

Approaching Integrated Arctic Management – Week of the Arctic 2013

The Arctic is the unique global harbor of northern cultures and climes. It is our place of great vast seas that change year round, and foster our history to meet our Arctic present. The known routines of seasons have been altered, and many cultures declare that these changes are our new constants. The timelines of survival and travel are forever changed, and they cross natural and political boundaries with no discrimination or favorites. We are forced to see, hear, and act with common goals as the Arctic changes as an entire region. Our voices must become a chorus for an integrated vision for the future, with science-based planning to bring action right now to the forefront. The exciting opportunities that are before us form a giant management task of international proportions that must be based on an integrated approach for goals of stewardship and stakeholder successes.

MANAGEMENT IMPERATIVES:

Integrated Arctic Management, or IAM, brings complex challenges that are not completely understood, and are familiar to the State of Alaska. Alaska is of the Arctic, and Alaskans are experts on many fronts of science, traditional knowledge, cultural partnerships, and policy. We can lead using our knowledge and understanding, for the world is looking to Alaska for current and future options to build integrated solutions.

In May 2013, the White House administration released a *National Strategy for the Arctic Region*. The strategy identifies the priorities to advance United States security interests, pursue responsible Arctic region stewardship, and strengthen international cooperation. The approach will be informed by guiding principles: safeguard peace and stability; make decisions using the best available information; pursue innovative arrangements; and consult and coordinate with Alaska Natives. The US will continue to be a responsible Arctic steward, and will solidify the IAM to balance economic development, environmental protection, and cultural values. A strong balance must be sustained to protect the Arctic environment, and conserve Arctic natural resources. Alaska and the nation will increase continued understanding of the Arctic through scientific research and seeking traditional knowledge. Alaska will be a first hand partner to chart the course for the Arctic region.

Solid, functioning IAM can be defined as a science-based, whole-of-Arctic approach to stewardship and planning that integrates environmental, economic, cultural community needs. It is informed by stakeholders in a dynamic, adaptive, team approach that identifies Arctic uses, the associated impacts and analyzes and acts with sustainable solutions. The reality is that the Arctic is changing at an unprecedented rate and the nation needs to prepare for the upcoming challenges. Federal budgets are decreasing, and the country and its neighbors have to find new ways to meet the changing demands. The potential of benefits for sustaining lifestyles and developing emerging uses are enormous. We recognize that in order to take full advantage, we will have to be proactive in our approach to managing the perception of the changes from past patterns, the demands of current surprising changes, and must impart strong policies and action to adapt to the undeniable future to come. The goals of IAM are to reduce the conflicts, and the perceptions of conflicts, among the users of the Arctic. The wave of future efforts must embrace regional planning with cooperation among all Arctic nations.

Advocates are voicing a united belief that we need a balance among economic development, environmental protection, and cultural preservation. Using these foundation ideals as starting points, international teams must work together toward an IAM Implementation Plan that is supported by nations and stakeholders alike. The US Federal government has over 20 different agencies operating in Alaska that have some responsibility or jurisdiction in the Arctic. There is a perception, and a reality, that access and permit approvals take too long. The vast geography of the north crosses borders of at least eight different nations. There is no clear set of statutes, protocols, or regulations across all Arctic nations that currently guide balanced development and international uses in the Arctic.

We in Alaska have decades of experience in the Arctic, and are poised to stand at the forefront as a technical, scientific, and cultural leader in sound policy and implementation. Local and tribal governments, and Native communities have a wealth of experience and knowledge that can forge the pathway to local commitment. Our Arctic residents with traditional knowledge can lead in so many arenas, and will be the first hand recipients of Arctic management successes. IAM must effectively engage active commitment from all impacted partners to achieve a sustainable management of the Arctic. Alaska is the Arctic face and on-the-ground force that can take primary ownership of an effective US program, and can lead with expertise and forethought. It is our State's duty to serve our national imperative.

There are many current examples in the State where IAM principles are being implemented. One example is the Statewide Digital Mapping Initiative (SDMI). The SDMI is a State program implemented by the University of Alaska and Alaska Departments of: Natural Resources; Military and Veteran Affairs; Public Transportation and Public Facilities; Environmental Conservation; Fish and Game; and Commerce, Community and Economic Development, and is endorsed by the Governor. There are also partners from Federal, local, private industry, and non-profit organizations active in this mapping initiative.

The proactive Interagency Working Group on Coordination of Domestic Energy Development and Permitting in Alaska is tasked to ensure safe, responsible, and efficient development of conventional and renewable energy resources in Alaska. The member agencies are the Federal Departments of: Interior; Defense; Commerce; Agriculture; Energy; Homeland Security; Transportation; Environmental Protection Agency; Council on Environmental Quality; Office of the Federal Coordinator; Office of Science & Technology Policy; Office of Management and Budget; and the National Security Staff. Each of these member agencies have designated senior staff in Washington D.C. and Alaska that meet regularly.

