

Alaska Regional Director Staff
Meeting Minutes
June 22, 2017

Aimee Devaris
Mark Shasby
Dawn Bundschuh
Tom Murray
Chris Zimmerman
Dee Williams
Durelle Smith
Matt Sexson

Aimee Devaris – Regional Director (RD)

– Director’s Staff Meeting, Updates, and “Good of the Order” Announcements:

- At Tuesday’s Director’s staff meeting, Bill Werkheiser, Acting USGS Director, provided a few more details from the email that was sent out on Friday on the [SES reassignments](#).
 - Barbara Wainman has been reassigned to the Fish and Wildlife Service to lead their Office of External Affairs. The current Assistant Director for External Affairs, Betsy Hildebrandt will replace Barbara as the Associate Director for Communications and Publishing on July 10. Barbara's last day at the USGS will be July 8.
 - Jose Aragon has accepted his reassignment to the Department in the Policy, Management, and Budget Office.
 - Virginia Burkett has been reassigned to work in the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Water and Science. She has declined and will leave the SES to rejoin science. Virginia will become the Chief Scientist in the Climate and Land Use Change Mission Area.
 - The Department has decided not to interfere with these moves.
 - Secretary Zinke cancelled his visit to Reston.
- Grant update: Bill Werkheiser said they have heard back from the Department. All requests have been approved except the one for the Climate Science Centers (CSC). Jim Cason (Acting Deputy Secretary) has asked we re-submit those.
 - All cooperative agreements up \$100K threshold have been released; except CSCs. Virginia Burkette updated that Scott Cameron, W&S, wants three year funding agreements modified to provide funding through first quarter of FY 2018.
 - Steve Gray solicited a letter from Larry Hintzman to Steve Wackowski that was sent forward and returned back to Aimee via Dave Applegate, USGS Acting Deputy Director, who received the letter through the Department.
 - This letter helped motivate discussion and a meeting is scheduled between Jim Cason and Bill Werkheiser over the CSC’s next Tuesday, June 27.
- Craig Robinson and Kevin Gallagher are executive sponsors of a working group to create practical guidelines for tribal consultations. Kari Craun (Director of the National Geospatial Technical Operations Center) and Monique Fordham (National Tribal Liaison in OSQI) are co-chairing that working group. The kick-off meeting was Tuesday, June 20, 2017, and the goal is to have guidelines to distribute in about 4 months.
 - Aimee requested Kevin loop Dee into the conversation to see how Alaska can contribute.
 - Dee commented that most of the department training is presented in Oklahoma and not focused on Alaska challenges.
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- Cindy Lodge reported the USGS received 2019 budget guidance from the Department. The preliminary guidance that was passed along is aligned with it, so there aren't any updates that need to be made.
 - Guidance is (b) (5)
 - Office of Management & Budget (OMB) said there had to be a (b) (5) while the Department said (b) (5) and now it is at (b) (5)
 - (b) (5)
- The Department received 200 questions from Secretary Ryan Zinke's House Appropriations hearing, of which 15 of those were for the USGS. Secretary Zinke is testifying to the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee Tuesday, June 20, 2017, the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Wednesday, June 21, 2017, and the House Natural Resources Committee today, Thursday, June 22, 2017.
 - There are a number of articles released on what Secretary Zinke said at these hearings.
- The Budget Office and the ADs are working on 101 briefings with our new Office of Management and Budget (OMB) examiner this week.
- Monday, June 19, Aimee reported that she and Tom Murray met with Jason Moses, Director of the Mission Integration Directorate at the National Reconnaissance Office. He was interested to know how the Alaska region uses remote sensing data, both commercial and classified, for volcano monitoring. Aimee said it was a good discussion.
- Murray Hitzman and Bill Werkheiser met with Scott Cameron on Monday, June 19, 2017, on the response to the assessments under [Secretarial Order 3352](#) (National Petroleum Reserve – Alaska) to talk with him to specifically on how to get those assessments funded.
 - There are a number of alternatives that would involve more time and a significant investment.
 - Aimee expects to see a final version the end of June or beginning of July from Vincent DeVito, Counselor for Energy Policy.
 - Once that version is received Aimee wants to pull together a meeting with Jim Kendall of Bureau of Ocean Energy Management; Greg Siekaniec, Fish and Wildlife Service; Bud Cribley of Bureau of Land Management, Steve Wackowski, from the Office of the Secretary; Murray Hitzman, Associate Director for Energy and Minerals; and Dave Houseknecht from the Midwest Region.
 - Aimee will share the BOEM submission from Jim Kendall with Dee; she has not seen the BLM submission.
- Aimee will attend the ACCER meeting Thursday, June 29, 2017. Larry Hartig sent out the agenda and the State will host this meeting. The attendees expect to see the Lt. Governor to address the state administrations priorities around climate science.
- Mark forwarded articles on Secretary Zinke one was asking congress for more tools to make it easier to fire staff and another on the 100 year vision.

