

Northwest Arctic Borough Science Steering Committee

April 10, 2015 Committee Meeting Minutes (April 22)

Members Present:

Cyrus Harris, Committee Chair, At-Large Village Representative, Kotzebue
Henry Huntington, Committee Vice Chair, Pew Charitable Trust, Independent At-Large Member
Raymond Lee, Jr. Village Representative, Buckland
Alex Whiting, Village Representative, Kotzebue
Louis Brzuzy, Shell
Ruth Perry, Shell
Molly McCammon, Alaska Ocean Observing Systems, Independent At-Large Member
Michael Brubaker, Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC), Independent At-Large Member
Douglas DeMaster, Science and Research Director, Alaska Region, NOAA, Independent Scientist
Roland Booth, At-Large Village Representative, Noatak
Norma Ballot, Village Representative, Selawik
Stanley Hawley, Village Representative, Kivalina

Members Not Present:

Richard Glenn, Arctic Slope Regional Corporation, Independent At-Large Member
Gay Sheffield, Assistant Professor, University of Alaska Fairbanks, Independent Scientist
Morgan Johnson, Village Representative, Ambler

Borough Staff:

Noah Naylor, Planning Director **Glenn Gray**, Note Taker

1. Invocation / Call meeting to order

Cyrus Harris called the meeting of the Northwest Arctic Borough (NAB or Borough) Science Committee to order at 9:00am in Anchorage, Alaska. Roland Booth gave the invocation for the meeting.

2. Introduction of Members and Agenda Overview

Cyrus welcomed the committee members and asked them to introduce themselves. Ruth Perry is a new committee member representing Shell. A change was made to the order of agenda items to move the discussion on acoustics funding earlier in the morning.

3. Update on Acoustics Funding, Alex Whiting and Noah Naylor, Louis Bzruzy

Noah introduced the discussion by saying that he, Alex, and Louis met with JASCO Applied Science and Greeneridge Sciences twice since the last Committee Meeting to discuss expansion of the acoustic monitoring project in Kotzebue Sound. The current acoustic program initiated by the Kotzebue IRA targets marine mammals. Shell has proposed to expand the program to determine the increase of noise to ambient sounds in areas of Kotzebue Sound where it plans to conduct operations this summer. Shell

plans to moor vessels and oil spill response equipment in Goodhope Bay that will be used for its summer 2015 drilling program in the Chukchi Sea. Landing craft will also move personnel to the drill site.

The discussions during the first meeting included a discussion of findings of the IRA's project and technical issues associated with the expanding project, such as the right number of recorders and approximately where they will be placed. The second meeting included discussion of how to deploy the instruments.

Alex said he has been working on a budget for redeployment of the existing four recorders, deployment of the new recorders, and recovery of the recorders. He said he hasn't combined the budgets for the re-deployment with the budget for the new recorders, and the logistics budget is only for the Shell portion of the project. Alex said it was not clear how to move forward since some funding for the re-deployment of recorders was to be requested from the Committee's funding.

In response to a question from Molly about the discussion at the February meeting regarding developing a fence of recorders across Kotzebue Sound, Alex said the dates of deployment and instruments are different, so a fence of recorders will not work.

Louis discussed Shell's interest in collecting background noise while the IRA's focus is information about belugas. He said data will be shared among the team. Alex and Louis agreed to meet after lunch to discuss the budget further while the Committee prioritizes its funding.

After lunch, Alex and Louis reported that they discussed the acoustics project but will need additional time to work out the budget. They noted there was some redundancy between the IRA and Shell's acoustic proposals and said the investigators for both projects would be asked to revise their budgets. Alex recommended that the marine projects be prioritized for now, and actual allocations would be made after funding needs for the IRA's acoustic program have been finalized.

4. Approve Prior Meeting Minutes

The minutes for the February 18-19, 2015 meeting held in Kotzebue were approved without objection.

