

MINUTES

NSB/SHELL Baseline Studies Program

Steering Committee Teleconference

Barrow Conference Room

April 12, 2013

MAIN PURPOSE OF MEETING: To confirm the project 2013 Rankings.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Representing</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Representing</u>
Robert Suydam	NSB	Tom Weingartner	Independent Scientist
Victoria Broje	Shell	Willard Neakok	Pt. Lay Primary
Sue Moore	Independent Scientist	Lee Kayotuk	Kaktovik Primary
Michael Macrander	Shell	Craig George	NSB
Qaiyaan Harcharek	City of Barrow	Brandon Southall	Independent Scientist

Members Not Present:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Representing</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Representing</u>
Ransom Agnasagga	AIN Primary	Danny Pikok, Jr.	Alternate Pt. Lay
Enoch Oktollik	Alternate AIN	Hajo Eicken	Independent Scientist
Jack Schafer	Alternate Pt. Hope	Ron Oviok, Sr.	Pt. Hope Primary

Non Members Present:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Representing</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Representing</u>
Malissa Langley	NSB Wildlife		

CALL TO ORDER: April 12, 2013

INVOCATION: Willard Neakok

INTRODUCTIONS:

OPENING REMARKS: Suydam welcomed the committee members. The purpose of the meeting is to confirm the project rankings that everyone on the Steering Committee contributed to. Suydam thanked everyone for taking the time to submit their rankings. In addition to talking about rankings, the committee will also talk about the Chukchi Sea Ecosystem Study that the NPRB and NSF have planned. It may be that the the Steering Committee would like to support that project. If so, the committee would be able to influence the direction and focus of the study and participate in other ways. Thank you all for being here.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA:

Harcharek made a motion to approve agenda, which was seconded by Neakok. The agenda was approved unanimously.

PROJECT RANKING:

The committee examined the member's rankings. The spreadsheet included the average ranking and standard deviation to show the variation among everybody rankings. The projects are organized with the highest ranked project at the top. The Surface Current Drifters is the highest ranked project and the lowest ranked project is the Hydrology Stream Flow Project.

The committee discussed the rankings. Moore explained her rankings and why she chose not to rank some of the projects. In some cases it was not clear enough what the project would involve. They included the projects on Monitoring Ship Traffic and Polar Bear Hair Snare.

The following are comments on specific projects:

Forage Fish RFP: Marcrander and George will work on the RFP and will have distribute it to the committee for comments by the 1 May. The Steering Committee will have a couple of weeks to get comments back before sending it out.

Monitoring Ship Traffic: Suydam suggested that it might be worth having the NSB's Todd Sformo gather information and come up with some ideas for monitoring ship traffic. If this were the case, the NSB would work on looking into this a little bit more and coming back to the committee with some ideas of how to proceed.

Moore agreed that was a good approach. Sformo would do a really good job of helping to coordinate the approach including a summary of information that is already available. She expressed some concern that while organization are documenting increased shipping and increased vessel traffic they may not be looking at some of important space and temporal scales that are really pertinent to marine mammals and to people living along the coast of Alaska.

The committee agreed to have Todd look at the ship traffic project.

Polar Bear Hair Snare Project: The NSB had talked with USGS about this project. USGS has been running a hair snare project in Kaktovik and had been working with the NSB on the Hair Snare Project at Barrow. Many samples have been collected and there is now a need for analysis of samples that are in hand. There are about 1000 samples from Barrow and perhaps hundreds more from Kaktovik. The NSB will be talking with USGS and FWS about the best approach for

the analytical work. Additional information will be available about this project in the near future.

Several committee members commented on the cost estimates associated with the project. The estimates are very approximate. Broje suggested that the committee might not want to support all of them. Some of the projects being considered are new to the committee this year and some are repeats from last year. The projects ranked low by the Steering Committee maybe should not be funded at all. Just because money may be available, it does not mean it needs to be spent on the lower ranked projects. For example, the hydrology studies ranked low and may be should not be funded by the Baseline Studies Program.

Hydrology Projects: Neakok suggested that the hydrology projects should be taken off the list because they consistently ranked low. Perhaps the funding should be reserved for some other important project. Weingartner generally agreed but did not want the projects to completely disappear. They may be important for the committee to consider at a future date. Those projects may not be as urgent as some other studies but the general topic should not be dropped. Suydam commented that hydrology studies were important in large part because there are large data gaps about this topic. There are only a few long-term gauging stations across the North Slope. The committee may want to engage with the NSSI and others to figure out if there is a way to develop a collaboration, especially for rivers and streams in the western part of the North Slope. There may be some follow on work based on what Shell initiated in the last couple of years. Water levels during break up in the spring have the potential to be really influential on things like pipelines or lagoon systems or communities. A better understanding of stream flows is going to be important.

