

Alaska Climate Change Strategy Natural Systems Adaptation Technical Working Group Meeting

Monday-Tuesday, October 27-28, 2008
Anchorage, Alaska

The Natural Systems Adaptation Technical Working Group (TWG) met at the Sheraton Hotel in Anchorage, Alaska, on the afternoon of October 27 and the morning of October 28, 2008.¹ The objectives of the meeting were to develop the following products, which are attached to this meeting summary:

- Review and revise the draft Catalog of Natural Systems Adaptation Options that the TWG will use to identify the highest priority options to recommend to the Adaptation Advisory Group (AAG) (Attachment 1);
- Compile research and monitoring recommendations to forward to the Research Working Group (Attachment 2);
- Discuss and confirm the criteria that will be used to select the highest priority Natural Systems adaptation options (Attachment 3).

The NS TWG expects to provide its recommendations regarding the highest priority Natural Systems adaptation options to the AAG at a teleconferenced meeting in December (date/time TBD).

The next meeting of the NS TWG will be held Friday, November 14, 1:00-3:00 p.m. (Alaska Time) via teleconference. The purpose of that meeting will be to continue to refine the Catalog and research/monitoring list and to discuss results of an initial balloting process.

Primary Meeting Products

The primary products of the meeting are the revised versions of the documents listed above. The NS TWG will continue to work with these drafts, and revise and refine them, as they work to develop their recommendations to the AAG.

Part I: Summary of Expected Effects (in Attachment 1)

Part I of the Natural Systems Catalog will include a concise summary of expected effects of climate change on Alaska's habitats and the fish and wildlife that depend upon those habitats. This summary will address: Marine, Freshwater and Terrestrial Environments,

¹ NS TWG members in attendance include: Carline Brown (for Jim Simon), Terry Chapin, Steve Colt, Amy Holman, Molly McCammon, Chris Maisch, Kurt Parkan, Tom Paragi, Tony Nakazawa, Jeff Short, Eric Volk, Marsha Shulski (for Gerd Wendler), Trish Wurtz. Karen Pletnikoff from Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association attended. The meeting was facilitated by Jan Caulfield (janc@gci.net) Toby Krasney from ICF International also attended.

and Future Trends. The following “assignments” were taking on by NS TWG members to complete this section:

- Contribute information about forest environments to the Terrestrial Environment section (Chris Maisch).
- In Terrestrial Environment section, add appropriate discussion about the ecosystem services that terrestrial habitats (e.g., forests, wetlands) and potential change to those functions. (Tom Paragi)
- Pull “future trends” into a separate section that addresses all three ecosystem types. Jeff Short will contact UAF Scott Rupp (terrestrial) and Larry Hinzman (freshwater) to draft this section. Opportunity to consider global circulation models at an Alaskan-scale.
- Provide comments on the draft sections in Part I (all TWG members.)

Part II – Natural Systems Catalog of Adaptation Options (in Attachment 1)

The NS TWG is taking the following approach to its Catalog of adaptation options:

- The Natural Systems adaptation options will generally be at a policy or programmatic level – not at the level of more specific, discrete actions.
- In the “Extended Actions” column of the catalog, more specific actions that would implement the broader policy or program can be listed.
- This will generally result in fewer, more comprehensive recommended adaptation options for each topic area.

However, it was also noted that this approach of recommending more comprehensive adaptation options *competes*, in some cases, with an interest in recommending very specific actions that could be readily accomplished by the State of Alaska, with positive benefit.

The NS TWG reviewed and revised the catalog of Natural Systems adaptation options on October 27-28. These changes have been made in Attachment 1. This version of the catalog will be used for an initial balloting process during the week of November 10-14, but is still subject to revision.

Research and Monitoring List (Attachment 2)

The group recommended additional items to include in the Research and Monitoring list that will be forwarded to the Research Work Group. These have been added in Attachment 2. The TWG needs to review Attachment 2 – add additional items as needed, and revise as needed.

Criteria for Identification of High Priority Options (Attachment 3)

The group did not discuss the draft criteria in Attachment 3 in detail. They will have the opportunity to suggest adjustments to the criteria. The primary point made by the group is that the criteria should be consistent across the different TWGs.

Additional Topics of Discussion

Notes from ATCEM Listening Session – Monday, October 27, 9:45-11:45 a.m.

Many TWG members and the group’s facilitator participated in climate change related sessions of the Alaska Tribal Conference on Environmental Management during Monday morning, October 27. The following points related to Alaska’s natural systems were raised during that session and were considered by the NS TWG during its subsequent meeting:

- Hunting and fishing regulations need to adapt to changing migration and other natural patterns. (For example, in a warm dry fall, moose harvest is low in interior Alaska, in part because access along the rivers is very difficult; in a cool wet fall, moose harvest is generally good.)
- Wildfires in a tundra environment affect lichen, an important component of caribou diet. Concern that this can cause change in caribou migration routes.
- There is fear of the loss of traditional practices for harvesting fish, wildlife and plants.
- The cost of living in villages is sky-rocketing – fuel costs are very high; can’t afford to travel far for subsistence fishing, hunting, gathering.
- It is important to update mapping and aerial photography of landforms and environmental conditions, as conditions change, so communities and organizations can use most up to date information for planning.
- “WILDCAST” is a USGS forecasting tool for projecting changes in wildlife populations 30-40 years ahead (associated with SNAP – Scenarios Network for Alaska Planning).

Miscellaneous

Forward the following recommendation to the Cross-Cutting Issues Working Group:

(NOTE: This has been done)

- The State should take action to participate in emerging carbon markets, including:
 - Establish rules and process for listing forestry carbon sequestration projects in Alaska for potential purchase.
 - Provide a mechanism for aggregation of fuel offset credits from wood biomass or other alternative energy projects in order to sell credits on the Chicago Climate Exchange (CCX).