

Sharing Perspectives about Climate, Sea Ice, and Subsistence Walrus Hunting

Interim Project Report for Cooperative Agreement #H9807060006

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I presented the current state of this project at the 2006 Beringia Days meeting in Anchorage. A copy of that presentation and narrative has been provided to Peter Richter (NPS). To this point, I am very happy with the progress of this project; it has yielded a far richer set of data than originally hoped for. The scope of our research (although not the budget) has only changed slightly in Year 2. Modifications are detailed below:

Modification 1 – Communities Involved – Primary villages for study are Gambell, Savoonga, Diomede, Wales, and Shishmaref. A lack of data for Barrow precludes incorporation of that one Alaskan location. However, data for Gambell, Savoonga, and Diomede has been richer than expected with reasonable records now compiled since the 1950s (rather than the originally projected 1970).

Villages in Chukotka where harvest and environmental data exist include Lorino, Uelen, Inchoun, Enurmino, Novo-Chaplino, Sireniki, Enmelen, and Yanrakynnot. Unfortunately, the resolution of reported data has precluded direct comparison with Alaska data. However, I am hoping that one of two efforts will help resolve this situation.

1. Renewed efforts by the Eskimo Walrus Commission to develop a bilateral walrus harvest monitoring project would provide the opportunity to meet in person with Russian harvest monitors to access historical raw data from that region
2. The 2007 Beringia Days conference is in Anadyr, Chukotka. I would use that opportunity to meet with Russian researchers who have been involved with the Harvest Monitoring Program in the past to try and access raw data.

Modification 2 – Timing – Apart from the Russian harvest data, which I do anticipate gaining access to, the project objectives of compiling historical data on weather, sea ice, and walrus hunting season have been accomplished. The data has been richer than expected as mentioned above, which has slowed progress a little, particularly with respect to compiling all the local knowledge from harvest reports and observer field notes. Therefore, rather than presenting this project at the Spring 2006 Eskimo Walrus Commission meeting, I will now make an initial presentation of the data to the full Eskimo Walrus Commission meeting in December, 2006 in Anchorage.

Secondly, the extra effort and resultant delay in data compilation means that community visits and presentations at Nome, Wales, Savoonga, Gambell, Shishmaref, and Diomede will not take place until spring of 2007 (rather than the original plan of fall, 2006). However, as originally planned, we will discuss the historical data with hunters to assess how well they represent the local perceptions of their environment. We will work with local IRAs and the EWC to facilitate these community visits.