

Meeting Notes

Yukon-Kuskokwim Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

2022 Q1 Climate Adaptation Work Group Meeting

March 21, 2022 | 1:30-3:30pm

Agenda Item 1. Welcome + Introductions

Attendees:

Adelheid Hermann	Alaska Center for Climate Assessment and Policy (ACCAP), International Arctic Research Center (IARC) at the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF)	acherrmann@alaska.edu
Brent Hove	Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC)	brhove@anthc.org
Eric Evon	Association of Village Council Presidents, Community Development Division	eevon1@avcp.org
Erin Leaders	Alaska Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA) Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (DHS&EM)	erin.leaders@alaska.gov
Florence Kargi	Coastal Villages Region Fund (CVRF)	Florence_N@coastalvillages.org
Jocelyn Fenton	Denali Commission	jfenton@denali.gov
Joel Neimeyer	Neimeyer Consulting	joel.neimeyer@gmail.com
Kathlena Tsosie	Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation (YKHC)	Kathlena_Tsosie@ykhc.org
Katie Kashatok	Coastal Villages Region Fund (CVRF)	katie_k@coastalvillages.org
Krista Heeringa	Alaska Climate Adaptation Science Center (AK CASC) at the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF)	kmheeringa@alaska.edu
Malinda Chase	Alaska Center for Climate Assessment and Policy (ACCAP), International Arctic Research Center (IARC) at the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF)	mjchase@alaska.edu
Oscar Evon	Coastal Villages Region Fund (CVRF)	oscar_e@coastalvillages.org
Philana Miles	Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (ADOT&PF) Central Region Planning Office	philana.miles@alaska.gov
Sally Russell Cox	Alaska Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development (DCCED)	sally.cox@alaska.gov
Samantha Angiak-Miller	Donlin Gold	sangaia-miller@DonlinGold.com
Terry Murphy	DHSE&M	terry.murphy@alaska.gov
Tisha Kuhns	Calista Corporation	tkuhns@calistacorp.com

Agenda Item 2. Purpose of Today's Meeting

- Measures of Success – see supplemental materials

Agenda Items 3-4. Measures of Success and Action Planning

STRATEGY 3: Conduct capacity building and implement proactive solutions for communities to respond to climate change and ensure all YK communities have active hazard mitigation plans and climate adaptation plans.

PRIORITY ACTIONS	LEAD/PARTNERS
<p>3-A. Complete risk assessments, FEMA Hazard Mitigation Plans, and associated reports (e.g., Preliminary Engineering Report) for communities to address near-term and long-term threats. This Action focuses on FEMA hazard mitigation plans, which allow the community to make annual updates that incorporate new elements (e.g., other plans and reports). DHSEM is working on a regional approach to hazard mitigation planning with FEMA. Communities can adopt other planning documents into the HMP (e.g., BIA Long Range Transportation Plans, sanitation preliminary engineering reports, housing studies).</p>	<p>Lead: Communities Partners: ANTHC, Calista, CETC, academic institutions, DCRA, DGGS, VSW, YKHC, school districts, village corporations (as key landowners), AVCP Housing Authority, Yuut Elitnarviat</p> <p>HMP Approving Agencies: FEMA, DHSEM</p>

To learn more about climate adaption planning, check out the following guidance and resources listed on the [Alaska Climate Adaptation Science Center website](#), especially the [Tribal Climate Adaptation Guidebook](#), and hose listed in on the [BIA Tribal Climate Resilience Program website](#).

Priority Action 3-A. Hazard Mitigation Plans: Terry Murphy (DHS&EM) gave an overview of FEMA Hazard Mitigation Plans (HMPs):

- HMP is an important document to document hazards and to fund brick-and-mortar projects pre- and post-disaster declaration.
 - A FEMA Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) may be informed by and/or include other documents as attachments to the core plan. Many involve risk assessments that inform the HMP and provide the documentation needed to access implementation funding. Some Tribes are doing their climate adaptation plan(s) that are not FEMA HMPs. It is the FEMA-approved HMP informed by the risk assessment(s) that sets the community up to access FEMA funding.
- HMPs can be done by a city, borough, tribe, or as a multi-jurisdiction plan. The Hazard Mitigation Plan belongs to the community.
 - The State prefers the multi-jurisdiction option because it is generally a more efficient use of resources and involves coordination among all local government entities in the community. If each entity (cities, boroughs, *and* tribes) in Alaska did their own plan, Alaska would have 400-500 hazard mitigation plans that would have to be updated every five years.
 - The State (DHS&EM) may work with contractors to facilitate the planning process. The State only has about four people to staff these plans and plan updates. Without the capacity to draft the number of plans needed, DHS&EM must work with contractors.

