“Arctic in the distant future...gaining Alaskan Native insights to challenges anticipated across Maritime and Coastal Regions”

A partnered workshop
26-27 March 2018
University of Alaska Fairbanks, Northwest Campus
Nome, Alaska

Introduction

The Arctic is strategically vital to U.S. National Interests. The region is rich in resources, geographically essential, yet remains austere and remote. The Arctic is the homeland to Inuit peoples (Inupiaq, Yup’ik and St. Lawrence Island Yupik) and poses both a beauty and difficult life for many U.S. Arctic residents. Preserving and protecting U.S. national interests, to include securing borders and ensuring safety and security in adjoining Arctic waterways, remains an important task, but also a resource challenge for U.S. federal agencies.

The U.S. Arctic region is facing an unprecedented amount of change in terms of environment, weather and human activity. As reported through many U.S. research and data tracking sources over the past several years, the Arctic Ocean icepack has broken records in seasonal retreat, while recorded Arctic temperatures are rising far faster than temperatures at lower latitudes.

Reduced Arctic Ocean sea ice has been accompanied by seasonal increases in storm severity, with significantly stronger winds and coastal storm surges battering Arctic shores across the Bering, Chukchi and Beaufort Sea regions.

Arctic warming is reducing the amount of shore-fast ice that has historically served as a protective barrier from the sea for native villages and critical infrastructure along the coastal Arctic. As the Arctic warms, coastal regions frozen for centuries are now thawing. This recent “unfrozen” terrain is proving vulnerable to erosion, which is of particular impact in coastal Arctic Alaska and the people who live across this fragile region.

Enabled by a changing environment, human activity across the Arctic is increasingly dynamic. Arctic warming (resulting in opening waterways and reduced sea ice) across the Arctic marine and coastal regions is creating conditions for increased human activity, in particular, adventure tourism, marine shipping and resource extraction. While recent depression in global crude oil
prices has temporarily dampened arctic oil exploration in the Chukchi and Beaufort Seas, recent changes in U.S. government policies and increasing crude oil prices raise anticipation that oil and gas exploration activities will increase across the U.S. Arctic.

Much of the U.S. Arctic remains economically disadvantaged. Transportation networks across the U.S. Arctic are principally limited to air and seasonal marine conveyance. Economic development is limited due to remoteness, lack of infrastructure, cost and difficulty of establishing new roads, ports and facilities, plus a range of complementary factors.

An increasingly dynamic Arctic is affecting populations whose ancestors have inhabited the region for generations. Subsistence lifestyles proudly continue, but are threatened by increased global activity (such as marine shipping and resource extraction), which affect marine mammal activities and populations. Correspondingly, while Arctic residents strive to retain culture and traditional ways of life, ancient traditions and cultural fabric of Arctic lifestyles while engaging with global activities to be done “right” with appropriate mitigation and environmental measures.

The changing physical environmental factors, including reduced ice and thawing permafrost, diminished shore-fast ice, increased storm frequency and severity coupled with increased human activity...equates to increased demands of urgent and emergency response to U.S. Coast Guard and other U.S. Department of Homeland Security maritime missions.

Looking to future decades, U.S federal decision makers are likely to face tough strategy, policy and resource choices. It is a reasonable and fair assumption that as the physical environment of the Arctic warms (further increasing access and enabling higher levels of human activity) the already strategic importance of the Arctic will further increase.

As a principal response community for the U.S. Arctic, the U.S. Coast Guard missions across the North American Arctic region are complex, operationally risky, and logistically straining. Yet, despite the challenges, the U.S. Coast Guard maintains a strong commitment and dedicated capability to respond to marine safety and security challenges across the region. As human activity increases in the U.S. Arctic, other U.S. Department of Homeland Security components (such as Customs and Border Protection and Immigration and Customs Enforcement) will likely need to increase their ability to respond to the region and partner with Arctic organizations and communities.

The U.S. National Strategy for the Arctic (released in May 2013) remains (for the time present) the specified U.S. Arctic Strategy on record. The New U.S. National Security (released in December 2017) emphasizes security of U.S. borders, close collaboration with Canada and countering defense and security challenges by “Peace through Strength” measures. The U.S Department of Homeland Security Arctic Strategy is drafted and awaiting approval. The U.S. Coast Guard Arctic Strategy (released in May 2013), and associated implementation plans (released in 2015 and 2017), established priorities and implementing tasks for Coast Guard capability investment.
National strategies for the U.S. federal agencies drive policy and resource decisions. As strategies continue to evolve in the current Presidential administration, knowledge-products which capture insights and perspectives (such as Arctic local and place-based knowledge), provide a unique opportunity to inform planners and policy makers alike as they revise and develop new federal strategies and policies for the U.S national actions in the Arctic.

