

### ***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:***

- Adaptation to Climate change (p. 1-2)

### ***Content:***

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## **North and South Unites in Search for Ways to Adapt to Climate Change**

**The most vulnerable communities of the Arctic and Small Islands Developing (SID) States are joining their efforts in urging the world to take immediate actions on mitigation and adaptation to climate change.**

Many Strong Voices (MSV) is an initiative launched at the Arctic Day at the Conference of Parties of UNFCCC in Montreal in December 2005. It brought together Arctic communities and Caribbean and South Pacific SID states to share their experience in the quest for adapting to climate change impacts.

A Stakeholder Workshop was organized in Belize City last May. The workshop, generously supported by the Norwegian government, United Nations Environment Programme, the National Science Foundation, UNEP-GRID-Arendal and graciously hosted by the Caribbean Community Climate Change Center and the government of Belize was attended by 40 representatives from permanent participants of the Arctic Council: Aleut International Association, Arctic Athabaskan Council, Inuit Circumpolar Council, Saami Council; SID states: Belize, Barbados, Cook Islands, New Zealand, Fiji, French Polynesia; international organizations, and several universities. Patricia Cochran, ICC, Victoria Gofman, AIA, and Peter Larsen, ISER UAA, traveled from Alaska to join in the discussion.

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"In the Arctic, we know that melting ice and sea level rise are going to affect everyone on the planet especially people in Small Island Developing States. This is why we have chosen to work together – amplifying our voices in global negotiations," said Patricia Cochran, Chair of the Inuit Circumpolar Council.



## **Nelson Lagoon Erosion Got Attention of a DC Official**

One of the effects of global climate change that is already being felt by coastal communities in Alaska, Russia and throughout the Pacific is damage brought about by erosion and flooding due to rising sea levels and storm surge.

In June, a meeting was held at the AIA offices with Charles Abernathy, Republican Staff Director, Clark Corbridge, Assistant Borough Administrator for the Aleutians East Borough, Peter Larsen, Resource Economist at the Institute of Social and Economic Research, UAA, and Victoria Gofman, Executive Director of AIA. Corbridge described what the borough is doing to fight the erosion. He showed

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

### Climate change links of interest:

[www.ipcc.ch](http://www.ipcc.ch)  
[www.acia.uaf.edu](http://www.acia.uaf.edu)  
[www.unfccc.int](http://www.unfccc.int)

### Climate Change Organizations/Projects

**UNFCCC:** The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is an international treaty to begin to consider what can be done about climate change and to cope with whatever climate change effects are inevitable.

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**IPCC:** The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has been established by WMO and UNEP to assess scientific, technical and socio-economic information relevant for the understanding of climate change, its potential impacts and options for adaptation and mitigation.

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**ACIA:** The Arctic Climate Impact Assessment is an international project of the Arctic Council and the International Arctic Science Committee (IASC), to evaluate and synthesize knowledge on climate variability, climate change, and increased ultraviolet radiation and their consequences.

## Many Strong Voices (continued from Page 1)

The participants were greeted by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Natural Resources of Belize who lent his support to this important undertaking. One after another, participants took the podium to show and tell their stories of eroding shorelines, lost freshwater sources, the increase of violent storms, the threat of sea water level rise, and the destruction of marine habitat—all resulting in potential devastation to their vulnerable economies. The speakers shared local adaptation strategies ranging from project-based approaches to engaging in multilateral international agreements to influence policies.

What emerged from the workshop was the understanding of common goals, and the need to work together to strengthen the message of urgency, which was passionately summarized by the Honorable John Briceño, Deputy Prime Minister of Belize: “Let us resolve therefore to ensure that our many voices be heard loudly in every forum, insisting that we are the most vulnerable and we need action now not tomorrow”

*Victoria Gofman*

#### Numbers talk:

- Communities like Shishmaref suffer erosion of up to 100 feet per year
- The cost of Shishmaref relocation is \$180,000,000
- Elders in Alaska report that “200 year storms” become yearly storms
- Additional cost of water and sewer maintenance due to climate change impacts in Alaska is estimated at 30%
- Eastern Aleutians’ cost of infrastructure is estimated at \$336,000,000
- 187 Communities in Alaska are affected by coastal erosion.

#### Possible areas for cooperation between Arctic communities and SID:

- Joint education and outreach activities
- Alternative energy development
- Coordinated statements to the International Community



MSV Attendees interact at the Stakeholder Workshop in Belize City last May



From 27 to 30 May 2007, 40 stakeholders from the Caribbean, Alaska, Fiji, Greenland, French Polynesia, and other locations in the Arctic and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) gathered at a workshop in Belize.

## AIA Representatives Attend Arctic Council Meetings in Tromso



Indigenous Peoples Secretariat held a Board meeting on April 12. Patricia Cochran, ICC Chair, was elected as a Chairperson of IPS. The chairmanship rotates every two years.