Dee Williams

- Traveling to Fairbanks, June 27-29, 2017 to attend the Study of Environmental Arctic Change (SEARCH) Meetings; Dee will be in the office on Friday, June 30.
- Announcement at the previous All Hands meeting on fall opportunities for Native Relations training. Dee has been in discussion with Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) on expanding their training for all of DOI. Looks like it will happen in November 2017.
 - Dee is looking to negotiate having the course modified to two days that may be a more optimal training.
 - Intended to be Alaska specific and to be more available.
 - Dee requests feedback on interest to attend.

- Invitation to join a teleconference on Interdisciplinary Research (IDR) on Friday, June 30 at 9:00 a.m. Alaska time. Jane Reid, Pacific Region Deputy Director, came up with an idea for a new science opportunity to put before the RD's for consideration. Jane arranged for Rudy Schuster of the Economic and Behavior Program, along with Nina Burkardt, for a one-hour teleconference brief on coordinating natural science with social science to go beyond traditional approaches for resource management. This is an opportunity to gauge if Western Regions want to make this a more inclusive training event. Dee will report back on the cogent points.
- Dee completed the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) conversations and Chris Zimmerman transmitted the requested two-years of data.
- August visitation by Congressional staff tour - Dee is collaborating with John Pearce and Grant Hilderbrand on a comprehensive fact sheet on energy and wildlife research. This derived from an annual Ecosystems mission area publication trying to identify biological research relevant to energy management issues.
 - Chris commented that this is wind energy impacts on wildlife; however implies it is all of USGS rather than only Ecosystems centric.
 - Chris contacted the Water Mission area for more input.
 - Chris has entered a request for approval into IPDS for Alaska energy related wildlife information.
 - Dee will start with a four-page brochure for this event to feed into the next print of energy and wildlife.

Tom Murray

- Two people to be on-boarded with the DCA staff. One transferring from Hawaii and the other is a computer specialist that arrived just before the hiring freeze.
 - Durelle commented there will be a group on boarding early July.
 - Yvette Gillies is the DCA staff member for July, Aimee is on the list for January.
- By July 1, two more waivers to go forward; these are for the Merit Promotions board for GS 12 staff moving to GS 13. These opportunities will need to be advertised internally as well as in Denver and Reston.
 - Brief internal discussion on term and time limited hires.
 - At this point it is difficult to see the pattern for these requests.
- Received mock allocation for FY 2017 for the Volcano Hazards Program that Tom will share.
 - The mock was within what Tom expected
- Tom has been asked to provide bullets for a National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) briefing for Steve Wackowski; Tom will share the speaking points with Aimee.
- DTS update requested for the status of the International Association of Volcanology and Chemistry of the Earth's Interior Conference package
 - Dawn reported this Conference request for over \$100K stalled for about a week before being signed by Water and Science today; it has now moved to the Finance office.
- Back-up Generator cost update
 - Tom reported the new quote was at ~\$410K, which is split between two Centers.
 - Working capital funds are not quite at the right amount.
 - Tom's initial reaction was to put this expense off another year due to funding.
 - If Alaska Volcano Observation (AVO) experiences technical difficulty the back-up comes from the Advanced Systems Center in Reston.

Matt Sexson

- Attended the Dispersant Avoidance Area Technical Committee meeting today; this committee reviews areas under the statewide response plan to identify the areas where incident responders cannot use dispersant due to marine impacts. Matt has developed an avoidance area map that will be reviewed by senior leadership before it is sent to the Coast Guard.

- Security Upgrades – Matt, Geoff Brady, ASC Admin, and Durelle Smith met for more discussion. Federal Protective Services (FPS) has not been in contact recently.
 - Geoff is working on a Statement of Work for cameras on campus
 - Matt will continue working with FPS on key card access and cameras.
 - Durelle spoke with Susan Mosier who will work with GSA on the Statement of Work for the camera installation before the end of July. Susan will find out if we can work with GSA without Federal Protective Services (FPS). Facility Approval process follows the Reimbursable Work Authorization (RWA) process.
 - [REDACTED] (b) (7)(E), (b) (7)(F)
- DOI Disaster Response Plan update – Matt will work closely with Aimee to develop a disaster plan standing operating procedure (SOP) for Alaska that will focus on accountability. Matt will distribute a draft to senior leadership that includes a use of the USGS Emergency Alert and Response System (EARS) and phone trees.
- Bear Safety update - Several stories are being posted on the two fatal bear attacks this last week.
 - Four bears euthanized after killing a 16-year old participating in a foot race last weekend.
 - Second incident was surrounding two female scientists that were attacked near Pogo Mine.

