Nome-Based Education
WAISC Conference Draws Researchers to Isolated Community
by Tom Moran, Alaska EPSCoR

At one end of Pioneer Hall a large white screen was set up for powerpoints; at the other sat a spread of bagel halves and cream cheese. In between were orderly rows of tables and chairs and a few dozen people chatting amiably about water resources, solar power, or wildlife management. It could have been almost anywhere.

But then you look out the window. At the melting six-foot snowdrifts, at the ATV’s rumbling down Front Street, and at the last mile of the Iditarod Trail, running along the icy edge of Norton Sound a block away. This is Nome, Alaska, 500 miles from the continental road system, where about 100 people gathered in April 2009 for the Western Alaska Interdisciplinary Science Conference (WAISC) - a rare chance for researchers on the remote Seward Peninsula to share their work on regional issues with locals and with each other.

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