



### **Alaska Marine Policy Forum**

Summary from Wednesday, June 21, 2023

Hosts: Darcy Dugan, Alaska Ocean Observing System and Ginny Eckert, Alaska Sea Grant

Notes by 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](mailto:dawn.montano@alaska.edu) to receive email reminders and agendas for upcoming calls, and summary notes following each call.*

#### ***Alaska Congressional Delegation Updates***

##### ***Carina Nichols, Senator Sullivan's Office***

- Soon to break for a two week recess covering the 4th of July holiday
- Last week U.S. Senators Sullivan and Murkowski introduced the U.S.–Russian Federation Seafood Reciprocity Act legislation that would impose a comprehensive ban on the import of all Russian-origin seafood products into the United States. While there is currently an embargo on Russian seafood, a lot is still entering the U.S. because of a loophole in which Russian seafood is being sent to China where it is reprocessed and sent to the U.S.
- The Senator is introducing a seafood bill focused on the USDA, which will hopefully get worked into the Farm Bill. It would establish an Office of Seafood at the USDA.
- Wild Fish Conservancy lawsuit: A federal appeals panel issued a ruling that will allow this summer's Southeast Alaska troll chinook salmon fishery to open as scheduled, reversing a lower court ruling that would have kept the industry off the water. Senator Sullivan is happy that fishermen will be allowed to fish while it is solved in court.
- NOAA released their Inflation Reduction Act spend plan. Senator Sullivan is not satisfied with where funding is being allocated. For example, money is allocated for tribes hatcheries in Washington state but is not accessible to those in Alaska. Senator Sullivan would also like to see additional support from NOAA for salmon issues in Alaska. There is a lot allocated for climate and coastal resiliency overall, which he supports, but some of the details need to be worked out concerning what Alaska will be eligible for.
- The FDA Commissioner is coming to Alaska later this month.
- Senator Sullivan will be in Alaska for the two week recess. He will also be here in August.
- Contact info: [carina\\_nichols@sullivan.senate.gov](mailto:carina_nichols@sullivan.senate.gov)

### **Matt Robinson, Senator Murkowski's Office**

- It has been great working as a delegation on many of these issues this congress.
- Senator Murkowski will also be introducing an agricultural bill, referred to as “Arctic Ag.” There is some overlap with Sen. Sullivan’s bill. Senator Murkowski is hoping to get that introduced soon.
- There was an announcement about identifying [Aquaculture Opportunity Areas in Alaska](#). The senator was excited to see that and talked to Dr. Spinrad the day it was announced. They had a good conversation about what that means for Alaska and the future of mariculture in the state.
- Senator Murkowski was excited to see the Ninth Circuit decision for the Wild Fish Conservancy suit.
- Several of Senator Murkowski’s staff will be in Alaska next week. Staff will be visiting Anchorage, Seward, Kenai, and Homer. The senator will be in Bristol Bay at the same time. We are also planning trips to Alaska in August. Sen. Boozman, ranking member of Senate Agriculture, will also come to get an overview of commercial fishing and our idea of agriculture in Alaska. He wants to see processing plants, kelp farms, etc. If you have other ideas for how we can show off Alaska, they would be welcome.
  - Stephen Grabacki: I am on the Board of Directors for the SeaLife Center and any dignitaries would be welcome there.
  - Attendee: They could do a field trip to the Nenana-Totchaket Ag Project. Sold first parcels last fall and farmers are already getting crops in ground/clearing land.
- Senator Murkowski reintroduced several acts
  - Ocean Regional Opportunity and Innovation (Ocean ROI) Act, which would require the Secretary of Commerce to establish a federal strategy for investing in the nation’s ocean-based economy through the creation of Ocean Innovation Clusters.
  - Coastal Communities Ocean Acidification Act, which focuses on coordination and collaboration between federal, state, local and tribal entities on ocean acidification research and monitoring.
  - Don Young Veterans Advancing Conservation Act, which aims to help support veterans’ mental health by giving them the opportunity to reinvest their talent and training to benefit America’s marine environments.
- Contact: [matthew\\_robinson@murkowski.senate.gov](mailto:matthew_robinson@murkowski.senate.gov)

