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# Aleut International Association

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## ***AIA mission:***

Bringing new opportunities for environmental, social and economic improvements in the Aleut region through international programs that promote continuity of culture and protect resources needed to sustain it

## ***Special Interest Articles:***

- International Polar Year Launched (p. 1-2)

## ***Content:***

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## **Under Secretary of State Recognizes AIA's Project**

The International Polar Year is a scientific program focused on the Arctic and the Antarctic. International Polar Year will involve more than 200 projects, with thousands of scientists from more than 60 nations examining a wide range of physical, biological and social research topics.

The Honorable Paula J. Dobriansky, Under Secretary of State for Democracy and Global Affairs, delivered remarks at the U.S. launch of International Polar Year at the National Academies of Science in Washington, D.C., on Monday, February 26, 2007:

"The State Department supports scientific efforts worldwide by facilitating cooperation with foreign governments through science and technology agreements and through other collaborative arrangements. For example, marine science will form a very important component of International Polar Year, and our vessel clearance program ensures that marine scientific research by U.S. entities can take place in foreign Arctic waters, and vice versa.

The second issue that we're concentrating on is the area of health. And it's through the Arctic Council that we coordinate a wide range of science projects related to the International Polar Year. One of the major projects under the new "human dimension" aspect of IPY is the Arctic Human Health Initiative. Under the leadership of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Arctic Human Health Initiative will cover a broad range of health issues facing Arctic residents, including infectious diseases, chronic illnesses, dietary issues, and environmental contaminants.

Thirdly, we're leading an IPY project in energy: the Arctic Energy Summit. And later this year, the United States has plans to host a technical conference in Alaska to bring experts together, specifically together to address all fields of energy development in the Arctic, including the areas of renewables, extractive, and emerging energy technologies. The plan is to create an energy action working group to advise policymakers in the Arctic countries as to how we can better deliver energy to remote areas and at the same time how we can extract energy resources in ways that protect the environment and create good jobs for northern residents.

**Finally, I want to underscore the important role played by indigenous groups. Alaskan natives are leading a number of projects for IPY. The Aleut International Association proposed the Bering Sea Sub-network, an initiative to monitor changes in the marine environment of the Bering Sea. Villagers on both sides of the Bering Sea will engage in community-based monitoring of the marine environment and fold their research into the larger Arctic Council Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program."**

See Page 2 for more information on IPY



### IPY links of interest:

[www.ipy.org](http://www.ipy.org)

[www.us-ipy.gov](http://www.us-ipy.gov)

[www.alaska.edu/ipy/](http://www.alaska.edu/ipy/)

### IPY Education & Outreach

**Indigenous peoples' Forum on Environmental Monitoring in the Arctic**, led by Canada, ICC and others will bring indigenous knowledge perspectives out of the anecdotal background into the forefront of the environmental monitoring work in the Arctic, will be held in Fall 2007

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**Circumpolar Indigenous Youth Conservation Project**, led by Canada and Russia seeks to build a circumpolar conservation network linking youth across the Arctic countries with the global conservation community.

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**International Symposium on the Health and Wellbeing of Arctic Indigenous Peoples**, led by the University of Ottawa and AMAP will draw together scientists and policy makers to address the cutting edge of known and predicted health implications of changing economic, social, physical and environmental conditions in the Arctic.

## International Polar Year (IPY)

The International Polar Year is a large scientific program focusing on the Arctic and the Antarctic. It is organized through the International Council for Science (ICSU) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO). International Polar Years have occurred in 1882-1883, 1932-1933, and 1957-1958. IPY 2007-2008 will be the fourth IPY and will run from March 2007 to March 2009.

IPY 2007-2008 will involve over 200 projects, with thousands of scientists from over 60 nations examining a wide range of physical, biological and social research topics. It is also an unprecedented opportunity to demonstrate, follow, and get involved with, cutting edge science in real-time." ([www.ipy.org](http://www.ipy.org))

IPY 2007-2008 objectives are to:

- Include an intensive and internationally coordinated campaign of high quality research activities and observations in polar regions that would not otherwise be undertaken.
- Leave a legacy of observing sites, facilities and systems to support ongoing polar research and monitoring. The Polar Year will strengthen international coordination of research and enhance international collaboration and cooperation in polar regions. Programs will address both polar regions and their global interactions.
- Link researchers across different fields to address questions and issues that are beyond the scope of individual disciplines. IPY programs will collect samples, data and information regarding the state and behavior of polar regions and recover relevant historical data.
- Attract, engage and develop a new generation of polar researchers, engineers and logistics experts and engage awareness, interest and understanding of schoolchildren, the public and decision-makers worldwide.

The National Science Foundation (NSF) launched Arctic Observing Network (AON) as one of the US programs in the IPY. A key contribution of the AON will be to provide a framework for linking new and existing research programs. It will be a system of observational infrastructure – including satellites, terrestrial observatories, ocean buoys and moorings, weather stations, hydrological monitoring stations, ecological sampling networks, arctic residents, and other data sources – that will collect, organize and distribute arctic observations (*Toward an Integrated Arctic Observing Network, National Academy of Science, 2006*).

