

Letter from the Principal Investigator

August 2016

Hello to all,

“Fire and Ice” is out the door.

On August 2, we submitted our proposal for a fifth phase of the Alaska NSF EPSCoR Track-1 program to the National Science Foundation. “Fire and Ice” is a 5-year, \$20 million project to employ remote sensing, fieldwork, lab experiments, and modeling to study climate-driven biophysical changes to Alaska’s boreal forests and coastal margins. The project will incorporate research and outreach from throughout the UA system and build off of some of the findings and infrastructure we’ve put together through Alaska ACE. I owe a round of thanks to the members of our writing team and to faculty, staff, and administrators from all three UA campuses - especially the UAF offices of Proposal Development and Grants and Contracts Administration.

We’re all very excited about “Fire and Ice,” but I’m also thrilled to be able to turn my attention fully back to Alaska ACE, which continues to make steady progress as it enters its fifth and final year. In mid-July two University of Idaho instructors traveled to Anchorage to train 14 UAF and UAA affiliates in building virtual worlds using the C# computer programming language and the Unity 3D game engine. The workshop was a key step in transferring knowledge about EPSCoR’s SalmonSim visualization program to Alaskan programmers.

And even though school is out (but not for much longer!) we’ve been busy with outreach as well. In June we held our annual Global Learning and Observations to Benefit the Environment (GLOBE) teacher training workshop on the UAF campus. Ten K-12 teachers from across the state learned protocols for students to use to make atmospheric, biological, and hydrological observations. The data they collect will be shared with scientists and other students around the world, and they’ll learn about the scientific method and fieldwork in the process. And in late July we held four days of Discovery Labs for students and the public in collaboration with the Kachemak Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve in Homer. EPSCoR set up eight tables of hands-on science activities in the Islands and Ocean Visitors Center, including a salmon board game, an outline of the salmon lifecycle using balloon animals, and a SalmonSim demonstration. The labs drew more than 400 people, not counting another lab held as part of the Kenai’tze Tribe’s summer science camp.

All of these are evidence of a program that is hitting its stride even as it approaches the finish line. Test case leads are continuing to meet to plan cross-test-case integration, which will be a focus of our annual meeting on Nov. 3-4. We’re passing milestones, making new discoveries, publishing findings, and working hard toward wrapping up a successful project. For more information on recent developments be sure to keep an eye on our website, www.alaska.edu/epscor.

Cheers,



Anupma Prakash



NSF EXPERIMENTAL PROGRAM TO STIMULATE COMPETITIVE RESEARCH