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The Alaskan Inuit Food Sovereignty Initiative is led by a 17-member Steering Committee, comprised of Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) Alaska Member Organizations, collaborating comanagement organizations, as well as an elder, youth, and hunter representative.

Doreen Fog-Leavitt, Inupiat Community of the Arctic Slope Willie Goodwin, Maniilag Association Mary David, Kawerak, Incorporated Jennifer Hooper, Association of Village Council Presidents Nicole Kanayurak, North Slope Borough Nathan Hadley, Jr., Northwest Arctic Borough Marvin Okitkun, Alaska Beluga Whale Committee Arnold Brower, Jr., Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission Taqulik Hepa, Alaska Migratory Bird Co-Management Council Millie Hawley, Alaska Nannut Co-Management Council Vera Metcalf, Eskimo Walrus Commission Billy Adams, Ice Seal Committee James Nicori, Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission James Stotts, ICC Alaska President Merlin Koonooka, ICC Alaska Elder Board Member Chris Apassingok, Youth representative Thomas Napageak, Jr., Hunter representative from the North Slope Region

This report summarizes the outcomes of the Bethel Steering Committee meeting.

"Time to have those regulations changed to adapt to today's world. We know how to adapt to our surroundings; we learn how to adapt to weather because it is within us and was taught from generation to generation. These regulations are stiff and not adaptable, and they need to be made adaptable to our environment and surroundings... We need to bridge the gap and live in a way that our people are not criminalized for our way of life."

"We are here because status quo is not enough. Don't want to see our children go through this mess, harassment and criminalization. What we are doing is towards saving food security in perpetuity that is livable by our culture."

"We are doing something that is tremendously awesome in many ways that can change our culture back to the way it should have always been to benefit the people who can't go out hunting, to teach the young, keep moving forward.

"We have to recognize our ancestors who survived all these thousands of years before... Proud to take part to strengthen our food security for us and those ahead of us."

"We did not give up our culture. Our access and ability to feed our communities is our culture. We did not give that up. We are done being in someone else's box. It's time we define what we want for ourselves."

"So thankful I get to feed my people and people around me year-round. Thankful to come to this meeting ... and better Inuit way of life. Our food sovereignty is going to a whole new level with all of our regions as one."

"We don't have autonomy, desire for subsistence hunting for ourselves. We are regulated by someone else who needs to better understand our livelihood."

"We need to create something that comes from us... It's really exciting to think of developing something that started with us."

Executive Summary

On January 9-10, 2019, the Alaskan Inuit Food Sovereignty Initiative kicked off in Utqiagvik, Alaska with the first of three Initiative Steering Committee meetings to be held in Inuit regions of Alaska. The Initiative is a three-year effort being facilitated by ICC Alaska and will run through September of 2021. ICC Alaska member organizations and co-management organizations are leading this effort. The Initiative responds to a direct call to action from Alaskan Inuit and follows up on ICC Alaska's earlier work affirmed by and reflected in the final report of Alaska Native Review Commission and published in VILLAGE JOURNEY; the Alaskan Inuit Food Security Conceptual Framework; the Food Sovereignty and Self-Governance project, and the ICC Wildlife Management Summit.

The ICC Wildlife Management Summit brought together Inuit from Chukotka, Alaska, Canada, and Greenland in November 2017 and resulted in the Circumpolar Inuit Wildlife Management Strategy, which seeks to ensure a sustainable future for Inuit use of wildlife through the establishment of the Circumpolar Inuit Wildlife Management Committee and the Circumpolar Inuit Wildlife Network. The Committee is the interface between Inuit wildlife management experts, groups, committees, and organizations and will work to recognize and build onto existing bi-lateral and multi-lateral relationships, mechanisms, and agreements at the international level to advance Inuit food sovereignty. The Committee and Network aims to unify Inuit to collectively promote, develop, and maintain our rights to self-determination, culture, food sovereignty, and sustainable use of our food resources across national and international borders throughout Inuit Nunaat (homelands).

This Initiative is a direct follow up to the ICC Wildlife Management Summit to carry this work forward, aiming to create a movement to unify and organize Alaskan Inuit through three regional meetings and one statewide Summit. The Summit is the centerpiece of the Initiative and will bring together Inuit from the North Slope, Northwest Arctic, Bering Strait, and Yukon-Kuskokwim regions of Alaska to hear directly from community members on a way forward, to set the framework for the Alaskan Inuit Food Sovereignty Management Action Plan.