- The multi-jurisdiction HMPs include both tribal *and* city infrastructure. If the HMP is done by the city or tribe alone, it would only cover the infrastructure of that entity.
- A local government “entity” can be a city, tribe, or borough.
- In the Yukon-Kuskokwim region, there are a total of 53 entities (48 communities). Of these, 16 communities have current (or in-progress) HMPs, 6 are multi-jurisdictional, and 14 are not current. We are trying to keep up.
- The entire HMP process can take up to two years from developing the plan to getting FEMA funding. It can take another one to two years if the plan lapses.
 - It takes six months to one year to do a plan.
 - The costs for an HMP are usually \$25,000-30,000 per plan, and they must be renewed every five years.
 - Once the plan is done, it is submitted to the State or FEMA. The State has 30 days to review it. If it meets all requirements, it is forwarded to Federal FEMA, which has a 45-day review period.
 - Once FEMA conditionally approves the plan, it is formally adopted by community resolution(s). FEMA then approves the plan for the next five years from the date of approval.
 - Annual updates to the HMP may be done and included in appendix.
 - If there is a federally declared disaster and no Hazard Mitigation Plan, the State can write an Extraordinary Circumstance Letter, which allows the community to do a Hazard Mitigation Plan (within one year) and the project to proceed once it is awarded.
- Federally Recognized Tribes and the State of Alaska can submit directly to FEMA. The State takes a letter of intent from the City or Tribe and creates an HMP if there is funding available.
 - A city or borough can apply to the State of Alaska.
 - A tribe has the option of going tribal direct to FEMA or it can apply through the State.
 - A multi-jurisdictional HMPs requires that the community apply to the State, but DHS&EM is asking the Federal FEMA if a tribal direct can fund a multi-jurisdictional plan.
 - Tribal direct does not hurt the State’s feelings because it allows the community to have the plan in place.
- The State is trying to track communities that have no plan and use seven percent of its current FEMA disaster funding to complete HMPs.

- The State is also using BRIC (Building Resilience and Infrastructure in Communities) funding to support HMPs.
- Akiak used American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to update their HMP for Governmental Services.
- Joel discussed using the Hazard Mitigation Plan to identify phases of Managed Retreat for communities that are facing severe erosion. It is a simple way of communicating what is going on. With the stepwise process of doing a risk assessment, then the HMP, etc., we can arrive at implementation steps earlier. Competing for competitive grants involves defining the risk and explaining what you will do to address it, with a timeline and a budget. For Managed Retreat, or Protect-in-Place, discuss simply what is happening.
 - Joel discussed two kinds of risk assessments for riverine communities, using Akiak as an example. In Fall 2013, there was an erosion event, and they did a bathometric survey. In Spring 2019, they did another bathometric survey, and in a couple of days had a risk assessment from NRCS. They were able to create a trendline because of the two surveys and define where the river is going. They don't have an answer of when it will stop, but we do have a trend of how the movement of the river is affecting the village. The 2019 HMP included a desire to understand what is going on with the whole river. We reached out to academic institutions and began working with Iowa State and the University of Washington to do a study funded by the National Science Foundation that could lead to a larger study of the whole river to understand the science. The initial studies that looked only at the river in Akiak start to get complex when looking at the entire river system.
- The State does community mapping. Sally has been using the 2019 Statewide Threat Assessment, so the threatened communities rise to the top as priorities.
 - She described the RiskMap Program: FEMA's vision is that RiskMap would help gather data and provide risk assessments to inform the HMPs. It has been challenging to align the two processes. The RiskMap process takes two-to-five years. The Hazard Mitigation Plan process takes just over a year (a much shorter timeline). RiskMap is now looking at the next five-year HMP update for communities.
 - Mapping and risk assessments (e.g., erosion) are critical to inform decisions about managed retreat, relocation, etc. for the communities that are facing those kinds of decisions. What will the longer-term effects be? What you see does not necessarily tell you what will happen over time. Start with local knowledge, expand into the future: what is likely to happen in 20 years, 50 years? These decisions are often expensive, so having more time to plan for them helps.
 - Tisha agreed with Sally's statement. Land loss is prevalent and impacts ANCSA entitlements as well. The Village and Regional ANCSA Corporations (who own the

subsurface land rights) must determine if available replacement acreage exists that is sufficient to rebuild or relocate within the 50+ year erosion inundation maps.

