ALASKA NATIVE SCIENCE COMMISSION

Volume 2, Issue 1 ***Naalaktuaqtuni Ilitchiruni-lu - "Listening and Learning"*** Fall 2001

The Alaska Native Science Commission Newsletter – Naalaktuaqtuni Ilitchiruni-lu (Listening and Learning) – is published twice annually. We invite your comments and information from your community.

Chairperson's Message

Dr. Dolly Garza, ANSC Chairperson

COMMISSION SAYS FAREWELL TO RETIRING MEMBERS, WELCOMES NEW…

The Commission has accepted the resignation of Elder Paul John of Toksook Bay. Paul has been on the Commission since its creation and has been important to keeping us grounded and true to our ultimate goal of helping our people as we participate in and help direct science in rural and Native Alaska. We have been blessed to have Paul on the Commission. Another elder will be named to the board in the near future.

Orville Huntington, from Huslia, joins the Commission (replacing Michael Pederson from Barrow) as a Native in the wildlife field. We are happy to have Orville as he brings the Interior perspective to our deliberations and has years of experience working with federal wildlife agencies. Michael Pederson stepped down from the Commission to continue his education and is pursuing a master's degree. We thank Mike for his service and wish him good studies.

The Commission met this winter and took several important actions. We met with an attorney to begin the process of

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Traditional Knowledge and Contaminants Project - Part 2

The Alaska Native Science Commission (ANSC) received a grant from the Environmental Projection Agency, Office of Radiation and Indoor Air for a project on traditional knowledge and contaminants to document Alaska Native people's observations of environmental changes. The goal of this project is to build capacity among Alaskan communities in order to identify and address their concerns about environmental changes and contamination.

Contrary to typical scientific methods used for collecting data, i.e., surveys and public hearings, during the first year of this 3-year project, locally meaningful practices and protocols were used to gather traditional knowledge about environmental concerns. Meetings in each region were organized with key community and regional experts in order to document local people's concerns and questions regarding environmental change. Year two of the project focused on a second series of regional meetings that allowed scientists and communities to consider appropriate applications of traditional knowledge and local knowledge. Synthesis meetings enabled scientists and communities to identify common and divergent understandings of environmental change, including the role of contaminants.

The ANSC held seven regional meetings across Alaska, documenting regional participants' environmental and health concerns. It our last newsletter,[1] the ANSC cited summaries of the environmental and health concerns from the Interior Region (Fairbanks), Southeast Region (Sitka), and Northwestern Region (Nome).

What follows in this article is a continuation of these brief summaries from regional meetings, held in the Arctic Region (Barrow), Western Region (Cordova), South Central Region (Anchorage), and the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta (Bethel).

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*A copy of ANSC Newsletter Vol. 1-1 can be downloaded from ANSC's Website at: www.nativescience.org

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removing ourselves from the University and stepping out as a non-profit. This process will be slow but we hope to be on our own by early next year. While we have greatly benefited from the alliance with the University of Alaska Anchorage we feel we will have greater control and leeway as a separate entity. We feel that was the original goal when we were first established through AFN's efforts.

The Commission also took action to establish the small grant program as part of the EPA contaminant project. We will be soliciting proposals for small grants covering contaminants and local knowledge. In addition we hope to be hosting a workshop of planning and grant writing for contaminant research.

We hope you know that you can contact the Commission office or any of the Commission members if you have science concerns or ideas.

Respectfully,
Dr. Dolores "Dolly" Garza
ANSC Chairperson

(Knowledge & Contaminants cont. from pg. 1)

For the full text of the regional meetings, visit our website: www.nativeknowledge.org.

One of the direct outcomes of this project is a database, which systematically documents Alaska Native people's perceptions about the nature and source of contamination in each community. The observations shared during the regional workshops are entered into a database that is a useful tool for Alaskan communities as well as providing a foundation and cultural context for further discussions between the Alaska Native and science community.