Other examples of proactive efforts to provide IAM are: the shared Arctic subsistence quotas; the Alaska Arctic Policy Commission; the international Arctic search and rescue agreements and oil spill response agreements; the Magnuson-Stevens Act; the North Slope Science Initiative; and the Red Dog Mine closure reclamation plan.

The real challenges cannot be ignored. There are areas of policy and practices where IAM goals are not defined, and implementation of sustained integration are lacking and should be pursued in earnest. One of those critical areas is for language and cultural sustainability. Rapid changes in lifestyle, paired

with economic and political pressures, have threatened the cultural ways of Arctic life. In order to preserve the language and culture, it will take a regional IAM approach. Coordination across all levels of governance and various agencies will help to ensure that the languages, lifestyles, and cultures are not threatened or forever lost.

Creative partnering to inform decisions and build a network of collaboration is critical. IAM planning with a common voice can be cemented as a formal Implementation Plan. To establish an Implementation Plan we have to identify and prioritize the goals, those values we can agree upon, to become the mission we commonly support as we face our changing Arctic seas and landscapes. There are many objectives sought; many values identified across the region. When pressed to prioritize these goals, there are several mutually agreed upon that have broad support. They include:

- Informed decision making (sound science and traditional knowledge based)
- Food sovereignty
- Sustainable cultures and lifestyles, subsistence
- Economic opportunities
- Localized decision making that has input into regional policies
- Intergenerational successes for the long term
- Healthy ecosystems and habitats
- Resilience and emergency preparedness for economic development and natural events
- Infrastructure development to support multiple uses and community needs
- Targeted, effective communication that translates into action

As a draft IAM Implementation Plan is being developed, there are major themes that are evident. For people living in the Arctic, the number one priority is being able to choose a subsistence lifestyle. The perception, and the reality, may be that development and uses by private industries threaten the continued lifestyle in some way. Communities voice that new development must not impede the subsistence way of life. A balance is required to allow development opportunities to bring increased economic stability to the north. For there is some desire to establish and sustain the community facilities, human health services, education opportunities, and employment that accompany growth of business and commerce regionwide. The people who live in the Arctic have generations of experience working in the Arctic, and residents want to ensure these lifestyle choices continue. The mixture of current lifestyles, with choices based upon economic growth, can also maximize our Alaskan benefits without reducing those same benefits for future generations. Residents and Arctic policy makers must build a common ground to share the importance of these high priority goals of: trust, balance, beauty, independence, diversity, participation, adaptation, preservation, homeland, and cooperation.

STEPS FORWARD:

No policy can take flight for realization without the consent and concurrence of the important impacted partners. Collaboration needs to happen early and often, and the stakeholders need to know that their input is valued and is incorporated in the decisionmaking. Stakeholders need to know they are not just audience or bystanders, but are valued partners with vested interests in the Arctic outcomes. This is the

common foundation upon which trust can be built. There are potential areas of agreement and conflict, and IAM must promote successful dialogue with results:

- Accommodate schedules in order to allow for full participation (example: hunting times)
- Agree upon by-laws or ground rules for planning and action
- Manage expectations of outcomes and roles
- Build on areas of agreement
- Establish and understand baseline concepts of discussion points
- Commit to sustained dialogue
- Establish understanding of other partners' perspectives and priorities

IAM strategies have been successful when they addressed a specific project or topic, instead of a theoretical idea or general area of discussion. The foci of effort on clear, specific goals can produce measurable results. Lack of sincere communication and unmeasurable outcomes miss meeting the goals, and problems may continue to persist or worsen.

Knowing that effective dialogue is the key to collaboration will help Alaska and our nation reach our goals for success. The challenges will not disappear, and the efforts to meet them may extend over years. Discussion among the peers during our Week of the Arctic dialogue surfaced some critical potential solutions, sorted below by sequenced categories of: quick and easy; short-term; medium-term; and long-term implementation.

Objectives that afford quick and easy solutions:

- Communicate, communicate, communicate.
- Implement standard operating procedures that are decided by stakeholder concurrence.
- Prepare documented guidance on standard operating procedures.
- Review governance structures and evaluate strengths and weaknesses. Provide best management solutions to build strong governance networks.
- Actively communicate important information using Fact Sheets and targeted communication at stakeholder engagement meetings
- Evaluate the complex human dimensions impacts/relevant. Foster and validate that policies and integrated decisions relevant to the Arctic communities.
- Set clear goals and objectives.
- Use transparent policies and applications that fortify that all partners are valued and considered equals.
- Identify challenges and encourage participants to focus on solutions
- Operate in forums based upon the spirit of cooperation
- Validate the importance of bottom-up driven solutions. Use local knowledge to inform decisions.
- Measure outcomes using agreed upon metrics for accountability.