### **Representative Peltola's Office**

*none present*

### **Attendee Q&A**

- Does anyone have information on the Quintillion service outage and access to financial assistance for the communities affected? I am concerned about long-term, widespread outages presenting barriers to these communities. Has the delegation talked about this? Is there a strategy?
  - Carina: We are aware of the issue. The delegation is pushing to get better internet and high-speed Wi-Fi out to rural parts of Alaska. We’re seeing the fruits of that labor—lots of investment happening. I don’t have the perfect answer for

what to do if you're in one of those communities affected right now. We've reached out to various community leaders. It is an issue we are aware of and can try to bring awareness to it in DC.

- Matt: Cordelia Kellie, our Rural Affairs specialist in the state was up in Utqiagvik and experiencing this first-hand. Steve Wackowski, our state director, is either on his way to Nome now or there currently. We are well aware, and engaging with the community. It is a top priority for us.
- For Murkowski and Sullivan's office: who in both offices do I contact to share a letter from Nome-based Tribes regarding the Port of Nome development project?
  - For Sen. Murkowski's office, LA Kevin Swanson ([kevin\\_swanson@murkowski.senate.gov](mailto:kevin_swanson@murkowski.senate.gov))
  - For Sen. Sullivan's office, you can share with Carina ([Carina\\_Nichols@sullivan.senate.gov](mailto:Carina_Nichols@sullivan.senate.gov)), Mary-Eileen ([mary-eileen\\_manning@sullivan.senate.gov](mailto:mary-eileen_manning@sullivan.senate.gov)), and Shannon ([Shannon\\_Burns@sullivan.senate.gov](mailto:Shannon_Burns@sullivan.senate.gov))
- What's the status of the Harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Research and Control Act (HABRHCA) reauthorization?
  - Shannon Burns (Sen. Sullivan's office): This is a very active issue, and we should have an update at the next forum.

### *Alaska Legislative Updates*

#### **Jake Almeda, Rep. Vance**

- The representative is the chair of the House Special Committee on Fisheries. This year was the first of a 2-year legislative session so bills that did not pass this year will still be in play next year.
- [HB169 Fisheries Rehabilitation Permit/Project](#) is one of the top bills the committee took on this year
  - Filed by Rep. Cronk. Is currently being reviewed by the House Resources Committee. It has been introduced by past legislators.
  - Presents one avenue to address the problem of decline of fish in the northern part of the state, particularly in the Yukon-Kuskokwim River systems. Would establish opportunities for advocacy groups to do rehabilitation projects.
- Working on a mariculture bill.
  - The representative has had conversations with members of the mariculture industry. DNR has a lot of regulations concerning the length and content of leases. The statutes haven't been touched in a while, so Rep Vance is working to find common ground, making sure the department does not overstep in terms of regulation but is keeping a more open entry for industry to expand growth. We are working with the Alaska Mariculture Alliance about what this bill could look like. Anyone with interest in that bill, please reach out.
- House Joint Resolution 5 filed by Rep. Rebecca Himschoot
  - This is a resolution speaking in support of the Southeast troll fishermen. Passed with high levels of support in the House and Senate.
- The Fisheries committee has handled everything from DMV fishing boat bills to bycatch

this year. We are always looking to hear from our constituents about any marine issues.

- Contact: Office of Rep. Sarah Vance - [rep.sarah.vance@akleg.gov](mailto:rep.sarah.vance@akleg.gov), 907-235-2921, chief of staff - [jake.almeida@akleg.gov](mailto:jake.almeida@akleg.gov)

