

For Immediate Release
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US Arctic Research Commission identifies top priorities for a changing Arctic

Bethel, AK - In response to rapid changes in the Arctic, scientific research should be expanded and focused on five major themes according to the "Report on the Goals and Objectives for Arctic Research 2013-2014 for the US Arctic Research Program," a report to be released tomorrow in Bethel, AK, by the US Arctic Research Commission (USARC). The Commission, a small independent federal agency, was established in 1984 by the Arctic Research and Policy Act. The report is published biennially and may be found at <http://www.arctic.gov>.

Fran Ulmer, appointed Chair of the Commission by President Obama in 2011, will release the report at USARC's 100th meeting to be held in Bethel, the hometown of fellow Commissioner Mary Ciuniq Pete. The meeting will include presentations by University of Alaska researchers and by Arctic residents from the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta region of Alaska.

The five priority research goals are:

1. Observe, understand, and respond to environmental change
2. Improve Arctic human health
3. Understand natural resources
4. Advance civil infrastructure research
5. Assess indigenous languages, identities and cultures.

Ulmer said, "Dramatic changes in the Arctic environment, and the pace of resource development, combine to make it very important that public and private decision makers have access to relevant research, including timely and comprehensive information and a more thorough understanding of Arctic ecosystems, resources, and infrastructure challenges. The Commission strives to be an effective link between the people who do the research and those who need the results. Part of that process is listening to the people who live in the Arctic. We look forward to the input and ideas from rural Alaskans in Bethel."

The Commission's research goals help shape the national Arctic Research Plan, the most recent version of which was released by the White House on February 19, 2013, and may be found here: http://www.nsf.gov/od/opp/arctic/iarpc/arc_res_plan_index.jsp. Implementation of this plan, developed by the Interagency Arctic Research Policy Committee under the auspices of the National Science and Technology Council, involves 12 teams from 14 federal agencies and nonfederal partners, constituting over 250 individuals.

USARC's mission is to develop and recommend US Arctic research policy to the President and to Congress and to build cooperative links in Arctic research within the federal government, with Arctic residents, the State of Alaska, researchers and international partners. Visit the USARC at www.arctic.gov and subscribe to our daily electronic newsletter, the "Arctic Update," which provides useful information about recent events, conferences, research initiatives and international news.

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