About 30 AON projects were selected for funding by NSF in 2006. BSSN is one of them and the only project on community-based monitoring. The first meeting of project leaders was held in Boulder in March 2007. This was the first step in linking the projects and the data that will be collected. Victoria Gofman presented BSSN to a distinguished group of AON scientists.

**AIA PROJECTS**

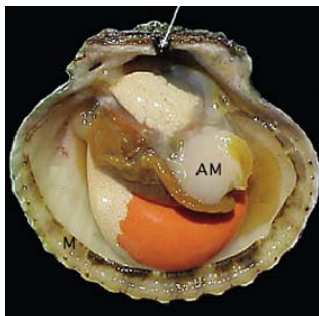
AIA Project Name/Description	Grantor(s)	Objectives & Activities
<p><b>Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning (PSP).</b> Proposed communities extend the length of the Aleutian Islands.</p> <p>Project Period: May 2006 through Sept 2007</p>	<p>North Pacific Research Board</p> <p>(Grant Awarded/In Progress)</p>	<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>
<p><b>Bering Sea Sub-Network (BSSN):</b> Proposed development of a network for community-based research and monitoring throughout the Bering Sea area.</p> <p>Project Period:</p>	<p>National Science Foundation</p> <p>(Grant Approved)</p>	<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>
<p><b>Language Communication Project</b> (Anchorage, Atka and Nicolskoye)</p>	<p>Self-supported</p>	<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>
<p><b>Open World Exchange</b></p>	<p>Library of Congress via Pacific Environment</p> <p>Cancelled by Program Management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exchange program to promote communication and understanding of different geographic locales, cultures and local issues.</li> </ul>

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**AIA SUPPORTED PROJECTS**

Project Name/Description	Project Lead	Objectives & Activities
<p><b>Integrated Management Tools for Arctic Coastal Zone Resiliency.</b> This proposal sets forth a three year plan to develop a web-based arctic coastal community information system by harnessing existing and emerging understanding of the arctic coastal system and presenting information tailored to user groups needs, such as, communities or planners.</p> <p>Project Period: November 2007 through October 2010</p>	<p>David Atkinson, International Arctic Research Center, University of Alaska – Fairbanks</p> <p>(Project Pending)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A coastal information database must be built for the Bering Sea coasts.</li> <li>Climatologies for wind, wave, storm, and ocean swell extreme-event return frequencies must be established; this will include new research to apply a model for Chukchi/Bering Sea ocean swell dynamics that includes effects of sea ice.</li> <li>An overview of coastal information systems already in existence will be conducted and relevant coastal managers and community associations will be entrained for needs assessment and tool design.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Thin Ice: An Exploration of the Bering Sea at the Dawn of Global Warming.</b> As a project of the International Polar Year, Thin Ice will address the impact of climate change on the Arctic Region.</p> <p>Project Period: July 2007 through December 2008</p>	<p>Thomas S. Litwin, Ph.D. Director, Clark Science Center, Smith College, Northampton, MA</p> <p>(Project Pending)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thin Ice is an educational project based upon a 30-day circumnavigation of the Bering Sea aboard the M/V Norseman, a former Bering Sea crabber.</li> <li>With a team of scientists, social scientists, and local knowledge experts onboard, Thin Ice will explore the Bering Sea ecosystem, and the lifestyles, religions and cultures that make up the communities of the Bering Sea region.</li> <li>Climate change will be examined as a global impact that is changing the Bering Sea ecosystem, and the communities that have come to depend upon it. In this regard, the Bering Sea will serve as a natural laboratory to learn about this important natural resource, the people of the region, and how climate change is influencing the world around us.</li> <li>Educational products will include a 2-hour PBS documentary, educational web site, cross-cultural curriculum, and a book.</li> </ul>





The paralytic shellfish poisoning (PSP) project is designed to determine distribution of PSP toxin in the Aleut Region. The project partners are AIA, Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association, and Alaska Sea Grant program (UAA). The North Pacific Research Board provided funding. This project will educate local residents about paralytic shellfish poisoning, train technicians in the villages to use test kits to monitor for PSP toxin and monitor PSP in the Aleut Region. Survey of the traditional knowledge on PSP will be conducted and the data will be compared with the results of testing.

## PSP: Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning Progress Report

Bruce Wright, APIA, informs about the latest findings:

“The Jellett tests have indicated positive for St. George mussels, but a recent mouse bioassay test done by the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation indicates no PSP in St. George mussels. A recent test of King Cove mussels came in as negative for PSP, but recent tests on King Cove butter clams indicate they contain PSP toxins at 65 micrograms (80 micrograms is the FDA limit for consumption). Even at levels below 80 micrograms one should not eat too many clams. Butter clams can remain toxic for two years, so this is a species to be avoided and harvesters should remain cautious when consuming any bivalves in Alaska. We received our first Nikolski mussel samples. The mussels were very difficult to dislodge from holes in submerged lava flows and, based on their annual growth rings, they were around 100 years old! I sent one of the mussel shells to a Russian colleague for further analysis. The Nikolski mussels were negative for PSP.”

