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# Aleut International Association

333 W. 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite 301, Anchorage, AK 99502 • 907-332-5388 • aia@alaska.net

## Special Interest Articles:

- Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning (PSP) Project
- BSSN: Bering Sea Sub-Network

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## Welcome to the New AIA Quarterly Newsletter! Who is AIA?

The Aleut International Association (**AIA**) is an Alaska Native not-for-profit corporation registered in the State of Alaska, United States, in 1998.

AIA was formed by the Aleutian/Pribilof Islands Association, U.S., and The Association of the Indigenous Peoples of the North of the Aleut District of the Kamchatka Region of the Russian Federation in 1998. AIA is governed by the Board of Directors comprised of four Alaskans and four Russian Aleuts under the leadership of a president. The current president is Mr. Michael Zacharof of Saint Paul Island, Alaska, U.S.; the vice-president is Valentina Sushkova of Nikolskoye, Commander Islands, Russia.

The organization was formed to address environmental and cultural

concerns of the extended Aleut family whose wellbeing has been connected to the rich resources of the Bering Sea for millennia. Russian and American Aleuts are separated by distances, borders and the International Date Line but united by the great Bering Sea and the North Pacific Ocean. Today, not only does the Aleut community share the resources of the region but the environmental problems as well.

The need to understand global processes was an

impetus in joining in the work of international forums where AIA is actively pursuing collaboration with governments, scientists, and other organizations in developing programs and policies that could improve the wellbeing of the Aleut people and their environment. AIA was admitted as a permanent participant of the Arctic Council in 1999.

M. Zacharof,  
AIA President  
and  
V. Gofman,  
AIA Executive  
Director



## AIA Board of Directors

President Michael Zacharof, St. Paul Island, Alaska  
Vice President Valentina Sushkova, Nikolskoye, Russia  
Arnold Dushkin, Nikolski, Alaska  
Lorraine Jonsson, False Pass, Alaska  
Patricia Lekanoff-Gregory, Unalaska, Alaska  
Vera Belobrova, Nikolskoye, Russia  
Ivan Vozhikov, Nikolskoye, Russia

## AIA Staff

Victoria Gofman, Executive Director  
Anneliese Tschannen, Administrative Assistant  
Bruce Wright, Science Advisor



## The PSP (Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning) Project



Bruce Wright's visit to Nikolskoe (2006)

*"Since 1973 there have been 150 outbreaks reported in Alaska and three fatalities since 1994."*



Ivan Vozhikov is testing samples in Nikolskoe, Russia (2006)



Anfesia Tutiaikoff in Unalaska

The North Pacific Research Board (NPRB) funded the AIA paralytic shellfish poisoning (PSP) project in May 2006. The PSP project objectives include developing methods for communities to monitor the occurrence and distribution of paralytic shellfish toxins that occur in connection with climate change observations. The project goals are: 1) devise a mechanism to better respond to the threat and minimize the risks of poisoning, 2) develop a process of interlinking modern technology and traditional knowledge, 3) educate local residents about paralytic shellfish poisoning and 4) train local technicians to use test kits to monitor for PSP toxin. Project activities include workshops, development of a manual on how to set up a community-based surveillance system, and public outreach materials.

Since 1973, there have been 150 PSP outbreaks reported in Alaska and three fatalities since 1994. The PSP project will investigate the increased risk of PSP as a result of climate change and the reliability of traditional knowledge used when harvesting clams and mussels. The methods developed to monitor the occurrence and distribution of toxins will increase the capacity of communities to respond to the threat of poisoning. Primary targeted communities include: Nikolskoye, Sand Point and Unalaska. However, additional communities may include Adak, Akutan, Atka, Attu, Belkofski, King Cove, Nelson Lagoon, Nikolski, St. George and St. Paul. So far, community technicians have been trained to collect and test samples for the project in Sand Point, Unalaska and Nikolskoye and additional samples have been sent

in from Akutan and King Cove.

Species being sampled include: blue mussels, butter clams, surf clams, Alaska great tillin clams, cockles, little neck clams and razor clams. Samples collected in July in Akutan, King Cove, Sand Point and Unalaska have been tested, and the results indicate PSP is present in the bivalves. The test results from Nikolskoye indicate PSP is not present in mussels and razor clams, the only two species collected and tested there.

For more information you can go to the National Pacific Research Board website at the following address: <http://project.nprb.org/view.jsp?id=c974307d-3e90-4f56-adb3-d6c370d38dd0>



Dana Osterback in Sand Point



Natalia Tatarenkova preparing samples in Nikolskoye

## Bering Sea Sub-Network

*“This collaborative effort will connect individuals bound by a common geographic area and sharing similar traditions, values and ideals but who are separated by great distances.”*



Dutch Harbor, Alaska

The Bering Sea Sub-Network: International Community-Based Environmental Observation Alliance for Arctic Observing Network (**BSSN**) is a project involving mostly local indigenous communities in the Bering Sea region to monitor and share the environmental changes they observe. Changes could include the shift of southern species north, distribution and abundance of fish and other temperature-sensitive species, changes in ice patterns, and weather observations.

BSSN will be a model community-based monitoring component for the Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program of the Conservation of Flora and Fauna Working Group of the Arctic Council.

This collaborative effort will connect individuals bound by a common geographic area and sharing similar traditions, values and ideals but who are separated by great distances. Within the network there will be an emphasis on the sharing of values, methods and wisdom of indigenous peoples and traditional knowledge systems and linking it to concerns within the conventional science arena. Through this network a dialogue will be created that will assist in the exchange of information and ideas central to analyzing important issues within the region.

