

Draft Meeting Summary

**Climate Change Immediate Action Workgroup Meeting  
January 15, 2010 Anchorage, AK  
Convened: 1:30 pm**

**Communities and individuals participating by phone:**

**Fairbanks:**

**Kotzebue:**

**Kivalina:**

**St. Michaels:**

**Nome:**

**Newtok:** Stanley Tom, Co-Chair Relocation Committee

**Shishmaref:** Stanley Toktou  
\_\_\_\_\_ Sukiak

**Koyukuk:** Cindy Pilot

**Unalakleet/Shaktoolik:** Michael \_\_\_\_\_  
Simon

NOAA: John Lingus

**Anchorage:**

IAW Members

Mike Black, Co-Chair (DCCED)  
Bob Pawlowski (Legislative Representative)  
John Madden (MVA)  
Amy Holman (NOAA)  
Mike Coffey (DOT)

Public and Agency Participants

Kolena Momberger (DEC)  
Sally Russell-Cox (DCCED)  
Sean McKnight (Kawarek)  
Steve Ivanoff (Kawarek)  
Bob Dickens (Bering Straits School District)  
Jackie Poston (EPA)

**Self-introductions were made.**

**Agenda Review:**

**Status Report on Shaktoolik Flooding:**

Steve Ivanoff, Glen McKnight, John Lingus

Lucky community was experiencing a low tide and saved by the slush  
Storm Surges from the south are stronger and higher (Aleutians) than the Seward  
Peninsula

## Draft Meeting Summary

Storm was unique and developed fairly rapidly with winds changing direction almost as fast.

Issues raised were: How to better monitor, warn and assist communities that may experience an extreme weather event.

1. Critical: open communication between affected communities and NOAA weather forecasters.  
Local on the ground knowledge exchanged with NOAA can allow for better modeling and accurate predictions.
2. Weather forecasters need to be aware that shifts in wind direction especially to the South or Southwest will/can generate significant storm surges for the Unalakleet/Shaktoolik communities.

### Community Updates:

#### **Shaktoolik**

Ability to build a safe evacuation shelter:

- Provide Emergency Evacuation Shelter within the community itself v. elsewhere
- Mr. Dickens - provided update on school capital projects, funding and status of school. Currently it is not in the budget this year, but may for next
- School building schematics/engineering review and how it could function as an evacuation shelter and clinic.
- Discussed in previous IAWG meetings:
  - Use of School- modifying or expanding
  - Major Maintenance
  - New building
  - New building/site location
  - Square footage/footprint
  - Funding is a critical issue.
- Need collaboration, coordinated effort to get this project going
  - Good design work, codes, structural requirements, can withstand hazardous conditions
  - Study if location is suitable or if need to move
  - Ability to evacuate
- Other considerations:
  - Is the school a good location for an evacuation shelter?
  - Would elevating be helpful
  - Funding sources:
    - State
    - work with other federal entities such as USACE and Denali Commission

## Draft Meeting Summary

- Look at Section 606 and \_\_\_\_ Dave Williams overview of flooding presentation. Need access to information about erosion and flooding possibly add flooding into mix
- Flooding through precipitation is different than flooding from coastal storm surges.
  - Update on funding within FEMA.
  - National policy changes mitigating flooding events, cost/benefits, funding
  - Good Projects not getting funded because not enough people
  - Protection of private property – studies saying “erosion” problem it would be hard to turn around and then say “this is a flooding issue”
  - Growing uncertainty should be enough to start action, not immediately before.
  - John M. working with coalition to develop policy changes in this area too.

### **Koyukuk**

Ability to build a safe evacuation shelter:

- Tanana Chiefs looking at funding for new clinic
  - Just signed and submitted planning grant plan
  - Community wants to stay in village and have building serve as a tribal office building
  - Possibly combine evacuation shelter with clinic.
  - New building/site location?
  - Could look at combining project. Would be able to look at issue.
  - Do have a stronger argument for funding construction projects if combined. Instead of two separate projects it can be one.
  - Good design work, codes, structural requirements, can withstand hazardous conditions
  - Lower construction, mobilization, de-mobilization, labor, materials, land issues, etc. One building could have less footprint/impact than two separate ones too.
  - Include tribal office into the shelter, clinic concept.
  - Need to do enough ground protection for flooding or storm surge event

### **Shishmaref**

Issue with permafrost melting and saltwater getting into their fresh water supply, need to make sure we take into consideration when relocating as well

Shaktoolik is noticing that lakes are drying out from permafrost melting too.

Another Issue: IVE—ice comes over the top and piles up

How do we design to create protection from these phenomena

### **Discussion of IAWG:**

What does IAWG do? What is its Role? How does it perform? Need to accomplish?