Overview of Alaska Native Concerns

- Global Warming
- Abnormalities in Subsistence foods
- Human Health
- Impact of Commercial and Sports Fishing
- Outside Impact on Subsistence Foods, Culture and Environment
- Changes in the Eco-system
- Local Sources of Contamination
- Perpetuation of Culture

SUMMARY CONCERNS BY REGION

Y-K DELTA MEETING

Global Warming

- Changes in weather patterns
- Used to be more snow in winter

Abnormalities in Subsistence foods

- Whitefish wormy
- White spots on flesh of salmon
- Trout, red salmon, Coho, dog salmon - skinny, some eyes have been pierced
- Fish with different colorings on skin
- Codfish and halibut found with cheek lesions

Human Health

- High numbers of people dying of cancer
- Increased incidence of disease - asthma, arthritis, Alzheimer's, heart attacks and strokes, brain tumors
- Problems with drug abuse, alcohol, tobacco, FAS, huffing, suicide, depression, mental health problems

Impact of Commercial and Sports Fishing

- Increase in sports fishing resulting in increased waste in river and destruction of habitat
- Fish being destroyed - too many people touching them, measuring them and tearing up their mouths

Outside Impact on Subsistence Foods, Culture and Environment

- Birds and fish found with plastic around their necks
- Ballast water from barges introducing foreign organisms, species and pollutants
- Transboundary pollution from Russia and Europe
- Large airplanes going to Japan affecting the ozone layer

Changes in the Eco-system

- Decline in the numbers of fish
- Reduced numbers of migrating salmon
- Increase in the numbers of beavers
- Decline in the numbers of shore birds and songbirds
- Mink have disappeared upriver
- New plants and trees discovered in areas where they did not used to grow
- Decline in the abundance of edible plants

Local Sources of Contamination

- High mercury levels in rivers from mining operations
- Polluted rivers due to: chlorine and fluoride, rust running into river, outboard motors, antifreeze, and honey buckets that overflow

Summary of Concerns continued from page 2

Perpetuation of Culture
- Loss of respect for traditional ways
- Failure to follow traditional restrictions and structures

WESTERN ALASKA MEETING

Global Warming
- Weather appears to be going back to the pattern of 40 or 50 years ago – more snow, colder
- Changes in wind patterns
- Weather is less predictable than in the past

Abnormalities in Subsistence foods
- Many species of fish contain roundworms, tapeworms and cysts
- Hatchery fish are mushy
- Animal fat (seal, fish and walrus) does not preserve as well now as it did in the past
- Seals: balding, elastic skin, blubber thinner and gristly
- Moose and caribou: livers and bone marrow discolored

Human Health
- Increase in numbers of people with cancers, diabetes, respiratory problems, flu and TB

Impact of Commercial and Sports Fishing
- Increased tourism and motor craft resulting in sport hunters/fishers and guides leaving more waste behind
- Shooting halibut on charter boats – contaminants from bullets and noise
- Catch and release practices are causing fish to show up with damaged jaws and swollen mouths

Outside Impact on Subsistence Foods, Culture and Environment
- After Chernobyl, blackberries smaller, seedier, only 2 or 3 berries per cluster ripen
- Lingering impacts of Exxon Valdez oil spill

ANSC Synthesis Meeting Participants share their time, knowledge and expertise on contaminant issues in the Arctic – September 2000.

Changes in the Eco-system
- Increased occurrence of red tides and blooms in water
- More wolves, bears, sea otter, sea lions (Prince William Sound), rabbits, porcupines, and lynx
- Fewer number of crabs, shrimp, clams, seabirds and shorebirds
- Changes in the characteristics of berries, plants and nutrient levels in traditional plants.

Local Sources of Contamination
- Boat harbors, commercial boats and logging sites sources of contamination
- Logs in bay, oil wastes and litter

ARCTIC REGION

Global Warming
Warming temperatures impact the following:
- Whaling practices
- Ducks are starving
- Ice floes melting
- Riverbanks eroding
- Seasonal cycles disrupted

Human Health
- Cancer and bad health
- Negative effect of substance abuse on young people

Outside Impact on Subsistence Foods, Culture and Environment
- Development and oil projects disrupting migration patterns of caribou and fish
- Negative impact of collaring practices on bears and caribou

Changes in the Eco-system
- Overpopulation of polar bears – ecosystem imbalance
- Migration patterns of animals are changing
- Greater numbers of polar bears in village than in past, bears are skinnier too
- Fewer birds
- Dangerous winds
- Meat tastes different in ice cellars and in refrigerator
- Seagull are beginning to devour bird nests
- Wolves don't go near drilling and as a result the caribou are overpopulated

Local Sources of Contamination
- Need to clean up oil and old batteries
- Seismic testing impacts fish/whales
- Chlorine drinking water
- High mercury levels
- Industrial noise