- The group discussed the possibility of taking a regional approach to the HMP process.
 - The State is now working on a regional HMP for the North Slope Borough. They can do this because the Federal FEMA recognizes the Borough as a local government entity.
 - DHS&EM explained that because there is no borough in the Yukon-Kuskokwim region and many unincorporated areas, a regional plan could only be done for the YK region if the State itself became the overarching government entity for that plan.
 - The program is structured so that an over-arching government entity is required; it is based on how they do things in Lower 48.
 - Ideally, DHS&EM would see the program use the 10 Oil Spill Contingency Plan regions in Alaska as the regions. For now, they are trying to work with the boroughs to complete the HMPs as much as possible.
 - Calista's region has 10 units.
 - The question was posed whether the tribes could do a regional Hazard Mitigation Plan through regional consortiums or come together and decide they want to work on a plan at the sub-regional level, through an agreement among themselves that they forward to FEMA. If they have a formal partnership with other entities as a multi-jurisdictional approach, is that something where the tribe is the lead on behalf of other entities on sub-regional level? All of our Native non-profits have a governing function. That is the one our tribes go to more than up north with the Borough structure. How do we align funding through that approach?
 - Terry Murphy (DHS&EM) explained that FEMA does not consider non-profits to be governmental entities, although there are some exceptions, such as the Central Council of the Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska. Terry asked about this and received a response letter from FEMA in 2008 to the effect that FEMA would not recognize the Tribal non-profits as governmental entities.
 - Joel Neimeyer responded that since 2008, there has been a substantive shift in the way FEMA works with Tribes because the Stafford Act was amended to recognize Tribes. It may be conceivable with this region to come back to FEMA with a sub-regional plan proposal. Although FEMA does not have the authority through the Stafford Act to recognize tribal organizations in the same way, there is a statutory disconnect to the way the Federal Government typically works in Indian Country. Joel asserted that this is a federal matter to resolve not a state matter to resolve and requested that DHS&EM share a copy of the 2008 FEMA response letter.

- Erin Leaders can answer questions. Please reach out with any questions about Hazard Mitigation Plans and the plan process:
 - Erin Leaders
State Hazard Mitigation Plan Manager
mvamitigation@alaska.gov
907-428-7055

PRIORITY ACTIONS	LEAD/PARTNERS
<p>3-B. Provide technical assistance and training to communities to obtain federal funding, conduct assessments, and manage ongoing communications around climate change response. AVCP’s Resilience Division (anticipated to be fully developed by the end of 2022) may act as a convening organization. The BIA is holding listening sessions focused on climate adaptation to inform U.S. Department of Interior-wide initiatives.</p>	<p>Lead: AVCP Community Resilience Division, Alaska Climate Adaptation Science Center Partners: CETC, Tribal liaisons, Alaska Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development, Raychelle, Pew Charitable Trusts, BIA Tribal Resiliency Program</p>
<p>3-C. Build capacity among communities and Tribes to advocate for more flexible FEMA regulations and other agency programs to meet the immediate needs of communities. AVCP submitted AFN Resolution 20-20, which passed at the AVCP Convention in September and the AFN Convention in December 2020.</p>	<p>Lead: AVCP Partners: ANTHC, Climate Adaptation Science Center, CETC, Alaska Center for Climate Assessment and Policy</p>
<p>3-D. Establish a Collective Impact Initiative: Set a goal to develop a certain number of climate adaptation professionals from the YK region to work in the region. Align entities to leverage educational opportunities, internships, employment opportunities, etc. A concept paper was drafted that explains how a formal program could be developed to implement a Collective Impact initiative focused on increasing the number and capacity of climate professionals from and working in the region.</p>	<p>Lead: TBD (Alaska Climate Adaptation Science Center?) Partners: TBD</p>

Priority Actions 3-B through 3-D: Slated for future meeting discussion(s).

