

MINUTES

NSB/Shell Baseline Studies Program

Steering Committee Meeting

Frontier Building, Anchorage Alaska

September 27-28, 2012 9:00 a.m.

September 27, 2012

Members Present:

Name	Representing	Name	Representing
Robert Suydam	NSB	Ron Oviok, Sr.	Pt. Hope
Tom Weingartner	Independent Scientist	Victoria Broje	Shell
Enoch Oktollik	Alternate AIN	Sue Moore	Independent Scientist
Michael Macrander	Shell	Hajo Eicken	Independent Scientist
Qaiyaan Harcharek	City of Barrow	Brandon Southall	Independent Scientist
Craig George	NSB	Danny Pikok, Jr.	Alternate Pt. Lay

Members Not Present:

Name	Representing	Name	Representing
Ransom Agnasagga	AIN Primary	Willard Neakok	Pt. Lay Primary

Non Members Present:

Name	Representing	Name	Representing
Malissa Langley	NSB Wildlife	Janell Kaleak	NSB Wildlife
Ryan Klimstra	Biologist NSB Wildlife	Erling Westlien	Shell

CALL TO ORDER: Suydam, Interim Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:00 am.

INTRODUCTIONS: All members, alternates and guests introduced themselves.

INVOCATION: Provided by Ronald Oviok, Sr.

INUPIAT WORD OF THE DAY: qaqqisuk = brain

Macrander gave a safety briefing for the meeting.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The committee reviewed the agenda for the meeting. There were several slight changes: (1) the May approving the 2012 minutes would be postponed until the next meeting; (2) Hajo would be added to agenda to discuss the Sea ice/ocean current Workshop; and (3) election of the Chair and Vice Chair was moved from 28 September to first thing on 27 September. The committee approved the Agenda with changes.

APPROVAL OF DECEMBER 2011 MINUTES

The committee reviewed the December 2011 minutes. Southall pointed out that he was not present but he attended by teleconference. Correction was made to the minutes to reflect Southall attended by teleconference.

The December 2011 minutes were approved.

ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

Motion was made and seconded to nominate Robert Suydam as Chair. He was elected by unanimous consent.

Motion was made and seconded to nominate Michael Macrander as Vice Chair. He was also elected by unanimous consent.

SIGNING OF THE BYLAWS

The Bylaws were reviewed by the committee and a slight correction was made.

A motion and second to approve the modified Bylaws was made. The Bylaws were approved by consensus. The bylaws were signed by the Chair, Robert Suydam, and Vice Chair, Michael Macrander.

VILLAGE CONCERNS/OBSERVATIONS

Barrow: Qaiyaan Harcharek

Many Barrow residents were concerned about helicopters in the area. They are currently the biggest concern. Caribou appear to leave the area when helicopters arrive. Fall whaling officially opens in Barrow on 1 October 2012.

Point Lay: Danny Pikok

Point Lay was concerned about Shell's drilling when the containment ship was not ready and it was still in Seattle. Point Lay was also concerned that Shell was dumping cuttings on the ocean floor.

Macrander explained about Shell's modified plans and progress for summer 2012. Shell was trying to get a spill containment barge built and in place. If there was a spill, the containment dome on the barge could be positioned over the well and process the oil instead of having it spill into the water. They also have a capping stack that could be deployed. This stack was similar to that used to stop the spill in the Gulf of Mexico. Broje also explained that oil spill response vessels are stationed within one hour of the drill rigs.

The committee held a brief discussion the fate of the cuttings from wells. Suydam mentioned and Macrander confirmed that each well produces about 600 tons of cuttings that get dumped on the ocean floor. Macrander stated that Shell was not dumping cuttings in the Beaufort Sea but they were in the Chukchi Sea. Also, Shell was only planning to drill to about 1400 or 1500 feet this year because the capping stack was not ready. They are planning to drill the remaining depth, to about 7000 feet, next summer. The size of the cuttings is approximately the size of a fingernail.

