

# Bering Sea Elders Group

Spring/Summer 2023 Newsletter



## BSEG HOSTS FIRST SUMMIT SINCE 2019

The Bering Sea Elders Group's (BSEG) Summit was held May 2-4, 2023, in Anchorage.

During the Summit, Elder Representatives listened to presentations and engaged in discussions about BSEG and the Northern Bering Sea Climate Resilience Area (NBSCRA). Participants also engaged in strategic planning and celebrated BSEG's 15-year anniversary.

This year, Elder Representatives successfully passed two resolutions. These included:

**2023-01.** Title: *Resolution Expressing Appreciation and Continued Support for the Northern Bering Sea Climate Resilience Area Executive Order and Calling for Sustained Funding and Protection of the Northern Bering Sea;* and



BSEG's newly elected Executive Committee. (Back from left) Ralph Kiunya, William Igkurak, Axel Jackson, Melvin Gregory, John Twitchell, Sr. (Front from left) Jerry Ivanoff, John Waghiyi, Jr., Richard Slats, Aaron Iworrigan.

**2023-02.** Title: *Resolution Declaring a Disaster in Our Traditional Waters of the Bering Sea and Calling for a Holistic Plan to Restore Balance to the Interconnected Bering Sea Web of Life.*

This year, elections were also held. Jerry Ivanoff of Unalakleet was elected as BSEG's Chair. Other officers include John Waghiyi, Jr., Vice-Chair (Savoonga), Richard Slats, Treasurer (Chevak) and Aaron Iworrigan, Secretary (Gambell).

"This is the first Summit we've been able to hold since 2019," said BSEG Executive Director Jaylene Wheeler.

"We are grateful to the Executive Committee for their diligence in leading us through the pandemic. We'd also like to honor and thank Fred Phillip for his leadership and service as Chair these past several years."

## LKTKS PRESENTS PROTOCOL & ONRAMP RECOMMENDATIONS

This April, Dr. Kate Haapla and Dr. Sarah Wise, Co-Chairs of the Local Knowledge, Traditional Knowledge, and Subsistence (LKTKS) Taskforce presented the finalized draft of the LKTKS Protocol and related onramp recommendations to the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC).

"The LKTKS Protocol provides guidance to the Council, analytical staff, and others working in the Council's decision-making process to identify, analyze, and incorporate local knowledge, traditional knowledge, and subsistence information," said BSEG Executive Director Jaylene Wheeler. "Whereas the on-ramp recommendations identify potential changes to the Council's process for

better incorporating these knowledge systems."

The development of these materials was a collaborative, multi-year process. They were created based on consensus by the Taskforce. After receiving the Taskforce presentation, reports from the Scientific Statistical Committee and Advisory Panel, and public comment, the Council chose to release the materials presented at this meeting for a 50-day extended public comment and review period.

The Council also authorized the Taskforce to convene for an additional meeting over the summer, to review comments received during the extended review period, input to the Co-Chairs from the Council and its

advisory bodies, and to discuss what additional capacity and resources may be needed for successful implementation of specific onramp recommendations.

The Council will receive a final report from the Taskforce in October 2023 at which time they will consider final action.



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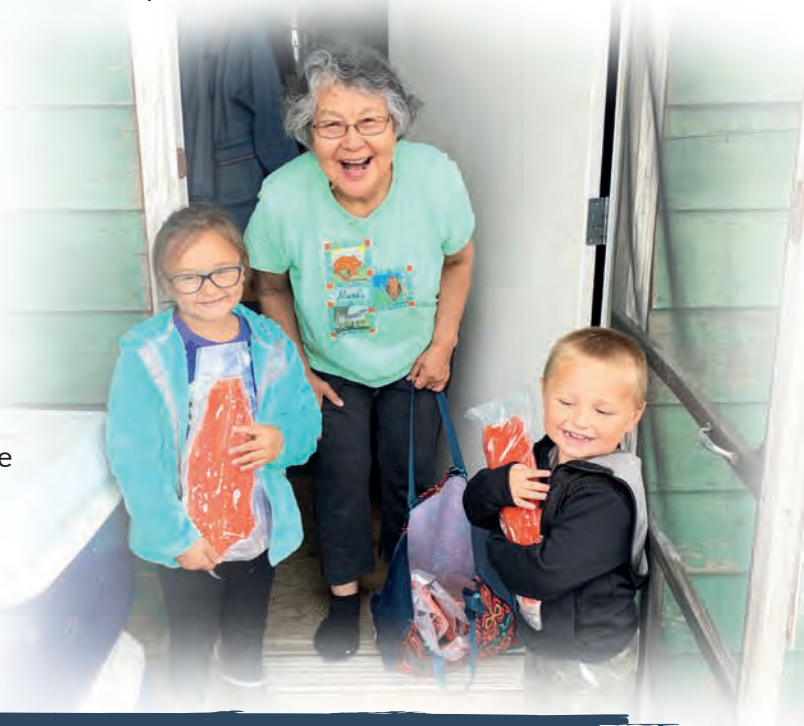
# WITH GRATITUDE: Local Knowledge, Traditional Knowledge, and Subsistence Taskforce