The Action Plan will empower our people to seek reform and justice as we collectively work towards securing access and management rights over our traditional food resources and to create long-term systematic and policy change that will advance food sovereignty and benefit Inuit communities throughout our four regions of Alaska.

Through this Initiative, we hope to gain recognition of and respect for our rights to access and manage our wildlife and other resources in Alaska to ensure that we can progress towards this collective aspiration for international collaboration of wildlife management across Inuit Nunaat.



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Special Acknowledgement

Special acknowledgement goes out to ICC Alaska member organizations: North Slope Borough, Arctic Slope Regional Corporation, Inupiat Community of the Arctic Slope, NANA Regional Corporation, Northwest Arctic Borough, Maniilaq Association, Bering Straits Native Corporation, Kawerak, Incorporated, the Association of Village Council Presidents, Nicole Kanayurak (former ICC Alaska Youth Board Member) and the partnering co-management organizations: Alaska Beluga Whale Committee, Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission, Alaska Migratory Bird Co-Management Council, Alaska Nannut Co-Management Council, Eskimo Walrus Commission, Ice Seal Committee, Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission who supported and committed to this collective Inuit-led effort.

A special thank you also goes out to the community of Bethel who welcomed us well. This appreciation also extends to the Association of Village Council Presidents who donated their space for this meeting to take place. Special thank you to Jennifer Hooper for going out of her way to give us rides, help set up the meeting space, and help us make coffee during the meeting.

And special thank you to all of the Steering Committee members for your time and commitment to serve on behalf of your regional communities/the Initiative's project beneficiaries, who live within 83 Alaskan Inuit communities that span across our four Inuit regions of Alaska.



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The Bethel Steering Committee meeting was facilitated by Vernae Angnaboogok with assistance from Eilene Adams, as well as facilitation design support from Jered Stewart. This report was written by Vernae Angnaboogok.

Meeting Participants

The workshop was attended by 15 of the 17 Alaskan Inuit Steering Committee members, with the Northwest Arctic Borough and Ice Seal Committee members unable to make it. Three others joined the Meeting as observers. See below for a list of participants and observers.

Alaskan Inuit Food Sovereignty Steering Committee Members Present:

George Edwardson	Inupiat Community of the Arctic Slope
Willie Goodwin	Maniilaq Association
Jacob Martin	Nome Eskimo Community - Kawerak, Incorporated
	Representative
Jennifer Hooper	Association of Village Council Presidents
Nicole Kanayurak	North Slope Borough
Marvin Okitkun	Alaska Beluga Whale Committee
Taqulik Hepa	Alaska Migratory Birds Co-Management Council
Arnold Brower, Jr.	Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission
Millie Hawley	Alaska Nannut Co-management Council
Bryan Rookok	Eskimo Walrus Commission
Billy Adams	Ice Seal Committee
James Nicori	Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission
James Stotts	ICC Alaska President
Merlin Koonooka	ICC Alaska Elder Board Member
Chris Apassingok	Youth Steering Committee Member
Thomas Napageak, Jr.	Hunter Member from the North Slope Region
Others present:	
John Orr	Association of Village Council Presidents
Mardy Hanson	Association of Village Council Presidents
Lauri O'Brien	Association of Village Council Presidents

Lauri O'Brien Eilene Adams Vernae Angnaboogok Susan Apassingok Association of Village Council President Association of Village Council President Association of Village Council President ICC Alaska Project Assistant ICC Alaska Project Director Mother of Chris Apassingok

Introduction

On April 24-25, the second Initiative Steering Committee meeting was held in Bethel, Alaska. The objectives of this meeting were to **1**) Provide clear distinction between the two ICC facilitated projects: the Food Sovereignty and Self Governance Project and the Alaskan Inuit Food Sovereignty Initiative; **2**) to Review the Utqiagvik Meeting Report; and **3**) build off the outcomes of the Utqiagvik meeting to set the agenda and facilitation style for the Alaskan Inuit Food Sovereignty Summit, to be held in Nome Alaska on September 10-12, 2019.