Perpetuation of Culture
- Importance of maintaining traditional values
- Cultural impact of from dog teams to snow machines

Summary of Concerns continued from page 3

- Importance of native foods and traditional diet
- Kids like to hunt, but not to eat the food
- Lack of physical work (i. e. chopping wood)

SOUTHCENTRAL ALASKA MEETING

Words of Elders

- We must cure the disease of the mind. That is what is holding Natives back.
- We need to go over the mountain and look beyond, to go through the troubles to the river and on to the ocean. We need to find the pearls and bring them back.
- People are dying from lack of spirit. But we can regain this spirit by helping each other, learning from each other, sharing with each other, freeing ourselves from our material things and listening.
- Try to find those who will listen. If they don't want to listen, pray for them.
- You can look at fads as ways to wake us up. Like when non-Natives tried to run talking circles, like the mini-skirts. But it helps wake us up to make our own bridge to the new millennium. We don't know how to be healers, but when the knowledge comes, we have to push it together. We have to be positive, not to doubt ourselves.

Spirituality

- Speaking about spiritually puts people like scientists off, but it is important to bring an understanding of the spiritual to what we are doing in the environment.
- We cannot solve the physical aspect of things when there has been a spiritual affliction that has not been healed.
- We were told that our traditional religious practices were evil and that is why we were experiencing famine. We need to talk about these things to feel healed and clean.
- Through science and technology some things are possible, but through the way of the spirit all things are possible.

Traditional Knowledge

- Traditional knowledge needs to be valued. Sharing it freely may demean it. We need to be very careful with this precious knowledge.
- We need to know who uses it and for what purpose.
- We need to keep in mind that the elders have the wisdom to see the future. We tend to lose sight of this in our enthusiasm to help people.
- Our experience is that western society takes our knowledge without credit and with their own interpretation. We can borrow some of the structures about the way to document data. But some information is sacred to our people and used for very specific purposes. Some information needs to stay within our own circles.
- We learned from Howard Rock that the Tundra Times proved to be one of the best Native voices around the state. It stopped Project Chariot, and it advanced our Native Claims.
- Today we don't have a Native voice, no TV station. We should. It can be reborn, maybe through the website. But a web site isn't like a newspaper that can be read every day or TV news every day.

Communication

- The information age of the last 7 years is more difficult to keep up with than previously.
- We are communicating now whereas with TV we learned but couldn't communicate with each other.
- Our choices in TV were not good. Now with the Internet and the village TV channel, we need to take advantage of the information and communication, including in the villages. We can use it to educate ourselves.
- When we collect information, organizations often keep it to themselves when it should be shared.

Connection with the Environment

- We need to regain our ability to sense the world around us –solutions will come from a shared ability.
- The last 30 years especially have brought great change and destruction of mother earth, not just in Anchorage, but around Alaska.
- We are entering a time of big change and mother earth needs our help to hold together. Signs are the disappearance of all these animals; we have lost our connection with them. We need to return to knowing how to live.
- So many different things affect each part of the ecosystem: solar activity, dumping, mining, and fishing.
- Knowing why the fur seal has declined is an example – we can't expect to know, but if we heal ourselves first we can understand. We need to re-establish our ability to sense the environment and to communicate with all things in the environment.

Cook Inlet Environment

- The inlet does not flush away pollution
- We have to look at the whole system – the salmon as well as Beluga, for example.
- We proved that beluga had been exposed to radiation in the 60's.
- We are pumping pollutants into the inlet every day.
- There is a repeat of a decline of silver salmon from 52 years ago.
- The Big Su river channel is filling up with gravel so that it is too shallow for whitefish, grayling, lingcod to stay there and the area is being over fished.

Bering Sea Environment

Problems include:

- Over fishing
- Climate change
- Dumping of wastes
- Pollutants from Russian rivers
- New diseases: white muscle disease in fur seals
- Chemicals from WWII

Summary of Concerns continued from page 4

- Airborne pollutants

Other Problems Areas of Alaska

- Mining chemical pollutants on top of minerals released into the environment.
- Tongass clear cutting – access roads weaken forest and damage salmon spawning streams.
- ANWR – lower plant diversity which cause caribou to decline.
- Silver salmon – few get past international fleets; Natives forced to cut back or close fisheries to compensate for commercial over-fishing or sport fishing.

