



26 September 2001

Dear Colleagues,

The final report of the Tribal and Native workshop on the Alaska contaminants program is attached. The report was developed during the workshop of June 6-8 attended by 104 representatives of Tribes and Native organizations.

The workshop was organized by the Alaska Native Health Board (ANHB), the Alaska Native Science Commission (ANSC) and the Alaska Intertribal Council (AITC). The conference was moderated by three facilitators: Deborah Vo with AITC, Cynthia Navarrette with ANHB and Patricia Cochran with ANSC.

The workshop was also convened because a proposal for funding of a contaminants program was submitted to Senator Stevens by the State of Alaska and other organizations in March. Funding would begin in FY 2002. Specific organizational and functional elements of the program were not included in the proposal to Senator because broad Tribal and Native input had not yet been accomplished. The main objective of the June workshop was to generate Tribal and Native input for the structure and functions of the program.

The first day was devoted to reviewing the history and previous efforts of the contaminants initiative. The following keynote speakers spoke during the morning of the first day:

- Will Mayo of the Governor's Office
- Michele Brown ADEC Commissioner
- Richard Kaufman, ATSDR
- Marilyn Heiman, Governor's Office
- Phil Johnson, US Fish and Wildlife Service
- John Middaugh, Epidemiology/DHSS
- Michael Bradley, EpiCenter, ANHB
- Patricia Cochran, ANSC

The afternoon of the first day was devoted to open discussion to identify all needs, concerns and issues of importance to Tribal groups and Native organizations. This information was grouped into five categories, which served as topics for five breakout sessions. Participants volunteered for the sessions. A facilitator and presenter were identified

for each breakout group. The five categories and breakout topics were: structure, goals, function, communication and information.

All of day two was devoted to work in the breakout sessions. At the end of the day each breakout group presented a report.

Day three was devoted to additional discussion on the program's structure and developing a draft report of the structure and functions based on recommendations from the workshop. The draft report is attached. It proposes the structure, goals, functions communication and information, issues and categories.

Feedback from Tribes and Native Organizations: A draft report was developed and distributed to all participants, all tribes and all other Native organizations ANHB, AITC and ANSC had addresses for. Feedback was solicited and four responses were received. Suggestions from this feedback were incorporated into the report as appropriate.

Sincerely,

Patricia Longley Cochran
Executive Director
Alaska Native Science
Commission

Deborah Vo
Executive Director
Alaska Inter-Tribal
Council

Cynthia Navarrette
President/CEO
Alaska Native
Health Board

FINAL REPORT

ALASKA CONTAMINANTS PROGRAM PROPOSED STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONS

PROGRAM NAME

The Alaska Contaminants Program has been used to describe the program but many feel it could be better named. The proposal submitted to Senator Stevens was called the “Wild and Traditional Foods Safety Program.” This title was felt to be much more politically feasible.

Considerable discussion was devoted to a more suitable name: “Alaska Native Protectors of the Land” was proposed. Another proposal was to call the program “INUA” which is an Inupiaq word meaning “Spirit of the Animal.” After the draft report was disseminated a suggestion to change the name to “Alaska People, Protectors of the Land”

I. STRUCTURE

The structure breakout group was not able to reach consensus on a suitable structure of the program during the breakout session, but a proposed structure was agreed upon during the third day open session.

GOVERNING BOARD CONCEPTS

The key component of the program would be a governing board.

The governing board would be comprised of representatives from Native and tribal groups, government agencies and other organizations with a stake in or interest in contaminants.

There would be two categories of board participants:

- (1) Board members with authority to determine policy and make funding decisions, and
- (2) Board members who would have an advisory role.

A Council of Elders and Youth would also be formed to provide direction to the board.

- One Elder and one youth per region to Board of Directors
- Terms of office, selection/appointment process, location, frequency of meetings should be defined

A majority of board members authorized to make policy and financial decisions would be Alaska Native representatives.

GOVERNING BOARD

Elder and Youth Advisory Board



VOTING MEMBERS (policy and funding decisions)		NON-VOTING MEMBERS (advisory role)
NATIVE ORGANIZATIONS	GOVERNMENT AGENCIES OTHER ORGANIZATIONS	
		Dept of Interior
Alaska Native Health Board	Governor's Office	Indigenous People's Commission On Marine Mammals
Alaska Native Science Commission	AK Dept of Environmental Conservation	Dept of Defense
Alaska Inter-tribal Council	AK Dept of Health Social Services	Bureau of Indian Affairs
Alaska Federation Natives	Alaska Dept of Fish and Game	
Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium	UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA	
Six tribal members-at-large	U. S. Environmental Protection Agency	
Native American Fish and Wildlife Society	Agency for Toxic Substance and Disease Registry	
Yukon River Inter-Tribal Watershed Council	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	
	National Marine Fisheries	

GOVERNING BOARD ISSUES

A number of issues would have to be addressed in forming the board. These include:

- Conflict resolution policy
- Government to government protocols
- Interagency agreements

Issues to be addressed after the board has formed:

- Funding board activities
- Protocols and confidentiality
- Ownership of intellectual property
- Public Relations - marketing strategy, especially to communities
- Cultural values are essential and must be incorporated into decisions, priorities, research, etc.
- Information ownership

II. GOALS

Topics for Goals presented on June 7th, were revisited on June 8th and accepted as follows:

Program Vision

“Through cultural values, common goals, global partnerships, Alaska’s indigenous peoples, as the first stewards of our homelands, shall take a leadership role, to preserve and protect our people, environment, and natural resources, from harmful effects of contaminants, for today and future generations.”