Steering Committee members gave an update on the work they have been doing to build momentum in their regions in anticipation of the upcoming Summit. The Committee reviewed and discussed the IPCOMM Gap Analysis project and discussed edits to be made on the Utqiagvik Steering Committee meeting report. They spent some time mapping our dependencies within the systems of management in place today and worked together to decide upon what is needed to break away from those dependencies to advance Alaskan Inuit food sovereignty. They mapped out threats to our food sovereignty and strategized ways to overcome them.

Outcomes of Bethel Steering Committee Meeting included Steering Committee:

- Identified three main focus areas for the Summit
 - 1) To present three options on systems/approaches to management of our traditional food resources to Summit participants
 - 2) Place focus on the cultural underpinnings of our [Inuit] approach to management, discuss an Inuit ecosystem approach to management
 - 3) Implementation- planning for the next phase of this Initiative
- Agreed to form an Executive Committee comprised of one Steering Committee member from each region and the ICC Alaska President



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Meeting Summary

Willie Goodwin opened the meeting with a prayer. Steering Committee members and ICC Alaska provided an update on our collective efforts to build momentum for this work as we move forward. Vernae provided a clear distinction between the ICC Food Sovereignty and Self-Governance Project and the Alaskan Inuit Food Sovereignty Initiative. Steering Committee members held a brief discussion on the Indigenous People's Council for Marine Mammals (IPCoMM) Gap Analysis and their potential participation. Following that, Steering Committee members reviewed and discussed the draft Utqiagvik Meeting Report.

Throughout the meeting, the Steering Committee break out groups addressed threats to our Food Sovereignty, mapped our dependencies within the framework/system of management currently in place and how to overcome them, brainstormed ideas for the top three Summit themes and ideas for keynote speakers and targeted invitations.

Threats to Alaskan Inuit Food Sovereignty

During the Steering Committee breakout activities, threats related to Inuit food sovereignty, impacts to hunting, and access to hunting areas were identified. Threats fell into three major categories: shipping, wildlife regulations, and climate change. Once the threats were identified, a list of possible solutions as to how to respond to the threats were developed.



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Shipping/Vessel Traffic Threats and Solutions:

The Steering Committee emphasized that shipping, including tourism, is impacting all marine mammals during their migration due to the rapidly challenging climate and increased ship traffic. The following shipping threats and solutions were identified and further discussed to offer possible solutions.

Threats	Solutions
Deep Draft Port in Nome: Increase in	Be more active with regulatory bodies in
tourism	charge of shipping, including the International
 Increased shipping/trade tankers 	

Bethel Steering Committee Meeting

April 24-25, 2019

 Higher likelihood of oil spills 	Maritime Organization (IMO) and making
 Logistical issues with the size of 	sure ships follow the Polar Code
Nome	
 Depend on U.S. Coast Guard to 	
provide assistance if there were a	
technological shipping disaster	
Tankers/ships are getting bigger with more	Communication is key between ships and
capacity	community members
Ship traffic disrupts the migration and	Port Access Route Study- Marine insurance
behavior of animals that we rely on. Russia	companies should encourage ships to use the
is increasing shipping.	proposed two-way shipping route
Opening of the Arctic passageways are going	Bring awareness to the global community to
to increase with the increasingly larger ships.	understand the challenges with shipping in the
	Arctic and within the Bering Sea
Fish populations are already being affected	Polar Code: ships need to abide by it and
by shipping	include protections of "subsistence" areas
	Increase communication with/from the Arctic
	Waterway Safety Committee
Off-shore Seismic testing is changing the	Communicate with appropriate agencies
abundance of fish with explosions and	(DEC, ADF&G, NOAA)
fracking	
Concern for whether the salmon will be able	Every coastal community should be equipped
to migrate	with Automatic Identification System (AIS) in
• Shipping will affect all areas, even	every ship that is always on
areas not directly dealing with vessel	
traffic	
Protecting various species in the food chain	Make sure that commercial activity honors
is a major concern	restricted/protected "subsistence" areas
Heavy Fuel Oil/Bunker fuel could be	Develop more robust contingency plans for
devastating, with ships still using it. Fuel	communities
could sink and get washed back up a year	
after, repeating devastation	
There is ZERO infrastructure to deal with a	
spill	
	l

Threats and Solutions within Wildlife Regulations

The threats to our food sovereignty within wildlife regulations really ties back to one of the leading drivers of Inuit food insecurity, the lack of decision-making power and authority within the management of Inuit traditional food resources. Regulations do not fit our culture. The physical and intellectual spaces within management that Inuit should be occupying are being taken up by special interest groups.