George shared that because of Shell's drilling in 2012, the AEWG initiated tagging bowheads again in collaboration with Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

Pikok asked about the communication centers that are set up in the villages and Macrander explained that the boats call or radio into the comm. centers every six hours from offshore.

Pikok also mentioned that walrus are coming near Pt. Lay in 2012 but had not started hauling out in large numbers again. He explained that on a quiet night you can hear them offshore 5-6 miles out but that it depends on the weather.

Wainwright: Enoch Oktolik

Wainwright is concerned about limitations on staging areas. The community wants to be able to access lands for hunting. There was a lot of helicopter activity in the vicinity of Wainwright, which caused to caribou to move away from hunting areas. Every summer there are a lot of caribou near Wainwright. For some reason this year, they did not see a herd of caribou come through Wainwright or in the surrounding area. This may be because of the intense activities. The community relies on the caribou heavily because of the high costs of store bought food. Helicopters are affecting the fishing, bird hunting and caribou hunting and the community knows it will be like this for years to come. Somehow impacts from helicopter traffic needs to be mitigated. Ringed seals were not being seen in the summer. This is very unusual and there is no certain explanation for the cause or whether it has to do with the industrial activities. Shore ice

stayed around Wainwright well into the summer for the first time in a long time. Wainwright is concerned about the large ice breaking ships because it can affect whaling and seal hunters.

All in all, Wainwright had good hunting this year except for ring seals and at certain times for caribou because of the disturbance from helicopters. When the ice pack is thick hunters can get a lot of animals as the ice moves out and comes back to near the village. If ice breakers cut the ice there will definitely be impacts to Wainwright's hunting success.

Wainwright recognizes that Shell is good for the economy but they hope Shell can be considerate of the hunting and food resources that come from the ocean and the ice.

Wainwright harvested five polar bears.

Pt. Hope: Ron Oviok, Sr.

Pt. Hope also had a really good ice year. The ice was 6 to 8 feet thick and the village harvested five bowhead whales in the spring. During the whaling season there were too many polar bears around. One hunter counted 12 bears come into his camp and he couldn't sleep. Bearded seal were caught. Enough were caught this spring and early June before the ice went out for skin boats next year. Lots of seals were near the coast but when the ice went out they didn't come back. Point Hope harvested five walrus this season and they were all in good health and body condition. Caribou began coming in June and were also in good health. Beginning in September, caribou were again migrating from south to north and there were quite a few around. About 10-15 were harvested. There was lots of wind and rain which kept lots of hunters at home. They usually go out about 40 miles. There is also a concern about the price of gas. That expense makes it hard for hunters when the people aren't working.

Concerns and suggestions from Pt. Hope city council and hunters:

1. Ask Shell to help analyze tissues from the dead seals from 2011.
2. During caribou migration there are lots of aircraft. Point Hope would like copies of permits issued by Alaska Fish & Game, including airplane tail numbers and purpose of the planes.
3. There were helicopters going back and forth from Pt. Hope to Cape Lisbourne and from Cape Lisbourne to Cape Thompson during the caribou migration and disturbing hunters and caribou. It was a small black helicopter.
4. Committee members would like to get their per diems and security deposits covered at the hotels.

Weingartner asked about the status of the disease on polar bears and seals.

George replied that there is a very intense sampling and analysis effort. They are trying to figure out the cause of the disease in the seals. Very good samples have been collected and sent to the

best labs in the US and Canada but so far they have not determined the cause. There is no evidence that the disease can be spread to humans by contact or consumption. The NSB has done a lot of beach surveys in 2012 looking for sick seals or walruses and only a couple of cases have been seen this year. The event was officially declared an unusual mortality event (UME) for ringed seals and walruses, but there are still concerns about other ice seals and possibly polar bears.

Committee members discussed the possibility that pollutants and contaminants may be affecting the marine mammals and contributing to the UME. Some people have suggested that the sick seals are due to contamination from the nuclear reactor in Japan. There is no evidence that this is the cause; however, the symptoms are consistent with radiation exposure.

