



Alaska Marine Policy Forum

Summary from Wednesday, January 24, 2024

Host: Darcy Dugan, Alaska Ocean Observing System

Notes by Molly Cain, Alaska Sea Grant

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

Shannon Burns, Senator Sullivan's Office (Sea Grant Knauss Fellow)

- In December, President Biden [amended Executive Order, EO 14068](#), to prevent the import of products into the U.S. which contain fish and seafood from Russia. Sen. Sullivan has strongly advocated for such actions to close the loophole in the original executive order which gave Russia access to the U.S. market by sending Russian seafood to be transformed in another country through reprocessing.
- In December, the Senate approved [the Save Our Seas 2.0 Amendments Act](#), sponsored by Sen. Sullivan, by unanimous consent.
- We expect the next Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee will consider markups of the [Fighting Foreign Illegal Seafood Harvest \(FISH\) Act](#), [a bill to reauthorize the NOAA Marine Debris Program](#), and the [Harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Research and Control Amendments Act \(HABHRCA\) reauthorization](#).
- This week is Shannon's last Alaska Marine Policy Forum as a Knauss fellow as her fellowship is ending. We wish her well.

Senator Murkowski's Office

none present

Tyson Fick, Representative Peltola's Office

- Reiterate and praise the work done by Sen. Sullivan's office concerning the import of Russian seafood. The Alaska delegation offices were in sync about the issue.
- Rep. Peltola's office is working with NOAA to update National Standards and encouraging further efforts around bycatch.
- Appropriations are coming up soon, likely in February or March. Rep. Peltola's office will soon have a portal to take comments, and will work with the Alaska delegation to deliver for Alaskans.
- National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) announced its [intent to prepare an](#)

[Environmental Impact Statement \(EIS\)](#) to analyze the impacts of alternatives related to NMFS's issuance of an incidental take statement (ITS) for species listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) affected by salmon fisheries in Southeast Alaska. NMFS is seeking public comments on the issue.

- Wild Fish Conservancy recently petitioned NOAA Fisheries to list Alaska king salmon under the ESA.

Q: I'm wondering about the status of Alaska's Right to Produce Act. Have any amendments been made for that and do you have information on how it might affect Northern Bering Sea climate resilience?

A: Please send the specific link and direct me towards the part you're concerned about as it relates to climate resilience. My understanding is the intent is not to impact that.

email: Tyson.fick@mail.house.gov

Comment: I know you hear from a lot of entities concerning how in years like last year, processors have a hard time paying fishermen and those providing tendering services on time. It sounds like the issue surrounds cash flow. This happened across many regions of Alaska. I know for other types of agriculture, the USDA and other entities have loans they can provide. I wonder if there is an agency solution for this issue as seafood is often under-represented by groups like USDA.

A: I have heard about that. Thank you for your comment.

Alaska Legislative Updates

Rep. Dan Ortiz

- The legislative session just started. The focus is currently around education funding. Issues of marine policy are not currently at the forefront, but will be, and there will be more updates to provide at that time.

Invited Speakers

Introduction to Alaska Coastal Cooperative for Co-producing Transformative Ideas and Opportunities in the North (AC³TION)

Toby Schwoerer, Research Assistant Professor, UAF Alaska Coastal Cooperative: project overview

- The Alaska Coastal Cooperative (ACC) is a new initiative UAF started over a year ago
 - The initiative is a consortium across different entities at UAF, as well as partnerships with other universities and agencies, in collaboration with rural coastal communities.
 - Researchers engaged with communities to facilitate broader cooperation across agencies and institutions, and to enhance workforce development within the communities.
 - Their goal is to conduct research prioritized by communities to support local decision-making on coastal hazards
- The newly funded National Science Foundation (NSF) [project](#) is called the Alaska

Coastal Cooperative for Co-producing Transformative Ideas and Opportunities in the North (AC³TION)