The Bering Sea Elders Group would like to thank members of the Local Knowledge, Traditional Knowledge, and Subsistence (LKTKS) Taskforce for their time and dedication to developing the LKTKS protocol. The protocol is critically important because it creates a pathway for traditional knowledge to be incorporated into the decision-making processes.

Taskforce members include:

- Darcy Peter-Beaver, Alaska
- Richard Slats-Chevak, Alaska
- Toby Anungazuk, Jr.-Golovin, Alaska
- Simeon Swetzof, Jr.-St. Paul, Alaska
- Julie Raymond-Yakoubian-Kawerak, Inc.
- Rachel Donkersloot-Coastal Cultures Research
- Robert Murphy-Alaska Pacific University
- Alida Trainer-Alaska Department of Fish & Game
- Bridget Mansfield-National Marine Fisheries Service
- Kate Haapala, Co-Chair-North Pacific Fishery Management Council
- Sarah Wise, Co-Chair-Alaska Fisheries Science Center-National Marine Fisheries Service

BSEG has long prioritized our peoples' traditional knowledge and its inclusion into federal management structures and decision-making processes. BSEG has passed multiple resolutions affirming the importance of this living body of knowledge and the way it is intertwined with our people's identity, culture, values, and ways of life.



## SEA ICE FOR WALRUS OUTLOOK

Beginning in March, information about weather and sea ice conditions relevant to walrus in the northern Bering Sea and southern Chukchi Sea regions of Alaska is available from the Sea Ice for Walrus Outlook (SIWO).

This resource is available for Alaska Native subsistence hunters, coastal

communities, and others interested in sea ice and walrus. SIWO is managed by the Arctic Research Consortium of the U.S., it is a partnership between the Eskimo Walrus Commission, the National Weather Service, the University of Alaska Fairbanks, and local observers.

The forecasts are produced with information on weather and sea ice conditions provided by the National Weather Service - Alaska Region and Alaska Native sea ice experts. For more information, please see the SIWO website ([www.arcus.org/siwo](http://www.arcus.org/siwo)) or Facebook page ([facebook.com/seaiceforwalrus](https://facebook.com/seaiceforwalrus)).