SCIENCE CONCERNS OR OBSERVATIONS

Weingartner mentioned that the ocean was warm in 2012, at least along the coast. He wanted to know about the salmon catch this year?

George commented that the salmon catch was modest in Barrow this year. Harcharek added that the catch was pretty good in the early part of the year but then as summer progress, it tapered off. Oktolik added that in Wainwright there was too much high water in the rivers for good salmon fishing. Pikok mentioned that the place where Point Lay usually fished for grayling they caught many chum salmon through the ice in 2011. This area is close to the Beaufort basin on the Kukpowruk River.

The committee discussed the Atlantic and Pacific waters off of Barrow. Water from the Pacific Ocean moves north through the Bering Strait. The water that is much deeper in the Arctic Ocean, at about 600 feet deep is from the Atlantic Ocean. Atlantic water is warm and salty but the Pacific water is cooler and much fresher. The ice is really cold and fresh water but varies depending on where the water /ice are located.

DISCUSSIONS ABOUT CONCERNS

Helicopter Impacts

Conducting a study about helicopter impacts on wildlife and hunters ranked high in the committee's past discussions. The NSB would like to get a study in place and collect data on impacts. There is widespread concern across the North Slope about helicopters and airplanes. Pt. Lay has expressed concern for quite a few years because of caribou issues. Some studies have been canceled because of their concern that helicopters would cause caribou to deflect away from hunting areas.

Better understanding and documentation are needed of the extent of the problem. Documenting instances where aircraft disturbed hunters and wildlife will help define next steps for reducing

impacts or conducting studies. The committee had extensive discussions about this issue. There are questions about whether it is just helicopters or also airplanes. Are hunters and wildlife disturbed because of noise or is it the sight of the aircraft?

Weingartner asked whether there was some central data archive that logs every helicopter flight on the North Slope. That information would be helpful for sorting out the problem. If a data set does not exist, would it be possible to collect that data and have it archived?

There was also a discussion about the timing of the problem. Is there a specific time period that is more sensitive to disturbance? George stated that there has been some good mapping work done on the North Slope hunting areas but probably not specific enough for documenting overlap with aircraft traffic.

Oktollik reminded that committee that if there are three oil companies drilling in the Chukchi Sea, there will likely be lots of helicopters flying back and forth. Macrander informed the committee that the majority of Shell's helicopter activity at this point, is to resupply the drill rigs. Shell has one helicopter in Barrow and one in Prudhoe Bay. They take observations from the pilots and direct the pilot to avoid the animals and hunters. Shell also has a Search and Rescue helicopter in Barrow. They have talked to the coastal communities and they have requested that when we transit to and from the rig that we stay 10 miles inland parallel to the coast and then turn 90 degrees and go across the coast and directly out to the rig. There have been cases where helicopters flew over camps or hunters, but that was when weather or time was an issue. Shell makes contact twice a day with their village representatives and tries to stay away from hunters and animals.

Shell is trying to improve its helicopter activity to reduce impacts. However, there are many other helicopters and plans on the North Slope, including from science, Federal and State agencies, other industry companies, and local helicopters.

Moore suggested that we conduct a scoping study first. Suydam agreed that this study would document the problem. Once we have more information from hunters and other community members, we could more appropriately design a field study, if necessary, to better understand and mitigate impacts from aircraft disturbance. Conducting a controlled experiment or study on helicopter and other aircraft disturbances to wildlife and hunters may not be the best approach at this time, until we have better documentation of the problem.

Helicopters are going to continue to fly on the North Slope and people are going to continue to hunt. We need to figure out how to allow both activities to go forward with as little conflict as possible. There have been very strong comments from communities about the disturbance from aircraft on wildlife and hunters. It may be feasible to develop mitigation measures to help reduce the conflict, even if there isn't a controlled study on aircraft impacts.

