

A New Home for Northern Adaptation Data

If the Arctic had a bulletin board, it might look something like the Arctic Adaptation Exchange Portal.

The portal (arcticadaptationexchange.com) is a home for adaptation information for northern communities, proposed by the international Arctic Council and currently hosted and maintained by Alaska EPSCoR and the Geographic Information Network of Alaska (GINA). Originally designed largely to house institutional records, the portal and its associated data catalog and map interface have since been expanded to enable sharing of citizen science and community observations of Arctic change.

“The portal was for gray literature and just general research, so it was a very broad focus,” noted Vanessa Raymond of GINA, who manages the project. “The trend of Arctic happenings toward citizen science and user observations have pushed the portal in that direction as well.”

Alaska EPSCoR, specifically its Coordination, Integration and Synthesis (CIS) Group, played a key role in the creation of the portal. Details of the project were largely mapped out at a 2014 meeting of polar researchers hosted by CIS. Based on that input, the portal was designed and implemented by the Canadian government and GINA. The CIS Group presented on the portal during the 2016 Arctic Science Summit Week in Fairbanks, and feedback from those sessions led to the shift toward citizen science and community input. The portal now enables users to share observations and document local problems arising from climate change, as well as to access problem-solving tools.

“I think the part that really makes a broader impact is having that forum where you can post what you have found in your communities, what works in your communities, and what has been challenging to your communities in adapting,” noted Alaska EPSCoR Principal Investigator Anupma Prakash.

GINA is slated to continue to maintain the portal during the current U.S. chairmanship of the Arctic Council, which ends in 2017. GINA’s role with EPSCoR efforts stretches far beyond the portal: The organization is also implementing a website for the Arctic Water Resource Vulnerability Index, helping to implement EPSCoR’s data-to-decision mini-grants, maintaining and improving the Decision Theater North visualization facility at UAF, and continuing to develop methods for using web-based visualizations in the Decision Theater. GINA is also administering EPSCoR’s online test case data portals and is consolidating them into a single portal to simplify future access to EPSCoR data.



Vanessa Raymond discusses the Arctic Adaptation Exchange Portal during Arctic Science Summit Week in Fairbanks in March 2016.

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