# THE WHITE HOUSE RELEASES INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE GUIDANCE FOR FEDERAL AGENCIES

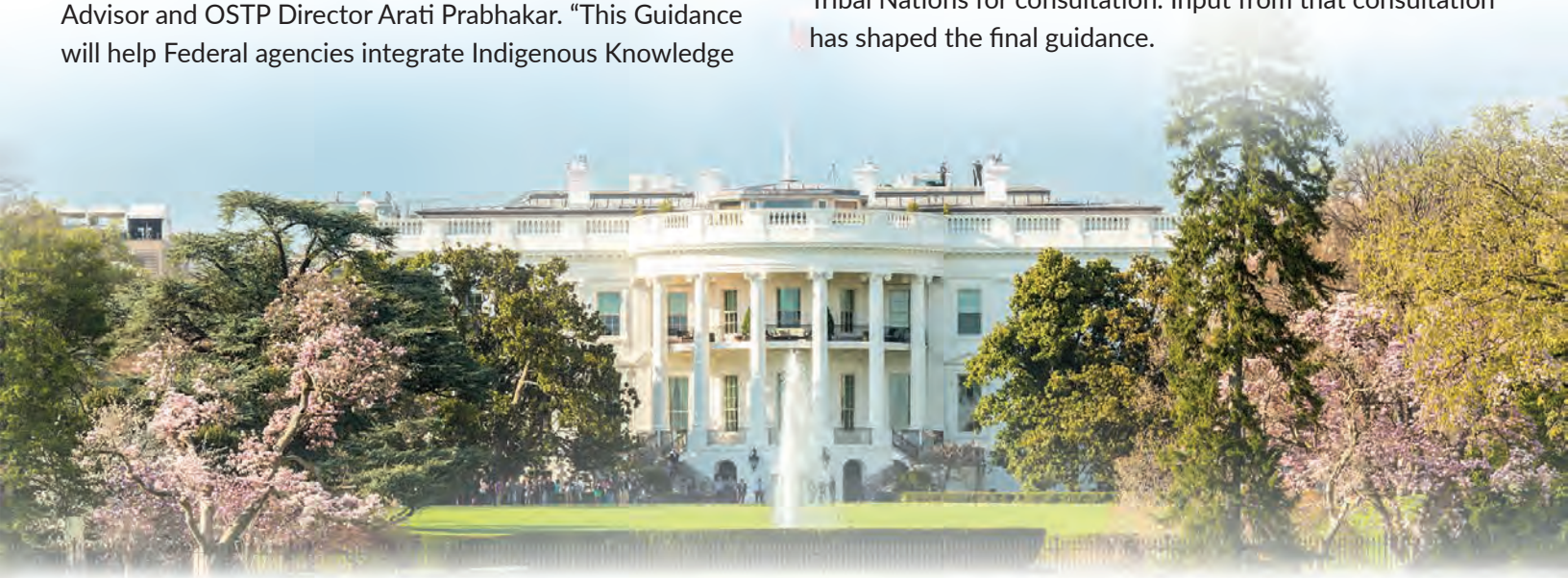
This past December, the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) and the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) jointly released new government-wide guidance and an accompanying implementation memorandum for Federal Agencies on recognizing and including Indigenous Knowledge in Federal research, policy, and decision making.

“Federal decision making is best when informed by all forms of knowledge,” said the President’s Science and Technology Advisor and OSTP Director Arati Prabhakar. “This Guidance will help Federal agencies integrate Indigenous Knowledge

in their work—from research to environmental rule making, to co-management of lands and waters.”

To develop the guidance, OSTP and CEQ led a working group of more than 25 Federal departments and agencies. The White House engaged more than a thousand individuals, organizations, and Tribal Nations on elevating Indigenous Knowledge in Federal decision making.

In summer 2022, a draft of the guidance was released to Tribal Nations for consultation. Input from that consultation has shaped the final guidance.



The White House guidance on Indigenous Knowledge will assist agencies in:

- Understanding Indigenous Knowledge.
- Growing and maintaining the mutually beneficial relationships with Tribal Nations and Indigenous peoples needed to appropriately include Indigenous Knowledge.
- Considering, including, and applying Indigenous

Knowledge in Federal research, policies, management, and decision making.

Together with the guidance, OSTP and CEQ also released an implementation memorandum which tasks agencies with reporting on progress within 180 days, and announced the formation of a new inter-agency group under the National Science and Technology Council that will assist in coordination and implementation of the new guidance across agencies.

More information on the Initiative can be found at:

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/ostp/ostps-teams/climate-and-environment/indigenous-knowledge/>

This article was reprinted courtesy of the White House and has been edited down from a December 01, 2022, press release. The original full length press release can be found at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/ceq/news-updates/2022/12/01/white-house-releases-first-of-a-kind-indigenous-knowledge-guidance-for-federal-agencies/>



# NPFMC FILLS ALASKA NATIVE TRIBAL SEAT

BSEG would like to congratulate Shawaan Jackson-Gamble who was appointed to the newly created Alaska Native Tribal Seat on the North Pacific Fishery Management Council's Advisory Panel.

Shawaan was raised in Kake, Alaska, and is a graduate of Northwest Indian College where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Native Environmental Science. He currently serves as an Indigenous Stewardship Fellow for First Alaskans Institute.