The Arctic Domain Awareness Center (ADAC), a U.S. Department of Homeland Security Office of University Program Center of Excellence in Maritime Research hosted “Arctic 2030, Understanding the Needs of the North” workshop at the University of Alaska Fairbanks in May 2017. Headquarters U.S. Coast Guard Office of Emerging Policy “Evergreen” sponsored this “Arctic Futures” workshop, and partnered with RAND Corporation and the U.S. Coast Guard Academy’s Center for Arctic Study and Policy. This workshop published a number of key insights, identified shortfalls and capability gaps, plus potential areas of further investigation to help better characterize future Arctic challenges and opportunities. While the workshop was fortunate to have participation from Alaskan Arctic Native communities, ADAC and Headquarters U.S. Coast Guard planners concluded a follow-on workshop specifically oriented to elicit Alaskan Arctic expertise and knowledge would be of significant value and merit.

Accordingly, ADAC, Headquarters U.S. Coast Guard “Evergreen” and U.S. Coast Guard Arctic Policy Planners are working with an array of collaborators to create a new workshop, specifically oriented to “listen and learn” from Alaskan Arctic experts in local and place-based knowledge that will enhance understanding of the region. The workshop planners are seeking to learn from a community of people who have a “PhD in Arctic living” in trying to understand the challenges, expected changes, and opportunities that may present in the Arctic in the coming decades and can be integrated into federal plans. This workshop is intended to inform planning, strategy and policy decisions for the distant future.

The current workshop planning team: ADAC is very appreciative of the efforts of the City of Nome, the University of Alaska Northwest Campus, Kawerak, Inc. and Sitnasuak Native Corporation in their gracious efforts to help form the planning team in creating this workshop. Accordingly, the following is an initial draft plan and agenda for an Arctic Futures workshop. Workshop planning is now a collaborative effort in partnership between:

- Headquarters U.S. Coast Guard Arctic Advisor to the Commandant;
- Headquarters U.S. Coast Guard Office of Emerging Policy—“Evergreen”
- U.S. Coast Guard District 17 Arctic Planners;
- U.S. Coast Guard Academy Center of Arctic Study and Policy (CASP);
- Sitnasuak Native Corporation;
- Kawerak Incorporated;
- City of Nome;
- The University of Alaska Fairbanks Northwest Campus;
- The Arctic Domain Awareness Center, (ADAC);
- Center for Resilient Communities;
Workshop venue. The workshop “Arctic in the distant future...gaining Alaskan Native Insights to challenges across Maritime and Coastal Regions” is planned as a complementary effort to precede the 2018 Western Alaska Interdisciplinary Science Conference, (WAISC). The WAISC venue is at the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) Northwest Campus from 28-30 March 2018. WAISC is an annual meeting focused on regional science issues and creates a suitable forum and framework to draw superb participants to join the Arctic Futures Workshop. UAF Northwest Campus WAISC planners will seek to integrate the Arctic Futures Workshop into the overall conference and provide workshop facilities.

Workshop method. Overall, the spirit and intent of the workshop facilitators are guided discussions that focus on “listening and learning” from Elders and other Arctic Alaskans, principally via a roundtable format. Initial workshop introductions are provided by the planning committee. Following introductions, an “Arctic Elders” panel will help orient participants and is anticipated to energize roundtable discussions.

Workshop preparations. ADAC has developed a series of questions to facilitate structured discussions of Arctic “futures and scenarios.” ADAC has also developed a workshop Literature Review. Strategic questions are oriented to a perspective of “what is needed, what is desired, what is feasible/suitable and acceptable” applied to different characteristics of a future Arctic.
As a complementary aspect to the Workshop Method, Sitnasuak Native Corporation and Kawerak Incorporated, are providing cultural exploration, including aspects of “dance, song and food” of Arctic Alaska. This includes opening the workshop with a ceremonial seal-lamp lighting, prayers and blessings for the workshop, an evening dance following the first day’s activities, and other considerations.

