

IARPC TEAM LEADERS' MEETING

Key findings and overview of the March 2017 IARPC Workshop held in Anchorage, Alaska which brought together those individuals responsible for leading the implementation of the Arctic Research Plan 2017-2021

WORKSHOP REPORT

Workshop Participants



IARPC wishes to acknowledge the support of the University of Alaska Anchorage for providing the meeting space and to the Arctic Domain Awareness Center for facilitating the logistics for the meeting.

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IARPC Collaborations Kick-off Workshop Report

March 22-23, 2017

Anchorage, AK

Introduction

Collaboration Team Leaders of the Interagency Arctic Research Policy Committee (IARPC) came together in Anchorage, Alaska March 22-23 for a two-day workshop. The purpose was to provide the team leaders with an opportunity to engage with one another at the launch of the implementation of new Arctic Research Plan 2017-2021 (hereafter “the Plan”). The workshop had four key objectives:

- Encourage intra- and inter-team communication and collaboration
- Develop first-year annual work plans
- Explore cross-cutting themes to reduce duplication and encourage collaboration
- Empower team leaders with tools and support, and energize them to actively support implementation of the Plan.

By virtue of the State of Alaska, the United States is an Arctic Nation. The Plan and its implementation directly relate to the people who live and work in the Arctic. Twelve of the 32 Collaboration Team leaders are based in Alaska, and Federal agencies with offices in Alaska are heavily invested in the Plan. Therefore, the decision was made that the inaugural workshop for the Plan 2017-2021 should take place in Alaska, and specifically in Anchorage, because of the large number of Federal offices located there.

The workshop was held at the University of Alaska Anchorage. Twenty-four of the 32 team leads participated in person in the workshop and six joined via webcasting and by phone. All the non-Fed team leaders were present and all the team leaders who are new to IARPC participated in the meeting. The twelve Alaska-based team leaders all participated in-person. (The list of workshop participants is available in Annex E.) The workshop agenda (Annex D) was developed by three team leads — Andrew Balsler of the Permafrost Collaboration Team, Steve Gray of the Terrestrial Ecosystems Collaboration Team, and Sandy Starkweather of the Observing Sub-team of the Environmental Intelligence Collaboration Team.

The Plan was released on December 15, 2016. The release was announced via the [White House Office of Science and Technology Policy blog](#) and at a Town Hall meeting at the American Geophysical Union Fall Meeting in San Francisco. The Plan will advance Arctic research over the next five years and will be implemented in collaboration with Federal and non-Federal stakeholders through [IARPC Collaborations](#).

Based upon experiences and lessons learned in the early phases of implementation of the previous Arctic Research Plan (2013-2017), the IARPC secretariat determined that the Collaboration Team leaders needed to meet early in the implementation process to get to know one another and plan for the upcoming year. It is hoped that in-person communication that occurs early and often will cut down on

duplication of efforts by multiple Collaboration Teams and provide for a more efficient implementation process. An early meeting was also viewed as a good opportunity to advance cross-cutting themes which are present in the Plan but not yet well formed. Discussing and addressing cross-cutting themes will encourage inter-team communication and collaboration on related objectives.

IARPC wishes to acknowledge the support of the University of Alaska Anchorage for providing the meeting space and to the Arctic Domain Awareness Center for facilitating the logistics for the meeting. We also wish to thank the University of Alaska Anchorage for including a panel of IARPC speakers in its Arctic Research Day program on March 24, the day following the IARPC workshop.

Workshop Overview

The March 2017 IARPC Team Leaders Workshop was designed to facilitate communication among team leaders within their own team and with other teams. For many team leaders, this was the first time they had sat together to discuss the research goals and objectives and consider implementation of the performance elements. The workshop allowed ample time for discussion of team priorities and areas of overlap with other teams.

The workshop was organized into eight sessions. After the first session, which included introductions and welcoming remarks, the co-chairs shared why IARPC matters and goals and objectives for the workshop. This was followed by a network drawing exercise which aimed to help the teams identify partners in their implementation process and consider the strength of their current network (the network diagrams are included in Annex F). Three of the eight sessions focused on sharing insights, information and ideas. Each team provided a brief overview of their goal and research objectives (Annex G). Presentations on three cross-cutting themes were also provided (Annex H). Each of the cross-cutting themes were identified by the workshop co-chairs in advance of the meeting and developed by two to three team leaders. The cross-cutting theme explorations were (1) surface energy exchange, (2) carbon budget, and (3) food security. After introduction of the cross-cutting themes, the team leaders participated in a “speed dating” exercise where they discussed each of the cross-cutting themes with other team leaders, and identified additional topics as potential cross-cutting themes. (For an extended summary of the speed-dating sessions, see Annex I).