Durelle Smith

- Wednesday, Library Advisory Board representative for the Alaska Region. On Wednesday's call, the President's budget calls for a 52% reduction and a 50% reduction in the journal prescriptions. The advisory board is the forum to gain input for prioritizing. Durelle will represent Alaska's position with the Library Board.
- Next Diversity Change Agent (DCA) all staff event will be Thursday, July 13, 2017. This is during a week that Jeff Conaway will host a Hydrological data training meeting event in the LHB conference room; this would be a way to involve Fairbanks and Juneau staff members. The meeting is scheduled to have a 45-minute break on Thursday and that is the target date/time for an Ice Cream Social as National Ice Cream day.
- DCA will be giving out a Peer Award at that event. A google form is being created by Dawn to assist the process for nominating staff; the plan is to roll out this form at the ice cream event.
- Yvette Gillies is the July DCA for the employee on-boarding; Durelle plans to see if there is another volunteer to assist with the on-boarding process.
- Role Based Security Training (RBST) IT security training update. This is an in-depth training for staff that have a PR account or specific IT security level duties. Durelle is looking into how the lists are developed and how to remove staff that do not belong on this list. Durelle contacted Robert Davies, IT Liaison for Alaska, regarding Mark Shasby and prevention of access deactivation. Aimee suggested contacting Tim Quinn, Chief Information Officer for USGS.

Chris Zimmerman

- Paul Laustsen called Chris with questions from a reporter relating to the *10-02 report*. Paul wanted to know when is it going to happen and who should they speak with? Chris suggested to pass this request on to Energy & Minerals and that seemed to work well.
- Dianna Jarvis, Center Management Officer for the South Carolina Water Science Center, has been a big help here this week working with Administrative Staff; she will be assisting the ASC with closeout.
- Stacy Masters, Administrative Officer for the Nevada Water Science Center, met with ASC staff via web-ex on Monday. She showed the reviews she has done, made suggestions for simplifying, and provided a workbook tool spreadsheet that will really be helpful with the preparation. Stacey will help with workbooks and set up for next fiscal year.

- *Civil Treatment for Leaders* training is required for all supervisors by the end of FY 2018. Durelle provided further details that it will be here at USGS in Anchorage on November 7-8, 2017 in the LHB East and West conference room. The original date was in August which impacts field work.
- Hydrological Gauges: New gauge on Glacier Creek in Girdwood and the Kenai Borough has notified Chris they will be removing the only gauge currently in Seward due to funding needs.
- Chris may tentatively take leave Monday, June 26, 2017 through Wednesday, June 28, 2017; he will let Aimee know his plans to possibly fly to Bering Glacier.
- No update on Research Grade Evaluation (RGE) Team launch; however, has received a link to the materials for the second level RGE panel in July 2017. Chris was told there would be a call with further instructions that has not occurred.

Dawn Bundschuh

Travel

- Please do not approve any travel vouchers after 3pm Alaska time on Friday, June 23 through Monday, June 26 to allow for a CGE update.
- Changes in CGE process as of June 19, 2017; travel arrangers can no longer change a profile on a travel voucher to allow another staff member to approve. The RD Routing list has Tom Murray, Aimee Devaris, and Dee Williams; we should be in good shape.
 - Chris offered how ASC is handling routing; Geoff Brady is back-up for all travel.

DTS

- The Volcano Conference has been signed by Water & Science; it has moved to the Office of Financial Management (PFM).
- The Alaska Science Center's request for invitational travel reimbursement has been sent to Jose Aragon's office; it is currently with the Office of Accounting and Financial Management (OAFM) for review.
- Leave next week for part of Tuesday and Thursday, then out on Friday, June 30 – Thursday, July 6.

Actions OR Follow-up:

- Aimee requested Kevin Gallagher loop Dee into the Tribal Consultation guidelines discussion.
- Aimee will share the BOEM assessment for Secretarial Order 3352 with Dee.
- Aimee will attend the ACCER meeting on Thursday, June 29, 2017.
- Dee requests feedback on interest in fall Native Relations training with FWS.
- Dee will attend the IDR teleconference call on June 30, 2017.
- Tom is working on submitting two waivers for Merit Promotions board.
- Matt is working on a dispersant avoidance area map for senior leadership to review.
- Matt and Durelle are working on Statements of work for campus security cameras.
- Matt is working to develop an accountability focused disaster plan.
- Durelle requests input for the Library Advisory Board budget and journal prescription reductions.
- Durelle will follow up on the RBST security training and deactivation list.
- Chris will follow up on the status of the Seward hydrological gauge.
- Dawn will continue tracking and monitoring progress of DTS submissions for ASC and VSC.
- Civil Treatment for Leaders training is scheduled for November 7-8, 2017 at Anchorage USGS Office.

On Leave/Travel

- Dee in travel status to Fairbanks, June 27-29, 2017.
- Dawn departing at 11am on 6/27 & 6/29; on leave June 30 - July 6, 2017.

Meeting Schedule for the Next Two Thursdays:

Thursday, June 29, 2017 – staff meeting is cancelled; Aimee attending the ACCER meeting.

Thursday, July 6, 2017 – Aimee will meet with the Alaska Leadership Team* in lieu of a regular staff meeting.

*Note: Alaska Leadership Team members:

The Regional Director, Deputy Director, Chief of Staff, Alaska Science Center Director and the Volcano Science Center Director.