

Alaska Climate Change Adaptation Advisory Group

Meeting #4

Friday, November 7, 2008 9:00 AM–4:30 PM

JL Tower, 3800 Centerpoint Drive, Anchorage (2nd floor conference room)

Public Access via Telephone (800) 315-6338, code 2690#

DRAFT MEETING NOTES

Attendees:

AAG members: Fran Ulmer, Bill Streever (BP), Terry Chapin (UA), Amy Holman (NOAA)

By Phone: Stephanie Madsen, Deborah Williams, Scott Dickenson (AFEO San Fran) , Patricia Opheen (US Army Corps of Engineers)

TWG members and members of public: Dale Summerlin (Conoco), Peter Larsen (TNC), Bruce Botelho (Mayor, Juneau), Michael Cerne (USCG), Bob Pawlowski (Denali Commission), John Madden (Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management), Marilyn Leland (Alaska Power Association), Steven Ivanoff (Unalakleet)

ADEC: Larry Hartig (Commissioner), Jackie Poston, Susan McNeil, Kolena Momberger

Facilitators and others: Brian Rogers (Acting Chancellor, University of Alaska Fairbanks), Fran Sussman (ICF International), Dick LaFever—Oil & Gas mitigation TWG (Crossroads Institute)

By Phone: Kris Ebi (ESSLLC), Jason Vogel (Stratus Consulting), Nancy Tosta (Ross and Associates), Barbara Sheinberg (Sheinberg Associates), Jan Caulfield (Jan Caulfield Inc)

Introductory Remarks, Larry Hartig (Commissioner, Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, and Chair, Governor's Sub-Cabinet on Climate Change)

Discussed the rate at which the TWGs are moving. Raised the issue of how evaluate the options presented by the TWGs and the importance.

Update on Immediate Action Work Group (IAWG), Mike Black, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development

This group is looking at issues to be dealt with in the first 12-15 months and so different than what you will be hearing from the TWGs about. Group began meeting last year, and met every two weeks, in order to have enough time to get the work done. From the communities looked at by the Corps of Engineers, the IA WG identified 6 in need of immediate action (Kivalina, Koyukuk, Newtok, Shaktoolik, Shishmaref, Unalakleet) and recommended specific actions that needed to be taken. Types of problem they're seeing: shoreline erosion, flooding, storm surges, and permafrost melting causing structural problems.

Commission Report is available at: http://www.climatechange.alaska.gov/docs/iaw_rpt_17apr08.pdf

Discussion

One member asked how this process could be institutionalized. Mike responded that, right now, the process is voluntary, but at some point will need to be formalized and institutionalized and funding provided for these activities.

One member asked how deal with issues that are not climate related, and how criteria were defined for choosing villages. Several points were made in response by various members:

- The IAWG began with the lists of communities from the Corps and GAO reports
- A long history of weather-related disasters
- Purpose of group is to protect lives and critical infrastructure, whether cause if climate change or not
- It is important to have criteria by which can identify communities. A decision framework is needed.

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One member asked whether the erosion control options identified by the Corps are sufficient? Answer: The IAWG requested resources so that the Corps plans can be evaluated, and the goal is at least 15 years of protection, not one or two years. That gives a decent window for planning and talking about alternatives.

Process Update: Where Are We Now? Fran Sussman, co-facilitator, ICF International

Process update:

- Overview of process
- Where are we now: two groups are through options development and balloting (EA and HC TWGs); two groups still working to that point; all groups identifying research needs
- Review of today's agenda

Larry Hartig provided additional information:

- Be on the lookout for opportunities and events where can send WG members to get ideas
- Ideally, would really like to wrap up the workgroup process in April or May, followed by a couple of months at the sub-cabinet level to digest the recommendations and look at interactions with existing programs and policies and come up with a strategy. At that point, will bring the strategy from the sub-cabinet level back to AAG and TWGs. Then get public input and revise before go to the Governor.
- Would like to have that to the Governor by sometime in the Fall

Outreach during ACTEM conference October 27. Jackie Poston, ADEC

- Two hour listening session with tribes and communities at the ACTEM conference with about 50 people in attendance
- Sat with US Climate Change Science program (CCSP) representatives at a booth for two days following that presentation to get additional input.
- US Geological Survey (USGS) hosted a lunch for the CCSP to get input from technical WG members. Steve Ivanoff presented a series of beautiful slides from his home and family and on how it is to live a subsistence way of life in rural Alaska.
- Work sessions in afternoon for TWGs
- Presentation hosted by Canadian consulate, where have many issues in common with Alaska, particularly on adaptation.