Victoria Gofman, AIA, reports on the Traditional Knowledge Survey workshop:

“A three-day workshop was organized in Anchorage on April 2-5 to refine traditional knowledge questionnaires developed by Paula Williams, UAA research assistant, and to train village coordinators to conduct interviews using digital recorders. Project coordinators from four participating villages, Dana Osterback, Charly Bendixen, Naomi Kashevarof and Anton Shelikoff, participated in the training. The workshop demonstrated that involving people from the communities in the development of survey tools greatly improves the accuracy of collected data and increases the understanding of local coordinators of the survey process and its purpose.”

### PSP in Motion by Charly Wilson

Last week I had the opportunity to meet several great people working toward healthier eating of subsistence foods. People whom you may know, as either family or friends, within your own communities: Anton Shelikoff from Akutan, Naomi Kashevarof from St. George, Dana Osterback from Sand Point and myself, Charly Wilson from King Cove. Last year Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association (APIA), Aleut International Association (AIA) and the University of Alaska saw the need for a system that would test shellfish in the Aleutians and Russian areas for high levels of toxins. Many people, me included, have our own opinions on when shellfish are safe to eat or not. We all came together with a purpose, to begin putting together scientific and traditional knowledge to help prevent our family and friends from getting shellfish poisoning.



Naomi Kashevarof, Charly Bendixen, Dana Osterback, Anton Shelikoff

We began by brainstorming and building a simple yet very informative survey which we will be bringing into our corresponding communities. We will be asking many people for their help in conducting this survey while we are collecting samples that will be sent out for laboratory tests. Testing and collecting is already in progress and we have that information available for anyone interested, by contacting your tribes, APIA or AIA.

We will have more information as it develops, but feel free to contact any of the participants with your questions or concerns.



Charly Bendixen, Anton Shelikoff, Paula Wilson



## Alphabet Soup: Acronyms got you confused? (acronyms used in this issue are in bold)

ACRONYM	TERM	ACRONYM	TERM
<b>AC</b>	<b>Arctic Council</b>	<b>EPA</b>	<b>Environmental Protection Agency</b>
ACAP	Arctic Council Action Plan	<b>EPPR</b>	<b>Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response</b>
ACIA	Arctic Climate Impact Assessment	IASSA	International Arctic Social Sciences Association
AES	Arctic Energy Summit	IPS	Indigenous Peoples' Secretariat
<b>AIA</b>	<b>Aleut International Association</b>	<b>IPY</b>	<b>International Polar Year</b>
<b>AMAP</b>	<b>Arctic Monitoring Assessment Program</b>	<b>NPRB</b>	<b>North Pacific Research Board</b>
<b>AON</b>	<b>Arctic Observing Network</b>	<b>NSF</b>	<b>National Science Foundation</b>
<b>APIA</b>	<b>Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association</b>	PAME	Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment
BASC	Barrow Arctic Science Consortium	<b>PICES</b>	<b>North Pacific Marine Science Organization</b>
<b>BSSN</b>	<b>Bering Sea Sub-Network</b>	<b>PSP</b>	<b>Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning</b>
CAFF	Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna	SAO	Senior Arctic Officials (of the Arctic Council)
CBM	Community-based Monitoring	<b>SDWG</b>	<b>Sustainable Development Working Group</b>
<b>CBMP</b>	<b>Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program</b>	<b>UAA</b>	<b>University of Alaska</b>
CSSG	Chukotka Science Support Group		

*Our New Website!*

**[www.aleut-international.org](http://www.aleut-international.org)**

*(Still Under Construction)*

## Calendar Of Upcoming Events:

Date	Event	Location
April 2-8, 2007	Snowchange 2007 Workshop	Nerjungri, Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), Russian Federation
April 6-7, 2007	Circumpolar Seminar on "The Conservation Value of Sacred Sites of Indigenous Peoples in the Arctic: A Case Study in Northern Russia	Salekhard, Yamal-Nenets, Russia
April 7-10, 2007	AMAP Human Health Expert Group Meeting	Lofoten, Norway
April 10-11, 2007	Arctic Council – SDWG Meeting	Tromso, Norway
April 12-13, 2007	Arctic Council – SAO (Senior Arctic Officials) Meeting	Tromso, Norway
April 24, 2007	Arctic Human Health Initiative Steering Committee	Banff, Alberta, Canada
April 24-26, 2007	EPPR Meeting	Svalbard, Norway
April 25-27, 2007	Northern Civilization, Region Expo 2007	Moscow, Russia
June 4-5, 2007	World Environment Day 2007: Melting Ice – A Hot Topic?	Tromso, Norway
October 15-18, 2007	Arctic Energy Summit Technology Conference	Anchorage, Alaska, USA

### AIA Board of Directors

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