April 24-25, 2019

Threats	Solutions
 Regulations do not fit our culture Does not allow for flexibility to adapt with Inuit hunting seasons Bag limits Oriented towards single species management Are not looking at the management of habitat, including the water and air They regulate what they can control Too many different processes Too many competing/confusing/convoluted layers of regulation/jurisdictions No preference for us to hunt and fish to put enough food away for our families over commercial/sport hunting Regulations w/access control too restricted (National Parks, etc.) Planned roadblocks for what we [Inuit] do Not measuring cumulative impacts in a holistic way Sea ice cannot be regulated in a changing environment Regulations impact safety We are not a part of the process to develop regulations Inconsistency and inappropriate 	Solutions Regulations do not fit our culture Inuit need to be meaningfully engaged in the management of our resources The #1 priority is to have our rights upheld to utilize the resources for food that is critical to sustaining our culture. Implement an Inuit Ecosystem Approach to Management Culturally grounded and appropriate Understood and carried out through our worldview Utilizes Indigenous Knowledge to inform decisions Recognizes our customary laws
 enforcement over hunting/fishing Special Interest Groups Strong influence over public perception on what is not understood about our hunting culture Misrepresentation in legal matters related to wildlife (lawsuits) Drive the focus and control the agenda They have financial and human capacity Divides communities based on different projects 	 Special Interest Groups Recognize Indigenous Peoples as more than stakeholders and instead as partners We need to occupy our own space Organize and ensure we are all on the same page Identify our allies and foes Develop our own priorities/agendas rather than being reactive Break and correct their messaging that misunderstands and is harmful to our culture

Threats and Solutions on Climate Change

The threats related to climate change ranged from invasive species to new diseases in animals, loss of critical habitat and changes in migratory patterns of the animals that we depend upon. The Steering Committee expressed the need to have adaptive and flexible wildlife management, inclusive of Inuit and our Knowledge in order to have a holistic understanding of climate change threats and impacts.

Threats	Solutions
Invasive Species	Adapt and harvest with the changing seasons
 Decrease in king crab 	(including regulations)
 Hanasaki crab increase 	
 Stellar seals are moving further north 	
 Increase in pollock 	
New diseases in animals due to new species	Holistic management of all species as
introduced to the ecosystem due to warmer	opposed to single species management
water temperatures	
Loss of species in their natural habitat due to	Advocate for adaptive, flexible management
the warming water temperatures	due to climate change
Changing migration patterns and timing of	Flexible adaptive management
all species	
Changes in customary practices due to	Educate ourselves on how we can help reduce
changes in climate	Co2
	Insulate cellars to help them stay cold
Ice cellars are melting. Some people resort to	With new species showing up, management
using freezers.	needs to be flexible to allow for regions to
	hunt non-traditional species that are now
	showing up in their region.
Bird die offs probably due to hunger	
Thinner river and ocean ice posing an	
increased hazard to hunting/navigation	
Record snowfall: animals threatened and	
unable to get to feeding grounds	



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Mapping our dependencies within the system of wildlife management that we are party to:

Steering Committee members collectively mapped out the management system that we are party to. The following photo illustrates the heavy inequity that Alaskan Inuit face within the wildlife management system.



In the center, we have Alaskan Inuit food sovereignty. To the left of the red dividing line, we have Tribal law and our hunters. To the right of the red line, this map demonstrates our dependence on someone else's management system where Western laws at the state and federal level, as well as Western science dominates and controls the management of our traditional food resources. This is not co-management. We are not considered equal partners throughout all stages of the management of our resources, from setting the agenda, to research, and in developing and enforcing regulations.

The following chart illustrates the inequity Inuit are facing, as we are party to someone else's wildlife management system.