Ms Cochran said, *“It’s pretty obvious that climate change is a very big issue, contaminants still remains a big issue, looking at oceans management, biodiversity, there’s so many issues on our plate right now. We have to look at our priorities and at what we can do, and do well.”*

The first Senior Arctic Officials (SAO) meeting under the Norwegian chairmanship took place in the picturesque city of Tromso in northern Norway on April 12-13, 2007. As in the past, it was preceded by the Sustainable Working Group Development (SDWG) meeting. The AIA delegation consisting of AIA Board members, Lorraine Jonsson and Ivan Vozhikov, and the executive director, Victoria Gofman, attended both meetings.

Norway announced the creation of a permanent Arctic Council (AC) Secretariat in Tromso that will serve during Norwegian, Danish and Swedish chairmanship in the next six years. This will improve the continuity of AC work.

Norway, the Chair of SDWG, proposed two projects: **Adaptation to climate** change that would consist of a scoping study and a workshop and **Best Practices in Ecosystem based Oceans Management in the Arctic**. The idea is to look at what has been developed already and to share the best practices while identifying the existing gaps. As customary for Norwegian initiated projects, the government has already allocated money for project implementation. Such funding usually covers project coordination and some travel. Inputs from countries and permanent participants are expected as in-kind contributions. The concern expressed by AIA was that Arctic residents’ voices may not be heard in this project due to funding constrains and the lack of PPs’ capacities to provide in-kind contributions. Considering that adaptation is at the very heart of the climate change debate at a community level in the Arctic and beyond, permanent participants should have an opportunity for meaningful participation. Both projects are of interest to AIA, as well as the Canadian-led **Arctic Indigenous Languages Symposium**.

In addition to the working groups’ reports on the progress of their work, a discussion of the need to improve the efficiency of the Arctic Council was on the agenda. It was based on the paper drafted by the Arctic Athabaskan Council that provided a detailed analysis of the AC weaknesses ranging from poor outreach, both at regional and global levels, to inability to plan project activities and proposed far reaching actions to restructure AC, e.g. to reorganize the role and composition of the working groups. Whereas everyone agreed that AC could use improvements in its operations, the extent of the changes was up for debate. The saying “if it isn’t broken why fix it” held the ground for now. The main problem lies in the process of funding of AC projects, which are not funded by AC. Within the current system, enabling permanent participants’ and other indigenous organizations’ participation remains a problem. The mechanism of inclusion of even a portion of PP’s work in the budget of projects hasn’t been developed. Arctic Council is a project-driven forum. Perhaps, the time has come for AC to become the driving force behind the projects and not the other way around.

Victoria Gofman

## AIA PROJECTS

(For more information go to [www.aleut-international](http://www.aleut-international))

| AIA Project Name/Description  | Grantor(s)   | Objectives & Activities  |
|---|--|--|
| <p><b>Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning (PSP).</b><br/>Participating communities extend the length of the Aleutian Islands.</p> <p>Project Period:<br/>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> <li>Develop risk reduction recommendations for communities</li> </ul>                                      |
| <p><b>Bering Sea Sub-Network (BSSN):</b> Development of a network for community-based research and monitoring throughout the Bering Sea area.</p> <p>Project Period:<br/>June 2007 – May 2009</p> | <p>National Science Foundation</p> <p>(Grant Awarded)</p>              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a community-based research and monitoring network.</li> <li>Establish data management protocols.</li> <li>Design survey instruments and conduct surveys documenting the state of the Bering Sea bioresources important for subsistence and local economies based on local and traditional knowledge</li> <li>Produce an assessment based on the survey results</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>   |

## Nelson Lagoon (Continued from Page 1)



photos of structures that they have installed with assistance of a small grant. The structures are called geotubes and consist of sediment-filled sleeves of geotextile fabric intended to serve as temporary storm surge protection and erosion control structures. Due to climatic changes sea ice forms later in the year and does not provide protection from fall storm surges which results in increased flooding and erosion which threatens the entire community. Nelson Lagoon has been documenting erosion using aerial photographs for a number of years. This is a valuable proof for federal agencies.

Abernathy noted that the communities that have invested human and financial resources in developing adaptation projects in their communities may have a better chance of attracting matching federal funding. It is also necessary to look at all possibilities for federal assistance, he said. For example, many of the climate change impacts may also be considered natural disasters' and impact on infrastructure may qualify for Federal disaster relief from FEMA. And as with many other problems that require large-scale high-dollar federal assistance, an incremental approach may be the most effective way to provide a timely but gradual solution.



Larsen spoke about his recent ISER report on how much climate change will add to future costs for public infrastructure. Their study concluded that most of the extra infrastructure costs due to climate change will be for maintaining or replacing roads, runways, and water and sewer systems. These types of infrastructure are most vulnerable to thawing permafrost, flooding and coastal erosion – and they're expensive to replace. He said that their study shows not only the magnitude of extra costs agencies could face, but also the potential value of efforts to understand and mitigate climate change.