Committee Members were in agreement that the hydrology projects would not be funded in 2013 but would be considered for future funding.

Tide Gauge: Weingartner suggested this project and there are several reasons behind it. (1) The gauging of sea level serves a number of purposes. It begins to build a base for understanding sea level fluctuation in the near shore and that bears on issues pertaining to land fast ice and coastal erosion. (2) Sea level will be correlated with the ocean circulation. Deploying tide gauges now will be valuable in conjunction with measurements offshore oceanography. There are conditions in the Bering Sea or Bering Strait that propagate across the Chukchi and Beaufort seas. A sea level signal may actually be more related to current initially before the local winds have any input. Sea level is actually important in understanding some of the circulation patterns. Another point here is that sea level is a simple thing to measure and it is a real good guide for how well any circulation models are doing.

If project is supported by the committee, Steve Okkonen would take the lead and submit a proposal to UAF's Coastal Marine Institute for half of the needed funding for the program. The Baseline Studies funds would help to leverage additional funding from UAF.

George mentioned that the NSB has a pressure gauge that could be deployed near Barrow. That may be one way of getting a time series started that would not cost a lot of money.

Wolf/Wolverine Surveys: Suydam mentioned that the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) was very interested in this topic especially for the western part of the Brooks Range. Ryan Klimstra, with the NSB, has been in discussions with WCS about ways to build a collaborative study if the Committee approves the project. The study would be a pilot effort to better understand what is needed and how we might go about understanding wolf and wolverine density and habitats use in the western Brooks Range. Other committee members agree that the project seems like a good idea, especially if Baseline funds can be used to help leverage other funding to share costs. That approach is an important strength to this program.

Other Comments on Projects and Rankings: Macrander asked for additional input from the village representatives in terms of their perspective of this list of studies. Neakok stated that he thought there were a lot of good projects being considered. The information coming out of those projects will be important for our children and grandchildren. He wants to see something moving so we can start gathering and sharing the information. Willard also re-emphasized that Point Lay is concerned about the use of helicopters to do projects. Other approaches should be considered.

Koyutuk I find it important for these studies going on throughout the coming years. I think continuing the projects are important to see what is out there that no has completed studies on.

Qaiyaan: I think for the most part, I think our committee is headed in the right direction and we hear a lot of concerns of there not being a lot of work on the terrestrial side but I think as far as what we have on the list now it positive. People in AKP are really interested in the wolf and wolverine study and speaking with folks with ADF&G and Geoff Carroll mentioned of the predators the wolf population on the Northern part of the Slope is significantly being higher and they even talked about the possibility of going into some type of predator control because of caribou caving and musk ox but I think for the most part we are moving in the right direction.

Kayotuk expressed concern about Exxon's Pt. Thompson project. The population of 400 people in Kaktovik is exposed to blasting every night at 6pm, seven days a week. He was not sure how long the blasting was going to continue and was concerned about impacts to the caribou herd this summer. George responded that ADF&G is now about to release some information about the effects of the Red Dog Mine Road on caribou movements. The results were surprising because the western Arctic caribou herd, which is naïve about industrial projects, reacted very strongly to the Red Dog Mine road. This compares to the central arctic herd that regularly intersects with roads on a coastal migration but has much lower response. At the Red Dog Mine road, about 80 percent of the collared caribou went around or deflected from the road. Those results were beyond anything that was predicted. The point is that if we start moving towards further plans for terrestrial pipeline routes, roads, and these sorts of things, caution is needed in evaluating

short-term and long-term effects. Neakok stated that the Red Dog Mine is going to really affect Pt. Hope, Pt. Lay and Kivalina, if they are not affected already. Maybe the committee should ask if they would like to be in this Baseline Study Program too to help address these kind of issues.

The committee further discussed the rankings. George motioned that the committee accept the rankings and have the NSB move the projects forward. Harcharek seconded the motion.

Neakok reiterated that the hydrology studies not be considered for 2013 and just focus on the other rankings. He also suggested that the forage fish assessment, ship monitoring and polar bear hair snare projects be put on the list for future discussion in future years. Weingartner also encouraged that will all projects, we seek collaboration with others.

The committee voted unanimously to approve the ranked 2013 project list.