Dependencies within the system of wildlife management	
Inuit Food Sovereignty	Someone Else's Management System that we
	are party to
Inuit traditional management practices	Colonization
Tribal Law	Western Law
 AEWC is empowered by Tribal resolution 78-14 from all of the 11 whaling villages 	 Laws that are meant to protect us are not being enforced Federal Law Suits – 9th Circuit Court of
Our Hunters	Appeals
 Seasonal cycle harvests – fall, winter, spring Significance of young hunter's first catch and sharing Example: caribou meat hung for flavor, has to be taken/eaten before 	 Open 10th Circuit Court of Appeals that does not criminalize us for hunting Fines Government regulations based on and dependent on land ownership State vs. Fed. Lands Funding

Bethel Steering Committee Meeting April 24-25, 2019

next sunrise or meat is not edible:	 Section 119 of the Marine Mammal
silatchiaq upingaanik tuttu	Protection Act (MMPA)
Protections under the United Nations	International
 United Nations Declaration on the 	 UN Food and Agriculture Organization
Rights of Indigenous Peoples	(FAO) does not acknowledge hunting as
 Free, Prior, and Informed Consent 	a means for providing our food
 Our Rights to our food 	 International Whaling Commission
	(IWC)
	 Treaties and International Acts - Whale Communication Act 8 Minutes Dial
	Convention Act & Migratory Bird
	Treaty
	Federal
	 Marine Mammal Management – U.S. Fight and Wildlife Service 9 Netional
	Fish and Wildlife Service & National
	Marine Fisheries Service
	 Management is based on Science with
	Indigenous Knowledge only as
	considered
	 Migratory Birds
	Reality: they advise, and we consent
	State
	 Sports hunters, guides, competition
	• Tags
	 Fish & Game lives off lower regions-
	big funding for state
	Based on minimum yield
	Single Species Management Sports hunters,
	guides, competition
	 Quotas for black bears, brown bears,
	musk ox, whales, Chukchi Sea polar
	bears, moose, tuttu (caribou), salmon
	(competition), wolves (sport hunter
	limited/unlimited trapper)

To address the inequity within our role in the management of our traditional food resources, the following is proposed:

- 1. Assert Inuit self-determination
- 2. Build a collective pathway to advance our food sovereignty
- 3. Co-management needs to be carried out through true partnership and eliminate the middleman
- 4. Need an approach that is grounded in and upholds Indigenous rights
- 5. Need a holistic approach that recognizes wildlife management across jurisdictional borders
- 6. Involve and inform other Alaskan Native peoples to build unity and strength

Bethel Steering Committee Meeting April 24-25, 2019

Planning for the Alaskan Inuit Food Sovereignty Summit

Three breakout groups identified three main themes to frame the Summit agenda:

Theme #1. Options to present to Summit participants on a system/approach to management. The approaches include:

- 1. **Managing by culture** (Inupiat, Yup'ik & Cup'ik, St. Lawrence Island Yupik), which is focused on resource management by culture, yet still connected to the region that the culture is within. For example, management by Yup'ik and Cup'ik would include Bristol Bay, which is not a part of ICC Alaska. It is thought that organizing by culture would allow focus to be placed on resources that are highly depended upon by that culture, like fish within the Yukon-Kuskokwim or whales amongst the Inupiat and St. Lawrence Island Yupik.
- 2. **Managing by region** (North Slope, Northwest Arctic, Bering Strait, Yukon-Kuskokwim), is based on the realization that we will need cooperation amongst those with shared resources. This approach is reflective of the divisions of regions put in place after land claims settlement (ANCSA) and was thought of as an approach that may be easier to implement, as that is the way business is carried out across Alaska. This approach would still need cooperation for tying together the shared resources across the regions.
- 3. Managing through an overarching organization that ties all regions and cultures together and utilizes an Inuit ecosystem approach to management. This could be understood as management through the Beaufort, Chukchi, and Bering sea ecosystems. So under this option, a Steering Committee could be created to represent the regions (ICC regions). Hunters could be appointed to represent their region/Tribes. Species would not be managed by region, but collectively by the whole. There could be a Hunter and Trapper Organization with members from each community, an organization of hunters. This would be a system set up from the ground up. It was also suggested that there could be elders and youth members engaged in the Steering Committee.

