



Alaska Marine Policy Forum

Summary from Wednesday, December 6, 2023

Host: Ginny Eckert, Alaska Sea Grant

Notes by Darcy Dugan & Molly Cain

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 (AOOS). Contact dawn.montano@alaska.edu to receive email reminders and agendas for upcoming calls, and summary notes following each call.

Alaska Congressional Delegation Updates

Mary-Eileen Manning, Senator Sullivan's Office

- There's uncertainty about what will happen in Congress between now and holiday break.
- Senator Sullivan's office has hope the National Defense Authorization Act would be passed before Christmas; it often includes provisions that relate to Alaska.
- Senator Sullivan's office introduced HABARCA: the [Harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Research and Control Act](#). It's a bipartisan bill that has a companion bill in the house. Contact the office with comments as changes can be made as it goes through markup.
- Senator Sullivan's office is hosting the new executive director of the Marine Debris Foundation, Susan Sherman, and the new NOAA Marine Debris Program coordinator, Nancy Wallace.

Q: Are there any discussions on transboundary communications for marine debris?

A: Sullivan's office can request NOAA and others to respond. They can also send messages to other countries through the state department. Contact Sen. Sullivan's office.

Matt Robinson (Legislative Assistant for fisheries and oceans) and Bella Smith (Sea Grant Knauss Fellow), Senator Murkowski's Office

- Senator Murkowski recently introduced the National Coordination on Adaptation and Resilience for Security Act ([NCARS](#)) with co-sponsors. This was a reintroduction from last session (used to be called the National Climate Adaptation Strategy) and will create a chief resilience officer at the White House.
- Senator Murkowski's office is wrapping up the Working Waterfronts bill and is hoping to introduce it next week. This bill covers energy, fisheries and infrastructure.

Tyson Fick, Representative Peltola's Office

- Rep. Peltola just started an American Seafood Caucus in the House. It has bi-partisan, bi-coastal support and the intent is to provide a common forum for seafood conversations and find common ground. They haven't identified specific policy positions

yet; they are initiating discussion and dialog across the coast to determine shared issues/interets.

Alaska Legislative Updates

No updates

Tim Lampkin, Senator Stevens Office

Legislators are ramping up for session in January; Sen. Stevens wants to keep abreast of ocean-related issues and concerns, and his staff is available for questions.

Invited Speakers

Sandy Starkweather, executive director, US Arctic Observing Network

Molly McCammon, senior advisor, Alaska Ocean Observing System

Update on Sustaining Arctic Observing Networks (SAON) Roadmap

Sustaining Arctic Observing Networks is an international body of Arctic and non-Arctic states, permanent participants of the Arctic Council and other organizations concerned with the improvement of Arctic observing and data systems. It was created by the Arctic Council and the International Arctic Science Committee after the International Polar Year.

SAON's Board has been following the Arctic Council pause, but is reviewing recent AC guidance on how to best proceed. Some of SAON's efforts, including the work of its Arctic Data Committee and its new planning process, the ROADS process—have fallen more in the category of grassroots efforts and have proceeded even during the pause.

The Arctic Roadmap for Observing and Data Systems—or Arctic ROADS—is a planning process that was developed by SAON to provide tools to its partners to bring focus to the development needs for Arctic observing and data systems. Since late 2021, it has been moving forward under the leadership of the ROADS Advisory Panel, which was appointed by the SAON Board before the pause.

Progress under the ROADS process is realized through self-organizing, grassroots Expert Panels that identify a topical or issue-driven theme to work under, with the goal of developing equitable and sustainable observing and data system implementation plans that support societal benefit. These Expert Panels—following the Guiding Principles of the ROADS process—are expected to equitably include Indigenous Experts and funding for their participation. The success of an Expert Panel under ROADS is consistent with a funded effort —something like a planning grant with support for expertise, travel and workshops.

The ROADS process, which launched two years ago, is currently being piloted by efforts in Alaska, Canada and Europe with collaboration from Asian countries. The thematic expert panels being initiated include wildfires, permafrost (living on frozen ground), sea ice and mobility, pacific salmon (Hajo Eicken, Harmony Wayner) and harmful algal blooms (Lauren Divine).

