

**Alaska Marine Policy Forum**

Summary of Wednesday, Nov 30th, 2011 call

Host: Paula Cullenberg paula.cullenberg@alaska.edu

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***Alaska Marine Policy Forum:******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.***

**Stefanie Moreland *-* Staff to Senator Murkowski on fisheries, oceans, and Arctic issues**Stefanie started in Senator Murkowski’s office in early Nov and is getting up to speed, but will be happy to provide updates in the future. She’s working closely with Bob King in Senator Begich’s office who wasn’t able to be on the call today. Stefanie can be reached at Stefanie\_moreland@murkowski.senate.gov.

**Senator Beth Kerttula & Juneau Mayor Bruce Botello - Coastal Zone Management Program Initiative**.

The initiative is awaiting Lt. Gov’s approval and certification of the application. The governor has until Dec 6th, and it’s expected to be issued within a week following that. The stated goal of the initiative organizers is to achieve the requisite number of signatures on or before Jan 17th when the legislative session begins. The Legislature has an opportunity to enact a piece of legislation similar to the ballot initiative, in which case the initiative would not go on the ballot. If there is no legislative action, the initiative would be placed on the Aug or Nov 2012 ballot depending on the adjournment of the regular session. If the session is extended more than 3 days, it would be on the November 2012 election ballot.

The initiative requires at least 7% of voters that voted in the last election in 30 of the 40 house districts. Signatures will be collected by a combination of volunteer and professional signature gathering efforts. (Professional in Anchorage, volunteer in rest of state.) For more information, see: [www.Alaskacoastalmanagement.org](http://www.Alaskacoastalmanagement.org) .

At the end of the last legislative session, AK became the only coastal state in the U.S. without a coastal zone program, despite having the largest coastline. The ACMP was the program that allowed Alaskans to have a direct say in federal activities that affect the coastline. Senator Kerttula reported there was overwhelming support to help get the program back. Contact Kerttula or Botelho at: Rep.Beth.Kerttula@legis.state.ak.us, or bruce\_botelho@cj.juneau.ak.us

The state was invited to talk about coastal permitting at this session of the Forum, but asked to have their presentation delayed until the next session in January.

**Jeremy Mathis – UAF, Ocean Acidification Research Center**

Jeremy reported on a $2.7 million request that UAF has submitted for the governor’s budget for ocean acidification (OA) monitoring. It involves several parts:

* Build early warning system with buoy network to monitor OA parameters in sensitive coastal areas in real-time. This has been successful in WA and OR in areas experiencing die-off of calicified organisms. Alaska has not seen big stresses yet, but it’s important to start collecting baseline information and get the buoy network in place ahead of time.
* Model and quantify the economic consequences of OA, both now and 10 and 50 years from now.
* Engage the fishing community through a program where fishing vessels around the state could collect water and send it to UAF’s lab. This would provide broad geographic coverage and involve stakeholders and communities.

The hope is that this item will go in Governor Parnell’s budget. If not, Jeremy and others will be working with legislators to get it included in the legislature’s capital budget. The request is written into UAF's budget request passed by the Board of Regents in September. The funding request would cover three years. A one pager is attached to this email.

**John Lingass – NWS Forecasting office, Western Alaska Storm Recap**

In early November, a strong winter storm moved through the Bering Sea. It was the strongest observed in that area by forecasters since 2004, and they monitored its progress as it continued north. Due to minimal ice cover, open water allowed winds to create 20-30 ft waves in the northern Bering Sea and10-15 ft waves over Norton Sound. The storm surge increased water levels 8-10 ft above normal tidal variations in northern Norton Sound and at least 3-5 ft in areas north of the Bering Strait. Hurricane-force winds were clocked in Wales (89 mph) and Little Diomede (94 mph). The storm weakened once it hit land, although ocean levels remained high over Norton Sound for the next day.

The NWS gave advance noticed about the storm, and provided watches, warnings and advisories. This gave time for communities from Hooper Bay to Point Hope to adequately prepare. A dozen communities had minor inundation as a result of the storm, and the State and FEMA are still trying to figure out actual damages from wind and flooding.

**Amy Holman**

On December 1st, NOAA released the 5th version of the Arctic Report Card. This effort started five years ago and reports on how the Arctic might be changing. <http://www.arctic.noaa.gov/reportcard/>

Amy also reported that the NOAA budget was passed. There are still efforts underway within the agency to see how the budget will play out this year.

**Kathleen Digman, USCG – District 17**

The Arctic Council Oil Spill Task Force will hold its next meeting in St. Petersburg Russia.

The meeting after that will be in the US in March, but a location hasn’t been determined. For more information, email: Kathleen.a.duignan@uscg.mil for more information.

**Denny Lassuy – USFWS**

A big storm in southeast Alaska blew apart an aquaculture facility near Sitka where a species of invasive tunicate was growing. Thanks to ADFG staff and locals, for helping to collect the pieces that came loose. There still remains some tunicate on the sea floor in Whiting Harbor area which raises concern, but surveys will take place in as many port facilities as possible to make sure it hasn’t spread.

**Other Announcements:**

AOOS released a new version of its real-time sensor map: <http://data.aoos.org/maps/sensors/> .

Welcome to Katrina Hoffman, new director of the Prince William Sound Science Center.

Upcoming Events

Alaska Marine Science Symposium – Jan 16-20th

NPRB Graduate Student fellowship applications - due Feb 10th ($25,000 each)

Alaska Marine Gala – Feb 18th

Knauss Fellowships – Due Feb 18th

**Next meeting: Jan 25th or 26th at 1pm. Will confirm in early January.**