



## Alaska Marine Policy Forum

Summary from Wednesday, November 20, 2019

Host: Tara Borland, Alaska Sea Grant

Notes by Holly Kent

***The 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 [dawn.montano@alaska.edu](mailto:dawn.montano@alaska.edu) to be added to the list serve to receive a reminder and agenda for the next call, and summary notes following each call.***

### **Alaska Congressional Delegation Update**

***Carina Nichols, Sen. Sullivan's office***

- The Save Our Seas II bill, co-sponsored by Senator Sullivan, has passed out of committee and they are hoping to get it on the floor soon.
- Senator Sullivan and Senator Markey (D-Mass.) co-sponsored the [Ocean, Coastal and Estuarine Acidification Necessitates \(OCEAN\) Research Act](#) introduced in late October.

### **New High Frequency Radars in the Bering Strait Region**

***Rachel Potter, UAF-CFOS***

- Rachel works with Principal Investigator Dr. Seth Danielson in a physical oceanography research group at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks investigating ocean circulation.
- From a scientific aspect, ocean circulation plays a role in the movement of heat, salinity, nutrients and sediment and therefore, has a direct effect on fisheries and other ecosystem processes. From an operational point of view, ocean currents show what is happening with the ocean in real time. Real time conditions are important for search and rescue operations, marine navigation and safety, sea ice forecasting, and tracking of various contaminants like oil spills and harmful algal blooms.
- Current speed and direction can be measured from research ships producing information at a snapshot in time or from moorings anchored to the sea floor which can only collect information from a stationary point. Drifters have also been used to measure ocean currents but have similar limitations.
- High frequency radar (HFR) systems are shore mounted and more cost effective; they can operate autonomously in all weather conditions; and they collect measurements on a grid with spacing about every three and a half miles for up to 100 miles off shore.
- A few HFR systems were installed ten years ago at sites on the coast of the Northeast Chukchi and Beaufort Seas in anticipation of oil drilling to improve oil spill risk analysis and have been reporting data since then. This long-term data set has helped to understand what current circulation patterns can be expected based on various wind conditions.
- HFR systems are being used along the entire west coast of the lower 48 states, parts of the Gulf of Mexico, and the majority of the northeastern US coast, but in Alaska we only have these three systems in place now.
- Through funding from AOOS their group has installed two new test sites in the Bering Strait region, one in Wales and one in Shishmaref. After analyzing the data from these test sites, they will develop a plan to relocate these installations to maximize offshore data coverage.

### **Announcements**

- Bart Buessler: A recent [presidential proclamation](#) highlighted the need for surveying for both the nearshore and Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) areas in Alaska.
- Meridith LaValley from IARPC: they are beginning the development of their next five-year Arctic research plan and are interested in audience thoughts on what research should be involved. Her contact information is [mlavalley@mail.arcus.org](mailto:mlavalley@mail.arcus.org).
- Holly Kent from AOS: AOS is beginning development of its next five-year strategic plan and are interested in collecting input from stakeholders on ocean observation and data product needs. Holly also reminded the group about the Alaska Marine Science Symposium coming up January 27-31, 2020.

**Next Alaska Marine Policy Forum call: January 15, 2020, 1 pm Alaska time.**