COLLABORATION WITH THE NORTH PACIFIC RESEARCH BOARD AND NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION ON ECOSYSTEM STUDY IN THE CHUKCHI SEA

The North Pacific Research Board (NPRB) and the National Science Foundation (NSF) conducted a five year ecosystem study in the Bering Sea. They are proposing something similar to the Bering Sea project for the Chukchi Sea. Moore mentioned that this project was discussed considerable at the Wakefield Symposium in Anchorage two weeks ago. Groups were asked to get together in a workshop format to provide input to that process. A group of people will try to come up with a conceptual model to guide the five year research efforts in the Chukchi Sea. Moore agreed that this project may be one for the Baseline Studies Program to consider being involved with, especially so that considerations of the people living along the Chukchi Sea coast be considered.

Weingartner thought the project was generally valuable but the committee should be careful so that the study addresses the goals and the desires of the North Slope communities. The committee may want to be part of this process so we can contribute by developing a few topics that we think are particularly important we would want to see funded. Moore and Macrander agreed with his suggestion. Macrander thought that this may be a good program and there is a lot to gain by the Baseline Studies Program having a strong voice in helping to chart the course of the program and continue to bring in some level of focus on the question of the relevance for the North Slope villages.

Kayotuk asked how we would be involved with this study? Suydam thought that this study is just in the process of being formulated. Field work would not actually start until 2014 or 2015 and then it would go on for a few years from there. The steps after that would be to take what they learned and figure out how to use that information. The NSB perspective is that the information would hopefully be useful in making decisions about trying to have human activities

that are going on in the ocean especially oil, gas and commercial shipping, be done in a way that has the least amount of impact to resources that are important to the North Slope communities. It is likely that the committee's involvement could help to steer the project in that direction.

The NPRB is very interested in having the Baseline Studies Program participate in the Chukchi Sea ecosystem study. NPRB approached Suydam and Macrander about interest in helping to fund the project. Danielle Dickson is the person at NPRB who is taking the lead. She has attended one or two of our meetings and she is aware of our discussions. She sees us as a possible collaborator. Suydam emphasized that this is an opportunity to help guide what is happening with this larger project. George strongly supports the ecosystem program.

Weingartner made a motion that the NSB/Shell Baseline Studies Program should to collaborate with this Chukchi Sea Ecosystem Study to address concerns of the community and become part of the process to influence it. Harcharek seconded the motion. We should have a strong voice and influence decisions about this study. The committee unanimously passed the motion.

Suydam suggested that the committee form a subcommittee to focus on this project. The committee agreed and Suydam, George, Moore, Macrander, and Neakok will serve on the Ecosystem Subcommittee.

Suydam agreed to tell NPRB that the committee is very interested in participating in this Chukchi Sea Ecosystems Study; we want to be involved; we want the community concerns to be incorporated into the study design; we have a fair number of studies that we are moving forward on that may fit in very nicely with the larger program; and there maybe ways that we can fund specific projects or subprojects as the program moves forward. He won't give them a specific dollar amount but will give them an idea of our budget overall and see how things work from there. He will specifically ask them how they see us fitting into the ecosystem study and how we might be able to influence the projects, the process and how they see us being involved. The committee agreed.

VILLAGE OBSERVATIONS AND CONCERNS

There was some discussion about sea ice this year. The overall thickness of the Beaufort seems to be below normal. There is expected to be major ice loss this year. At Pt. Lay, the shorefast ice is only about four miles out and is very thin. In Barrow the ice trails for whaling have not been cut out yet because the ice is so unstable. The ice off of Barrow is only 3 to 4 feet thick as far out as 30 miles. Katovik is having blizzard weather; the storms have become more severe in the spring in the last few years.

SHELL UPDATE

Macrander provided an update of Shell's plans for 2013. They will conduct shallow hazards and ice scour surveys in the Chukchi Sea this summer. The Burger prospect area is a focus and then

a string of leases farther to the west. They may also survey between Barrow Canyon and Hanna Shoal. Also, several weeks of equipment removal will be needed at the Burger Prospect. In the last two weeks of May, Shell will be visiting the Villages for plan of cooperation meetings. Shell is still making plans for activities in 2014. Macrander also mentioned to the committee that ConocoPhillips announced that they will not be drilling in 2014. Suydam asked if ConocoPhillips' announcement would influence the joint industry Baseline Studies program. Macrander stated that he expected the industry program was on track.

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

As summer approaches, it will be difficult to find a time to meet in the coming months. Langley or Kaleak will send out a Doodle Poll for the next Face to Face Meeting. In the meantime we will schedule a Teleconference for late May or early June.

The Teleconference was adjourned.

The Inupiat Word of the Day "II"