Macrander mentioned that Shell had to deal with this problem in Wyoming with prong horn antelope migration. Antelopes were being disturbed because of road traffic while building the gas field. Perhaps Shell can provide some references that will help us understand disturbance problems in other areas. Southall also volunteered to provide information about these types of problems.

The committee had several suggestions for what the study might involve:

- Document how much helicopter traffic there was on the North Slope in 2010, 2011, and 2012? (BLM, NSF, NSB, Shell, USGS, FWS, etc.)
- Is it possible to accurately predict helicopter traffic? [include planes in the mix too?]
- Document previous conflicts experienced by subsistence hunters. Document as many details about the conflict as possible (i.e., date, time, location, helicopter, airplane, color of aircraft, call numbers, subsistence resource disturbed, subsistence activity disturbed, etc.)
- Are current mitigation measures being followed? Are the measures working?
- Conduct a literature review off helicopter/airplane disturbance studies to ungulates/birds, at least those relevant to the North Slope.
- Provide recommendations for:
 - how a controlled experiment might provide additional information needed for implement mitigation measures and
 - Appropriate mitigation measures.

A small subcommittee was formed to help draft an RFP. They include Klimstra, Macrander, Southall, George, and Harcharek. George mentioned that one that should be included in the scoping study is to seek recommendations for how to mitigate problems that currently exist. The committee agreed.

Sharing Information with Villages

The committee continues to be committed to receiving feedback from North Slope communities and sharing information back with the committees. The steering committee agrees that holding meetings in the villages will be an important means to receiving and sharing information. Committee meetings could be held in the villages or special meetings that involve some of the steering committee might be appropriate. The special meetings could be designed to address specific issues that might be particularly pertinent to the community.

BRIEF UPDATE OF SUMMER PROJECTS

George and Suydam provided an update on baseline study projects that occurred during 2012. They talked about the Surface Drifters to document ocean currents at the surface, a study on

bowhead and beluga hearing, bowhead stress analyses, beluga contaminants, ice seal tagging, and bowhead scarring.

PENDING PROJECTS

Sea and Ice Currents Workshop

Hajo provided information on a proposal to bring together traditional knowledge experts from coastal villages and scientific experts to discuss sea ice and ocean currents. One important part of the project would be hold meetings in villages to help get input and give feedback to the community. The workshop will also likely include people who are working with NOAA running oil spill trajectory models. One outcome of the workshop is develop a set of recommendations for next steps in understanding sea ice and ocean currents and using that information for spill response or other activities. It is hoped that a workshop could be held sometime between January and March 2013. One meeting may be held in Barrow and one in Wainwright or Pt. Hope.

Macrander mentioned that NOAA has previously expressed concerns about being involved with projects that involve industry funding. Eicken has described the committee and workshop to the NOAA collaborators. They do not think it will be difficult for NOAA to be involved with the workshop.

Outreach

A page on the newsletter of NSB Department of Wildlife Management is dedicated to the NSB/Shell Baseline Studies program. The Department is also working on a pages for the website that is dedicated to information about the program.

The committee wished Weingartner a happy 60th birthday!

Recess for the day.

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Malissa Langley	NSB Wildlife	Janell Kaleak	NSB Wildlife
Ryan Klimstra	Biologist NSB Wildlife	Erling Westlien	Shell

CALL TO ORDER: Suydam called the meeting to order at 9:05 am.

INVOCATION: Provided by Enoch Oktollik

UPDATE OF SHELL'S ONSHORE STUDIES

Macrander and Westlien updated the committee on the onshore and near shore studies that were conducted by Shell in 2012. Westlien is the lead for Shell on this program.

There are many components to this program that involves hydrology, coastal erosion, habitat/vegetation surveys, fish studies, archeology, and other studies. The program uses helicopters to access study sites and has the potential to disturb hunters and wildlife that are important for subsistence. To attempt to avoid conflicts, Shell has daily meetings with its subsistence advisors (SA). The SA's ask where people are going fishing and hunting so that helicopters can avoid those areas. The SAs help avoid conflicts from Shell and make the program successful. The Shell Subsistence Advisors from the villages are: Ransom Retenaar, Barrow, MaryAnn Warden, Kaktovik, Eunice Lane, Pt. Hope, Michael Tagarook Wainwright, Danny Pikok, Point Lay, and Sam Kunakana, Nuiqsut. The Shell representatives are chosen through the native corporations based on recommendations from the community leaders.