**Workshop objective.** Workshop planners seek insights from Arctic Alaska Local & Place-Based Knowledge as regards to long-term/future perspectives in order to create a report of future concerns, opportunities, recommendations and inquiries to address anticipated challenges to the future Arctic in coming decades. Notes taken during the meeting will be formed into a summary report, allowing coordination across the community of planners. Once finalized, the report will be provided to U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Headquarters U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Coast Guard District 17. The report will also be shared with ADAC’s and CASP’s Arctic Research Community of Interest. A tailored journal article and/or other deliverables may also be suitable follow-on considerations.

**Workshop logistics.** Overall, workshop planners anticipate a workshop sized at approximately 50-70 people. University of Alaska Fairbanks Northwest Campus (UAF/NWC) is hosting the workshop (consistent with the overall WAISC event). If workshop participants exceed the UAF/NWC facility capabilities, City of Nome has graciously offered to provide alternate/larger facilities. The workshop agenda is detailed on the following page. Finances for the workshop are very lean, with planners and coordinators seeking to utilize their own funding in order to participate. University of Alaska has established limited funds for WAISC, but may be able to support a small number of travel needs of desired workshop participants from the Arctic Alaska Native community.

- **Workshop Invitations:** Planning team has pushed invitations to a wide array of desirable participants.
- **Visitor Information:** The Nome Visitor Center is a great resource – online at [http://www.visitnomealaska.com/](http://www.visitnomealaska.com/)
- **Workshop supporting materials:** ADAC has developed a Literature Review and is developing workshop discussion questions in order to facilitate structured discussions in breakout groups.
- **Workshop Timeline:** The below is the initial planned timeline.
- **Workshop registration:** Please email RSVP to: adac@uaa.alaska.edu
- **Finances:** Participation is self-funded (or funded via the participant’s parent organization).
- **Attire:** Workshop planners recommend “Alaska Casual” clothing for the workshop. Comfortable and layered attire, sturdy and weather resistant footwear, suitable for participants to transition from the workshop, to the outdoors in rural Alaska.

**Agenda:**

26 March 2018:
1200: Lunch/hotel check-in.
1230: Registration/workshop check-in.
1300: Welcome by co-workshop conductors:
   - Arctic Domain Awareness Center (ADAC), Executive Director, Maj Gen (Ret) Church Kee;
   - Sitnasuak Native Corporation Vice President, Ukallaysaaq Okleasik.
1305: Opening ceremony at UAF/NW. This includes:
   - Lighting of Seal Oil Lamp;
   - Opening Prayer: Pastor Charlie Brower;
   - Nome Beltz High School Choir: National Anthem and Alaska State Flag Song.
1320: Introductions and opening remarks:
   - Arctic Domain Awareness Center: Principal Investigator, Dr. Causey, Research Director, Dr. Hinzman;
   - City of Nome, Mayor Beneville;
   - University of Alaska Northwest Campus Director Mr. Metcalf;
   - Sitnasuak Native Corporation President & CEO Ms. Quintavell;
   - Kawerak Incorporated, VP of Community Service Division Ms. Piscoya.
1340: U.S. Coast Guard reflections on the challenges of the distant future Arctic maritime region,
   - CAPT Charlie Cashin, CDR Eric Popiel and Mr. Shannon Jenkins.
1355: Break.
1410: Elders Panel.
   - “Reflections on the Challenges of the Future Arctic, based on recollections of the past.”
1540: Workshop orientation (Led by Church Kee, Malla Kukkonen and Paula Williams).
   - Goal: Establish Local and Place-Based Knowledge (LPBK) perspectives of the likely range of Arctic “Futures.”
   - Review overarching question: “What maritime and coastal challenges to safe, secure, and sustainable Arctic Alaskan communities will be faced in the next 15-20 years?”
   - Introduction of breakout groups, break out group facilitators, and recorders.
   - Respectful interaction instructions.
1555: Assemble in break out groups (Note, each group has at least one facilitator and one recorder).
   - Introductions, name-tags, ice breaker.
   - Review first tasks and conduct initial brainstorming of best and worst futures and perspectives on past, present and future from local and place-based knowledge perspective.
1645: Close initial brain storming session.
- Brief report out from each table on best and worst future, compile averages for perspectives on past, present and future.

1720: Leave for Richard Foster Building.
1730: Reception & Cultural event Richard Foster Building, Nome.
- St. Lawrence Island Dance Group (sponsored by Sitnasuak Native Corporation and the City of Nome/Port of Nome).
1830: Dinner/evening at leisure.

