



Alaska Marine Policy Forum

Summary from Wednesday, April 18, 2018

Host: Molly McCammon

Notes by Holly Kent

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 to receive a reminder and agenda for the next call, and summary notes following each call.

Molly notes that co-host Paula Cullenberg has retired after decades of service to the marine and fishing community, including eight years helping to host this forum. Her contributions to marine science and policy are very much appreciated. UAF is interviewing potential candidates for her replacement as Alaska Sea Grant director.

Ann Robertson (Knauss Fellow), Sen. Lisa Murkowski's office

- NOAA is getting close to allocating the \$200M appropriated by Congress for fisheries disasters along the southeast and west coasts including the pink salmon disaster declaration.
- The Senate failed to invoke closure on the USCG reauthorization bill last week which included a Jones Act waiver for the vessel *America's Finest* and the Vessel Incidental Discharge Act (VIDA), which contains a permanent exemption for commercial fishing vessels, so these are still unresolved.
- The vessel restrictions language included in the USCG reauthorization bill on April 24, 2018 is provided here: <https://tinyurl.com/y7l85ny2>.

Sam Cotten, Commissioner, Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G)

- North Pacific Fishery Management Council's focus has been on bycatch associated with both salmon and halibut fishing.
- A new method, referred to as abundance based management, is being used for halibut in the Bering Sea with respect to bycatch.
- Trawl groups have asked for an increase in limits on bycatch for salmon but it was not granted as the stocks of Chinook in the Gulf of Alaska are not doing well.
- The department is anticipating the reauthorization of the Magnusson Stevens Act which has been delayed due to many side issues.
- Negotiations are ongoing for the Pacific Salmon Treaty by a group of hard working Canadians and Alaskans and a signed agreement will hopefully happen by the end of this year.

Governor's Climate Leadership Team

Molly McCammon, AOOS

- The entire team met in person in Fairbanks April 12.
- The draft Climate Change Policy, publicly released the week of April 9, was reviewed during a very robust discussion. Significant changes to the draft will be included in the next draft.

- The policy is very comprehensive including issues regarding resilient and healthy communities, diversification of the state's economy, increasing energy efficiency and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- Once the team finalizes their recommendations to the policy and an implementation plan, the chair, Lt. Governor Byron Mallott, will bring them to the governor for his review.
- The draft policy includes recommendations on how Alaska could do its part to live up to the Paris climate accord.
- New Oil and Gas Technical and Science Advisory panels are being developed. Larry Hinzman and Molly McCammon will be co-chairing the Science Advisory panel.

Danielle Meeker, Alaska Sea Grant Fellow, Lt. Governor's Office

- Nikoosh Carlo sends out a monthly stakeholder update that lists all the climate team activity, pertinent events attended by the Lt. Governor, climate work being showcased in the media, etc. If you would like to receive these updates just email Danielle at danielle.meeker@alaska.gov.
- The Climate Team's Science Advisory panel should be up and running by the end of April.
- The new draft of the Climate Change Policy should also be sent to the Climate Leadership Team and made public by the end of April.
- Lt. Governor Mallott and Nikoosh Carlo will be at the Arctic Encounters event April 19-20 and then will head to Washington D.C. to speak at the Wilson Center.
- Some small listening sessions will be set up for this summer with the possibility of having one on the next Alaska Marine Policy Forum call June 20.

**Julie Decker, Executive Director, Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation
Mariculture Task Force**

- The task force has very broad representation and is made up of representatives from business, state departments, tribes, and universities.
- The [Alaska Mariculture Development Plan](#) draft was published March 23 after two years of work and presents a vision and goal along with five priority recommendations.
- There has been a lot of new interest in seaweed and shellfish operations.
- The task force is working with AOOs to develop mariculture siting maps for Alaska.

Jim Lima, Bureau Of Energy Management (BOEM)

- BOEM is tentatively planning for a lease sale in the Beaufort Sea in late 2019 even though the decision to move forward on the sale has not yet been made.
- A call for nominations and information was published in the Federal Register on March 30, 2018 with a 30-day comment period ending on April 30, 2018.
- Comments can be made online at regulations.gov

Mary-Beth Schreck, Alaska Sea Ice Program, National Weather Service, Anchorage Forecast Office

- Sea ice in the Bering Strait Region is lower than it has been in at least the last two decades and maybe since the mid-1800s.
- The cause is probably a combination of warm sea surface temperatures and lots of storms with warm southerly winds.
- The Chukchi Sea experienced slightly cooler temperatures from last year.
- These conditions do not appear to be the "new normal" but rather a "new extreme".
- The International Arctic Research Center produced a very good fact sheet: [Bering Strait: An Overview of Winter 2018 Sea Ice Conditions](#) and it is attached to this summary.

Roundtable

Darcy Dugan, Alaska Ocean Acidification Network (AKOAN) -

- The network started a new video series on the [website](#) called “Ask A Scientist” where people can have their questions answered by one of the network’s scientists.
- The network Enews is published monthly and you can subscribe by contacting Darcy at Dugan@aoos.org.
- AOOS and Alaska Sea Grant are hosting an Alaska Sea Grant Fellow this year who will be working on the new Harmful Algal Bloom Network.

Jeremy Rusin, Alaska Fisheries Science Center -

- Jeremy will be the acting Science Director when Doug DeMaster retires at the end of May.
- The science center will also be hosting an Alaska Sea Grant Fellow this year working on some Mariculture issues.

Molly McCammon, Alaska Ocean Observing System

- The Anchorage Museum will be hosting the North by North Festival April 26-29 which opens with Arctic Research Day on the 26th. You can find more information at <https://nxnfestival.com/>.

Next Alaska Marine Policy call: June 20, 2018, 1 pm Alaska time

Upcoming Events

April 26-29 – North x North Festival