

Letter from the Principal Investigator

October 2019

Dear Fire and Ice team,

First of all, thanks to everyone who contributed to our first Fire and Ice All Hands Meeting. The turnout was terrific and I think we all learned a lot from each other over the course of a very busy day and a half. Anyone who missed the meeting and wants to catch up can find the presentations and posters on our website.

One highlight of the meeting was hearing from our research teams about their fruitful field seasons. Boreal Fires researchers took to the air and verified from the ground in their effort to improve hyperspectral methods of identifying fire fuels. And Coastal Margins scientists in both Lynn Canal and Kachemak Bay spent all summer getting their hands dirty with intertidal and river sampling, transects, plankton tows, drifters, and much more. The reams of data they're creating will be stored and made available for analysis and sharing through our new data management infrastructure, which will be implemented in partnership with Axiom Data Science in Anchorage. The components' research is also creating exciting new opportunities for education, visualization and outreach, which were also a highlight of the meeting.

Technically, Year 2 of the Fire and Ice project began on October 1, but our Year 2 activities are well underway. We just announced the 23 recipients of our Year 2 travel awards, who will fly everywhere from Utqiagvik to DC to attend conferences or collaborate on research. We're currently looking over the submissions for our Outreach and Education seed grants, which were due this week. And we're still soliciting proposals for our research seed grants as well, which are due on Monday. Check out our awards page for a list of travel winners and more info on seed grants.

One person who has been instrumental to our seed grant efforts (and to many other EPSCoR activities over the past year) is Project Administrator Faye Gallant. Which is why I am sad to report that Faye is leaving Alaska EPSCoR to take a new position as the Executive Director of Budget and Financial Planning for Western Washington University starting January 1st. As happy and proud as I feel for Faye, this is a loss for the project and we will all miss her positive energy and happy spirit. We will work to fill her position over the next couple of months.

To end on a more positive note, however, I have good news from Washington D.C.: the National Science Foundation has awarded us funding for the next two years of the Fire and Ice project (2019-21). This gesture represents a strong vote of confidence in our project going forward, and based on what we all saw at the All Hands Meeting and over the past year, I think it's safe to say the NSF has made a solid investment.


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NSF ESTABLISHED PROGRAM TO STIMULATE COMPETITIVE RESEARCH