**27 March 2018**

0830: Light Breakfast.
0900: Arctic Futures Workshop Day Two begins (UAF – NWC).
- Refresh/recap Day 1 and overview agenda and planned outcomes for Day 2.
0930: Welcome Day 2 by Kawerak Incorporated Headstart Children and Staff.
0950: Re-assemble in breakout groups.
- What are the maritime and coastal issues and decisions ...which need to be addressed in the next 15-20 years in order to establish safe, secure, and sustainable Arctic Alaskan communities?
- **Goal:** Produce issues and decisions of most relevance to discerning a future Arctic from a *local and place-based perspective*.
- Review breakout discussions in plenary.
1045: Break.
1100: Re-assemble in breakout groups.
- Describe what “uncertainties” are for the breakout groups.
- What are the maritime and coastal uncertainties...which need to be addressed in the next 15-20 years in order to establish safe, secure, and sustainable Arctic Alaskan communities?
- **Goal:** Produce uncertainties of most relevance to discerning a future Arctic from a local and place-based perspective.
- Review breakout discussions in plenary.
1200: Lunch. **NOTE:** Workshop Facilitation Team assembles one Arctic Future and Scenario based on assessing breakout group developed Issues, decisions and uncertainties as an example.
1330: Re-assemble in breakout groups.
- Describe the scenario/potential future assembled by facilitation team over lunch as an example of what we would like them to do;
- Describe the levels of change in issues/decisions and uncertainties prioritized by workshop participants in the morning and assign one to each table. Assign each table to tell a story with their respective levels of change.
- **Goal:** Develop Futures and Scenarios within groups using the decisions/issues and uncertainties the group has prioritized.
1445: Break.
1500: Return to plenary. Each breakout group:
• Discusses what will likely occur *given the levels of change* in each of the listed uncertainties. Each group develops a story/future for those levels of change;
• Table spokesperson tells story, highlighting specific local and place-based insights;
• Other tables comment, add insights, discuss the likelihood of this future.

1615: Feedback survey. What works, did not work, and suggestions for improvement (either content of process).
1630: Final remarks and thanks.
• Headquarters U.S. Coast Guard, Arctic Advisor to the Commandant;
• Headquarters U.S. Coast Guard, Office of Emerging Policy;
• City of Nome;
• Sitnasuak Native Corporation;
• Kawerak Incorporated;
• ADAC.
1645: Conclusion, dinner/evening at leisure.

**28 March 2018**

Start of WAISC, UAF/NWC.

**Hotel Accommodations:**

- Trip advisor information: [https://www.tripadvisor.com/SmartDeals-g60732-Nome_Alaska-Hotel-Deals.html](https://www.tripadvisor.com/SmartDeals-g60732-Nome_Alaska-Hotel-Deals.html)
- The below is a list of hotels pulled from on-line search.

  - Aurora Inn and Executive Suite, 302 Front St, (907) 443-3838;
  - Nome Nugget Inn, 430 Front St, (907) 443-2323;
  - Dredge Number 7 Inn, Teller Hwy, (907) 304-1270;
  - Krier Incorporated, Hotel, 205 Front St, (907) 443-2661;
  - Trails End, Hotel & Motel, 49 E 1st Ave, (907) 443-3600;

- **Workshop Meals and beverages:** Beverages and light snacks are planned to be available at the workshop venue. A light breakfast will be made available on the morning of 27 March.

- **Weather:** Late March is still winter season, with highs averaging in the low 20’s degrees F and lows averaging between 5 and 10 degrees F. Anticipate chance of light to heavy snow. Sunrise is approx. 8:30 AM and Sunset is approx. 9:40 PM.

- **Transportation:**
- **Air:** Direct flights via daily service to and from Nome Airport on Alaska Airlines. Flights to Anchorage from Washington DC normally connect via Minneapolis, Seattle or Portland, OR.
  
  **Note:** City of Nome is planning to provide transportation from the airport to hotels on 26 March and from hotels to the airport on 28 March.

- **Ground:** Principally Taxi. There are two taxi companies in Nome: Checker Cab 443-5211 and Mr. Kab 443-6000.

**Conclusion**

The “Arctic in the distant future…gaining Alaskan Native Insights to challenges across Maritime and Coastal Regions” workshop represents an opportunity for U.S. Coast Guard, ADAC and other participants to strategically learn from Alaskan Arctic Natives in context of a future Arctic. Following the workshop, ADAC will prepare and coordinate the release of the workshop report, seeking to accomplish follow-through items as discussed in the plan. ADAC and the workshop planning committee look forward to seeing you in Nome!