### *Invited Speakers*

#### **Jessica Cross, NOAA Pacific Marine Environmental Laboratory**

#### **Introduction to carbon dioxide removal (needs, techniques, informing gaps)**

#### **Slides**

- Today is [Show Your Stripes](#) Day, a communications campaign. Warming stripes in presentation are a visual representation of changes in temperature in Alaska since 1893. You can check out the UAF [International Arctic Research Center Stripe Wall](#). Carbon removal could be a way to bring these colors back to blue (cool).
- Nearly every scenario considered by the IPCC that limits warming below 2 degrees C relies on some degree of CDR (carbon dioxide removal).
- To make up for unavoidable emissions, estimates suggest we need to extract 10 Gt CO<sub>2</sub>/yr out of the atmosphere by 2050, increasing to 20 Gt CO<sub>2</sub>/yr by 2100. This is ambitious growth for this industry.
- Offset markets selling advance commitments are already becoming big. Private industry is putting money into this industry (e.g., JP Morgan purchased 800,000 tons which tripled the market)
- There are many ways to remove carbon from the atmosphere. These fall into three categories generally:
  - Engineering to pull carbon from the atmosphere (e.g., filters)
  - Inorganic methods like enhanced rock weather
  - Biotic methods = using photosynthesis; plants store carbon as organic matter
- Some methods have important costs, such as high energy, water, or land use requirements
  - E.g., Direct air capture = high electricity demands; e.g., Deforestation = lots of land use and water
  - If this industry scales to the level that we need, we will have to contend with these demands. It is helpful to have a diverse portfolio and the right incentives to limit these pressures.
- Cheap, effective, and durable methods could have the highest potential impact
  - E.g., alkalinity enhancement has low cost and high effectiveness
- Key challenges of CDR implementation
  - Measuring the actual removal
  - Understanding environmental impacts
- What research products will have the highest impact?
  - Scalable new technologies that can work both on the local scale, and when networked together provide a regional or global picture
  - Interdisciplinary systems that explore both the carbon system as well as environmental impacts
  - Maps are key. Products that can be easily spatially indexed are integral for decision support systems

- More info about NOAA CDR Research Strategy can be found in the NOAA Science Council Website:
  - <https://sciencecouncil.noaa.gov/cdr-strategy/>
  - <https://www.pmel.noaa.gov/news-story/noaa-carbon-dioxide-removal-strategy-released-path-forward-meet-noaa%E2%80%99s-climate-goals>

### **Attendee Q&A**

- Is alkalinity enhancement the top NOAA strategy?
  - NOAA isn't triaging these methods. All methods need more research. Those that are cheap/effective indicate what we can study most quickly but doesn't mean they're the best methods out there.
- Where is CDR being tested?
  - Currently in labs (benchtop chemistry) as well as models. There are companies with permits doing active testing. E.g., Project Vesta is seeding beaches with olivine sand. The weathering sand adds alkalinity to the water over time. Jessica wasn't aware of anyone testing this in Alaska other than models.

### **Announcement**

You can learn more in depth information on this topic during upcoming events:

- June 23: [Webinar on CDR](#) - overview of science, policy and decision making. Will feature four speakers including Jessica. 10–11:30am AK time.
- July 18: [ACCAP webinar on CDR](#). Also with Jessica Cross, more comprehensive than today with time for Q&A.

### ***Rena Miller, Alaska Department of Natural Resources***

#### **Overview of recent carbon capture legislation signed into law by Gov. Dunleavy**

- Gov. Dunleavy introduced a Carbon Management and Monetization Bill package, creating statutory and regulatory structures needed to enable the state to participate in carbon management and capitalize on carbon markets.
- The package consists of two pieces of legislation
  - One focuses on a carbon offset program through forest sequestration. It grants the Department of Natural Resources the ability to establish a carbon offset program and enable carbon offset projects on state lands
  - The other focuses on carbon capture, utilization, and storage through projects that would capture carbon emitted and inject it deep underground into geologic formations.
- There was broad support for the bill, which passed with a 58:2 vote and was signed at the Alaska Sustainable Energy Conference in Anchorage.
- They are now working to implement the bill. A scoping notice went out last week. Comments can be submitted through the [comment portal](#).
- Broadly, the bill paves the way for Alaska to start participating in management with state land and resources. The state sees it as multi-use land, compatible with other uses (hiking, fishing, hunting). There is also potential revenue to the state from credits generated from carbon offset projects. These projects also benefit the environment.

