

Coastal Observation Technology System Project Summary – 2004

Project Name/Title: Alaska Ocean Observing System

Date Project Initiated: October 2003

Recipient Institution: Alaska Ocean Observing System at the Alaska SeaLife Center

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Brief Project Summary: The Alaska Ocean Observing System (AOOS) is part of a growing national network of integrated ocean observing systems that will improve the ability to rapidly detect changes in marine ecosystems and living resources, and predict future changes and their consequences for the public good. When fully developed, AOOS will

- Serve as the Alaska regional node for a national network of observing systems;
- Systematically deliver both real-time information and long-term trends about Alaska's ocean conditions and marine life;
- Provide to the public Internet access to cost-free data and information on coastal conditions; and
- Supply tailored products to meet the needs of mariners, scientists, industry, resource managers, educators, and other users of marine resources.

Accomplishments to Date:

- Hired a director, established an office, created Web site, began to create an organizational infrastructure for program consistent with regional association criteria under development by Ocean.US.
- Held Data Management and Communications (DMAC) workshop, established DMAC committee, drafted terms of reference, and began drafting pilot effort for Prince William Sound.
- Partnerships in place as evidenced by signed memorandum of agreement and funding commitments for two years of planning and pilot efforts.
- Held two Governance Committee meetings.
- Facilitated development of straw man AOOS implementation strategy for three regions in Alaska—Arctic, Bering Sea, and Gulf of Alaska—with more detailed strategy for Bering Sea region and Prince William Sound subregion.
- Actively participated in meetings and workshops to develop regional association criteria and National Federation of Regional Associations (NFRA).
- Widely promoted AOOS and potential benefits to variety of stakeholder groups and individuals, and in turn assessed needs of users for such a system.

Current Year Objectives:

- Determine governance structure that makes sense for Alaska and meets Ocean.US criteria.
- Organize stakeholder user needs assessments, planning workshops geared towards developing final product of strategic operational plans for the three regions: Arctic, Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands, and Gulf of Alaska.
- Develop statewide-integrated data system that conforms to national criteria and protocols.
- Obtain certification as the regional association for Alaska.
- Participate in national efforts, including the national DMAC committee and the National Federation of Regional Associations.
- Develop pilot projects.
- Integrate existing observing systems. Plan for and implement expanded, integrated systems for all three regions.

Partners: University of Alaska, North Pacific Research Board, Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council, Alaska SeaLife Center, Prince William Sound Science Center, Barrow Arctic Science Consortium, NOAA, Minerals Management Service, U.S. Geological Survey, Alaska Sea Grant, National Weather Service.