



Alaska Marine Policy Forum

Summary of Wednesday, November 13, 2013 call

Host: Molly McCammon, mccammon@aoos.org

Summary notes by Ellen Tyler

Alaska Marine Policy Forum is a bimonthly teleconference for Alaskans to network and share information about marine policy, budgets, and legislation at state, national, and international levels, sponsored by Alaska Sea Grant and the Alaska Ocean Observing System. Contact Sue.Keller@alaska.edu to be added to the list serve for meeting reminders and summary notes following each call.

Molly McCammon introduced the call and reminded callers that we count on participants in this forum to help populate the agenda every other month. She encouraged those with updates, and those looking for updates on particular marine policy issues, to contact the AOOS office with suggested agenda items and speakers.

Agenda:

- Congressional update from Senator Murkowski (Jay Sterne and Mari Freitag)
- Congressional update from Senator Begich's office (Bob King)
- Update on Japanese radiation and fisheries (Doug Dasher)
- Alaska and the New Maritime Arctic Workshop debrief (Lawson Brigham)
- Alaska Marine Science Symposium, news and updates (Crystal Benson)

Jay Sterne, Office of U.S. Senator Murkowski: Congressional Update

Jay_Sterne@murkowski.senate.gov

Jay gave a brief update on recent actions Senator Murkowski has taken in an effort to push Congress to include needed fisheries funding in the budget. During the Senate's FY14 budget process, the Senator sponsored a successful amendment to the Budget Resolution that would address funding for federally recognized fisheries disasters in Alaska and other states. Most recently, she led a bi-partisan, bi-cameral letter requesting that the \$150 million fisheries disaster mitigation funding in the Senate-version of the CJS appropriations bill be included in any final FY 2014 funding package. For Alaska, this includes disaster assistance for the 2012 Chinook fishery disaster, including funding to assist communities adversely affected by the low runs. The funding may also be available for research and conservation efforts.

Molly McCammon noted that this funding for fish disasters was initially included in the Superstorm Sandy supplemental appropriations bill in 2012, and offered that if the Senator has ideas for building support for the funding, to let the Marine Policy Forum know how we can help out. The entire Alaska delegation has signed onto this letter.

Lawson Brigham, Professor at UAA: Alaska Arctic Policy Commission and Alaska and the New Maritime Arctic Workshop updates and debriefs
lwb48@aol.com

Lawson shared that the next meeting of the Alaska Arctic Policy Commission to continue working on a draft Alaska Arctic Policy will be in Anchorage on December 9 and 10. At this meeting, Commissioners will review and discuss draft Arctic policy statements, specific preliminary recommendations, and the supporting background document. Public testimony will be accepted Monday, Dec 9 from 11:15 am-12:30 pm and is limited to 3 min presentations. Supplementary written testimony can be emailed to aapcGovernance@gmail.com. This meeting will be audio streamed live on akl.tv. See www.akarctic.com for a draft agenda and additional information as it becomes available.

The Commission's Preliminary Report will be submitted to the Alaska Legislature on January 30, 2014 and will help guide the Commission's work in 2014 as they prepare to submit a final Report in January of 2015.

On November 6-8th, the University of Alaska Fairbanks and the Embassy of Norway to the United States hosted a mini-conference in Anchorage called *Alaska and the New Maritime Arctic*. The event was organized by the Centre for High North Logistics (CHNL) and the Institute of the North. 55-60 people attended sessions on: Future Arctic Sea Ice, Maritime Safety, Access and Environmental Considerations (chaired by Margaret Williams, World Wildlife Fund); Economic Impacts of Arctic Shipping: Development and Trade in a Future Arctic (chaired by Roberta Graham, Deputy Commissioner, DCCED, State of Alaska); A Circumpolar Arctic Marine Transportation & Logistics System (chaired by Bruce Harland, Crowley Marine); Future Prospects of Arctic Sea Routes: Short to Medium Term Scenarios (Chaired by Dr. Lawson Brigham); and Investment, Infrastructure and Planning Efforts (Chaired by Sarah Barton, ConsultNorth)

Additional speakers included: Lieutenant Governor Mead Treadwell, State of Alaska; Felix Tschudi, Chairman of CHNL and President/CEO, Tschudi Shipping Company, Norway; Morten Høglund, Special Advisor for Arctic Affairs, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs; and Chancellor Brian Rogers, University of Alaska Fairbanks.

A workshop report will be available next spring, and will complement a larger report led by UAF on Arctic shipping and new connections.

Jay Sterne commented that Senator Murkowski is pushing hard for an Arctic deep draft port amendment to the currently pending Water Resources Development Act (WRDA),

which would authorize non-federal entities – like tribes and local governments - to begin spending money to begin planning /construction.

Crystal Benson, Alaska Marine Science Symposium organizer: news and updates
crystal.benson@nprb.org

The Alaska Marine Science Symposium, the largest annual marine science event in Alaska, will be held at the Captain Cook Hotel in downtown Anchorage Jan 20-24, 2014. The agenda for plenary and keynote presentations are posted on the symposium website: www.alaksamarinescience.org. Registration is \$100 and includes access to all sessions plus a lot of associated side events, town halls and workshops. Crystal encouraged listeners to register now- January 2014 is not that far away!

