

# CLIMATE CHANGE UPDATE



## ALASKA REGION



### **FY 09 Budget Initiative**

Proposals were submitted to establish three Focal Areas in Region 7. Focal Areas are landscape-level units established to facilitate the Strategic Habitat Conservation process, a platform for cross-programmatic, multi-agency projects. Two of the Focal Areas, the Arctic and the Yukon and Kuskokwim River basins, have substantial crossover with the Ecological Planning Units used in the Forum, and climate change was the focus of the Arctic. Cross-walking with the Focal Area approach may facilitate and improve our ability to monitor and respond to climate-related effects on trust resources and responsibilities.

### **Directorate Meeting**

A summary of the Climate Change Forum and a progress report of activities in Region 7 since the Forum will be presented during the USGS-USFWS Directorate Leaders meeting to be held in Anchorage this July.

### **Coordination with USGS**

Refuges has two collaborative efforts in developing Service capability to predict and evaluate potential broad-scale climate change effects. First, Refuges has developed a climate change theme for funding under the USGS Refuge Cooperative Research Project initiated in regions 3 and 5. Three priority topics of interest were identified, including physical systems monitoring, wetland drying predictive modeling, and rate of vegetation community change in transitional zones. If accepted, the theme would be circulated as an RFP to USGS at up to \$100,000 per year for four years. Contact Danielle Jerry at 786-3335 for more information.

In the second project, investigators from FWS, USGS, Yellowstone Ecological Research Center, NASA, and Harvard University are collaborating on a proposal to address Ecological Forecasting on the Arctic and Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuges. The proposed research will use locational and demographic data for caribou (Arctic Refuge), and lesser scaup and trumpeter swans (Yukon Flats Refuge), combined with remotely sensed habitat data, to develop predictive models for wildlife abundance and distribution. These models, also known as Decision Support Tools, will be useful at the spatial and temporal scales necessary to implement Strategic Habitat Conservation initiatives. Contact Mark Bertram at 456-0446 or Dave Payer at 455-1830 for more information.

### **Climate Change Web Page**

The Climate Change website, which was initially developed to provide information on the Climate Change Forum, will be updated and maintained to provide the final report from the Climate Change Forum, copies of PowerPoints presented at the Forum, an up-to-date literature section, links to other useful websites, and descriptions of current climate change related activities in the Region.

### **Climate Change Modeling**

Building predictive modeling capacity was a common recommendation among the breakout groups at the Climate Change Forum. There are two new climate change modeling capabilities that may be useful tools for Region 7: Scenarios Network for Alaska Planning (SNAP; University of Alaska), and Alaska's Center for Climate Assessment and Policy (ACCAP; NOAA). We currently have a brief window of opportunity to request projects through these programs at no cost. For more information on this opportunity, contact Karen Murphy at 786-3501.

### **Executive Roundtable**

USFWS and USGS directors initiated a Roundtable discussion to seek collaborative opportunities with Federal and State agencies with regard to addressing climate change issues in the state. The Roundtable was composed of representatives from six federal agencies, three state agencies, and the University of Alaska, Fairbanks. All participants agreed that a follow-up meeting would be beneficial; the second Roundtable is scheduled for July 12, 2007. Agenda topics include cross agency prioritization and funding of research, identification of data gaps, and developing a monitoring network.

### **DOI Climate Change Task Force**

In early May, the Secretary of Interior convened a DOI Climate Change Task Force with representation from all bureaus to coordinate and focus departmental policy, management, and science efforts to respond to climate change. A parallel effort within the Service is being undertaken by the Climate Change Workgroup. Richard Hannon, John Morton, LaVerne Smith, and Charla Sterne are on the workgroup for the Alaska Region, and LaVerne Smith and John Morton are representing the Alaska Region on the DOI Task Force.