



Alaska Marine Policy Forum
Summary of Wednesday, March 12th call
Host: Molly McCammon, mccammon@aoos.org

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.

Mari Freitag, Office of Senator Murkowski
Congressional update

The Senate recently rolled out the FY15 budget. Senator Murkowski was pleased with the fish disaster allocation in the amount of \$20.8 million (although half of what was requested). They are working with tribes and the governor's office to implement the funding. Previous Alaska fishing disaster funding was administered by the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission, and it is possible that this will happen again.

Current issues of concern are research and habitat, and the block to shellfish imports by China. Senator Murkowski has written a position letter on this, and meetings are scheduled with the Chinese ambassador. The budget allocation for NOAA is still unknown, but the CJS committee (Commerce, Justice, and Science) will make sure it is a priority. Senator Murkowski is pleased with the research on installing electronic monitoring cameras on small boats and fixed gear in Southeast Alaska, as part of the fisheries observer program. There should be some results from this in about six weeks, according to Pete Jones of NOAA.

Bob King, Office of Senator Mark Begich

Senator Begich is also pleased about the fisheries disaster relief funds and is working with Senator Murkowski, Congressman Young, and Governor Parnell on a spending plan. Senator Begich is working on reauthorization of the Magnuson–Stevens Fisheries Conservation and Management Act which has had 4 hearings and 11 field hearings – mostly in Alaska. There has been a lot of input and Senator Begich has been tasked with developing a draft. The Hastings Bill on the House side has also stirred a lot of conversation.

Senator Begich is working on the Coast Guard reauthorization bill. He is close to introducing it in pieces, which will include the quality of life bill (i.e. housing, family, etc)

and the Arctic Preparedness Act involving icebreakers. There is a USCG budget hearing in April. Dan Abel will take over the Coast Guard 17th District in Alaska.

Last week Senator Begich introduced the Vessel Incidental Charge Act implementing tougher standards for ballast water and exemptions for large or commercial vessels. The bill has 22 co-sponsors. Senator Begich is also involved in a tsunami warning bill and the ICOOS reauthorization act. Others issues are NOAA, stock assessments, AOOS, Sea Grant, marine debris, an Arctic ambassador, and China's ban on importing geoducks.

General comments—Bob King hopes that issues with Ukraine will not affect our working relationship with Russia on the western front, concerning marine mammal research and shipping.

**Brent Goodrum, Director of the Alaska DNR Division of Mining, Land and Water
Alaska HB77 Land Use/Disp/Exchanges; Water Rights**

In 2013 the controversial HB77 passed the House.]Brent Goodrum explained that in 2014 a new version of HB77 has been introduced and he described the changes that were incorporated as a result of public input. DNR leaders have met with different groups involved and have held over 40 meetings to get input. This is an evolving story, and readers are encouraged to go to http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_bill.asp?bill=HB++77 for more information and provide written testimony.

Brent mentioned that Tom Crafford, currently at DNR, will likely replace Mark Robbins in the governors office and attend the Marine Policy conference calls.

**John Walsh, UAF-IARC, ACCAP, <https://accap.uaf.edu/>
Winter/Spring Alaska Climate Update**

ACCAP publishes two products on climate:

1. [Alaska Weather and Climate Highlights](#)
2. [Alaska Climate Dispatch](#)

John Walsh highlighted the extreme weather in Alaska in December-January-February. December and February were normal, but the weather in January was a standout. It was warmer than in the Lower 48—the average Alaska temperature was 24, while the average temperature in the Lower 48 was 22. The temperatures at many Alaska sites were the warmest on record. During the third week in January a temperatures of 52 was recorded at Denali Park, and it was 62 at Port Alsworth. Also, snowfall was below normal. Some weather impacts were the avalanches near Valdez, and freezing rain in Anchorage and Fairbanks. The official lowest wind chill ever recorded in Alaska was minus 97 in the Brooks Range. Sea ice was way below normal—there were large areas of open water near Nome for example. Why was Alaska weather so different from the Lower 48? Some attribute it to the jet stream (polar vortex). There were no el niños or niñas, or other anomalous events that would account for it. Under discussion is a huge

area of warm water (3 degrees above normal) in the Pacific Ocean south of the Gulf of Alaska—this may have played a role.

**Todd Radenbaugh, UAF Bristol Bay, Dillingham
Western Alaska Interdisciplinary Science Conference**

WAISC will be held in Kotzebue April 23-25. The conference began in 2008 and rotates among western Alaska rural communities. The conference takes on the flavor of the hosting community. The conference is interdisciplinary, with presentations by practicing researchers and “nonprofessional” scientists. Coastal issues, solid waste, and the Pebble Mine have been reported on at WAISC. UAF, EPSCOR, state agencies, and community residents attend and present. This year the first day will be taken up with presentations and discussions on oil and gas exploration in the Chukchi Sea, in conjunction with the Northwest Arctic Borough. Abstracts are still being accepted.

<http://seagrant.uaf.edu/conferences/waisc/index.html>

**Christine Hess, Northwest Arctic Borough
Northwest Arctic Borough Science Program**

Shell Oil Exploration and the Science Department of the Northwest Arctic Borough are partnering to create a Science Program, with \$1.2 million for the first year. To set research priorities for the borough, a symposium will be held April 22-23 at the National Park Service. Nineteen presenters are on the schedule to present Arctic research. Mayor Reggie Joule has appointed board members for the Science Program, including Molly McCammon, Henry Huntington, other scientists, and seven village representatives.

Molly commented that this new program will add science strength to northern Alaska; the North Slope Borough already has a robust science program.

**Lisa Matlock, PWS Regional Citizen's Advisory Council
EVOS 25th Anniversary**

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill. Several talks are being presented in different locations—Cordova, Homer, Valdez, Seward, Glennallen, Anchorage, and Seldovia. In addition to the talks, an oral history project has been completed in partnership with the National Jukebox Library of Congress program, with archived recordings about perspectives on the oil spill. An EVOS exhibit will be on display at the Loussac Library in Anchorage, focusing on changes, better protection, and longterm effects on people and the environment. Look for full-page newspaper ads and [flyer](#) with the presentation dates.

**Molly McCammon, AOOS
Workshops**

Recently workshops have been held on HABS, shellfish, and oyster farms. AOOS, Alaska Sea Grant, and others are organizing a [Community-Based Monitoring workshop](#) set for April 1-2 in Anchorage to look at best practices and lessons learned. NOAA will hold a Climate Adaptation Workshop in Anchorage. The AOOS project [STAMP](#) (Spatial Tools for

Arctic Mapping and Planning) is coming to a close and will hold a stakeholder workshop on April 16. AOOS is also celebrating its [10th anniversary](#). Among other events, they are holding a [film contest](#) with a \$1000 prize; short films are due September 15.

Upcoming Events:

- Future of Shellfish – March 11-12, Homer
- Community-based monitoring best practices workshop – April 1-2, Anchorage
- STAMP workshop – April 16, Anchorage
- ComFish Alaska 2014 Forums – April 17-19, Kodiak
- Kodiak Area Marine Science Symposium – April 22-25, Kodiak
- Western Alaska Interdisciplinary Science Conference – April 24-26, Kotzebue
- Fisheries Bycatch: Global Issues and Creative Solutions, Wakefield Symposium – May 13-16, Anchorage

Next Alaska Marine Policy Forum: May 21, 2014