- The Climate Adaptation Working Group actions are all timely because of developments with the Tribal Climate Resilience Program, which could be a key funder.
- There is also a lot of discussion around 3-D in the University.
- The Adapt YK Delta climate adaptation strategies were brought into the YK CEDS process to open up additional partnerships, funding and other support to maintain momentum.
- The Denali Commission should have more information soon about partnerships with the Tribal Climate Resilience Program.

Priority Measures of Success

Priority Measures of Success	Data Source(s)	Where this is at Today	Where we want to be in 5 Years
Hazard Mitigation Plans: Number of FEMA Hazard Mitigation Plans completed for Y-K communities.	Alaska Homeland Security tracks which communities have assessments and can report back to the Climate Working Group. <i>(BIA has an online map that shows the number of awards and gives a synopsis of the funded project, but it might not list whether an assessment has taken place.)</i>	13 communities in the YK Region have current FEMA hazard mitigation plans. Another 3 communities have HMPs in progress.	All 48 communities in the YK Region have current, completed FEMA hazard mitigation plans.
Jobs: [#] jobs in Bethel + Kusilvak Census Area(s) employed in Government + Professional, scientific and technical services representing [%] of total regional workforce in [YEAR].	Bureau of Economic Analysis Government + Professional, scientific and technical services jobs serve as a proxy for jobs related to climate adaptation.	4,317 jobs in Bethel + Kusilvak Census Area(s) employed in Government + Professional, scientific and technical services representing 41.36% of total regional workforce in 2020.	[#] jobs in Bethel + Kusilvak Census Area(s) employed in Government + Professional, scientific and technical services representing [%] of total regional workforce in 2025.
Wages: \$[#] annual wages to Bethel + Kusilvak Census Area(s) employed in Government + Professional, scientific and technical services, representing [%] of total regional wages in [YEAR].	Ditto comment above.	\$348,183,000 annual wages to Bethel + Kusilvak Census Area(s) employed in Government + Professional, scientific and technical services representing 50.25% of total regional wages in 2020.	\$[#] annual wages to Bethel + Kusilvak Census Area(s) employed in Government + Professional, scientific and technical services representing [%] of total regional wages in 2025.

Economic Indicators for Strategy 3:

- Terry Murphy (DHS&EM) pointed out that the Hazard Mitigation Plan might not be the best place to capture employment and wage data for climate adaptation activities; it does not fit with the intention of the plan.
- Adelheid Hermann (ACCAP/UAF): It's difficult to define what workforce development means in terms of implementing the climate adaptation plans that have been done in Alaska. For example, in the Bering Sea area, the climate adaptation plan included building meat racks. Although we need a workforce to do that, it is not what federal agencies have in mind when they talk about jobs and workforce development.

Agenda Item 5. Next Steps and Wrap-Up

Next working group meeting:

- **2022 Q2 Meeting:** The group discussed scheduling a next Climate Adaptation Working Group meeting in May to discuss funding for priority actions and key information for Priority Action 3-D. As time allows, the group may also share updates on the Measures of Success discussion and Priority Actions 3-B and 3-C.
 - **Timing:** May 9-20. Schedule 1.5-2 hours for the meeting between May 9 and May 20, 2022 to address timely issues with Tribal Climate Adaptation.
 - **Focus:** Actions 3-D and funding (3-B and 3-C if time allows)
 - **Invitations:** Additional invitations to the May meeting should go to a few individuals who may become partners or could bring potential funding to the actions for Strategy 3 (Climate Adaptation).

Other follow-up:

- Agnew::Beck will follow up with AVCP regarding scheduling and possibly providing meeting support for the next Climate Adaptation Working Group meeting in May.
 - Coordinate with Malinda Chase and Adelheid Hermann to prepare for discussions about Priority Action 3-D Establish a Collective Impact Initiative: Set a goal to develop a certain number of climate adaptation professionals from the YK region to work in the region. Align entities to leverage educational opportunities, internships, employment opportunities, etc.
- Agnew::Beck will follow up with AVCP and/or EDA to resolve how best to define and track economic indicators for climate adaptation actions.
- DHS&EM agreed to share a copy of the 2008 FEMA response letter regarding regional Hazard Mitigation Plans with Joel Neimeyer and the Climate Adaptation Working Group (by extension).