Ellen Tyler, on staff at AOOS, also encouraged listeners to be in touch with her (via: tyler@aoos.org) to discuss any ideas about public workshops or private side meetings to occur alongside the symposium. The deadline to submit public workshop ideas is December 2.

Bob King: Office of U.S. Senator Begich: Congressional Update
bob_king@begich.senate.gov

Bob reported that Senator Begich’s subcommittee on Oceans, Atmosphere, Fisheries and Coast Guard is charging forward with their second oversight hearing on the Magnuson Stevens Act reauthorization. Two more hearings are planned for Pacific and North Pacific regions. The subcommittee has received requests to hold hearings on the National Ocean Policy, ship building (including within NOAA, the Coast Guard, and other federal agencies), and funding for the “wet side” of NOAA, including programs addressing storms in Western Alaska.

Bob confirmed that Senator Begich has also signed onto the Fishery Disaster letter that Jay mentioned at the start of the call. He commented that Senator Begich has not given up hope that an appropriations bill will be passed —particularly if funding can be appropriated for the Senator’s Arctic Science Bill.

Bob reported that the confirmation of Kathryn Sullivan to head the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is expected to pass under unanimous consent.

Bob closed by thanking everyone for scrambling after the shutdown to prioritize critical needs and getting things back on track as quickly as possible. He expressed frustration about the shutdown, and gratitude for Alaskan’s ability to jump back to action once it was over.

Mark Gleason from the Alaska Bering Sea Crabbers responded by thanking Bob and Jay for their work on behalf of Alaska’s crab industry. He shared with the group that the fleet has now caught 97-98% of their allocated quota. Since “Cost Recovery” fees necessary to open the fishery are not accessible during a Federal Government shutdown,

threatening the entire crab season, he commented that a permanent fix is needed to ensure that in the future these funds may be used if there is ever a repeat of the government shutdown.

Jeremy Mathis, Director of Alaska Ocean Acidification Research Center, UAF:
Status update on ocean acidification research and monitoring activities
jtmathis@alaska.edu

Jeremy reported that the Alaska Ocean Acidification Network is continuing to build out a network of observations statewide, the most exciting new development being the installation of a real-time sampling instrument at the Alutiiq Pride shellfish hatchery in Seward. This project is being funded by the Alaska Ocean Observing System (AOOS).

Jeremy shared that he has been working on a new economic study of how ocean acidification will impact commercial fisheries and coastal communities. This comprehensive risk assessment ranks communities on a scale from 1-29 to quantify risk or vulnerability to ocean acidification based on physical oceanographic and social and community resiliency variables. You can hear Dr. Mathis talk about this on a recent ACCAP webinar: <https://accap.uaf.edu/?q=node/990>

Molly commented that AOOS is working on getting more ocean acidification monitoring data available through the AOOS website. Stay tuned!

Doug Dasher, Professor at UAF: Update on Japanese radiation and fisheries
dhdasher@alaska.edu

Doug shared what he has and hasn't found while studying the issue of radiation from the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Plant accident caused by the Japanese tsunami.

He has been part of a team sampling around Adak and Amchitka since the early 2000s (limited # of samples taken for different species) following nuclear testing in that region decades ago, but expressed frustration with the lack of follow-up sampling efforts after the Japanese disaster. Another program that used to test for radiation and other contaminants is the NOAA mussel-sampling program, but that program hasn't sampled for a long time due to insufficient funding.

Doug expressed concern with a number of recent disease outbreaks in Alaska's marine environment whose causes have not been resolved. This includes the unusual mortality event impacting seals. Another issue Doug raised is the danger of spent fuel.

Doug commented that he is not concerned about contamination from Japanese marine debris. While it would be interesting to look at bivalves or other organisms attached to the debris, he does not see anything that would pose a human health risk floating as debris itself.

Lyman Thorsteinson, USGS, shared that the marine environmental work group at

PICES (an intergovernmental scientific organization for the North Pacific) has been investigating impacts from the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Plant accident and has a number of resources on their website:

<http://pices.int/publications/presentations/PICES-2013/2013-presentations.aspx>

Power Point presentations can be found under the MEQ Papers Session. Lyman also highlighted Dr. Stanley (Jeep) Rice's presentation (same session) about science needs and Arctic oil and gas development in the future.

Tara Jones, President and CEO at Alaska SeaLife Center: ASLC awards

Tara shared that ASLC leadership awards are now open for nominations. The Marine Research Award and the Marine Science Outreach Award will be given at the Alaska Marine Science Symposium in January. The Lifetime Achievement Award, the Stewardship and Sustainability Award, and the Ocean Youth Award will be presented at the Alaska Marine Gala in February. To learn more about how to nominate someone for any of these awards, visit www.alaskasealife.org

Upcoming Events:

- Alaska Young Fishermen's Summit, Anchorage, December 10-12
- Alaska Marine Science Symposium, Anchorage, Jan 20-24
- Alaska Forum on the Environment, Anchorage, Feb 3-7
- Community Based Monitoring Workshop, Anchorage, April 1-2
- Kodiak Area Marine Science Symposium, Kodiak, April 22-24
- Western Alaska Science Symposium, Kotzebue, April 24-26
- Alaska Sea Grant Wakefield Symposium on Global Solutions to Bycatch, Anchorage, May 13-16

The next Alaska Marine Policy Forum call will be at 1:00 PM on Wednesday, January 15. As always, contact Molly or Paula with any questions, comments or suggestions for speakers or topics.