History's Effects on Native people

- Mistreatment, displacement, sickness, death.
- Survival through personal strength and organization to protect our people and our land.
- We need to remember the power of humor in overcoming adversity.
- The history of medical experimentation on Natives leads to distrust and death.

Concerns

- Pollution makes plants not good to eat or use for medicinal purposes.
- Children are using drugs to fill up the lack of spiritual fulfillment.
- They should hire local kids who know the area and the environment rather than hiring outside kids. They measure knowledge differently.
- Need more hunters to report what changes in the environment and ecosystems they are seeing (e.g. affecting beluga).
- In the past, we used to see more porcupines and rabbits. Today the snow machines are scaring the porcupines and rabbits and we don't see them as much.
- Fish and Game allow winter hunts and cow hunts while there is a decline in game, especially moose and Nelchina caribou in the Southcentral area.
- We used to hunt Ptarmigan with nets, but they are no longer there.
- Beginning hunters waste a lot of meat. Wolves and bear populations grow from the carcasses left behind by sport hunters.
- Sports hunters who shoot the first caribou to come through, they are shooting the caribou scouts upon which the herd depends for finding the right places to go.
- It used to be that we would see walrus without tusks and seal with just their faces taken.
- The shurra, stinkweed used to be green and now they are yellow- Seward, Ninilchik, Hatcher Pass.
- During the summer of 1997, there was an explosion of wasps and hornets.
- Sports hunters are shooting elder bears, and the young ones left are just like juvenile delinquents. It is important that ADF&G realize this problem.
- Transplanted wolves to Kenai that didn't have lice, but then they got lice from local wolves and they all died
- Living in the Anchorage area means that we each look for our own special places – but these places are on other people's lands and this is a problem.
- People who don't know, go out and destroy areas (e.g. breaking branches, ripping roots)
- The drive for resources has meant people have been exploiting the environment and we all have to live with the results, including buried waste of many kinds – including nuclear wastes.
- We don't trust agencies charged with the responsibility for investigating problems. Agency people don't take the time to involve people from the start. Agency people who do know local circumstances are transferred, or leave and you have to start over.

Ideas for Action

- We can use hydrogen – energy cell technology in our villages to produce heat, electricity, and to grow food and to make pure water.
- We should use hydrogen fuel jet engines to clean the atmosphere.
- We need to tell communities about why traditional foods are healthy to prevent heart disease, cancer, and diabetes and they feed our spirits.
- We are a visual people. You could take this video and share it everywhere. People would look more to how we can communicate with each other. You can put this on the website to start the discussions.
- Don't try to do the work all by yourself; pray often and long for aid and assistance for the future.
- We should pass the spiritual way of life to our children.
- We need to take time to balance things and sometimes this means mixing them up. With computers and technology, we move too fast to do this.

In Their Own Words: Native Concerns and Observations about Environmental Changes

I saw some dead fish in Fish Lake. You know when you see a dead fish in a river you know something is wrong. Like I was saying the people have been mining that area since I can remember. What have they been putting into those lakes? It makes you wonder. The reason a person wants answers to these kinds of questions is because you are concerned about your land and the next generation.

Alex Nick, Bethel

I would like to say this about the ocean area. Since I was raised around Browerville area—our ocean is just a short distance away. Now the beach area is very close—the ocean is only 100 to 75 yards from the land. When we were young it was farther. Maybe it is this thing called global warming or maybe not? Our ice is really melting and filling our area with water. Our weather has changed and is very definitely getting

warmer. The summertime has started coming early. Different animals have started coming in. Fish we haven't seen are now being seen in our area that live in other areas. When I was growing uu, I have known and seen what has changed from my uncle and my aunties and other relatives. I remember what I have learned.

Charlie Okakok, Barrow

The most important potential adverse environmental impact which can be controlled is to stop the oil industry from building ice bridges across our major rivers. Mass flooding of the Kuugpik River is in effect due to the experimental under river drilling. I have observed the building of the ice bridges and participated in the workforce during the development of the Alpine oil fields.

Joseph Akpik, Barrow

In the harbor, we don't get much ice really (Cordova). But the harbor very seldom freezes over. It's nobody's fault except the educated idiots that built the harbor. Now the water gets caught by the breakwater and freezes. Before there was another breakwater where the road is which wasn't closed in, so the tidewater flowed through and it never froze. The only reason it freezes at all is that the fresh water has no way out with the tide anymore, so it just sits there.

