

Letter from the Principal Investigator

October 2018

Hello to all,

And we're off!

As of October 1, "Fire and Ice: Navigating Variability in Boreal Wildfire Regimes and Subarctic Coastal Ecosystems" is officially underway. This \$20 million effort to research changing wildfire regimes in the boreal forest and climate-driven impacts to the nearshore Gulf of Alaska will last until 2023, and will involve at least 28 faculty members located across the three main UA campuses, as well as five new faculty hires, six postdoc hires, and dozens of graduate and undergraduate researchers.

We're all very excited about the next five years, and there was a palpable enthusiasm in the air in late August when project researchers gathered here in Fairbanks for our Strategic Planning Meeting. I was highly impressed by the spirit of eagerness and cooperation shown at the meeting, and expect it will translate into an innovative and successful project. There'll be lots more information about Fire and Ice (including the Strategic Plan) up on the website once we get up and rolling at full speed.

In other good news, more NSF support is also coming to Alaska in the form of three EPSCoR Track-4 awards won by individual UAF researchers Jeff Benowitz, Eric Collins and Ken Tape. These Track-4 awards support early-career scientists who want to further their work through collaborations with major research facilities.

Benowitz, a Research Assistant Professor with the Geophysical Institute, received \$220,000 to work with researchers at Oregon State University to investigate uncertainties in determining the age of young volcanic rocks. Collins, an Assistant Professor with the College of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences, received \$187,000 to travel to the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution in Massachusetts to use machine learning to predict distributions of Arctic marine microbes and their use and transformations of metals. And Tape, an Associate Professor at the Geophysical Institute, received \$200,000 to work with experts in satellite image analysis at Northern Arizona University to further his research into the expansion of beaver habitat into arctic tundra.

My congratulations on those three scientists for their success, and to the myriad folks involved in crafting the Fire and Ice proposal for theirs!

Cheers,



Anupma Prakash



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