- Neither of the two state programs affect private land or landowners. Some Alaska Native organizations have been participating in carbon offset programs on their lands for several years now. The university is also considering this. The bill does not relate to them.
- Projects could be done on state forests and other state lands.
- Revenue would go to the state as general fund revenue.
- For one program, the state is interested in improved forest management projects to reduce emissions and remove carbon from the atmosphere. Leases would not be required. There is a process to solicit input from agencies, incorporate that into the project, and move forward with the project.
- The second program would provide the ability to release state land to third parties. A lease of land doesn't convey any right to harvest/remove resources growing on that land.
- Concerning marine carbon offsets: Our understanding right now is that there are no protocols or methods at registries currently available and some of the technology for using submerged/tidal lands for carbon capture are still a ways off and involve higher costs. There is tentative interest at the division level for hybrid projects (e.g., combining growing kelp for food and capturing with carbon). The state is interested in incorporating this within the DNR regulation process.
- Contact: [rena.miller@alaska.gov](mailto:rena.miller@alaska.gov)

### *Announcements*

- Carrie Haisley, Chief of the Emergency Services and Multimedia Branch at NWS/NOAA Alaska Environmental Science and Services Integration Center
  - Carrie oversees “Alaska Weather” a production that the Weather Service co-produces with Alaska Public Media to get information to rural communities that may not have other ways of getting information.
  - The last day for this program is next Friday. Alaska Public Media notified NOAA in January that they are not able to continue the partnership. They were a key piece of the production and distribution as NOAA doesn't have the ability to do this on their own.
  - The main impact will be to those living in remote communities who don't have other ways of getting weather and water information. A public comment period is now open to collect input and provide information on how to move forward—how do people get info in other ways and what is the impact of this program going away.
  - NOAA is also looking for people to help spread the word to those impacted. NOAA will be moving the program to a Weather Service YouTube channel. It doesn't reach a lot of people but is a quick pivot. NOAA would like to determine another way to move forward long-term.
  - [More info](#)
  - Contact: [nws.service-changecomments@noaa.gov](mailto:nws.service-changecomments@noaa.gov); [carrie.haisley@noaa.gov](mailto:carrie.haisley@noaa.gov)
  - [YouTube channel](#)
- Timi Vann, Regional Lead, Alaska and Pacific Northwest, National Ocean Service, Office for Coastal Management at NOAA

- NOFO: [NOAA Climate Resilience Regional Challenge](#)
  - New program that will provide funding from the Inflation Reduction Act for investing in regional approaches for increasing community resilience.
  - ~\$575M is available for projects that build the resilience of coastal communities to extreme weather (e.g., hurricanes and storm surge) and other impacts of climate change, including sea level rise and drought
  - Four overarching program priorities
    - risk reduction
    - regional coordination
    - equity and inclusion
    - building enduring capacity
  - Two tracks
    - One will support regional collaborative building (\$25M total, awards range from \$0.5M to \$2M)
    - The other will support implementation of resilience and adaptation actions (\$550M total, \$15M to \$75M for projects)
  - Letters of Intent are due Aug. 21, 2023
  - There will be virtual information sessions, linked on website
- Lynn Palensky, North Pacific Research Board
  - Announcement for anticipated Northern Bering Sea Integrated Ecosystem Research Program. NPRB anticipates a full RFP to be released after our fall board meeting. [More info](#).
    - Reach out to Daniel Dickson for information: [Danielle.Dickson@nprb.org](mailto:Danielle.Dickson@nprb.org)
  - NPRB is soliciting recommendations for research priority ideas that inform our core RFP program. You can submit your ideas on our [website](#).
  - Alaska Marine Science Symposium 2024 will be Jan. 29–Feb. 2, 2024 at Hotel Captain Cook in Anchorage
- Dan Lesh, Southeast Conference
  - [Alaska Mariculture Cluster website](#) with information RFPs, grants to support growth in the mariculture industry.
- The deadline to submit public comment on the U.S. Coast Guard Vessel Response Plan and Maritime Oil Spill Response Plan advisory group recommendations is June 28.
  - [Federal register notice](#)

*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 August 16, 2023 at 1 pm Alaska time.** To register visit: <https://alaskaseagrant.org/event/alaska-marine-policy-forum-august-2023/>