Gilbert Olsen, Cordova

The sewage from Anchorage is flushed into the Inlet. They treat it with chlorine and pump it into the Inlet. They say it is clean. We need to look at what has happened and stop it in the future. They still aren't getting to the problems with pollutants.

Gary Harrison, Chickaloon

I used to hunt year round and I've noticed more and more caribou are sick. We don't know why there are illnesses. There have been a lot of changes in our health occurring on the Slope recently. I feel something has to be done about it. Cancer, rheumatoid arthritis, migraine headaches and asthma are among a few disorders throughout our elders as well as the young people – probably due to the environmental impacts of oil drilling.

Frederick Stalker, Barrow

My Uncle Willy used to predict the summer. First day of spring, he'd say, "Well it looks like we're going to have a pretty rainy weather this year." He's the one who taught me how to navigate. His navigation said don't go toward the swells, go toward the shine. He was right. He used to predict the weather and now what I think he's saying is something's wrong with the ozone and the line-up because our elders are confused now. If Uncle Willy were still alive, I suspect he'd say the same thing your people are saying. We go back to El Nino. We're not scientists but we know that our people used to be able to predict these things and can't now.

Lydia Robart, Port Graham

I've noticed in the beach grass that there are different lengths. All are different and so when you go to pick you are not able to pick like before. Instead you have to pick just the longs ones you find. The plants and berries have just changed. You don't go just anywhere to find them. Now you've got to go to coastal areas. This is where the change in the berries is and the preservation of the plants are changing. There is a mining camp in the mountain, but it seems like that if that was the cause it would just affect the one area. These grasses are all over the coastal area. We started noticing this in the mid-70s.

Molly Chythlook, Dillingham

In Arctic Village, the local village wanted to observe caribou around the oilrigs. They did not announce themselves. They saw caribou dropping calves and the birth sacs were red and they could tell that the calves would not live long. It is normal for the birth sac to be white. So if this is how oil development impacts the herd, we must take care of the herds. They want the oil, and they don't care about the people.

Walter Austin, Anchorage

The weather in the ocean has tremendously warmed up. So much so that the fishermen have to check their nets out more frequently so the fish won't spoil due to the temperature of the water.

Susie Akootchook, Nuiqsut

The Big Su River up by the power line used to be a half a mile long and 50 to 45 feet deep. Last year I went to check it out and now it is only 3 feet deep. That was where the kings and grayling used to be. I think they should close down the commercial fishing or else there is not going to be any more fish.

Percy Blatchford, Anchorage

Our village dumps don't help much. They are located along rivers, sloughs, and on swampy areas. Many of them are not contained and the germs grow there and unknown chemicals from our trash seep out in spring by the trickling of melting water into our sloughs and rivers that affect our health and the health of the animals, birds, and fish and their habitat we depend on for food.

Chuck Hunt, Bethel

There is a problem with the beaver. They are in the small creeks and are destroying the habitat. The beaver are polluting the habitat. They are causing many problems

Paul John, Toksook Bay

Twenty years ago, I was whaling with my dad and Uncle Henry and some of these other folks here (i.e., regional participants). Some doctor came and I asked this guy, "What are you doing?" "I am a research scientist," he said. In his study so far the bowhead whale was the most bacteria free animal in the world. It gave me a great sense of confidence that we were doing the most pure thing we could do. Whenever God put Inupiat here, he didn't intend huge mercury contents and contaminants in whales

Arnold Brower, Barrow

We have teachers - all kinds of elders - who know about their environment. We used to do summer camps for Johnson O'Malley Schools and Trailside. What I don't like is that they hire people from outside who don't know about Alaska and the environment. We have lots of teenagers here who need jobs. They teach the outsiders for two weeks about how to do these things. Then they are the ones who teach Alaska kids about their environment. I'd like to know why they don't hire people who know about the environment.

Rita Blumenstein, Anchorage

The changes in our environment are caused by the development of more buildings, and other environmentally related projects villages are undergoing at this time. They bring various sorts of chemicals, substances and equipment, which can pollute the air, land and water. More waste, regardless of what it may be, is being introduced into our environment permissible or not. These contaminants are not only coming from the western culture, they are also what we make it to be. By our carelessness in taking proper care of our trash and other debris we make the environment more difficult to remediate on the terms of health and welfare of our people.

