



Alaska Climate Change Adaptation Advisory Group  
Meeting #7  
June 19, 2009 9:00 AM–4:30 PM  
Draft Meeting Notes

**Attendees**

**AAG Members Present:**

Elaine Abraham, Bob Pawlowski, Fran Ulmer, Michael Cerne, Dale Summerlin, Larry Hinzman, Steve Ivanoff, Stan Foo, Randy Hagenstein, Bill Streever, Steve Weaver, Amy Holman, Terry Chapin, Billy Connor, Doug Vincent-Lang, Joe McLaughlin

**State:**

Commissioner Larry Hartig, Jackie Poston, Kolena Momberger

**UAF/Facilitator:**

Brian Rogers

**ICF:**

Fran Sussman, Nancy Tosta

**Public:**

Ian Dutton, Karla Dutton, Terry Johnson, Don Callaway, Mike Brubaker, Greg Kellogg, Denny Lassay, Mark Shasby, Eric O'Brien

**Welcome, Introductions & Objectives for the Day**

**Research Needs presentation**

6 policy recommendations for the individual TWGs—will be addressed later in the day as look at the individual TWG recommendations and add these in. This is a work in progress—not intended to be the end of the process. Two points to note:

- The WG did not prioritize the RN, rather this depends on sub cabinet and what happens when this goes forward.
- They did not develop cost of inaction—will add that in.

The members held a discussion of how research needs could be implemented. One member asked: How did you envision implementing the different research needs that you've identified? The presenter responded that, clearly, implementation will depend on what happens at state level. It will be important to examine each department and the strategic operations to make sure that RN are addressed as appropriate. Another member observed that this is a great list—but it is huge. Some of these are already being undertaken by some state agencies, but not with respect to climate change. Efforts to tackle these have not been successful so far. Another member responded that it is important for AK to get the lead in certain research areas and see that specific issues, such as cold climate research, are funded appropriately. Another member observed that existing research efforts are not coordinated well. If we coordinated better our few dollars would go further. Another member pointed out that there are a range of different groups and research areas that are developing and evolving, and that these groups are gradually being brought into the dialogue. The process has really allowed research needs to be brought into the process and integrated.

One member asked: We need to connect the data with decisions that are made every day in the public and private sector – this is very important (EA7 -5.1.1). Was there a discussion of this issue and how to connect with decision makers? At a conference I was at, someone said: “all models are wrong, but some models are useful.” Models don’t give us answers, they give us a process for thinking about the issues and the data. So the goal is to help the decision makers who don’t have the time and expertise to integrate the information. I keep searching for a different way of doing business that will help. In the discussions around the table: was there anything that we, as a group, should particularly emphasize to the sub-cabinet. The Answer: How we encourage folks to make a decision to take on short term costs for a long-term benefit. Integration of cost-of inaction into the decision models that will allow local decision makers to convince their constituents to make a case for these investments.

One member returned to the topic of the costs of inaction. When a village is threatened, there’s reluctance to put money forward to address the problem—unlike when DOT or other agencies sees infrastructure threatened. Why is this the case? Cost-of-inaction are not being taken into account. When a village is threatened, there isn’t enough advance warning time to fly in and rescue the village, but they’re told that having evacuation roads are cost-prohibitive.

Summary: costs of inaction needs to be part of the AAG report, as well as be part of the RN WG.

## **Common Themes/Overarching Options Workgroup Presentation**

### ***Establish an Alaska Climate Change Knowledge Network***

One member observed that these data already exists in the DCRA database. If not made useful, doesn’t matter what the data are that you have. The presented responded that everyone recognizes that information sharing is more of an institutional than a technical issue. This option represents a structure or series of negotiated agreements among agencies that have various responsibilities.

AAG members made a few observations:

- This has to be value added – has to be a focus on taking these data and making sure they are of use to decision makers. Need to be the people who navigate the data and pull it together.
- Has to be accessible—users needs need to be recognized
- Throughout all of this—there has been frustration expressed about the availability of data and where it is, and how it can be used. That has been rolled into this KN. If there are processes that exist that can “unlock data in these agencies” – if the mechanisms are already in place, may not need to create new structures. Interagency project, or project within agencies, to make the data more available/accessible.
- Everyone views this differently. Number 1 is awareness. Knowing there are other people out there so work is not duplicated. Second, then go to endpoint: outcome and product: what are user priorities, and how can I put this in a user friendly, actionable, local-decision-maker format. Then have usable work products. Third is how make it happen. But first need the awareness of who is involved and what folks need. Answer: this “inventory” idea is in the POD description in the OA option description.
- There are lots of databases and website that are out there that folks are starting to use (E.G., Finding climate in a community). Problem: don’t know when it was prepared, is it recent, relevant. But the information is there, and it seem as good opportunity to connect people and information.
- There is a whole science of data integration. Something could be done within the state—there are lots of technical solutions to this issue to link and make data available.
- As listen, I hear two important pieces. First, recognition that we need this, and second, a framework under which to work. If get the two of these, the rest will fall into place
- It seems to me that the diagram needs to have a 4<sup>th</sup> circle and overlap more. Needs to coordinate with federal agencies—CEQ, NEPA template. Second, there do exist a lot of data bases, but they vary in how info is collected, reliability, and so there really needs to be careful consideration of when use these and how.

