



The Resilience and Adaptive Management (RAM) Group

<http://ram.uaa.alaska.edu>

We are dedicated to developing social adaptation strategies in the face of rapid global change. We incorporate a vision that weaves multi-disciplinary research and diverse ways of knowing into a cohesive and integrated framework for Resilience in high latitudes.

National Science Foundation:

<http://www.nsf.gov>

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Forgetting Freshwater: How different generations are changing how water is valued.

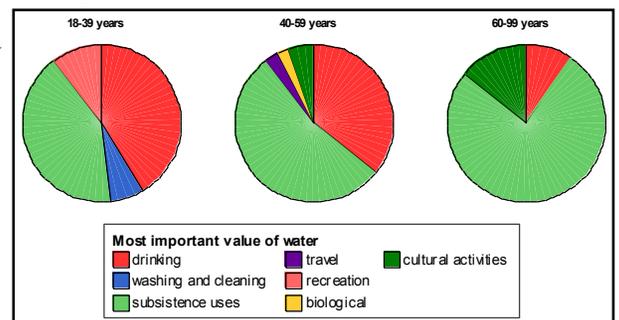
Like many communities who live in semi arid regions of the world, communities on the Seward Peninsula have a long history of adapting to changing climatic conditions. Rich oral histories bear witness to the way in which people have responded to warmer, cooler, drier, and wetter conditions - responses which have led to the resilience of a community to changes affecting its natural resources. Our interests lie in community adaptation to changes in fresh water because it is so critical to life and because despite being such a precious resource it is often ignored.

We talked with community members in Seward Peninsula villages from 2004-2006 to understand their perceptions of change in water resources, e.g., changes affecting river levels, and also the values they hold as important toward water. A questionnaire survey was used as a collaborative and systematic tool for examining patterns in perceptions and values of water. We found that people grouped themselves by age or generation. These groups were related to whether someone had been "land schooled", those who grew up living and learning on the land (the oldest generation), "residential schooled", those who left the village to receive a school education at a distant high school (the middle generation), or "local schooled", those who received a formal school education in the local high school (the youngest adult generation).

Awareness of change in water resources was related to age with land schooled residents showing a greater awareness of change than the

younger, local schooled, generation. Older generations also emphasized the importance of cultural and subsistence values of water, while younger generations placed greater importance on utility and recreational values. People who obtained their household water from a natural water source typically exhibited a greater awareness of changing conditions in that resource than people who predominantly used a municipal water source (i.e., the tap). Another finding that we are still exploring is that a community's adaptation to change is affected by the composition of people who fulfill different roles in that community's response to changing water resources. These different roles are referred to as "agent types" and describe those in the community who initiate a response, those who support such a response once initiated, and those who do not necessarily act in support of a collective response mainly because of self-interest rather than collective benefit. The relative proportion of these agent types appears to have a bearing on the successful adaptation of a community.

For published information about this article please see the publications listed on the next page or visit the RAM Website. <http://ram.uaa.alaska.edu>





Hanna's Bio

Hanna is from Pirkkala, Finland and has been living in Anchorage since Nov. 2007. She will very shortly graduate with a Masters in Human Geography from the University of Joensuu, Finland. She has worked on varied projects with The Snowchange Cooperative in Canada, Finland and Alaska. She loves to make jewelry! Welcome aboard, Hanna!

Upcoming Events

- Health Climate Change Workshop January 29, 2009
- State of the Salmon (Vancouver, B.C.) February 2-4, 2009
- RAM Group Meeting Ongoing Fridays at 1pm

For more information on Upcoming Events, please send an email to anmmk@uaa.alaska.edu.

Personnel Updates

- Paula Williams began her new job as UAA's Sustainability Director in January. Congratulations! Paula will complete her PhD this semester.
- The RAM Group would like to welcome Hanna Eklund to the staff in January. Hanna will be working on the Urban Elders Project, which focuses on rapidly disappearing knowledge about water among pioneer residents living in the greater Anchorage area. The project will convene a workshop in April.

RAM Website & Publications

- The RAM Group homepage, includes publications, research, and much more - <http://ram.uaa.alaska.edu>
- Perception of Change in Freshwater in Remote Resource-Dependant Arctic Communities. *Alessa et al.* Global Environmental Change
- The Distancing Effect of Modernization on the Perception of Water Resources in Arctic Communities. *Alessa et al.* Polar Geography