Jeffrey Pavilla, Tuntutuliak

A lot of people study our area as scientists, industrial developers, oil companies as well as environmentalists. They come and go quickly and this has not changed for many years. There is drilling debris so vast in our environment – it is devastating. Our Inupiaq elders are very concerned about these issues and they are involving their own time and effort even before the oil companies began developing in the Arctic Slope and knowing what the outcome would be way before western civilization began.

May Maasak Akpik, Barrow

There are some elders that don't understand about contaminants and still it is in the back of your mind that this is a problem. I was always curious about the Chernobyl fallout and as far as I know they haven't done any testing on anything. Research done before the Exxon oil spill was by observation - looking at the quantity of what was there before. But there are no studies of contamination in the wild resources.

Lillian Elvsaas, Seldovia

The Inupiat people are the foremost in knowledge of the Arctic science. For example, bone marrow has to thaw from the inside out--not the outside in. One of my brother-in-laws had a frozen hand and did a good job in thawing it--snow and ice--I asked what he was doing--he explained thawing it out from the inside out. It worked so well, it saved the hand. We would like to see the preservation of our livelihood but the contaminants in our land are not being dealt with. Sometimes people perish for lack of knowledge. Knowledge is being lost – we hate for it to be lost.

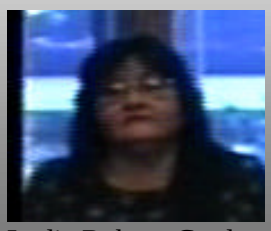
ArnoldBrower, Jr., Barrow

Too often the village residents are not educated as to what to dispose of properly in the village dumpsite. They put everything that fits into the trash bag and dump them into the dumpsite. They dump oil cans, fuel containers, paint, chemicals, and anything that is used for cleaning, empty aerosol containers, and just about anything in the village dumpsite. In the villages and near the villages, all kinds of trash are seen draining and seeping into the creeks, sloughs, lakes and rivers. We wonder what causes cancer in our communities and other diseases.

Alex Nick, Bethel

REMEMBRANCES

The Alaska Native Science Commission (ANSC) would like to honor the memories of the late Lydia Robart and Chuck Hunt, and others who may have passed on since participating in ANSC's regional meetings.



Lydia Robart, Cordova

Chuck Hunt, Bethel

What's on ANSC's Websites:

WWW.NATIVESCIENCE.ORG

- **ANSC's Origins**
- **Commissioners**
- **Goals & Concerns**
- **Arctic Contaminants**
- **Traditional Knowledge**
- **Eco-Tourism**
- **Current Projects**
- **Past Projects**
- **Code of Research Ethics**
- **Guidelines for Cultural Respect**
- **Newsletters & Related Links**

WWW.NATIVEKNOWLEDGE.ORG

- **About This Project**
- **Resource Guide for Tribes**
- **Look for Information In The Database**
- **Native Concerns Raised in Regional Meetings**
- **Research Summaries.**

AMERICAN FOLKLORE SOCIETY ANNUAL MEETING

The Alaska Native Science Commission (ANSC) received funds from the National Science Foundation's Arctic Social Science Program to support a plenary workshop entitled *Ethical Practices for Documenting Alaska Native Cultures* at the 2001 American Folklore Society (AFS) meeting in October 2001 in Anchorage, Alaska. During the workshop, Alaska Native tradition bearers and researchers will discuss their experiences working on collaborative cultural documentation projects. Panelists will address the topics of intellectual property rights, the legitimization of knowledge and the ethical roles inherent in collaborative relationships. This workshop will be held on Friday, October 19, 2001, at the Anchorage Hilton Hotel.

Workshop groups will divide up into small groups and develop recommended guidelines for researchers working with Alaska Native communities. Guidelines will address the following concerns as well as additional issues raised:

- Sharing and passing down oral and material cultural traditions in ways that are compatible with traditional practices and teachings;
- Establishing ethical standards for protecting intellectual property rights and retaining copyright authority over all local knowledge that is shared with others;
- Identifying and utilizing expertise in local communities to enhance the quality of data gathered;
- Insuring locally controlled access for sensitive cultural information that has not been explicitly authorized for general distribution.