Other updates & information:

- IA has a new facilitator (Meg King) and RN groups has facilitators (Brenda Holden and Indra Arriaga)
- Executive roundtable on climate change will be November 12 9:00 to noon

Review and Approve Recommended Priority Options by Technical Working Group (TWG):
Other Economic Activities

Nancy Tosta, Ross & Associates, Facilitator

Members from EA identified themselves as present. Provided an overview of the process that has gone through. Discussed how adaptation is both to respond to vulnerability and take advantage of opportunities, and to look at the economy more broadly. Discussed the criteria and how they were used. Went through an overview of each of the options briefly. Presentation available at:

http://www.climatechange.alaska.gov/aag/docs/AAG4_EATWG_Presentation_07nov08.pdf

Turned to a discussion of each option individually.

1. Increase Arctic Ocean activities

Discussion:

- Need an accepted definition of the Arctic Ocean, which is defined in very different ways in different agencies and WGs in the draft option proposals that come back from the TWGs.
- This notion of inadequate infrastructure, etc. comes up often in many contexts and meetings. What doesn't come up is a sense of what types of arrangements or responsibility is needed. What kind of interagency action is needed in order to make it happen? Needs to be more focused as an initiative as it moves forward.
- Should we first determine which activities should and should not be permitted?
- It will be expensive to operate up north and so will have opportunities for partnering
- As water opens up, there will be opportunities for fishing. Is fishing part of this TWG? Other issues also come along with increased shipping.
- Every agency with responsibility will have to expand operations into the arctic as it opens up – tourism wildlife, environment, etc. So as economic activities open up, so will agency responsibilities.
- There will be international issues as a result of shipping being opened. Most of the other countries have ratified the “law of the sea” but the US has not. Our failure to adopt and ratify this puts us in an awkward position and will make it more difficult to resolve issues that arrive.

AAG Recommendations:

- Identifying a focal point for this issue will be important.
- Considerations as TWG moves forward: fishing, definition of the arctic (include Bering), and arctic policy and state role

2. Explore economic activities opportunities offered by climate change

Discussion

- Specifying what the state role should be to make this happen is important. Must be funding behind the state role. Response: There would be some sort of fund that a board would manage and address adaptation type of issues as they arise in the future. So down the road would have a funding stream and aboard made up of state, federal folks, and would say: these are our needs, and issues that are arising. Board would meet and decide what should be funded, etc. This is in the longer description.
- Several members reiterated that a key piece of this is adequate funding. Analogies to “net metering” and need for funding.
- One member indicated that they would like to see something added in about actively pursuing partnerships, because State can't do it by itself.

AAG Recommendations

- Focus on state role, funding with possible revising of the ASTF, and looking at partnerships with a view towards increasing economic activities and ability to take advantage of opportunities.

3. Develop scenarios of the Alaskan economy.

Discussion

- Clarified differences between this option and what SNAP (Scenarios for Alaska Planning) is doing

AAG Recommendations

- Link output of SNAP to socio, economic and cultural work that might be done.

4. Participating in national and international forums on arctic issues

Discussion

- Commonwealth North did a recent policy paper on the Arctic that has a listing of all of the international organizations and efforts underway that deal with arctic issues

- The Aspen Institute (community dialog center approach) created an international commission looking at question of governance in the arctic; will make available information she has available from them that might be helpful.
- There are issues of federal/state roles and limitations

AAG Recommendations

- There is good background information from CN and AI, and collaboration coming forward. Bill Connor: need to make sure that information we have and are collecting is in a good place where we can access it.
- Further clarification of what's going on and how to gather and put in form where people can get it, and within this option looking at state role and what limitations might be in the arctic.

