on the recent 3-day North Slope Science Initiative workshop that was held in Barrow at which scientists gave numerous presentations about current arctic slope research. He also discussed the \$200,000, 2-year and expandable Tribal Wildlife Grant that NVB received through the US Fish and Wildlife Service that allows for the hiring of local people. The grant is used for conservation efforts for endangered species in the region and to monitor species of concern. With the grant, Sage created a Young Hunters Program at NVB in summer 2010 and hired 2 wildlife technicians and 2 high school interns and provides basic wilderness survival education. Sage's main focus was to keep young people out of trouble and shift their energy away from urban problems and technology back to a traditional Iñupiat way of life. He encouraged interested council members to inquire with NVB.

- **Ira Ungudruk** works as Wainwright's local ICAS liaison and coordinates with the Wainwright Traditional Council. This was his first SAP meeting and he appreciated the presentations given by researchers conducting projects in the region.
- **Danny Pikok, Jr.** described recent events in the Point Lay area, including the closing of the coal mine and the offshore oil exploration and seismic testing that occurred last summer and fall. Point Lay hunters found that the land was empty of game and many traveled to the Wainwright area to hunt. Pikok said that it was the first time in his lifetime that he could remember having to travel far to catch game and believes the industrial activity was the reason. According to Pikok, everyone in Point Lay was very concerned and the oil companies provided free fuel so that hunters could travel further. With the arrival of more industry, Pikok feels that good communication between industry and the communities is the most critical issue and he is very happy to be on the SAP panel and share his voice and the concerns of his community.
- **Andrew Hopson** with the **Naqsraqmiut Tribal Council of Anaktuvuk Pass** reported on that community's opposition to a coal mine located 45 miles northeast of the town and to the proposed road to Umiat, both of which would impact the fall migration of caribou that has been diverted further to the east in recent years.

Community Concerns

At the December, 2010 Subsistence Advisory Panel meeting in Barrow, the representatives decided that SAP meetings should involve as much open dialogue as possible. One suggestion was to include a "community concerns" item on the agenda, thereby opening the floor to any subsistence or land management issues or questions the audience may have. Many concerns and questions had been raised during the meeting about the extent of local involvement in the research projects, daily communication with the community regarding research locations, and respect for the land by all. A final comment was made by Terry Tagarook, who pointed out that the audience members were far more engaged with the discussions on local resources on which they were experts than they had been with the industry updates about relatively distant areas.