

Letter from the Principal Investigator

July 2019

Dear Fire and Ice team,

I hardly need to tell you that the past months have brought challenges we did not anticipate when we wrote the Fire and Ice proposal. Nobody could have predicted that the university would be facing a 40% cut to its state budget partway through the first year of the award. But here we are.

A lot of you may have questions about the status of the project. The short answer is, we are fully funded at both the federal and state levels and we have received no indication that that will change. I want to assure you that I am doing everything I can to keep the ship stable and moving forward. This week I invited directors of UA's other major research projects to craft a shared message to university leadership encouraging them to consider our groups' needs and to lean on our value in bringing people, ideas and resources together across campuses. I remain confident in the continuation of our funding and will be a voice for Alaska NSF EPSCoR over these next important months.

In the meantime, I am happy to report that Fire and Ice scientists are enjoying a fruitful initial field season. Coastal Margins researchers have been collecting marine samples; releasing, catching and re-releasing and tracking drifters; wading through rivers to obtain measurements and set gauges; and much more. Boreal Fires scientists have had work arrive on their doorsteps in the form of wildfires in the Interior and the Kenai. The fires have led to community members clamoring for more information, and we've seized the opportunity by asking fire scientist Chris Waigl to develop some innovative GIS products and maps that bring our science to practice in real time. The Diversity, Education and Workforce (DEW) team is also hard at work developing curricula for afterschool programs; preparing for the inaugural Girls on Water excursion in Kachemak Bay; and planning fall workshops on stereotype threat, values affirmation and mentorship.

Thank all of you for the work that you do to support EPSCoR and to keep our project moving forward. It is my sincere belief that we will spend the next four years, two months and thirteen days flying over forests, sailing through oceans, and tromping across the landscape in the name of Fire and Ice research. If there is anything that I can do to help any of you over the coming months please do not hesitate to reach out to me or any members of the EPSCoR management team.

My sincere thanks,



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