Committee members requested copies of Shell's presentation to share with their community.

Committee Members asked Westlien several questions:

1. Are you using the standardized vegetation/habitat classification system? Westlien stated that they are using the same classification system that ABR uses.
2. Has Shell thought about using old drill sites as a base of operations instead of flying in and out of Atqasuk or Wainwright? Yes, Shell is planning to establish a base camp at 2013 at Inigok, which is an old drill site, and Umiat. These are the two sites we are actively planning to utilize in the future. They are also evaluating other opportunities, which include bringing in a camp by rolligon this coming winter.
3. Are the data being collected by Shell going to be publically available? Westlien stated that it is the intent of Shell to make the data available.
4. In the presentation, Westlien mentioned that Shell's program has been successful. How is success measured? He responded that avoiding conflicts while still collecting baseline data is considered a success. Both of these things appear to be happening.

Hugo provided a summary of Shell's subsistence advisor program. This program works. For example, recently one of the Shell's helicopter being used for crew changes was grounded for two days because of an incident where it was flying too low and near location that was not approved. It was near an area used by hunters. The problem was resolved by meeting with the hunters, representatives from the NSB Planning Department and the NSB's Mayor's Office. The hunters were compensated for the disturbance and the hunters provided a new route for the helicopters. The program minimizes impacts, avoids conflicts, and builds relationships and trust between Shell and North Slope stakeholders and provides jobs. It is not a perfect program but improves every year. Shell recently held an open house in Barrow to help people identify the helicopters if there are problems with conflict and disturbance. Information collected by the SAs is put into annual reports

The committee requested copies of the presentation by Hugo

TOUR OF SHELL'S OFFICE

Macrander gave the committee a tour of its office, of particular interest was the weather and ice tracking and forecasting desk.

LONG-TERM STUDIES PLANNING

The committee discussed at length how we might want to go about long-term science planning. There was consideration of using a process similar to that used by the North Pacific Research Board (NPRB). The NPRB has a series of categories and they attempt to make a certain amount of funding available in each category. They put out RFPs for all of their projects. The steering committee was not in favor of using that approach.

To date, the NSB/Shell baseline studies program is set up in the following general way:

- Administration (Support for program, Steering Committee, Outreach, Overhead)
- Directed Studies (NSB and collaborators studies; aka: sole source studies)
- Request for Proposals (RFP; open process)

The steering committee agreed that they want to help decide the priorities for both directed studies and those funded through and open process. The committee would like to help set priorities for each year using the expertise of each committee member and recently gathered information. The directed studies will be conducted or funded by the NSB Department of Wildlife Management, with appropriate procedures for any sole source projects involving NSB collaborations.

Open process: The steering committee will help set priorities for the open process that involves RFPs. In an introduction to a RFP, the Steering Committee agreed that previously funded projects should be categorized in a standard way. For example, studies could be categorized as falling into one the below categories:

- Oceanography (ocean, ice, currents)
- Fish and invertebrates
- Marine mammals and birds
- Subsistence/Humans
- Terrestrial/nearshore
- Air/water quality
- Oil spills
- Mitigation measures
- Rapid response
- Other

These categories could be further grouped based on the main goals set out in the agreement of the NSB/Shell Baseline Studies Program. The bylaws should also be consulted, if appropriate, for grouping or categorizing studies.

The Steering Committee should draft the specific questions or topics for studies to be funded. The questions should be developed each year. These topics could be very specific (e.g., how is caribou distribution impacted by helicopters near the Kuk River system) or more general (e.g., what is the relative abundance and distribution of forage fish in the northeastern Chukchi Sea). Each year, an RFP would be put out asking for pre-proposals.