Theme 2: to explain the cultural underpinnings of our approach to management, basically explaining what an Inuit ecosystem approach to management is about. This would include a focus on covering key concepts, including Indigenous Knowledge, Food Security, and Food Sovereignty. Some of the concepts that could further be explained are about how an Inuit ecosystem approach to management is flexible and accounts for management by the seasons, realizing that Inuit must adapt to the rapid changes occurring. It would also work to gather a unified voice/message to take to the external management systems. We would work to ensure that our connection to and belonging to the places we hunt and gather in are known. It would also work to turn the lens around, to highlight what they (those outside Inuit culture) want to protect through management in their lens vs. why Inuit want to manage- to strengthen our culture and food security.

Bethel Steering Committee Meeting April 24-25, 2019

Theme 3: Implementation - planning for the next phase of this Initiative. There is still much to do, in order to secure access and management rights over our traditional food resources. Planning areas includes (in no order of importance):

- 1. Building off of what already works
 - Example: how did we overcome the 1977 ban on the harvest of bowhead whales by Alaskan Inuit hunters?
- 2. Formation of a commission to carry this work into implementation
- 3. Funding- what funding source will secure the Implementation phase?
- 4. Need our hunters, our communities, and all our regions and co-management orgs. bought-in and collectively moving in this direction in order to be effective. We need 50,000 Alaskan Inuit on board.
- 5. Legal guidance/advice look to the ICC Food Sovereignty and Self Governance project
- 6. Educate and petition our government (federal and state)
- 7. Negotiate this through (they/we each have our own negotiators)
- 8. Create a management structure we want- go create the bodies
- 9. Get a bonified commission set up at the government level

Conclusion

The meeting ended with the Steering Committee agreeing that the Executive Committee would work together through teleconference meetings to continue Summit planning. They also decided that we would continue building onto ideas for a Summit theme, building the list of potential Summit speakers and invited observers, and drafting the agenda.

Appendix: Bethel Meeting Agenda

MEETING OBJECTIVES:

- 1. Provide clear distinction between the two ICC facilitated projects, Food Sovereignty and Self Governance Project and the Alaskan Inuit Food Sovereignty Initiative
- 2. Approve Utqiagvik Meeting Report
- 3. Build off the outcomes of the Utqiagvik meeting
- 4. Set the agenda and facilitation style for the Alaskan Inuit Food Sovereignty Summit

DAY #1 Wednesday, April 24, 2019

9:00 Welcome & Introductions of new Steering Committee members Opening prayer Approval of agenda

9:15 ICC Alaska Update

ICC Alaska update and distinction between Food Sovereignty and Self Governance (FSSG) Project and Alaskan Inuit Food Sovereignty Initiative Circumpolar Inuit Wildlife Committee Role of Steering Committee Members

9:45 Steering Committee Update Steering Committee members Other food security/sovereignty projects & initiatives

- 10:30 Break
- 10:30 Review and discussion on IPCoMM Gap Analysis Project
- 10:45 Approval of Utqiagvik Meeting Report
- 11:00 Break out discussion- threats to our Food Sovereignty
- 12:00 Lunch
- 1:00 **Mapping our Dependencies-** what are our dependencies within the framework/system of management in place?
- 2:00 **Discussion** What will it take to move us beyond these dependencies? What does the framework for an Inuit-led, holistic approach to management look like? (where Inuit are a part of the ecosystem)

2:45 Break

- 3:00 **Review Utqiagvik outcomes-** our vision for a pathway to advance Alaskan Inuit food sovereignty
- 3:30 **What top three themes** from the Utqiagvik meeting should be addressed at the Nome Summit?
- DAY #2 Thursday, April 25, 2019
- 9:00 Welcome & Introduction of Day 2
- 9:15 Nome Summit Review of Logistics Venue, Hotel Potluck details to handle offline
- 9:30 Alaskan Inuit Food Sovereignty Management Action Planning- breakout activity to top 3 themes for Nome Summit
- 10:15 Break
- 10:30 Alaskan Inuit Food Sovereignty Management Action Planning- rotate to next priority Summit theme
- 12:00 Lunch
- 1:00 **Discussion-** framework for the Action Plan

2:00 Nome Summit Planning

Summit themes and promotion- putting out a call to Alaskan Inuit for a Summit logo to build momentum and ownership Keynote Speakers

- 2:30 **Role of Steering Committee and the 28 regional delegates**
- 3:00 Break
- 3:15 Ideas for furthering the Action Plan
- **3:00 Other Summit ideas outside the box**
- 3:15 Closing