



Climate Camp Alaska Summary Report

The Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies (CACS) provided event coordination and staffing support services to the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) for Climate Camp Alaska event at the Islands and Ocean Visitor Center in Homer, Alaska on October 30 – November 1, 2006. The event addressed the following conservation goals.

- Contribute to an understanding of the causes and potential impact of Climate Change to Bering Sea communities, economics, and natural systems;
- Foster an exchange of useful information between Bering Sea Communities and scientists from institutions and agencies
- Develop climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies that can be implemented at local and regional levels to address the scientific, educational, cultural, and advocacy needs of Bering Sea communities
- Support sustained collaboration and partnerships to achieve climate change mitigation and adaptation goals.

PARTICIPANTS

Dave Aplin, WWF, selected and invited attendees to include WWF Coastal Communities for Science partners, including youth and young adults, community coordinators, observers and leaders; conservation and civic leaders other Bering Sea communities, conservation leaders from the region, scientists involved in assessing and interpreting the regional impacts of climate change, policy makers and administrators, WWF staff, and regional press. CACS and the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge (headquartered in Homer but encompassing substantial areas in the Bering Sea) were the local co-sponsors of the event. Four people attended from each of the six Bering Sea communities of St. George, St. Paul, Unalakleet, Unalaska, Chevak, and Hooper Bay.

Presenters included the Lara Hansen, WWF Senior Climate Change scientist; scientists from the University of Alaska (Fairbanks and Southeast), NOAA, and the Refuge; along with independent and tribal scientists, a journalist, and two Native elders with expertise in the consideration of local/traditional ecological knowledge (LTEK) and science.

Invitees were provided financial support for their travel and were kept informed about the event through a website, <http://www.climatecampak.org>. Total invited participation included representatives of the sponsoring organizations, 14 presenters, 10 people involved in the Coastal Communities for Science partner program, and 21 other invited guests. In addition, CACS publicized the event locally in Homer through newspaper stories, a radio interview, and science-interest listserves. Homer participants included

teachers, scientists, natural resource managers, and involved citizens. Approximately 40 attended the presentations and opening reception and the majority of the 110 people who attended a showing of the film *An Inconvenient Truth* were from Homer.

FORMAT

Aplin developed the agenda to combine an initial day of plenary presentations to address the first two conservation goals followed by 2 days of facilitated small and whole group discussions to address the last two conservation goals.

The first day opened with a welcome from the sponsoring organizations along with an activity that continued throughout the day to construct timelines of key events related to personal, global, and climate change experiences in the last 3 decades. Charles Wohlforth, journalist and author of *The Whale and the Supercomputer*, keynoted the presentations by describing his experience with climate change science and Inupiaq attitudes and responses to climate change. The morning presentations were then arranged thematically in terms of the evidence of climate change and responses at the global, regional, and local scales. Afternoon presentations focused on salmon, marine mammals, and seabirds and combined western science and LTEK perspectives. Gary Kofinas, UAF, provided a final presentation on examples of several programs underway in northeastern Alaska and the Western Canadian Arctic that link monitoring, research, and co-management of natural resources to build local and community resilience.

For the rest of the workshop, the youth participated in a media track. They received training in audio recording, interview techniques, and the use of audio track editing from Miriam Elizondo. The track culminated in the production of PSAs about climate change.

Barbara Wyckoff and Dave Aplin adapted the Future Search process for discussions facilitated by Wyckoff, Marilyn Sigman and Beth Trowbridge, CACS; and Marianne Aplin, Maritime Refuge, during Days 2 and 3 of Climate Camp Alaska. The general process was guided by a series of worksheets with specific group assignments. The results were then reported out to the whole group and Wyckoff and Aplin facilitated a synthesis at key points. Brief presentations by Sue Mauger, Cook Inletkeeper, on citizen monitoring methods for salmon streams; and Charlie Johnson, Alaska Nanuuq Commission, and Henry Huntington to revisit the integration of western science and LTEK, were also scheduled on Days 2 and 3.

The general process was to develop a shared information base among diverse participants, guide the participants in processing the information in a small group setting, and then to report back and have a whole group dialogue about implications.

- The global, personal, and climate change timelines were completed and used to review the past in groups that mixed the various stakeholder groups (scientists, educators, residents of island and mainland communities). A group process summarized the crosscutting trends.
- A “mind map” of the present was created in terms of radiating spokes of the current trends related to climate change in terms of both problems and solutions.

Each individual in the group then had a chance to vote for the most important trends by placing the placement of five dots.

- Stakeholder groups were convened to continue to explore the present in terms of trends and actions related to the issue each group was most proud or sorry about. Each group then compiled a “wish list.”
- The groups were mixed up again to create future scenarios – what they wanted the world to be like in 2021 and the barriers to these changes (which were compiled by the whole group and distilled into themes.
- Small groups brainstormed the “whats” that needed to be accomplished and the “hows” of strategies and actions to reach the desired future. These were consolidated.
- The whole group clustered the “whats” and “hows” into different arenas for action.
- The final step was action planning in the different arenas with timelines of 3 months, 18 months, and 3 years. Each participant chose his or her area of highest interest and commitment.

An Inconvenient Truth was shown the evening of the second day. The event wrapped up early in the afternoon of the third day with presentations of the PSAs created by the youth.

RESULTS

Themes and Take-home Messages

- Climate change is happening. It affects all of us and it will take all of us to change the situation.
- Climate change is the “perfect global issue” that will require profound shifts in how we relate to each other and to other species. We will need to work together across generations, across cultures, across disciplines of knowledge and ways of knowing, and across the scales of geography and timeframes. People who participated in this workshop were willing to begin that work.
- The sense of place from the perspective of an Alaska Bering Sea village has already been expanded by world events and the imposition of western culture. With the cultural dominance of western culture (from western science to Dixie Chicks) comes responsibility.
- Climate change is no longer a distraction from other environmental or political issues - the commitment to increase activism around the issue is growing in all sectors of society.
- The exchange of information between communities, scientists, and decision-makers must be reciprocal. Mechanisms are needed for local communities to teach scientists and natural resource agencies about the local environment and the

ways they interact with it as well as for the results of scientific studies with implications for local communities to reach them in a timely fashion.

- Local and traditional knowledge, both historical and that being collected in an ongoing fashion, needs to be connected with environmental monitoring efforts with a specific emphasis of observations related to climate change. The local scale of observation and broad ecosystem-scale and regional-scale research and monitoring programs are complementary and both will yield better results and understanding through their linkage.
- We need a common currency and ways to talk about climate change, for example, in terms of implications for our youth, economic impacts and opportunities.
- The continuation of subsistence use in the Bering Sea is an opportunity to see and live the connections between humans and the rest of the natural world. In the face of a changing environment that will affect the fish and wildlife upon which they depend, the residents of Bering Sea communities have a powerful, human story to tell the rest of the world that could motivate others to understand the implications of climate change and act.
- Every effort must be made to develop and sustain hope.

Action Plans

Action plans from the groups focused on education, communication and community coordination, monitoring, and policy change were compiled and distributed to attendees via e-mail.

Follow-up

At the close of the conference, a CD with the youth-produced PSAs was distributed to the participating youth in each village. Additional resource materials on climate change issues relevant to the Bering Sea region was distributed to each Community Science program coordinator.

The list of participants and contact information has been distributed to all participants. PowerPoint presentations developed by the presenters have been posted on the website and the selected audio clips of the PSAs have been streamed so they can be played from the website.

For Additional Information

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