A number of goals to shape and guide program scope and activities were proposed.

- A. Native Leadership and Development: The program should be organized so that Alaska Natives have a significant leadership role and opportunities for development.
- B. Alaska Leadership: The program must be directed by people in Alaska. Representatives to the governing board must be stationed in Alaska.
- C. Partnerships: A major focus of the organization, activities and funding should be to encourage, establish and maintain partnerships between Native and tribal groups, government agencies, universities and other organizations. The goal of these partnerships will be to enhance capacity within communities, regions, universities and other organizations to participate in contaminant issues.
- D. Indigenous cultural values and perspectives must guide components, policies and programs.
- E. Focus on the Future: Programs, policies and funding must be guided by a focus and vision toward the future “seventh generation.”
- F. Common Goals: Alaskans through the governing board must work toward common goals, which serve as the basis for directing the program.
- G. International Collaborations: International collaborations must be established. Cooperation and Collaboration with the Arctic Council, Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program and the Northern Contaminants Program must be established.
- H. Advocacy for and participation in contaminants treaties must be a function of the program.
- I. Native traditions, cultural values and family values should be institutionalized in the program. This could be a function of the Elders/Youth advisory group.
- J. Traditional Medicines and Healing Methods should be a consideration in program activities.

III. FUNCTIONS

A. Laboratory support: A lab under tribal management is needed to support contaminant research.

B. Education and Training: Many components should be included in education and training:

- Education and training should incorporate social and cultural values and traditional knowledge along with the science.
- Information and education should address “scare tactics” and false or distorted information.
- Information and education should be in a risk benefit format. Benefits along with potentially hazardous effects of traditional foods as well as risks and benefits of alternate foods should be addressed.
- Education, information and all communication should be culturally based and be appropriate for the target audience.
- Education programs and information should be developed with Native input and have a comment period for general review prior to final development and release.
- There should be an education program for scientists, government agency people and others who work with Tribal and Native groups. Education and training should also be available for tribal and other Native groups who partner and participate in contaminant programs. These programs should focus on knowledge and skills necessary to partner in research and work with agencies.
- Dietary advisories must include comprehensive risk/benefit considerations.

C. There should be legal council

D. The program should have an advocacy function.

E. Regional elements of the program should be established. A regional component would enhance communication-training research etc.

F. Clean-up of Contaminated Sites: The program should have capacity to provide technical support to communities for environmental clean up.

G. Grants and Proposals: Grants and proposal quality assurance provisions should be tailored to Native communities and Native organizations.

H. Environmental issues in Alaska such as sewer/water etc. should be a consideration of program functions.

IV. COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

Information and communication is a function of the contaminants program but is important enough to stand alone as a separate section.

The Communication and Information function

- The program should develop a clearinghouse function for information on contaminants.
- The program should generate reports, have a website, sponsor conferences to provide information.
- Information should be reviewed for cultural suitability and language prior to release.
- Information should be translated into Native languages when appropriate.
- Communication within and between agencies, Native and tribal groups and others must be an essential component built into the structure and functions of the program.
- A marketing function and strategy should be a component of the program. Focus would be to agencies, communities, legislators (advocacy) and others.

V. ISSUES

The program should focus on the following issues.

- Determining the sources of contaminants
- Determining the types of contaminants in Alaska
- Global Warming effects
- Clean-up of contaminated sites
- Research protocols:
- Data collection and interpretation
- Privacy issues
- Consent issues

BREAKOUT SESSION PARTICIPANTS

I. STRUCTURE

Facilitator: Mike Bradley

Presenter: Celeste Davis

Recorder: Brook Boswell

Members:

Molly Patton

Christine Celentano

Paul McCollum

Art Ivanoff

Arlene Thomas

Delice Calcote

Victoria Hykes Steere

Gerald Trigg

Larry Merculief

Michelle Sparck

Arthur J. Lake

Glenda Huntington

Carole Holley

Ole Lake

Violet Yeaton

Randall Engler

II. GOALS

Facilitator: Deborah Vo

Presenter: Monica Riedel

Recorder: Amy Craver

Group Members

Olga Adams

Dianne McKinley

Moses Owen

Bessie Gonzalez

Michael Pederson

Dan Abalama

Harold Frank

III. FUNCTIONS

Facilitator: Wayne Carpenter

Presenters: Wayne Carpenter, Virginia Washington, Donna Willoya, Alice Julius, Greg Scott

Recorder: Rita Anniskett/Nicholas Morgan

Group Members:

Sarah James

Alice Julius

Sophie Andrew

Donna Willoya

Georgianna Hotch

Charlie Prince

Greg Scott

Gladys Pete

Albert Westlock

Harriet Broulliette

Becky Bogeyaktuk

Roger Otten Jr.

Virginia Washington

Harold Napoleon

IV. COMMUNICATION and INFORMATION

Facilitator: Richard Kaufman

Presenter: George Pletnikoff

Recorder: Tauni Rodgers

Members: Mikela Licona

Mary Agimuk

Larson King

Beatrice Olrun

Peter Merryman

V. ISSUE GROUP

Facilitator: Jean Gamache

Presenter: Charlie Johnson

Recorder: No one specified

Group Members:

Eileen Jackson

Elmer G. Simon

Thomas Neglaska

Roger Brown

Enoch Shiedt

Scott Anderson

Cyrus Harris

Jeannette Carlson

Alicia Lynn Reft

Carla Yates

George Smith

Caroline Ulak

