

# GREETINGS FROM ALASKA EPSCoR



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Alaska EPSCoR's Southeast Test Case is helping to guide the guides.

The test case has held two well-attended research symposia in Juneau, at which area scientists shared findings with local tour leaders. "We're hoping that by communicating science to tour guides that they will in turn have a greater education base in order to educate their tourists, which really translates into us having a much greater outreach impact than we would be able to otherwise," said Suzie Teerlink, EPSCoR's former University of Alaska Southeast Outreach Coordinator.

In 2015, test case researchers hosted an event for about 60 guides – focused on helicopter tour operators – at the Mendenhall Glacier Visitor Center. They followed that up a year later with a two-day symposium on the UAS campus for both land-based and marine guides. About 135 people attended the 2016 version, where they heard scientists discuss research on glaciology, salmon run timing, the economic value of glaciers, paralytic shellfish poisoning, and many other topics. The event also included an in-depth presentation on ways to communicate about climate change. "I think the main message that we're trying to send is that cutting-edge research is being done here in our backyard," Teerlink said.

The events also included opportunities for attendees to help guide research priorities, including a panel discussion in 2015. "It's really focusing on trying to make science accessible to stakeholders and trying to really engage with those stakeholders, in a way that we're trying to get information on what they need, how we can make our research and outreach objectives fit their needs," Teerlink said. "For me it's one of the best examples that we've been able to pull off in terms of really engaging with stakeholders and bringing the science to the community."

Attendees said the symposia offered up a wealth of information to aid in their tours. "Our company strongly encourages us to attend these so we can be more rounded as captains and naturalists, to share with the guests who come from around the world and also to help the naturalists who are new this season and don't have the information they need," said Diane Kyser, a captain with Gastineau Guiding who attended the 2016 symposium.



Juneau-area tour guides and interpreters listen to a presentation by humpback whale biologist Jan Straley in the Southeast Test Case's 2016 "Icefield-to-Estuary" research symposium.

photo by Tom Moran/Alaska EPSCoR