A funding proposal was submitted by AIA to the National Science Foundation in May 2006 and is currently pending.

Partners and supporters in

the BSSN include:

**APIA**, Arctic Slope Native Association, **AVCP**, **BBNA**, Kawerak, Maniilaq, Alaska Native Science Commission, Inuit Circumpolar Conference – Alaska, St. George Island Traditional Council, Togiak Traditional Council, Native Village of Kotzebue, Native Village of Piamut, Pauloff Harbor Tribe, Native Village of Buckland, The Kamchatka Regional Association of Tribes of the Indigenous Peoples of the North, Chukotka Regional Association of Indigenous Peoples, Association of Traditional Marine Mammal Hunters of Chukotka, Chukotka Science Support Group, Chukotka Indigenous Information Center, and other organizations.

*“A second BSSN workshop is being planned for November 26 – December 1, 2006, in Anchorage, Alaska.”*

## Bering Sea Sub-Network Workshops

The first BSSN international workshop was held on October 5, 2005. There were 12 participants spanning locations from Anchorage, Unalaska, Chukotka, the Commander Islands and Finland.

A second BSSN workshop is being planned for November 26 – December 1, 2006, in Anchorage, Alaska. This conference, like the first, is planned to coincide with several other international workshops, enabling the project to take advantage of a

greater number of international participants. The BSSN workshop will be held in conjunction with **CBMP** experts workshops. The BSSN has wide-ranging support from Alaskan Native villages and associations and the Arctic Council.

## AIA Project Information

Project Name/Description	Grantor(s)	Objectives & Activities
Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning (PSP). Proposed communities extend the length of the Aleutian Islands.	North Pacific Research Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Educate local residents about PSP</li> <li>Train local residents to use test kits to monitor for PSP toxin.</li> <li>Investigate increased risk of PSP as a result of climate change and the reliability of traditional knowledge used when harvesting shellfish.</li> </ul>
Bering Sea Sub-Network (BSSN): Proposed development of a network for community-based research and monitoring throughout the Bering Sea area.	Grant pending at NSF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a community-based research and monitoring network.</li> <li>Establish data management protocols.</li> <li>Define community based monitoring</li> <li>Establish methods for survival and continuity of traditional knowledge</li> <li>Develop individual ownership in a collectively connected network of information and communication sharing.</li> </ul>
Language Communication Project (Anchorage, Atka and Nicolskoye)	Self-supported	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote use of the Western Aleut dialect</li> <li>Strengthen communication between Alaskan and Russian Aleuts using their native language.</li> </ul>
Aleut Ethnobotany	In partnership with the Institute for Circumpolar Health Studies of the University of Alaska Anchorage and Alaska Native Science Research Partnerships for Health.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compilation of the Aleut/Unangax: Ethnobotany: An Annotated Bibliography</li> </ul>
Open World Exchange	Library of Congress via Pacific Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exchange program to promote communication and understanding of different geographic locales, cultures and local issues.</li> </ul>



## Alphabet Soup: Acronyms got your confused? **Bold** items are used in this issue.

### ACRONYM

### TERM

AC	Arctic Council
ACAP	Arctic Council Action Plan
ACIA	Arctic Climate Impact Assessment
AES	Arctic Energy Summit
<b>AIA</b>	<b>Aleut International Association</b>
AMAP	Arctic Monitoring Assessment Program
<b>APIA</b>	<b>Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association</b>
<b>AVCP</b>	<b>Association of Village Council Presidents</b>
BASC	Barrow Arctic Science Consortium
<b>BBNA</b>	<b>Bristol Bay Native Association</b>
<b>BSSN</b>	<b>Bering Sea Sub-Network</b>
<b>CAFF</b>	<b>Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna</b>
<b>CBM</b>	<b>Community-based Monitoring</b>

### ACRONYM

### TERM

<b>CBMP</b>	<b>Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program</b>
CSSG	Chukotka Science Support Group
EPPR	Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response
IASSA	International Arctic Social Sciences Association
IPS	Indigenous Peoples' Secretariat
IPY	International Polar Year
<b>NPRB</b>	<b>North Pacific Research Board</b>
PAME	Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment
<b>PSP</b>	<b>Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning</b>
<b>SAO</b>	<b>Senior Arctic Officials (of the Arctic Council)</b>
SDWG	Sustainable Development Working Group
UNEP	United Nations Environmental Program
UNDP	United Nations Development Program

**NEWS!**

International Peoples'  
Secretariat has a new  
website:  
[www.arcticpeoples.org](http://www.arcticpeoples.org)

**Calendar Of Events:**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Location</b>
September 18-19	SAO (Senior Arctic Officials) Meeting	Moscow, Russia
September 21-22	Multilateral Environmental Agreements and Relevance for the Arctic Seminar	Arendal, Norway
October 24-26	SAO (Senior Arctic Officials) Meeting Ministerial Meeting	Salekhard, Russia
October 23-28	Alaska Federation of Natives 2006 Convention	Anchorage, Alaska
November 26-27	Bering Sea Sub-Network Workshop	Anchorage, Alaska
November 27-28	CBM (Community-based Monitoring) Workshop	Anchorage, Alaska
November 29-December 1	CBMP (Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program) Workshop	Anchorage, Alaska

**Aleut International Association**  
333 W. 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite 301  
Anchorage, AK 99501  
907-33-ALEUT (907-332-5388)  
[aia@alaska.net](mailto:aia@alaska.net)