

Community –Based Research and Monitoring

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Local Observations and Scientific Perspectives in Dialogue: Efforts to preserve and access the record

This paper reports on two projects in the Interior Alaskan village of Tanana. The first combines local observations and scientific investigations of river ice conditions. The second identifies perceptions of climate change impact on subsistence livelihood. Both are archived on the University of Alaska Jukebox Program.

The projects began with community members who identified key environmental issues on videotaped interviews that have been preserved in some cases in their entirety on Jukebox, a web based program that allows us to update information and compare observations over time. The observations of community members are based on livelihood concerns such as safe travel, health of the fish, availability of firewood. Their concerns became the starting point for engaging scientists and scientific literature to help explain the processes at work and to create a dialogue between community members and scientists, one that informs both groups.

In this paper we will describe how we attempt to create and preserve the dialogue through aspects of the research such as: village monitoring and recording of travel conditions, site visits to dangerous river conditions, hydrological instrumentation, and a workshop that provided opportunity for scientists and local experts to discuss specific conditions together. Jukebox provides the archive for an expanding record of first person observations.

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