The remainder of the sessions were devoted to annual plan writing. In the first of these sessions, team leaders met only with their co-chairs; in the second session with at least one other team that shares similar objectives; and in the third with as many other team leaders as possible.

In the penultimate session, Eric Kasischke and Jessica Rohde gave a presentation on fostering engagement within Collaboration Teams. Eric drew upon experience in successfully identifying and engaging key collaborators, including those that had the potential to fill gaps in the team’s research objectives, as well as those that could fulfill multiple roles. Jessica demonstrated how to best utilize the website during and between meetings to engage communities of interest. (For more details on engagement and use of the IARPC collaborations website by team leaders see Annex J).

The final session of the workshop was dedicated to sharing the key points in each team’s annual plan. Team leaders discussed some of the highlights in their upcoming year and opportunities for collaboration across teams.

Two guest presentations were invited by the meeting organizers. On the first day, the guest speakers were Aaron Poe from the Alaska Bering Seas Landscape Conservation Cooperative (LCC), Leanna Heffner from the Western Alaska LCC, and Karen Pletnikoff from the Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association. They shared their views on climate change and impacts on local communities. The team leaders appreciated the richness of the Alaska research setting and how to better tailor research to meet local community needs. On day two, Carolina Behe from the Inuit Circumpolar Conference – Alaska and a Leader of the Coastal Resilience Collaboration Team, presented on food security. Her presentation added value to the ongoing discussion on community engagement and the understanding that food security is a central and profound issue for Indigenous communities. Since most team leaders come from a natural sciences background, the additional context provided by the guest speakers increased the diversity of topics discussed. Food security and ecosystems shifts enlightened the participants and made for a richer workshop.

The workshop was co-chaired by three team leaders who were thoughtful about the agenda and identified ways to encourage communication between team leaders and with other teams. Retrospectively, they believe that being prescriptive about the cross-cutting themes limited the dialogue and prevented other themes from emerging. Toward the end of the meeting a few additional themes such as snow science and infrastructure began to emerge but without time to adequately explore them in a meaningful way.

Providing time for the development of annual plans was a critical part of the workshop agenda, but in retrospect not enough time was allocated for this important task. Consequently, none of the teams completed the assignment and additional time was given. However, all teams made a good start on their plan development at the workshop and submitted their final versions for inclusion in this report (Annex A). These annual plans will not only help team leaders in the months ahead, but serve as a powerful planning tool for the secretariat as well as a means to identify overlaps and gaps in addressing performance elements.

After the workshop's conclusion, the secretariat developed a synthesis of the annual workplans (Annex B) and a comprehensive collaboration team calendar through the end of 2017 (Annex C). The calendar will be posted on the IARPC collaborations website and updated throughout the year.

Key Workshop Findings

1. Development of cross-cutting themes

The Plan includes several themes that are strongly represented in several research goals. The meeting organizers were interested in exploring these themes and providing a setting where they could be discussed and analyzed in hopes of reducing duplication of effort and providing a more coherent message on the themes in report writing. The themes identified by the co-chairs were (1) surface energy exchange, (2) carbon budget, and (3) food security. After presentations on the themes, discussions in the speed dating session, and within individual team discussions, it was decided that two of the themes merited further development and consideration. It is important to note that further development does not mean that new teams will be formed, but rather an effort will be made to ensure that the various performance elements that relate to the theme are clustered and addressed in a coherent manner.

- *Improved Understanding of Food Security and Its Role in Indigenous Culture:* The workshop participants heard from the Coastal Resilience Collaboration Team and through the guest speakers that food security is a critical issue in the Arctic among local and Indigenous communities, and it is a strong thread throughout the Plan. Most chapters have at least one performance element that is in some way related to food security, and the speed-dating session identified some previously unrecognized but strong, integral linkages among teams and the issue of food security. This emphasis on food security acknowledges that food security is of central importance to a larger cultural identity that includes the way people live and make a living. Subsequently, there was support for food security as a cross-cutting theme which will be led by the Coastal Resilience Team but in strong collaboration with the Health and Well-being Team, the Permafrost Team, and the Sea Ice Team. (For a summary of the food-security speed-dating session, see annex I).
- *Improved understanding of the Carbon Budget:* The Environmental Intelligence (EI) Collaboration Team chose this as its first cross-cutting theme because it appeals widely to local, regional, and national decision makers and stakeholders. The subcomponents of the carbon budget theme are highly relevant to decisions support, for example the effect of ocean acidification on the Arctic ecosystem and food webs, wildfire prediction and effects on air quality, and the positive feedback of permafrost melt on release of greenhouse gases and atmospheric warming. Of the potential Environmental Intelligence themes, the carbon budget focus was identified as the most actionable topic of the sub-teams and most strongly cross-cutting with the other IARPC Collaboration Teams. Specifically, the Terrestrial Ecosystems, Permafrost, and Atmosphere Collaboration Teams have performance elements that directly pertain to Arctic carbon. The carbon budget focus also relates to three of the four policy drivers identified in the Plan—well-being, stewardship, and understanding the Arctic as a component of the Earth system. (For a summary of the carbon budget speed-dating session and subsequent discussion, see appendix I.)
- Other emerging cross-cutting themes:
 - *Understanding the surface energy exchange:* This theme is most relevant to the Atmosphere, Sea Ice, and Glaciers & Sea Level Collaboration Teams that will continue to explore it in the year ahead and work together on related performance elements. (For notes from the surface energy exchange speed-dating session, see annex I.)
 - *Snow science:* Snow science is under-represented in the Plan, but it emerged as a possible cross-cutting theme because elements of it fall under several Collaboration Teams. During speed dating, it became clear that snow is very important to other areas like food security and snow on sea ice. It might fit into the carbon budget theme or food security theme or as a stand-alone cross-cut. Measurement of snow has been the driver of all snow science, but it came to light during the workshop that the community is beginning to think of snow as a player in the system, and taking a more systems approach to snow science