Is there any objection to the KN as one of the options to put forward in the report? No objections. Option approved.

### ***State Agency Coordination Option.***

One member asked: I know what the IAWG does, are you proposing to break that group into two pieces? Community advocacy and state coordination? Response: No, this is coordination of the mitigation and adaptation activities, and so not specific to community assistance. This is more about communication. Cognizance of legislation that's pending, funding opportunities, etc. etc. So the IAWG is reflected partly in PI and HC1.

Comment: Could community assistance be rolled into state agency coordination? Is it a new entity or getting state agencies to coordinate better? Answer: this is important enough to need a new entity. It's not just states, it's feds, it's consortia. Could be a realignment of existing functions—how they operate and how they operate with other entities, or could be a new entity. Recommendation of the TWG does not go into how this exactly goes on. One way to think about why we need both? When think about state agencies, they are sitting around the table—thinking of many things related to climate change—not just community assistance. Similarly, under community assistance, state agencies are not the only thing that they're addressing. So they're related, but not the same thing for all things, all times, all issues.

Question: should we have delegation representatives in this model. Yes. Where mention state and federal agencies, should mention congressional delegation reps.

Any objections to the recommendation as stated? Yes: Two options should be merged--combining state agency coordination and community assistance entity into one, or at least see more interaction or coordination. .Option approved by supermajority, with one objection

#### ***Community Assistance (formerly HC-1)***

Minor tweaking is needed (to explicitly include "local" and modify function 2 "flooding, erosion, and other risks.")

With those changes, no objections. This option will be approved and will be in the final report.

#### **Health and Culture TWG Presentation (excluding Option 1)**

##### ***HC2: Augment surveillance & control programs***

Consensus adoption, no objection.

##### ***HC3: Community health impact evaluation***

Question: This seems very logical but does it apply to all state decisions? Or all measures that go through a committee. Answer: Yes, all state projects. Further question: It seems to me you could make a similar recommendation to review economic or ecological impacts of every project. So I do raise objection about including ALL state projects—because some already go through NEPA or other detailed processes, so should be restricted to some that need it, not all.

A TWG member that was present elaborated: This is tied into Health Impact Assessment. In AK, there have been several HIA that have already been done. Most have been asked for—particularly by rural communities. So, what these do is, make sure that some of the activities that might adversely impact human health are mitigated before the project is begun. So the question is:— can there be resources available to help the community understand and assess what the health impacts might be for a community.

Question: If we're asking for this, why aren't we asking for ecological and economic assessments as well?

Observation: One problem is that will kill a lot of small projects—and assessments will be more expensive than the project itself. Should do this when do an EIS. We want to be sure the HIA don't get in the way of projects. So need to determine the magnitude of the project relative to the potential HIA. If the potential HIA is small, then may not need to do it.

Observation: This appears to be building capacity within state to conduct these assessments rather than relying on the EPA.

TWG members responded: it's not necessarily mandated that every community have an HIA, but want to make sure the capacity is there, if it's needed. This falls into the whole issue of just how much we can afford to do in this process.

Summary: The option needs some tweaks, specifically: (1) make sure that the option explicitly allows for a tiered level of review (minor/assessment, major/full review) and (2) make sure that it isn't "ALL", the process needs to be selective. With those changes, approved, by supermajority, with one objection based on creating a process.

#### ***HC4 – Address risks to rural sanitation and solid waste management***

Observation: Need to cross reference recommendation from PI group to assess risk to public infrastructure and a research needs topic on p. 32 or 33. Clarification in response: There is a systematic difference in the approaches—in PI we took an umbrella approach, not a specific approach. But understanding how to put it all in one or the other—doesn't work well. So in looking at the title—it is more than assessing risk.

Summary: Change H&C4 (title) – keep focus on Human Health. With cross reference to PI. Targets 4, 5, 7, & 8 -- move into PI. With those changes, approved by consensus.

#### ***HC-5 – Assess and protect archaeological, historical, and cemetery sites at risk***

Question: There's already a process—how does this help that process—and how is it new and different? What does it add to what's there? Answer: this is more systematic than what's there now, it sets up a triage for sites.

Observation: There are a variety of ways to incentivize this that don't require "enacting legislation." What about changing it to "Pursue funding" and let the Sub-cabinet decide.

Summary: Amend the option to delete "enact legislation.....tax" "Create a benefit for private landowners....etc.". With that modification, is adopted as modified.