Specific instructions should be given for pre-proposals. They should include:

- Limited to 2 pages.
- Concise objectives.
- Approach/method.
- Involvement of community members in the research.
- Expected outcome/significance.
- Outreach approach.
- Timeline.
- Rough budget.

Additional information should be provided in the RFP. These include a rough idea of how many studies would be funded and at approximately what amount. Information should be provided about how outreach approaches would be worked through the NSB. Criteria should be provided about how proposals will be reviewed. Perhaps saying what percentage of the decision will be based on approach/method, involvement of community, etc., etc.

The Steering Committee will review the pre-proposals and select an appropriate one or two for submittal of a full proposal. Guidance will be needed on what should be included in a full proposal.

Project Managers: Each project should have a project manager from within the NSB. If related to Directed Studies, a non-PI should be the program manager. The Senior Wildlife Biologists might be the appropriate person for project manager for directed studies.

For projects funded under the open process, the Research Biologist, Wildlife Biologist, or Division Manager might be the appropriate person to be project manager.

The Project Manager should make sure projects are moving forward in the appropriate time frame and meeting the pertinent goals and objectives. The managers should also make sure that data are provided to the archive in the appropriate format. Additionally, the managers should

make sure reports/publications are submitted and distributed to the Steering Committee members, other pertinent individuals, and posted on the website.

Conflict of Interest: The committee was also concerned about avoiding conflict of interest issues. For example, this program should not be about funding committee member's projects. Some of this may occur, by each committee member should use caution when prioritizing projects. They should recuse themselves from decisions when there are possible conflicts.

DRAFT 2013 BUDGET

Suydam and Langley reviewed the draft 2013 budget with the committee members. Suydam wanted to modify the presentation of the budget slightly by simply giving Shell a single figure for conducting the science. In the past it has been separated between NSB science and that contracted out, possibly through RFPs. The committee was agreeable with this modification.

The committee moved and seconded support for the 2013 budget, with the knowledge that there will likely be revisions. The committee passed the motion by consensus.

Suydam would send the budget to Macrander in the near future.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Suydam asked for any public comments. None were provided.

REVIEW OF ACTION ITEMS

Suydam and Langley reviewed the action items with the committee members. There are several RFPs that need to be drafted in the near future (i.e., forage fish/oceanography and helicopter impacts) and several subcommittees, for example, one coming up with guidelines for dealing with data availability and quality.

The committee would also like to think of a name for the baseline studies program. Oviok suggested we come up with an Inupiat name.

AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

The agenda items for the next meeting include:

1. Science priorities and projects for 2013
2. Progress on the scoping for the helicopter RFP
3. Update on the bowhead and beluga hearing study and other studies
4. Discussion about meeting in a North Slope village.

A teleconference is planned for October 2012 and will include:

- Village concerns/observations
- Science concerns/observations
- Shell's plans/activities
- Opportunities for collaboration
- Next Meeting

TIME AND PLACE FOR NEXT MEETING

The committee agreed that trying to meet in Wainwright for next meeting would be appropriate. It will be difficult to meet in November or December but Langley and Kaleak will put out a Doodle Poll.

CLOSING REMARKS

Suydam and George expressed appreciation to the committee members for their time, effort, and interest in the baseline studies program. This program will not be successful unless the steering committee includes active and interested participants.

Macrander also expressed Shell's appreciation for all efforts of the steering committee particularly for everyone traveling to Anchorage for the meeting. The steering committee is doing some unique things and the eyes of the communities, other individuals, industry, and Shell are on us to make progress. Involvement from North Slope communities is really what this program is about.

Southall commented that he was sorry he hasn't been able to participate in person at previous committee meetings. He appreciated being at this one and hopes to stay involved as much as possible in future teleconferences and in-person meetings.

Otkollik complimented Westlien's presentation for Shell's onshore studies and hopes to see more of these types of projects.

The meeting adjourned 3:36 pm.