- Recognized communities with immediate threats from climate change

## Draft Meeting Summary

- Currently working with 6 identified communities
  - Recommendations currently from this group are to buy time by preserving/protecting our current investment; providing for the safety of the community, it's people and infrastructure. Not addressing the long term 10 years out, but the immediate actions are there so we don't lose lives, our investments, and infrastructure.
    - Lot of things have come up that are intermediate of which we aren't prepared in current charter
  - Need a system that can be applied boarder.
    - How can it be applied to these communities under this mantle?
    - May need to change name based on role, charge, authorization
  - Establish Methodology/analysis approach to identifying communities in peril
- IDEAS:

### **Policy/Recommendations:**

(2) things on Adaptation Policy:

1. Greatest extent possible we protect our investment
2. In era of uncertainty, make better decisions for the future (over arching)
  - a. How we reach this point is developing, using good solid data, knowledge, and science in which to make these decisions.
  - b. Not just a matter of building to the worst case which can be very expensive. Not just save everything which could be rational/not rational, it is part of our IAWG recommendations, we need a system to by which to figure out what who are the imperiled communities. The obvious ones leap out but the not so obvious will not. Each community has a unique or different set of circumstances or mix of conditions for critical infrastructure, viable land, access routes, evacuation routes, etc but we have no system by which to look at the totality of the community and that's what can be one of the fundamental things we see that as the best tool for decision making for prioritization and Allocation of scarce resources that could be something that lends itself to decisions by the administration

### **Additionally:**

We have data, but we don't have coherent data

We have lists of things, but we don't have integrated lists of things

We have lots of antidotal evidence, lots of intuition going on, but there needs to be a means by which we can make sense of it.

A platform on which we can place emerging science, improve modeling  
And that's the part where this a great future for the IAWG even if this might take awhile those first few steps are taking advantage of existing systems, existing platforms, existing lists and data. That's where I see it.

## Draft Meeting Summary

Current IAWG Recommendations do address this issue.

John M. – The perfect is the enemy of the good. We need not have a perfect system to make good public policy.

### **Adaptation Assistance:**

Alabama and Virginia are willing to assist Alaska with climate change

### **Methodology:**

#### **Asset Management:**

- What is described in the transportation world as Asset Management is exactly what John Madden was describing by inventorying and assessing all assets. DOT is currently doing this with the Federal Highway Administration (FHA)
- What we are talking about is Community Asset Management.
  - Assessing what is in a community
    - What is the life cycle of our Airport, Generator? revetment wall?
    - Lumping the schools, clinics, offices, sewer systems, etc
  - Asset management and inventorying is expensive, but what makes this do able and lends itself to being integrated across agencies and private entities which lends itself to true asset management and integration making that immediate, intermediate and long term decisions based on the inventory of your assets.
- John M - Unit of Analysis needs to be the community. The unit of action may have to be the project. But we can't take a project specific approach when the community has many complexities and no one agency owns, regulates or funds all the public's infrastructures or service needs.

Nowhere is FAA, US Postal Service, Education here. State has counterparts but we compete.

Pull it together with all of the data, all of the assets, all of the programs that affect a community that is achievable. Marry it up with nature of hazard and bring in Sally's work with planning we might be able to have a real approach and bring people around the table around the climate change issue and have a true expression of "strategy"

Which are the fundamentals of Adaptation

Active community participation

Starting point Erosion –DCRA maps, Bruce's maps—good understanding of erosion scenarios and inventory on paper.

Document everything a community would need to make it viable and how pieces all fit together. Then scenarios can be used to model. If something comes up as

## Draft Meeting Summary

vulnerable through these scenarios that can point us into what actions to take. Assumptions, and range of variables that brings order to it and lends to policy and firm basis for recommendations.

### **Roles, Identification, how to tie everything together:**

#### **Question:**

How do we get a school, clinic, evacuation center in a very thoughtful way for the future?

- We need to breed unity across the board
- We need to become community based in function

Preliminary approaches

Selection process of communities

Prioritize

Understand if climate change is more hazardous than say an earthquake

Very clear this 1<sup>st</sup> tier of communities was the right thing. As we examine the next tier we need to continue to do it in a focused way. Expanding out statewide is not currently in our charter.

2 Examples given this morning

1. Waterline at Unalakleet
2. Shaktoolik

These are Maintenance problems at this time, long-term could be relocation issues

This would shift our charter from 12-18 months to more of an **Intermediate**

Workgroup (1 – 5/6 years)

Immediate 12-18 months

Intermediate 18 months – 5 or 6 yrs out

Long term 6 or more years

#### **Funding:**

Funding to protect in place. Recurring expense.