***HC-6 (p. 39 from RNWG):*** Research mechanisms to insure that traditional knowledge and wisdom is integrated into research....

This could easily dovetail into HC-1. As revise the options, take the theme of this and incorporate into the related recommendation.

### **Natural Systems TWG Presentation**

Recommends looking into Chapter which is here as an example and also into POD for further details. In April, one Option was sent to FAW, otherwise options have not evolved much. They have already seen all. Going through all first, then going back to discuss.

#### ***NS 1: Incorporate CC into fisheries***

Question: Can we add in ocean acidification? Response from TWG member: Yes, can indicate this in the discussion.

No comments/concerns. No objections.  
Approved.

#### ***NS 2: Wildland Fire Management***

No comments/concerns. No objections.  
Approved.

#### ***NS 3: Address Impacts on Fresh Water Management***

In text of Option 3, add in “those areas targeted for instream”

Approved with addition.

#### ***NS 4: Invasive Species Prevention & Response***

Add language indicating that one issue we’re facing is stressed forest health.

Approved with additional language change.

#### ***NS 5: Adaptive F&W Management***

Question: does adaptive management apply to everything? If not well-designed, this option is ripe for abuse. Don’t want it to be used to give relief to commercial fisheries. Answer: mainly dealing with changes in subsistence harvest. ADFG can do in season mgt for fisheries – but don’t have this for game – so this option should move towards providing that.

Clarify that are giving the same authority that have with fish to wildlife with this option.

Approved with clarification.

#### ***NS 6: Sustainable Agriculture***

Observation: Need to separate climate from non-climate-related changes. This option doesn’t seem to be oriented toward taking advantage of climate change – which was the original intent – seems to be able building an industry.

Decision on whether to send this back to EA was reserved until the EA discussion. At that time the conclusion was this option should be removed from NS and covered in EA Option #2.

Moved to EA.

#### ***NS 7: Public Education & Outreach***

Had a discussion of why this is still in NS, since AAG recommended at last meeting that it be moved to cross-cutting, but was sent back by the MAG.

The TWG feels this can be provided under existing programs. One member was concerned about placing additional burdens on School system which already has a great deal on their shoulders. Wants to make sure we change “promote CC literacy” to “promote CC science.”

Discussion clarified that outreach—beyond K-12 education—is already captured in CC; this is just the residual.

Summary: Move this option to make it a cross-cutting type option, and change “literacy” to “science.”

#### ***NS-8: from Research Needs (p. 51): Reduce Risks to health, safety and property from natural hazards resulting from climate change***

The TWG should check whether there are any natural hazards resulting from climate change that have not been in addressed in PI, HC—and if so, can they be addressed there, or is an option needed here.

### **Public Infrastructure TWG Presentation**

#### ***PI-1: Data***

No objection, adopted.

**PI-2.**

RN suggested (p. 60) including energy (energy use reduction and GHG reduction) – so the suggestion would be to incorporate these two ideas (which go beyond operating costs) into best practice text. Adding a couple of sentence that add RN suggestion and incorporating into this. Not changing the recommendation but the text behind it.

With that minor edit, no objection, adopted.

**PI-3.**

The issue of word “appropriate” building codes – best practices and building codes are not necessarily running on the same track?

RN also suggests that include some thing about monitoring of infrastructure – seems to be included in PI-1.

What about the carbon footprint of the government—has it been estimated? This is already included in the Cross cutting MAG group—government lead by example.

Is there any language in there that explicitly gives the notion that “one size does not fit all.” Make sure it is there (not same housing everywhere, etc.) if not there now.

With changes, approved.

*See RN recommendations for PI. Do not need to be addressed*

**Economic Activities TWG Presentation –**

***EA Option 1 Evaluate capability needs***

Discussion of whether should add language about a federal lobbying effort. Raises question of “editorial question” – commitment to oil and gas leasing, diamond mining etc. that federal commitment to Alaska.

p. 3 of Option Description – last bullet – add in some additional programs to be mentioned. AAG member will provide suggestions.

With those changes, approved.

***EA Option 2. Evaluate future scenarios for the AK economy***

Question: Does this systematic process of scenario building include NS-6? Issue is that when look at the economy you can't really segment out pieces of the economy. Could be a component of this easily. Add Agriculture in to this (forestry already there) – but without the level of detail that is in NS.

First sentence in EA-2 in one-pager turned out “rosey” by mistake. Needs to be a better summary of the actual option.

Adopted with those changes.

***EA-Option 3. imagery data***

Question: A lot of the mapping and imagery data that exists today is proprietary. How are you going to address that?  
Answer: part of this is trying to figure out those relationships, and make data more accessible/available. Agreements, etc.

No objection, is adopted.

[Presentation on Next Steps and Schedule going forward](#)

Discussion of style and content of report. Conclusion: Will keep 4 reports separate (MAG, AAG, RN, IAWG) but integrate them on the website so it is clear to the reader that they are connected.

DRAFT