In addition to the plenary workshop, Alaska Native tradition bearers and researchers will give presentations on the following panels at the AFS conference:

- The Aesthetic and Functional Dimensions of Arctic Clothing
- Faces of the Nunamiut: Mask Making in Anaktuvuk Pass, Alaska
- Frontiers in Folklore and K-12 Education
- Words of the Real People: Yupik and Inupiaq Narrative and Oral Tradition
- The Power of Alaskan Places
- Young Speakers of the Elder's Wisdom

For registration information, see http://www.afsnet.org/ or contact Amy Craver at the Alaska Native Science Commission, 3211 Providence Drive, Anchorage, AK, 99508, 907-786-7736. Email: anajc@uaa.alaska.edu.

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ALASKA NATIVE CONTAMINANTS WORKSHOP, JUNE 6-8, 2001

The heightened awareness and concerns over the effects of contaminants on Alaska Native health and safety of traditional foods led to a 3-day Contaminants Workshop attended by representatives of tribes and Native organizations. The gathering was held to draft the functions and organization of an Alaska Contaminants program, from the Native perspective. This draft will be one part of a collaborative effort to establish an Alaska Contaminants Program.

The conference was moderated by Ms. Deborah Vo, Executive Director of the Alaska Inter-Tribal Council, Ms. Cynthia Navarrette, Executive Director of Alaska Native Health Board, and Ms. Patricia Cochran, Executive Director of Alaska Native Science Commission. Ms. Cochran served as conference facilitator, 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
- John Middaugh, Epidemiology/DHSS
- Michael Bradley, EpiCenter, ANHB
- Patricia Cochran, ANSC

The afternoon of the first day was 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. A facilitator and presenter were identified for each breakout group.

The five categories and breakout topics were:

- Structure
- Goals
- Function
- Communication & Information
- Issues

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 discussing the program's structure and developing a draft report with recommendations of the workshop. For more information about this workshop or to receive a copy of the draft report contact the Alaska Native Health Board.

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National Science Foundation Funds ANSC Cooperative Agreement

The Alaska Native Science Commission has received funding from the National Science Foundation (NFS) for a Cooperative Agreement. Many of the goals and concerns of the ANSC parallel those of NSF. These include Arctic climate systems and stability of Arctic ecosystems, global environment change, links between environmental change and human activity, integrated assessments of effects of environmental change on Arctic peoples, and partnering with Native peoples in science planning, implementation and interpretation. The ANSC will assist NSF in bridging worldviews and enhancing understanding of Alaska Native communities and scientific researchers. Tasks include:

Board of Commissioners

During the first year of this cooperative agreement, the Board of Commissioners (BOC) will focus on building the capacity of the ANSC infrastructure by providing direction and guidance in refining ANSC's research agenda to meet the needs identified by Alaska Native communities.

Inform Alaska Native Communities and Organizations of NSF funded research and projects

One of the major goals of the ANSC is to provide information to Alaska Native communities regarding science and research that impacts their health, life, culture and environment. Future editions of the newsletter will disseminate information to communities about ongoing NSF funded research projects. It will also serve as a forum for exchanging information between researchers, and Alaska Native communities in a variety of disciplinary and cross cultural contexts such as research protocols and ethics, intellectual property rights, and the uses of local and traditional knowledge in science research.

Alaska Native Community Research Plan

Through the development of an *Alaska Native Community Research Plan*, the ANSC will provide NSF with the technical, scientific, and ethical information from communities regarding their concerns and priorities for research. The result of this Plan will be to develop research initiatives that are truly interdisciplinary, which involve partnerships between researchers and local communities and their knowledge of research.

Internship Program

The goal of the ANSC's internship program will be to produce more Alaska Native graduates in science and assist in making their college experience more rewarding not only to themselves but to the interests of their communities. This program will also increase the retention of Alaska Native students and the capacity and sustainability of communities. Each year the ANSC will place six Alaska Native students locally as well as throughout the state in rural communities, tribal governments and organizations, Native Corporations and non-profit entities.

UPCOMING MEETINGS: National Subsistence Technical Workshop

The Alaska Native Science Commission (ANSC) has received a grant from the Environmental Protection Agency to hold a national subsistence technical workshop in 2002. At present, there is a critical need for a comprehensive central body of understandable information on the safety of subsistence foods and contaminant sources. The purpose of this workshop will be to bring together Tribal representatives with experience in subsistence management projects, technical experts and administrators from across the United States and the Arctic to exchange information regarding on-going and planned research initiatives dealing with the safety of subsistence foods and contaminants.