5. Improve availability of mapping, surveying charting, and imagery data

Discussion

- This was obviously an important priority in the Alaska climate impact assessment.
- The private sector has a lot of the information which is proprietary. We need to be very clear as to what mapping data we need.
- What is the borderline between Research Needs and these options?
- Unfunded mandates

AAG Recommendations

- None

6. Recommendation to Research Needs group: Higher resolution climate and monitoring data

Discussion

- It would be important to look at NSSI to see if there are recommendations that need to be included in the RN WG
- Important to assign roles for state and federal and other levels of government
- Did the issue of state codes and occupational standards come up in PI?
- Why are there no specific recommendations for fishing and tourism? Answer: Tourism would be a component of the scenario analysis. In general, do not have recommendations for any specific sectors, in any event. In addition, we had 11 recommendations for tourism, but none of them floated to the top.

AAG Recommendation

- These sectors could come out as part of the general recommendations.

Lunch Presentation: "Mitigation Opportunities for the Built Environment: LEED Certification & Its Application in Alaska - What it is and What it isn't"

Review and Approve Recommended Priority Options by Technical Working Group (TWG): Health and Culture

Kris Ebi, ESSLLC and Jason Vogel, Stratus Consulting, Co-Facilitators

Don Callaway, Presenter. Ran through the process and where are now, and an overview of the options. Overall discussion, preceding options discussion: what is an option-is it a policy or an action, or can it be either. Then proceeded with option-by-option discussion.

Presentation is available at:

http://www.climatechange.alaska.gov/aag/docs/AAG4_HCTWG_Presentation_07nov08.pdf

1. Overarching: Health impact assessments

Discussion

- Discussion of the current situation with regard to health surveillance, and respective roles of DEC and DPH. Discussion of process by which dietary recommendations are developed: fishers, hunters bring tissue samples into DEC's environmental lab; results are given to DHHS who evaluates them and comes up with dietary recommendations (e.g., levels of mercury, etc.).
- Discussion of need for an integrated plan for dealing with subsistence issues and pulling together all agencies that work on these issues.
- Discussion of the linkages between human and animal health, and the importance of looking at these issues in a holistic manner.
- Concern expressed that this option is very broad right now and needs to be focused so as not to be so broad; suggestion made that could focus in on methodology, at least in the near term.

AAG Recommendation:

- This option needs some focus and clarity; as written, it appears so broad as to be prohibitively expensive

2. Overarching" Augment surveillance and control programs

Question: does word "augment" mean that these already exist? Yes, a number of programs are already in place with responsibility for these diseases.

AAG recommendation:

- None

3. Overarching: Assess local community capacity

Discussion

- The point was made that it is important to stress the conflicts between competing needs; currently those with differential access to resources are all treated the same. Fish and Wildlife needs to deal with needs/access differently. One member suggested that it is important to create dialogues among the agencies that manage different aspects of this issue so they can manage these issues flexibly and responsively, with heightened response times.
- One member suggested that the TWG consider focusing on the third bullet—identifying actions to address gaps... etc. An assessment of the capacity of communities could require a lot of time and energy but it wouldn't result in very much. The third bullet specifically addresses needs and provides communities with what they need.
- It was suggested that an assessment might not be needed, b/c an agency has already looked at community capacity in a variety of ways. Rather, it is possible to go to the community directly and get their feedback.

AAG Recommendation:

- Group agrees that this option should focus on fleshing out on the third bullet (rather than the first two) in the option description: "Identify gaps in and constraints to adaptive capacity, as well as multi-agency strategies to address them."

4. Overarching: Central ombudsman agency

AAG Recommendation:

- This should be broader—not just health. This options needs to be part of a broader strategy involving a number of state agencies. The point was made that the Natural Systems group also has a similar type of option.

5. Waterborne disease: Strengthen watershed contamination protection

Discussion:

- There was considerable discussion about whether this option was different from option 2, and whether options 5, 6, and 7 could be subsumed under Option 2. Most agreed that Options 5 and 7 fit well under Option 2, but that Option 6 did not.

AAG Recommendation:

- Combine options 2, 5, 7 on surveillance portion. Look at the other pieces of 5 and 7 that do not fit in Option 2 and decide what want to do with it.