Shawaan's Tlingit name is *Ch'aak'ti* (Watchman of Hamilton Bay). He is *Tsaagweidi* (Tlingit) and *Tiits Giit a Naay* (Haida).



## CCTF HOSTS CLIMATE PLANNING WORKSHOP

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) supported the Climate Change Taskforce's (CCTF) proposal to hold a workshop on Climate Scenario Planning and to solicit public input on the scope of such a workshop over the spring and summer.

In May, the CCTF presented a report to the NPFMC containing ideas for the scope and timing of the proposed workshop. Following a review of the report combined with comments from the Science and Statistical Committee and the public, the NPFMC moved to

support the proposed concept of seeking public input and feedback on the draft workshop scope. The NPFMC further emphasized its intent to provide tribal entities, fishery stakeholders, and the public with a clear understanding of how CCTF's efforts contribute to the NPFMC's effort to build capacity to address climate change.

Additional information on providing feedback on the CCTF's proposed Climate Scenario Planning workshop scope will be posted soon as a spotlight to NPFMC's website at <https://www.npfmc.org>.







# PARTNER UPDATE: Indigenous Sentinels Network

The Indigenous Sentinels Network (ISN) is making headway in the development of a new and improved environmental monitoring platform.

"We have partnered with an incredible software development company specializing in environmental and community-centered participatory apps, and are deep in the process of restructuring ISN for intuitive, effective, and secure data collection," said Nicholas Parlato, Regional Consultant, Aleut Community of St. Paul Island.

"We have also convened our Indigenous Sentinels Advisory Assembly for the seventh time, learning more about community visions of software governance and accountability. In all of our work, community data sovereignty and self-determination remain at the heart of our vision and goals."

Interested in building an environmental monitoring program in your area? If so, ISN would love to hear from you! For more information or to connect, visit their website <http://www.sentinelsnetwork.org>

## SAVE THE *Date*

### Co-Stewardship Symposium | August 14-18, 2023

In August, a Co-Stewardship Symposium will be held in Anchorage, Alaska. The gathering is intended to build understanding, relationships, and knowledge that advance Indigenous co-stewardship for the health and wellbeing of all Alaskan human and non-human relatives, lands, and waters.

The symposium will gather together Tribal governments, Alaska Native organizations and corporations,

government resource management agencies, university partners, and conservation partners.

The symposium will feature speakers from around the state. Participants will have the opportunity to engage in meaningful dialogues with one another.

Themes will include better understanding of co-stewardship and Indigenous-led stewardship of lands

and waters, healing relationships and respectful collaboration, upholding Tribal governance, racial equity, the process of co-stewardship, and imagining a new future together and charting concrete next steps.

Information about the symposium schedule and registration will be released at a later date as soon as it becomes available.

Symposium co-organizers include: UAF Tribal Governance, Northern Latitudes Partnerships, Alaska Conservation Foundation, US Fish & Wildlife Service, The Wilderness Society, Tyonek Tribal Conservation District, Prince of Wales Tribal Conservation District, Alaska Venture Fund, and Central Council of Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska

# KAWERAK HOSTS TESTIMONY WORKSHOP



Marilyn Stanislaus of Alaknuk testifies before NPFMC.

Attendees took part in a 5-day workshop covering topics such as the structure and operation of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC), the scope of the Council's management, Tribal issues, bycatch issues, as well as how to testify before the Council.

"The intent of the workshop was to share information with Tribal members about NPFMC including their role in federal fisheries management, and about how to effectively engage in their process through actions like written and oral testimony," stated Julie Raymond-Yakoubian, Kawerak Social Science Director.

"Often indigenous voices and the voices of others affected by regulations made at the state and federal level are missing or not heard. These voices are crucial for protection of subsistence resources, which is why Kawerak pursued options to fund this workshop," said Julie, who applied for the funding. She further reflected, "Indigenous voices and knowledges are underrepresented at the Council and this workshop was an effort to increase the number of people who are knowledgeable about and comfortable navigating and participating in this process."