Abernathy closed by saying that Washington DC lawmakers planned a fact finding trip to Anchorage in August and that this would be a good opportunity for Nelson Lagoon and other communities to testify about their situation.

## Project News

### PSP: Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning



During the summer months shellfish samples are continuing to be gathered and tested and the data accumulated for analysis at the end of the project. The traditional knowledge surveys have begun, but due to the demands of the fishing season on local residents the bulk of the surveys will be postponed until early fall when respondents will have more time. The project has received a time extension from the NPRB until the end of March 2008 which will allow for the extra time needed to perform the surveys and then analyze the data obtained. As an incentive to the Alaskan survey respondents AIA will be offering a drawing for 15,000 Alaska Airlines Miles per community. The name of each survey respondent will be entered into the drawing and a name will be selected at a meeting in each community to report the results of the project. Residents may take part in the surveys multiple times, but no more than once per month and will have their names entered into the drawing for each survey completed.



National Science  
Foundation  
approved  
\$650,000 grant  
award for BSSN

### BSSN: Bering Sea Sub-Network

In June, AIA received official approval of its grant application from the NSF. With this approval the project Steering Committee, consisting of representatives of the communities of Sand Point, Dillingham, and Gambell in Alaska and Nikolskoye, Tymlat and Lorino in Russia along with the project Principal Investigators was able to begin work. One of the initial focuses of the committee was on branding and promotion of the project which led to the BSSN logo shown at left. In addition, the project will feature its own website, <http://www.bssn.net>, which will contain project information and links to other relevant data. During the month of August, Victoria Gofman will be traveling to the Russian communities to begin setting up project resources there. A workshop has been tentatively scheduled for the second half of October to devise the surveys for the project and train project coordinators.

## AIA STAFF UPDATE



**Jim Gamble** has joined the Aleut International Association team as Assistant Director. He brings experience as a life long Alaskan and long term participant in the Alaska business community. Born and raised in Anchorage, Alaska, Jim graduated from the University of Alaska, Anchorage with a BS in Biological Sciences and extensive coursework in computer science. He then joined the staff of Gamble Construction Co., Inc. where he reached increasing levels of responsibility including appointment as Vice President.

After 20 years with the firm he judged that it was time for a change and became interested in the work of non-profit organizations and issues related to Alaska Native peoples. Deep interest in the Aleut region and desire to contribute his expertise led to his new association with AIA.

Jim brings a great deal of enthusiasm to his new position along with extensive experience as an administrator including expertise in the areas of quality assurance, personnel and project management, safety, and technology,

AIA is pleased to welcome Jim to our family.

AIA's administrative assistant, **Anneliese Tschannen**, left in mid-May when the position was upgraded to a fulltime Assistant Director position and Jim was hired on. Ms. Tschannen's ability to step in and take on AIA's administrative duties during the last nine months is greatly appreciated and she will be missed.

## New Job Openings

For details please go to <http://www.aleut-international.org>

AIA is inviting applicants for the following positions for **BSSN Secretariat**:

### **Senior Project Coordinator**

Will primarily be tasked with communicating with and coordinating the projects 6 remote sites. Full time, 12-14 month term with possible extension.

### **Assistant Researcher**

Will help design and administer the survey instrument and manage the survey data. Full/Part Time to be determined, 8-12 month term.

### **Administrative Assistant**

Will assist with administrative and logistical tasks. Part time up to 20 hours per week, 12 month term with possible extension.

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

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

*Our New Website!*

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

*Take a look! Feedback appreciated!*

## Calendar Of Upcoming Events:

| Date                  | Event  | Location                 |
|-----------------------|--|--------------------------|
| September 11-12, 2007 | ACAP Meeting   | Anchorage, Alaska        |
| September 17-20       | CAFF Management meeting                                | Copenhagen, Denmark      |
| September 19-23, 2007 | Beringia Days conference                               | Anadyr, Chukotka, Russia |
| September 18, 2007    | AMAP – CAFF joint meeting                              | Copenhagen, Denmark      |
| October 15-18, 2007   | Arctic Energy Summit Technology Conference             | Anchorage, Alaska, USA   |
| October 22-27, 2007   | Alaska Federation of Natives Convention                | Fairbanks, Alaska, USA   |
| Oct. 30-Nov 1, 2007   | SDWG Meeting   | Vadso, Norway            |
| November 12-14, 2007  | SAON Workshop  | Stockholm, Sweden        |
| November 28-29, 2007  | Arctic Council – SAO (Senior Arctic Officials) Meeting | Narvik, Norway           |

### AIA Board of Directors

President Michael Zacharof, St. Paul Island, Alaska  
 Vice President Valentina Sushkova, Nikolskoye, Russia  
 Arnold Dushkin, Nikolski, Alaska  
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 Vera Belobrova, Nikolskoye, Russia  
 Ivan Vozhikov, Nikolskoye, Russia  
 Irina Timonkina, Nikolskoye, Russia

### AIA Staff

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