

**Alaska Marine Policy Forum**

Summary of Wednesday, Jan 14, 2015

Host: Paula Cullenberg

Notes by Emily Hutchinson

***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.***

**Jay Sterne, Office of Senator Murkowski – Congressional Update**

Congress is in the process of organizing, so there is not much to report.

Jay will be leaving Senator Murkowski’s office, after serving for 2 years. Ephraim Froehlich will be taking Jay’s place. Ephraim was born and raised in Juneau. His father was a commercial fisherman. After college he worked for a congressman, went to law school, and is now back in Alaska serving in Senator Murkowski’s office.

**Erik Elam, Office of Don Young – Congressional Update**

Congress members are reintroducing bills from last Congress and talking about priorities for the U.S. chairmanship of the Arctic Council.

The new chairman of the House Natural Resources Committee is Rob Bishop. He wants to take the lead on the Magnuson-Stevens Reauthorization Act and hopes to have something drafted over the next couple of weeks. An aggressive time schedule is being taken to give Congress time to act.

**Paul Seaton, Alaska State Representative**

Representative Seaton hopes the Magnuson-Stevens Reauthorization Act includes a ‘no net loss’ provision.

In response to a question, Rep. Seaton noted that he had not heard about any discussions about the Coastal Zone Management Program from Governor Walker.

Louise Stutes will be taking over Rep. Seaton’s current position as chair of the House Fisheries Committee.

**Mike Sfraga, Vice Chancellor, UAF- Briefing on New Arctic Policy Fulbright Program at UAF**

The Fulbright Arctic Initiative was suggested to attract scholars that are focused on issues relevant and important in the circumpolar Arctic, and to provide scientific collaboration on Arctic issues. The Fulbright Arctic Initiative is a program of the U.S. Department of State, and is co-led by Dr. Sfraga and Dr. Ross Virginia of Dartmouth University.

The Fulbright scholars will pursue Arctic research in one of four areas: energy, water, health, or infrastructure. Funding will be provided for at least four scholars in each of these themes. The 2 year program will compliment and reinforce the agenda of the U.S. chairmanship of the Arctic Council.

The application process is open and ongoing. There are Fulbright offices in each of the eight Arctic nations and interested individuals should apply to their home office. The first cohort of scholars will be selected in mid to late March. The first meeting, where all the scholars will be brought together, will be held in May in Canada. For more information, visit the website: [www.cies.org/arctic](http://www.cies.org/arctic%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)

**Larry Hinzman, Director, UAF International Research Center (IRC)- Arctic Council plans and activities at UAF**

UAF will host the Arctic Science Summit Week (ASSW) in Fairbanks March 12th -20th, 2016. The summit will bring together international organizations involved with Arctic research and provide opportunities for coordination, collaboration, and cooperation in all fields of Arctic science. The summit was initiated by the [International Arctic Science Committee (IASC)](http://www.iasc.info/). The IASC is composed of 23 nations and is a non-governmental science organization founded to organize research activities in the Arctic. The ASSW is an annual summit bringing in groups from all over the world involved in Arctic observing.

During the ASSW at UAF in 2016, there will also be several workshops and side meetings, including the Arctic Council Senior Arctic Officials Meeting. Public lectures and outreach events will be held. March is a great time to bring people to the Arctic, and fun events will be held in Fairbanks, including the World Ice Art Championships, dog mushing, aurora viewing events and scientific tours.

For more information on Arctic Science Summit Week, 2016 visit the website: <http://assw2016.org/>

Larry is currently in Japan. The 2015 Arctic Science Summit Week will be hosted in Toyama, Japan from April 23rd – 30th. The IRC will be hosting a meeting March 5th – 6th, 2015 in Fairbanks to help the Japanese develop Arctic policy. They welcome suggestions on who to include for U.S. participants in that meeting.

**Bill Douros, West Coast Regional Director - Briefing from NOAA National Marine Sanctuaries (NMS) Office**

In the US there are 13 designated national marine sanctuaries and 1 marine national monument, for a total of 14 marine protected areas. The way candidate sites are considered has changed over the years. For the first time in decades NOAA has opened up the sanctuary nomination process. People, organizations, and communities across the nation are now able to nominate places in our marine and Great Lakes waters for consideration as national marine sanctuaries. There is currently no deadline for nominations. To find out more about the criteria for an area to be designated a marine sanctuary and to find the application visit NOAA’s website: <http://www.nominate.noaa.gov/>

To date there have been four nominations from around the country. When a nomination comes in, it is first checked to see if the application is complete. If it is determined to be complete, it is reviewed for substance. Of the current four nominations, one was incomplete and two are being reviewed for substance. The last nomination is for the area around the Aleutian Islands and into the Bering Sea was submitted by PEER and was of particular interest to many of those present on the call. [http://www.peer.org/assets/docs/ak/12\_2214\_Aleutian\_Islands\_NMS\_Nomination.pdf](http://www.peer.org/assets/docs/ak/12_22-14_Aleutian_Islands_NMS_Nomination.pdf)

The Aleutian Islands area nomination is currently being reviewed for completeness. The determination is due next week, and if the application is complete it will be reviewed for substance.

Questions for Bill included the weight given to the opinions of the local communities and people who will be directly affected by a national marine sanctuary designation in the Aleutian Islands region. Bill assured that concerns and opinions of local communities will be considered in the review process. All viewpoints, both in support and in opposition of the nomination are being accepted. However, right now they are just looking at whether the application for the Aleutian Islands region is complete. If it is deemed to be complete, then they will sit down with organizations/agencies/people that would be affected by a marine sanctuary designation.

Bill said he should be at the February North Pacific Fisheries Management Council meeting, where he can speak in more detail to the review process.

**Kurt Eilo, Alaska Forum for the Environment Director- outlook/update**

The Alaska Forum for the Environment is a non-profit organization that works with agencies, businesses, and other non-profit organizations to increase environmental education and facilitate cooperation and information exchange. They also help businesses improve environmental practices.

The Alaska Forum on the Environment (AFE) is Alaska’s largest statewide gathering of environmental professionals, and will be held this year from February 9th-13th at the Dena’ina Convention Center in Anchorage. There are scheduled to be over 100 technical break-out sessions, over 200 speakers, and 5 keynote events. To register or find more information about the event, visit the website: <http://www.akforum.org/afe-2015/>

You can also download the phone app to find the full agenda by searching the keywords “Alaska Forum”

**Other News:**

Alaska Sea Grant is accepting applications for Knauss Marine Policy Fellowship, with a deadline of February 13.

Alaska Sea Grant is also opening a new state fellowship program modeled after the Knauss Fellowship. Two fellowships positions are available and applications are due Feb 13. Five agencies have already offered to serve as hosts, including the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, the NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service, the U.S. Arctic Research Commission, the North Pacific Fishery Management Council, and the National Institute for Occupational Safety.

For more information: <https://seagrant.uaf.edu/research/state-fellowship/index.php>

**Upcoming Events**

Jan 19-23, 2015 Alaska Marine Science Symposium, Hotel Captain

 Cook, Anchorage

**Next Marine Policy Forum call: Wednesday March 18th**