- 4-year NSF Navigating the New Arctic project
- 4 universities
 - UAF lead + rural campuses
 - + Arizona State University, the University of Northern Iowa and the University of Texas El Paso
- 4 agencies
- +60 collaborators
- Private industry partners
- Participating communities include: Point Lay, Gambell, Hooper Bay, St. Paul Island, Nelson Lagoon, Atka and the Chignik Intertribal Coalition, as well as Tuktoyaktuk in Canada.
- AC³TION focuses on working with communities to move forward research as well as addressing community needs.
 - We will be looking specifically at climate policy and governance, not just coastal hazards. It is a comprehensive, systems approach to climate adaptation and policy.
 - Evaluation team is looking at the process of how we conduct the research and how the communities implement some of the research outcomes we hope to generate together.
- Action objectives
 - Enhance multi-stakeholder communication and decision-making
 - Advance research on coastal hazards and community impacts
 - Build community technical capacity with education and training
- Communication
 - Will have a high level of communication through use of a community research lead network. Each community has its own community research lead, subaward, and an advisory board to ensure that community needs are being met and that there is a high level of input to the research community lead.
 - The communication framework includes varying levels of engagement (meetings every month, every six months, and annually). We are hopeful that the framework enables a two-way street of learning and communication.
- Will engage in a visioning process in the upcoming months, looking at the research expertise in the communities and academic institutions. The goal is a community research plan for each community, and to inform and adjust.
- A primary goal is to ensure that communities end up with the information they want and can use to move their priorities forward within the multi-level governance system we work in.

Li Erickson, Research Oceanographer, USGS: risk assessments for coastal hazards

- USGS has been looking at numerical models for flooding and erosion
 - Through the Alaska Coastal Cooperative, we are working with collaborators in developing it for additional communities
- The purpose is to develop stakeholder appropriate science-based decision support tools to understand, visualize, anticipate, and plan for climate change driven impacts to

Alaskan coastal communities

- Products: web-based tools that show
 - Mapped flood and erosion hazards using a consistent modeling method across 20+ coastal Alaska communities
 - Mapped exposure risk using infrastructure data layers and first finished floor elevations; synthesis of vulnerabilities
- Approach: amend and apply the Coastal Storm Modeling System (CoSMoS) using a nationally-consistent set of sea level rise and storm scenarios
- Uniqueness of the modeling approach
 - Simulates the combined dynamic effects of sea level rise + storm surge + tides + waves + fluvial discharge + storm event erosion
 - Downscaling variability brought about by anticipated climate change to the local level
- Main take-home points
 - Products are stakeholder contributed web-based tools of coastal community future flood and erosion risks
 - Consistent modeling methodology that accounts for climate-driven variability and new extremes
 - Supported by numerous collaborators and various funding streams
- The website for the project is still under construction but the URL will be alaskacoastal.org
- If you have questions, contact uaf-acc@alaska.edu

Overview on the Fifth National Climate Assessment report—Alaska section

Henry Huntington, Arctic Science Director, Ocean Conservancy

- The National Climate Assessment is a congressionally mandated report that comes out about every five years
- This is the fifth iteration
- Has a series of thematic chapters (oceans, agriculture) and regional chapters. Alaska is the only state with an entire chapter.
 - Henry Huntington was the lead author of the [Alaska Chapter](#) and there were numerous authors and other contributors from different organizations
 - The charge was to be policy relevant but not policy prescriptive
- Chapter summary
 - Alaska continues to experience rapid, widespread, and extreme climate-related changes
 - This version focuses on the societal implications of climate change more than past iterations, examines the compounding or intersecting stressors exacerbated by climate change, and discusses aspects of security affected by climate change
- Organized around a series of key messages:
 - Our health and healthcare
 - Our communities
 - Our livelihood
 - Our built environment
 - Our natural environment

- Our security
- Adaptation
- Research needs include
 - The obvious ones: more observations and more research
 - Plus
 - Adaptation barriers and success and how to scale up
 - Climate change and various racial, ethnic, socio-economic, etc. groups
 - Synergistic response options
 - Other new ideas

Attendee Q&A

Q: How closely do the take-homes from the report for Alaska track with those of other regions?

A: The basic ideas concerning aspects like security, health, livelihoods, and infrastructure are similar. Some of the specifics are quite different. For example, messages related to subsistence and the role of fisheries statewide are different from the nation-wide solutions.

Announcements

Sheyna Wisdom, AOOS

- The [Alaska Marine Science Symposium](#) is next week
 - AOOS is hosting the Alaska Marine Research Planning Night on Wednesday, January 31, 6–9pm in the Quarter Deck. [WORKSHOPS](#)

Ginny Eckert, Alaska Sea Grant

- [Western Alaska Interdisciplinary Science Conference \(WAISC\) call for abstracts](#) is open. Deadline is February 15.

Molly Cain, Alaska Sea Grant

- [Alaska Sea Grant State Fellowship](#) host and fellow applications are due February 8.
- [Sea Grant Knauss Fellowships](#) applications are due February 15

Darcy Dugan, AOOS

- The Alaska Ocean Acidification Network recently partnered on an “[Ocean Acidification in Alaska](#)” [Story Map](#). This is one of six new ocean acidification story maps around the country.

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 March 20, 2024 at 1pm Alaska time. To register for this Forum or all of 2024 Forums visit:

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