

**Alaska Marine Policy Forum**

Summary from Wednesday, Mar. 19, 2015

Host: Paula Cullenberg

Notes by Sue Keller

***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. Contact*** ***Sue.Keller@alaska.edu*** ***to be added to the list serve to receive a reminder and agenda for the next call, and summary notes following each call.***

**Erik Elam, Office of Senator Sullivan—Congressional Update**

Senator Sullivan is working on reauthorization of the Tsunami Warning Act, which has passed the House. Of interest is the upcoming reauthorization of the National Sea Grant Program.

Senator Sullivan is involved in the IUU Legislation—to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. It includes the Port States Measures Agreement Act of 2014 to place controls on foreign vessels seeking entry into US ports.

Senator Sullivan attended Seafood Expo North America in Boston last week, and is expecting to work on budgets and appropriations bills next week.

**Thomas Farrugia, National Sea Grant Knauss Fellow from Alaska**

Thomas is in DC working for the Democratic staff of the US House Committee on Natural Resources. Thomas reports that the IUU bill made its way through the Natural Resources Committee relatively smoothly. His view is that it will make official many actions that are already being taken on unregulated fishing.

Thomas has also worked on NMFS National Standard Guidelines, to give more flexibility to fishing councils. The deadline for [comments](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/mediacenter/2015/01/15_01_natstandguidelines.html) is June 30.

Reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act is in committee, and is expected to be on the fast track. There is some overlap with the NMFS National Standard Guidelines.

Feel free to contact Thomas Farrugia at tjfarrugia@alaska.edu.

**Craig Fleener, Alaska Governor’s Office, Special Assistant on Arctic Policy**

Craig reported on a few coastal issues. (1) Most Alaska coastal communities do not have emergency response plans. Governor Walker has a goal of having all communities make a plan. (2) The Governor is looking at creative ways to use federal money to fund icebreakers. (3) Improving oil spill response capability is another goal of the Governor’s office.

Rob Earl, assistant to Legislator Rep. Herron, responded to a question on the status of Alaska Arctic Policy. An Arctic Policy bill must pass the State Legislature before it will go into effect.

**Terry Whitledge, University of Alaska Fairbanks—R/V *Sikuliaq* update**

The new research ice breaker *Sikuliaq*, owned by UAF, has made visits in Ketchikan, Juneau, Seward, and Dutch Harbor where residents and officials toured the vessel and celebrated its arrival.

The vessel will soon start ice capability trials, and then guest scientists onboard will help perform scientific data trials and capabilities. After the tests, the *Sikuliaq* will return to Dutch Harbor and get a warranty shipyard check.

In late June or early July science research cruises will begin. In summer the vessel will be up north in the Chukchi and Beaufort Seas, and in the fall will be on research cruises elsewhere in the North Pacific.

A few ship problems are being solved. The sewage processing system was clogging and will be replaced. The ‘A frame lift’ is inadequate for lifting some cores, and a new one will be installed.

The *Sikuliaq* is fully booked for research in 2016. UNOLS (University-National Oceanographic Laboratory System) coordinates oceanographic ship schedules and research facilities, including the *Sikuliaq*. See <https://www.sikuliaq.alaska.edu/>.

**Noah Naylor, Northwest Arctic Borough Science Steering Committee—Update on the science program**

The Northwest Arctic Borough Science Steering Committee, funded by Shell, is in its second year of a five-year agreement. Noah Naylor recently became the science director. He describes the program as having a strong committee and subcommittees, and is dedicated to good science. It is their policy to include traditional knowledge, partner with other groups, and involve youth in the research projects. Education and outreach are an important part.

At their current budget of $230,000 they are working on several projects: traditional knowledge on belugas, state of knowledge project, acoustic mooring study, bearded seal hearing study, Kotzebue ambient noise, drifter study with UAF, data portals, and more. They will hold symposia on caribou research and marine mammals. They are looking for a way to set up a laboratory facility in Kotzebue.

Although Shell is the main source of their funding, the committee is responsible for making decisions on evaluating proposals and funding research projects. The majority of committee members are from the Borough with some members from Shell. Shell makes some suggestions on research topics.

The Northwest Arctic Borough Science Steering Committee serves 11 communities: Ambler, Buckland, Deering, Kiana, Kivalina, Kobuk, Kotzebue, Noatak, Noorvik, Selawik, and Shungnak. See <http://www.nwabor.org/science.html>

**Jessica Rohde, Interagency Arctic Research Policy Committee (IARPC)**

IARPC is a National Science Foundation organization, which consists of 15-plus agencies, departments, and offices of the federal government. They welcome researchers and others to join, from academia, NGOs, states, and international.

One of their goals is to assist in setting priorities for future Arctic research. They share content on Arctic research, and issue a biweekly digest of Arctic research by email that can be customized to areas of research. They offer public webinars, and have an interesting rollover tool to reveal acronym meanings. See <http://www.nsf.gov/geo/plr/arctic/iarpc/start.jsp>

**Hajo Eicken, University of Alaska Fairbanks—Workshop on Japanese Arctic Policy**

The multi-nation meeting “Japan-U.S. Arctic Strategy and Policy Workshop” was held March 5-7 by the International Arctic Research Center at UAF, for a Japanese Commission that is charged with defining Japanese Arctic Policy. Larry Hinzman, IARC director, was lead organizer on the US side. The workshop was a closed meeting because of sensitive issues.

Japan looks to the United States, especially Alaska, as an important partner as they define Arctic policy. Among other issues, Japan is interested in climate change mitigation, indigenous peoples, and Arctic council membership. Japan plans to release their Arctic policy in about a year. See <http://www.iarc.uaf.edu/workshops/2015/japan-usa-arctic-strategy-and-policy-workshop>

**Other News**

In a previous Marine Policy call, Bill Douros mentioned that the area around the Aleutian Islands and into the Bering Sea was nominated to become a National Marine Sanctuary. NOAA has rejected the nomination.

**Alaska Sea Grant State Fellows**: Three highly qualified graduate students have been selected as fellows. At the end of March they will meet with potential agency hosts in Alaska, and decisions will be made on one-year fellow placement. These are the first fellows selected for the program, just launched this year. See <https://seagrant.uaf.edu/research/state-fellowship/index.php>

**Upcoming Events**

* March 28: Ocean Film Fest at the Beartooth Theater in Anchorage, sponsored by AOOS and Alaska Geographic
* April 2–4: [ComFish Alaska](http://comfishalaska.com/), Kodiak
* April 15–17: [8th Western Alaska Interdisciplinary Science Conference and Forum](http://seagrant.uaf.edu/conferences/waisc/index.html), Bethel
* May 12–15: Wakefield Symposium, [Tools and Strategies for Assessment and Management of Data-Limited Fish Stocks](http://seagrant.uaf.edu/conferences/2015/wakefield-data-limited/), Anchorage
* May 20–22: [NAAFE 2015: Economic Sustainability, Fishing Communities, and Working Waterfronts](http://seagrant.uaf.edu/conferences/2015/naafe/), Ketchikan

**The next Marine Policy call will be May 20, 2015.**