NPFMC's Council provides recommendations for fishery management of federal waters to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). NMFS manages federal waters from 3 miles to 200 nautical miles off shore. The State of Alaska manages fisheries from the shoreline to 3 miles. The NPFMC, through the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA), is tasked setting harvest quotas and catch limits, setting gear/season/area restrictions, monitoring, and habitat protection.

On April 9th, the NPFMC held one of their five annual meetings and discussed salmon bycatch—specifically chum salmon bycatch in the Bering Sea. With hands-on experience in developing testimony and delivering it to the Council, workshop participants gained the confidence needed to provide testimony during this meeting following the workshop. Jolene Nanouk, from Unalakleet testified, "Finding a balance, and being united with others for our future generations, along with good fish numbers is vital to what our future generations will need in order to keep our traditional way of life to be carried on." Shaun Daniels of Elim testified, "Every community in Alaska relies on fish for food. Alaskan subsistence way of life should be prioritized."

Other attendees included Michele Adams of Brevig Mission, Agatha Foxie of Stebbins, Jacob Ivanoff of Unalakleet, Louisa Paniptchuk of Unalakleet, Ron Pitka, Sr. of Unalakleet, Gisela Chapa of Bethel, Edward Corp of Bethel, Lisa Ellanna of Fairbanks, Marilyn Stanislaus of Alakanuk, and Nathan "Nick" Topkok of Mary's Igloo/Teller. We are grateful to the Bering Sea Elders Group for generously providing a scholarship for an attendee from the AVCP region to join us. All except one attendee provided testimony before the Council and proudly represented their respective regions and issues related to subsistence harvesting of salmon.



# NNA-CO ESTABLISHES INDIGENOUS ADVISORY BOARD

The Navigating the New Arctic Community Office (NNA-CO) builds awareness, partnerships, opportunities, and resources for collaboration and equitable knowledge generation within, between, and beyond the research projects funded by the National Science Foundation's Navigating the New Arctic Initiative.

NNA-CO works to build capacity in early career researchers and provides unique opportunities to inspire and engage a wide audience toward a more holistic understanding of the Arctic—its natural environment, built environment, and diverse cultures and communities.

NNA-CO has established an Indigenous Advisory Board (IAB) to partner with Indigenous communities and

institutions to ensure that NNA-CO is addressing issues of mutual concern, that Indigenous Peoples have a voice in NNA research planning and implementation, and that Indigenous knowledge and data sovereignty is upheld. The IAB also ensures that the NNA-CO amplifies and supports Indigenous-led initiatives.

IAB members each serve a two year term. Board members include: Dr. Nikoosh Carlo (Koyukon Athabascan) who serves as the Advisory Board Lead & Co-Chair; Mellisa Maktuayaq Johnson (Inupiaq) who serves as Co-Chair; Malinda Chase (Athabascan), Lisa Ellanna (Inupiaq), Dr. Lisa Mack (Unangax), and Gunn-Britt Retter (Norwegian).



## Indigenous Training Academy COMING SOON

With support from the First Nations Development Institute, BSEG will host its first Bering Sea Indigenous Training Academy session in late fall or early winter. The training will cover topics such as federal fisheries management, co-stewardship and the co-production of knowledge.

The two-day training will be held in Anchorage, Alaska, and will be followed by several, one-hour virtual sessions. A limited number of travel scholarships are available. More information will be shared with member Tribes in the near future.

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NPFMC, through the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, is tasked with setting harvest quotas and catch limits, setting gear/season/area restrictions, monitoring, and habitat protection.



# WATER SAFETY TIPS



**Be sure to follow these safety tips this summer and whenever you're on the water:**

1. Keep young children away from water unless supervised by an adult.
2. Ensure the whole family has access to and uses flotation devices when near water.
3. Always wear a life jacket when in an open boat or on an open dock, regardless of weather, boating experience or swimming ability.
4. Attach the engine cut-off device when underway, especially when boating solo.
5. When boating, have a means of communication/signaling device to attract help in an emergency—
6. passengers should know the location of and how to use emergency devices.
6. Equip boats with at least one means of re-boarding (e.g. swim step, ladder, foot sling).
7. If boating, file a plan so someone knows where you are and when you are expected to return.
8. Have your family members attend a water safety class such as those provided by the Alaska Marine Safety Education Association or the Alaska Office of Boating Safety.

Source: Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium

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