During this technical workshop, invited representatives will: (1) review research summaries with a focus on exchanging information on what has and has not worked; (2) evaluate what is known about testing and existing sources of contaminant testing; (3) determine appropriate methods for tribal outreach and evaluation; and (4) identify the gaps in information.

The funding of this workshop is a result of EPA responding to tribes across the United States voicing their concerns over the safety and protection of their subsistence resources. These concerns are far ranging and do not offer easy solutions. Some Tribal members speak of fear of contamination from harvesting, weaving materials sprayed with pesticides while others cite significant habitat losses of their weaving and medicinal plants. Throughout the Pacific Northwest, the impacts from heavy destruction of salmon habitats and contaminated salmon resources dominate many tribal cultures. Native American Tribes in the northeast, south and southeast United States continue to struggle against longstanding impacts of industrial contamination in their traditional food sources.

Most agency-driven environmental programs are designed to protect and manage water, air and soils or to cleanup and control contaminants and wastes. Consequently, there is a critical gap in the environmental protection of Tribal subsistence resources. Despite this, during the last decade there have been significant Tribal projects throughout the United States and Canada that effectively solved one or more aspects of the subsistence resource protection issue.

This National Subsistence Technical Workshop will assist Tribes nationwide in focusing on critical subsistence issues.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

ARCTIC COUNCIL
PLACE IVALO, FINLAND
DATE OCTOBER 7-10, 2001

ALASKA INTER-TRIBAL COUNCIL ANNUAL CONVENTION
PLACE ANCHORAGE, ALASKA, USA
DATE OCTOBER 10-11, 2001

AMERICAN FOLKLORE SOCIETY CONFERENCE
PLACE ANCHORAGE, ALASKA, USA
DATE OCTOBER 17-21, 2001

AMERICAN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MTG.
PLACE ATLANTA, GEORGIA, USA
DATE OCTOBER 22-25, 2001

ALASKA FEDERATION OF NATIVES CONVENTION
PLACE EGAN CENTER, ANCHORAGE, ALASKA, USA
DATE OCTOBER 22-27, 2001

ALASKA TRIBAL CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENTAL MGMT.
PLACE ANCHORAGE, ALASKA, USA
DATE OCTOBER 29-31, 2001

ARCTIC COUNCIL
PLACE ESPOO, FINLAND
DATE NOVEMBER 6-7, 2001

NAT'L CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS ANNUAL CONVENTION
PLACE SPOKANE, WASHINGTON, USA
DATE NOVEMBER 25-30, 2001

BIA RURAL SERVICE PROVIDERS CONFERENCE
PLACE ANCHORAGE, ALASKA, USA
DATE NOVEMBER 26-29, 2001

ALASKA NATIVE EDUCATION SUMMIT
PLACE ANCHORAGE, ALASKA, USA
DATE NOVEMBER 30 – DECEMBER 1, 2001

ALASKA HEALTH SUMMIT
PLACE ANCHORAGE, ALASKA, USA (SHERATON HOTEL)
DATE DECEMBER 4-5, 2001

ANSC BOARD MEETING
PLACE ANCHORAGE, ALASKA, USA
DATE DECEMBER 10-15, 2001

ALASKA FORUM **ON** THE EVIRONMENT
PLACE ANCHORAGE, ALASKA, USA
DATE FEBRUARY 5– 9, 2002

INUIT STUDIES CONFERENCE
PLACE ANCHORAGE, ALASKA, USA (UAA)
DATE AUGUST 1 – 2, 2002

ALASKA HEALTH SUMMIT
PLACE ANCHORAGE, ALASKA, USA (SHERATON HOTEL)
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DATE FEBRUARY 5– 9, 2002

STATEWIDE NATIVE YOUTH OLYMPICS
PLACE ANCHORAGE, ALASKA, USA (UAA)
DATE APRIL 22 - 24, 2002

SPIRIT DAYS ANNUAL CELEBRATION
PLACE ANCHORAGE, ALASKA, USA (KINCAID PARK)
DATE JUNE 1 – 2, 2002

WORLD ESKIMO-INDIAN OLYMPICS
PLACE FAIRBANKS, ALASKA, USA (BIG DIPPER ICE ARENA)
DATE JULY 17 – 20, 2002

INUIT STUDIES CONFERENCE
PLACE ANCHORAGE, ALASKA, USA (UAA)
DATE AUGUST 1 – 2, 2002

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