Short-term solutions:

- Information sharing is critical. Expand and improve access to make data and information using document and electronic media.
- Seek available traditional knowledge from Arctic residents.
- Outreach must be effective and sustainable. Implement an Arctic-specific notice or broadcast system for schedules and locations of upcoming IAM events. Facilitate stakeholder attendance and participation.
- Develop a public networking forum.
- Review current Arctic management policies and processes. Identify challenges, conflicts, financing hurdles, and political governance boundaries.
- Publishing reports in more accessible and understandable language formats for non-subject experts, or traditional language speakers.
- Know the audience and address its needs for review, input to decisions, and continued avenues of communication.
- Offer outreach for education and IAM awareness to maintain effective communication.
- Effectively address issues for dissemination using common understanding. Overcome technical and language barriers that serve to disenfranchise stakeholders.
- Support and keep active lines of communication open with the Arctic Council Task Force on Scientific Coordination.
- Connect efforts with the Joint Arctic vision of the North Slope Borough, the Northwest Arctic Borough, and the communities of the Bering Straits region.
- Embrace that local communities create the true Arctic vision.
- Make the IAM path forward understood to stakeholders and participants

Medium-term solutions:

- Facilitate sharing information among experts and stakeholders to avoid duplication and stakeholder fatigue.
- Empower young leaders to act, thus creating informed decision makers.
- Establish the specifics of the decision. Provide outreach of the decision so everyone understands the decision and is provided with reasons to support it. This may be critical to build concurrence for decisions that are not the stakeholder's preferred decision.
- Consider passing Arctic management statutes and regulations. A binding change may require passing a law so that Arctic users have clear and enforceable mandates.
- Support and develop dialogues that cross organizations and generations. Solidify the power of the human factors in the management solutions.
- Restructure the existing bureaucracy of the Arctic.
- Avoid litigation through conflict resolution.
- Build toward success through local experts and traditional knowledge.
- Build avenues for Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) compliance. Allow for input by non-federal organizations that have expertise and local abilities to positively impact the IAM.
- Pursue Federal delegation and Congressional support (financial, political).
- Secure sustained funding for a comprehensive Arctic strategy (State, Federal, international).

- Collaborate on funding opportunities and share resources.

Long-term solutions:

- Construct and maintain a common communication system, e.g. using broad-band internet access throughout rural Arctic Alaska.
- Utilize formal scenarios planning that leads to identifying common objectives and solutions.
- Plan a long-term timeline of Arctic research scope and applications. Establish measurable milestones for publishing research information.
- Act on a requirement that traditional knowledge is essential for incorporation into scientific research.
- Implement a process to ensure all concerns are considered. Provide feedback that the concerns were addressed, followed-up, and results were responded back to the impacted stakeholders or organizations.
- Integrate the Bering Straits international agency, and multi-stakeholder task force.
- Develop effective local-regional cooperation across the US and Russia border.
- Strive for equal opportunity participation in decision making.
- Establish a circumpolar expert consortium, a think tank that can consider and provide solutions for IAM priority issues.
- Incorporate social media to create transparency and inform the global public.
- Understand the audience, and communicate, communicate, communicate.
- Recognize that conflict management is healthy and not to be feared. Balance of actions will bring solutions.
- Develop an overarching decision-making framework, with identified participants, that are well-informed. Structure the decision maker framework with a transparent and mutually agreed upon process.
- Coordinate more effective and quicker response Federal and State permitting and authorizing processes.
- Minimize negative impacts to ecosystems, habitats, and community services.
- Secure adequate support to evaluate and sustain ecosystem health.
- Address the growth and added pressures for increased marine vessel and traffic management.
- Recognize that the Arctic waters are international waters. Seek an internationally sanctioned balance for unilateral compliance of the Law of the Sea.
- Work endlessly to clarify USA's identify as an Arctic nation, with Alaska as an integral Arctic global leader.

CONCLUSION:

Our Arctic vision is becoming more clear on a global scale. We are compelled to join as Arctic nations to inform and apply short- and long-term objectives in managing our northern region. Accomplishing all of this will not be easy, but our goals are attainable. IAM is a first step in balancing economic development, environmental protection, and cultural values for the betterment of our present, and our future. Communication and collaboration among the Federal, State, and local governments are the signature touchstones of successful long-term policies.