5. Finalize Mission and Goals

Noah introduced this agenda item by saying that the Committee drafted some initial language for its mission and goals during the February meeting, and that he, Christine and Henry further refined that language afterward. During the current meeting, the Committee finalized its mission statement and goals as follows.

Mission Statement: To improve the science and research capacity of the Northwest Arctic Borough to better understand our environment.

Goals:

- Involve the people of the borough and their knowledge in research and education efforts
- Improve communication among the committee, the researchers, and the people of the borough
- Support research that informs sound decision making that contributes to sustaining our natural resources
- Expand local research infrastructure and training
- Foster collaborative funding and research efforts

During this agenda item discussion, Committee members made some additional comments. Roland emphasized that information from previous generations has not always been passed down. Raymond asked if it would be possible to prepare a summary of the highlights of meetings that could be used to report back to the communities and organizations which Committee member represent. The Committee agreed, and brief summaries of the meetings will be prepared along with the minutes.

6. Updates from Subcommittees

Lab Subcommittee: Subcommittee members Noah, Cyrus, and Alex met on this issue, but Frank Hays (of the National Park Service) was unable to attend. Noah said that Frank Hays previously offered use of one of his agency's buildings for the laboratory. During the April 9 joint meeting with the North Slope Borough (NSB)'s science committee, Robert Suydam stated that he may have some equipment that may be used for the laboratory, and Doug said NOAA may have a centrifuge. Molly said equipment from research associated with the Exxon Valdez oil spill may be available, and it must be used for a public purpose.

Caribou Land Mammals Subcommittee and Marine Productivity Subcommittee: The discussion of proposals received for these two areas was postponed until the afternoon. Henry mentioned that the NSB may wish to participate in the workshops for the terrestrial environment and the marine productivity subject areas planned for next winter.

Oil Spill Trajectory Subcommittee: Molly reported that this subcommittee did not meet.

Website/Data Subcommittee: Noah mentioned the presentation at the April 9 joint committee meeting by Rob Bochenek of Axiom Data. Molly suggested this effort start small and build on to it as needed. It may be possible to share expenses with the with NSB committee.

7. Discussion and decisions on research funding for summer 2015

As directed by the Committee during its February meeting, Henry solicited proposals from investigators for the funding categories created by the Committee. He summarized proposals he received for each category of funding established at the February Committee meeting, including the proposer, title of

project, cost, and timing of the project. It also includes columns for committee members to indicate merit and relevance of proposal.

Marine Category: The Committee discussed options for how the \$310,000 for this category would be spent. During the initial discussion, it was mentioned that two NOAA ships will be in and around Kotzebue Sound this summer. The Committee eliminated the following projects from consideration for this funding cycle: winter trail, beluga tagging, and the northern Kotzebue Sound beluga workshop.

Later in the afternoon, after Alex and Louis reported on the acoustics project, the Committee prioritized the proposals for this category. Henry said he would go back to some of the proposers to ask for additional information.

Laboratory: The Committee agreed to keep the \$100,000 allocated to this effort but to wait until the National Park Service is ready to make the building available which may not be until next year.

Terrestrial: The Committee prioritized projects for the available \$100,000 for this category. Members discussed ways to improve collection of harvest information, such as use of smart phones. Cyrus pointed out that not much is known about predation on the caribou calving grounds.

Education and Outreach: The Committee discussed potential ways to provide outreach about its efforts to the Borough communities, including a survey of what technology people use (e.g., cell phone and VHF), potential use of satellite phones, and use of pilot observations.

Other: The Committee agreed to provide funding for a scenarios workshop to be held in Kotzebue with 10 students from Borough villages, and suggested inclusion of a social meeting component. The funding will be provided from the education category, some from the terrestrial category and the remainder from the Borough's Shell funding.

Regarding caribou workshop, members agreed it would be necessary to figure out what the issues are and how to address them.

The Committee agreed to contact Robert Suydam to determine if there is any overlap with projects funded by the NSB science committee.

Next Meeting: The Committee agreed the next meeting will occur October 5-6 in Kotzebue.