NOAA Alaska Stakeholder Forum Summary

February 5, 2009
Anchorage, Alaska
Background

- NOAA held a stakeholder forum to gain input for the new Administration and a new strategic plan

- The forum was held in conjunction with the Alaska Forum on the Environment and the Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Advisory Group meetings

- Participants were asked to provide input on four questions (see next slide)
Background

Participants were asked:

- What drivers, forces, and/or scenarios do you use in your long-term planning?
- What are the opportunities for your organization/community?
- What are the threats for your organization/community?
- What roles/activities should the federal government (e.g. NOAA) have in the future?
Participant Input

- The following slides highlight the common themes heard from the participants
Messages Heard – Drivers/Scenarios for Planning

“Alaska is one of the few regions where we depend on weather forecasts for life and survival. Weather dictates all of our actions.”

- Key question: Will climate change be dramatic or gradual?
- Opening of the Arctic (commerce, governance)
- Subsistence needs
- Energy costs
- Moving / changing fisheries resources
- Physical changes:
  - Melting/warming permafrost, Frequent and intense storms (debris flow, avalanche, floods), Coastal erosion, Sea level rise, Increasing temperatures, Potential health impacts (airborne and water diseases)
All members seem to either directly or indirectly focus on ways to sustain a viable economic community (particularly rural) as the climate change impacts begin.

- **Work Together!**
  - Create new partnership with Government, NGOs, private sector to chart a new course
- **Connect with and involve communities**
  - Take in their local knowledge (particularly traditional ecological knowledge)
  - Provide information they can use
- **Create a baseline of data and develop novel technologies** (e.g. observing, alternative energy)
Messages Heard – Threats

There is an underlying sense of an impending and fundamental change of lifestyle... and a corresponding call for science to be a steadying force through the transition

- Ensuring we are not trading one problem for another
- Many communities digging deeper, but bumping into regulations and barriers
- Health impacts of a changing climate
- Failure to recognize change by our political system and interest groups refusal to change and let go of their old interest in light of new challenges
Participants agreed that NOAA should build a reputation as a reliable source of scientific and climate data. NOAA should avoid ideological advocacy.

- Be the science leader in climate change and the Arctic
  - Coordinate and leverage efforts at all levels
  - Baseline observations and data were stressed over and over; monitoring, prediction, and projection also expected in the context of...
  - Improve knowledge and understanding of linkages between land, atmosphere and the ocean to help in providing critical information to decision makers
  - Contribute to international / Arctic governance
  - Provide information to support alternative energy (wind, tidal, and wave energy)

- Connect with communities and develop a public network approach to regional problems
Messages Heard - Summary

Overall the message we heard was:

- NOAA observations and data are deemed critical by a broad array of users
- NOAA should
  - Focus on being a science agency
  - Engage more with communities
  - Take a greater leadership role in climate and health
  - Take international leadership in the Arctic
  - Support shipping, fishing, and alternative energy
  - Utilize / incorporate traditional ecological knowledge in its science
- There is a sense that a fundamental change of lifestyle is on the horizon
For More Information, Contact:

Amy Holman
NOAA Alaska Regional Coordinator
222 West 7th Avenue, Suite 23
Anchorage, AK 99513
907-271-5334
amy.holman@noaa.gov