would be beneficial. More work on developing this theme will be undertaken by the Permafrost, Glaciers & Sea Level, and Terrestrial Ecosystems Collaboration Teams.

2. Improved understanding of the critical role of community engagement in Arctic research

Over the course of the workshop, in part because of the topics raised by guest speakers and the strong role that food security played as a cross-cutting theme, team leaders began to think more strategically around community engagement in implementing the Plan. Some team leaders had viewed community engagement as several orders removed from their goal, but as a result of workshop discussions, they began to see it as directly related and critical to what they hope to accomplish. One participant shared the view that a relationship between the Collaboration Team and the community it engages with is a valuable research objective in and of itself. Another noted that they saw actionable benefits with demonstrable value from community engagement. The discussion around community engagement helped to bring clarity to the role of the “Enhance the well-being of Arctic residents” Policy Driver.

Team leaders were empowered to look for meaningful ways to enhance community engagement through learning about and partnering with organizations that work in engagement and transfer of knowledge. Several teams are discussing the idea of workshops to improve engagement for all Collaboration Teams.

3. Familiarity and connections between team leaders were made

IARPC has excellent virtual communications tools, but this face-to-face meeting allowed for improved team building, group dialogue, time and space for uninterrupted work, and catalyzing energy to sustain the individual and group progress towards long-term goals. The two-day, in-person workshop allowed relationships to form that will add value over the year to come as team leaders find it easier to work together within and among teams.

4. The value of annual planning was realized

During the implementation of the Arctic Research Plan 2013-2017, team leaders did not prepare annual work plans but were ad-hoc in their meeting preparations. This led to some duplication of effort and some gaps in meeting milestones. The team leaders appreciated the planning process initiated during this workshop. Over the course of this coming year, the IARPC secretariat will track progress on implementing the annual plans. The annual plans will be posted on the website and the community may offer suggestions to improve or modify the plans. The secretariat envisions a more efficient implementation process with the inclusion of annual plans.

5. The value of an Alaska-based workshop appreciated

By virtue of the State of Alaska, the United States is an Arctic Nation. The Plan and its implementation directly relate to the people who live and work in the Arctic. Twelve of the 32 Collaboration Team leaders are based in Alaska, and Federal agencies with offices in Alaska are heavily invested in the Plan. Therefore, the decision was made that the inaugural workshop for the Plan 2017-2021 should take place in Alaska, and specifically in Anchorage, because of the

large number of Federal offices located there. This decision was acknowledged to be an excellent one. Inclusion of guest speakers who work in the Alaskan Arctic and interact with its residents turned attention towards Northern resident issues. Alaska-based Federal program managers who have grown weary of long-haul travel to DC for meetings were delighted to share their home with those traveling from DC and other parts of the United States. The proximity to Arctic research done at the University of Alaska Anchorage was an added benefit, as was our ability to participate in Arctic Research Day following the workshop. Participation in Arctic Research Day provided an opportunity to share the Plan and its implementation with the local community.

While the location of subsequent workshops is not yet determined, the IARPC secretariat will consider the value of having future workshops in Alaska.

Annexes

- A) Annual Plans by Collaboration Team
- B) Collaboration Team's Annual Work Plan Synthesis
- C) Comprehensive Collaboration Team meeting calendar
- D) Workshop Agenda
- E) List of Participants
- F) Network Diagrams
- G) Collaboration Team PowerPoint Summaries
- H) Cross-cutting Exploration PowerPoint Summaries
- I) Notes from Speed Dating
- J) Collaboration team engagement and website tools
- K) Implementation Guidelines