The panel interacts with the international Advisory Panel through a documentation and evaluation framework. The AP is co-chaired by Sandy and Lauren Divine on behalf of Aleut International. Margaret Rudolf from UAF is a member and supports co-production of knowledge practices within SAON ROADS. There will be an Alaska-led SAON ROADS session and workshop at the Alaska Forum on the Environment. The biennial Arctic Observing Summit (AOS) is going to be held in Edinburg, Scotland in March 2024. SAON and its ROADS process will both be high on the agenda.

Additional resources:

[Information on the Arctic Observing Summit](#)

[2-page overview of SAON ROADS](#)

[More SAON ROADS documentation and materials](#)

Molly McCammon is on the planning team for the UN Decade of Ocean Science Arctic Strategy. One recommendation was to start a planning process for a Global Arctic Observing System to work with international partners. This process is underway and Molly has been part of that effort on behalf of SAON (Sustained Arctic Observing Network). There is a session planned on March 28, at the Arctic Observing Summit in Edinburgh Scotland, to explore better coordination and collaboration of the ocean observing community and Molly will report back after the meeting. They are hoping for more engagement from the indigenous community. If you are interested in participating, contact Molly, mccammon@aoos.org. David Allen at NOAA, david.allen@noaa.gov, is taking the lead in the planning process and engagement.

Max Neale, Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC)

(Max was presenting on behalf of Jackie Schaeffer, Director for Climate Initiatives)

- ANTHC has two climate related programs: the Center for Climate and Health and the Center for Environmentally Threatened Communities
- Max is providing a summary of the report: “Unmet needs of environmentally threatened Alaska Native villages: assessment and recommendations”
 - The goal of the report was to generate new knowledge, document experiences and provide recommendations. The intended audience is at the national level.
 - 144 Alaskan communities have impacts to infrastructure and many communities in rural Alaska face disparities (Max showed photo examples of permafrost degradation, coastal erosion, etc.)
 - Included in the unmet needs report:
 - Inequitable delivery of resources and services (this was the biggest one)
 - Lack of funding—Estimate cost of proactively addressing mitigation costs is \$4.3B for Alaska
 - Limited local capacity—recommend increasing investments in staff positions and increasing training
 - Lack of technical assistance
 - Community-specific hazard data and analysis regarding risk
 - Agency coordination

- Recommendations
 - 1: Single funding source based on risk or a collaborative mechanism for agencies to fund projects based on priority list
 - 2: Remove barriers to equity, which involves legislative and programmatic changes (the report lists recommendations for specific agencies)
 - 3: Develop whole-of-government implementation framework for Alaska communities to address climate threats to infrastructure
 - local/regional coordinator works with technical assistance team which is single point of contact to all government entities
- National significance
 - Important to protect Alaska Native communities and cultures
 - Alaska is hit first and worst by climate change
- The report is 200 pages and will be available to the public soon.

Announcements

Kris Holderied, NOAA

The new director of the NOAA Kasitsna Bay Lab is Reid Brewer. Congratulations Reid!

Lynn Palensky, North Pacific Research Board

The Alaska Marine Science Symposium's "At a glance" program is up. The full program will be released in early January. This year's symposium will run January 29–February 2 at the Hotel Captain Cook in Anchorage. <https://www.alaskamarinescience.org/schedule-2024>

Ginny Eckert, Alaska Sea Grant

Alaska Sea Grant host and fellow applications are open. Molly Cain (Alaska Sea Grant Associate Director for Research) will be hosting a meeting for prospective fellows.

- More information on [Alaska Sea Grant Fellowships](#).
- [Fellowship Q&A: prospective fellows webinar registration](#)
- Application [information for hosts and fellows](#)
- [Sea Grant Knauss Fellowships are also open](#)

Gay Sheffield, Alaska Sea Grant

The [Western Alaska Interdisciplinary Science Conference](#) will be held April 2–4, 2024 in Nome. The theme is "Western Alaska in transition".

The [Lowell Wakefield Fisheries Symposium](#) will be held April 16–18, 2024 in Sitka. The theme is 'Shifting distributions and phenologies: implications for fisheries'.

Please reach out to [Ginny Eckert](#) or [Sheyna Wisdom](#) if you would like to hear about a particular topic during future forums.

The next Alaska Marine Policy Forum call will be January 24, 2024 at 1pm Alaska time. To register for this Forum or all of 2024 Forums visit:

<https://alaskaseagrant.org/events/alaska-marine-policy-forum/>