Need to be incorporated into the budget and funding processes

Recommendations will be based on intuition, experience and need strong support to run through modeling for understanding uncertainty. By running scenarios we can see goodness of fit. Project that benefits communities

Justify investment – new, preservation of current, future

Appropriation funding justification

Develop a correlation b/w impact and climate change

Next year justify why we need Fed invest in Adaptation and what state match should be

Systematically and gather.

DCCED grant program tie in

## Draft Meeting Summary

Amy – Fed funding – move sooner than later. Cut backs are expected for FY12. See what Presidential budget looks like

Think way through for the community and slice out for individual budgets

John's quotes for the day:

“Journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.” John M. We can begin with something like this

A good plan today is better than a perfect plan tomorrow.

**Briefing on Copenhagen Climate Conference** – postponed until next meeting

**NOAA handout – Amt Holman:**

Hydrological Survey is Shishmaref included? At this time no.

The survey is a tag to the Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment. If we are to have major shipping through the Bering sea, we need to know where to put necessary infrastructure, what the ice conditions are, currents, etc.

Shishmaref is working with UAF on fish and whale patterns

**Mike Black Water Resource Project development:**

Progress is being made in developing a process for resources from DEC and DCCED to evaluate water resource vulnerability. Such as case of Newtok

Permafrost melting, sedimentation, seawater mixing with fresh water, etc.

DEC—water systems, sanitation, fuel lines, contamination

90% of our communities receive fuel from the marine system

Currently designing a scope of work for the project which goes along with what we are talking about. Small pot of funding resources

Will present Draft scope of work at next meeting

**Climate Change Website Updates:**

Review of changes. Have added web pages for Individual communities and reports. Encourage everyone to visit website. Contact Kolena or Jackie if you want to add information for your community or want the web pages updated.

Website links are: <http://www.climatechange.alaska.gov/>  
<http://www.climatechange.alaska.gov/iaw.htm>

<http://www.calendarwiz.com/calendars/calendar.php?crd=climatechangelcalendar&PHPS ESSID=43f90613a1531d4bc440ee6aeb2d31a0&jsenabled=1&winH=754>

## Draft Meeting Summary

### **Next Steps:**

- Sub-Cabinet meeting tentatively scheduled for Wednesday February 10
- Discuss next meeting during AK Forum for the Environment
  - Panel Discussion in the morning
  - IAWG meeting in the afternoon
- Distribute information from Glen Gray electronically to everyone and post on website
- **Discuss with Commissioner Hartig:**
  1. Community Infrastructure:
    - Building shelters, roads, etc if left to normal processes will be ignored
  2. We need something said in the Strategy addressing the issue of decisions being made which aren't the best informed
    - If we can bring in those things we have now and are a couple of states that can assist us with descriptions, research, demographics, etc which will allow us to make good and better decisions and outcomes.
  3. Propose new IAWG recommendations for the Climate Change Strategy to address prior to implementation
  4. Implement climate change strategy
    - then something different from what we are doing now must happen. Need to have other infrastructure people involved. So that everyone is aware of issues

### **Tasks:**

- Sally – meet with Jackie Poston to arrange IAWG Meeting and Panel
- Kolena – bring white board, markers, etc to next meeting
- John – Lead Methodology identification for communities in peril during next meeting
  - how communities define?
- Mike Black-Present draft scope of work Water Quality Resources at next meeting
- Claire handling RSVP for AK Forum Resource Council Seminar Wed. night
- Sally has community links and info to add to IAWG website. Need reference link to DCCED for IAWG website

### **Public Comments:**

Community appreciates IAWG for recognizing and addressing challenges in Shaktoolik And are glad things are progressing/moving forward in a positive way.

Mike Black: IAWG Purpose to get agencies together and help solve issues  
Can do, have done and don't want to disappoint.

Pictures very important for the website

Still have difficulty with telecommunications in rural communities such as Shishmaref

## Draft Meeting Summary

Critical Habitat for Stellar Eider may have impact on relocation and building shelters need national policy change so that Critical Human Habitat needs supersede critical habitat designations

Need to be aware how community viability is changing

What is the dialog going to look like from Washington DC House/Senate on Climate Change?

Lots of interest in Climate change phenomenon - Yukon Territories seeing significant changes

Arctic Civil Infrastructure meeting in April

- **Next meeting:** Thursday, February 11, 2010  
1:30 pm – 4:30 pm Kenai/Denali Room at the Anchorage Marriot Hotel

**Meeting Adjourned:** 4:10 pm