6. Food security: Safeguard subsistence resources.

Discussion:

- Can this option be combined with #2? It was pointed out that this option has two parts: one is discussion of new pathogens, the other is looking at sustainability; the first should be broken out and looked at independently.
- It was pointed out that this issue is similar to one that was dealt with by the Natural Systems TWG
- The suggestion was made do combine 6 with 2, and identify any issues that are left behind afterwards and deal with them separately.

AAG Recommendation:

- See above discussion under Option 5

7. Toxic exposure: Conduct exposure assessments

Discussion and AAG recommendation: see Option 5 above

8. Traditional knowledge: Develop ongoing partnership to develop and transmit

Discussion:

- Discussion of various problems that have occurred as species availability has changed; point was made that, as climate change moves more rapidly, the flexibility of current regulations will be sorely tested and communication will be critical. Another member emphasized that this issue gets at the heart of how successful the agencies are in coordinating and in implementing state requirements that are already in place.
- The suggestion was made that this could be implemented in terms of a “gap” analysis, rather than a full assessment. This analysis would look at the needs, what regimes exist (and how can be made more robust).
- One member observed that the federal management system can be better than the state management system at dealing with native corporate land.

AAG Recommendation:

- None

9. Diminishment or change of subsistence: Form a state advocacy commission

Discussion

- Discussion of what this commission could accomplish, and how an integrated response could make a difference
- One member expressed concern that the issue of subsistence is too complex, too regionalized to be effectively encapsulated at the state level. Fear was expressed that this single recommendation has the potential to weigh down the overall momentum of the recommendations that are being developed here.
- A member expressed the view that it is difficult to imagine a state advocacy commission that could be effective given the way we currently do business, and issues of differential responsibilities under federal law, etc.. Reiterated concern about the regional differences in subsistence discussions. Observed that there is a role for getting information to decision makers, but that a commission is not the means for doing that. Another member also expressed dislike for the commission.

AAG recommendation:

- Keep the focus on climate change and subsistence but change the option b/c people don't like the commission. Group should come up with another vehicle.

10. Archaeology and history: Identify archaeological sites and gravesites

Discussion:

- Question was raised about the purpose of this option, and whether it's goal was to protect as many sites as possible, or had another goal.
- Question was raised about whether this is a research issue or an action. Answer: it is both—should stay in the TWG but also go to the RN group.

AAG Recommendation:

- None

Review Status of Priority Options Development by Technical Working Group (TWG): Public Infrastructure

Barbara Sheinberg, Sheinberg Associates, Facilitator

Presented the current status of the workgroup, and some example options that are being developed.

Presentation available at:

http://www.climatechange.alaska.gov/aag/docs/AAG4_PITWG_Presentation_07nov08.pdf

Discussion:

- Policy options being examined by this group are scalable, in terms of schedule, how much is done, how much money is put into it. Part of the challenge is the variability—new, old, service life of years or decades—of infrastructure, so that one approach does not fit all.
- It was pointed out that one challenge is to develop options that do not inhibit new technologies.
- Question was asked as to whether the group looked at any analysis of how infrastructure needs will evolve with changing economic activity. Answer: yes, but the real decisions lie after we do the documentation and analysis. Is that something to take up in the Economic Activities TWG?

Review Status of Priority Options Development by Technical Working Group (TWG): Natural Systems

Jan Caulfield, Jan Caulfield Consulting, Facilitator

Presented the current status of the workgroup, and some example options that are being developed.

Presentation available at:

http://www.climatechange.alaska.gov/aag/docs/AAG4_NSTWG_Presentation_07nov08.pdf

No discussion.

Proposed Template for Options, Schedule and Next Steps for the AAG and TWGs

Fran Sussman, ICFI, and Jackie Poston, ADEC

Described the template that will be used to develop the options further. Next steps, in terms of schedule and the need for a December AAG meeting to discuss the recommended options from the PI and NS TWGs.

Public Input and Announcements

Brian Rogers, Co-Facilitator

Wrap-Up and Adjourn

Larry Hartig, Chair, Climate Change Sub-Cabinet