

Sea Grant Postcard from the Field



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Adapting in Alaska

Alaska Sea Grant supports citizen science to boost Arctic communities' ability to manage climate change threats



"The weather is definitely not the same as it was 20 years ago. It's been a big concern not just because of erosion but because of subsistence and our way of life."

- Stacy Bowen, resident of Utqiagvik, Alaska



Adapting in Alaska

With the recent release of the [NOAA 2018 Arctic Report Card](#), a look at how Sea Grant work on the ground is helping communities in Alaska adapt.

As temperatures rise in the Arctic, sea ice is disappearing. Shore-fast ice forms a protective barrier for coastal Arctic communities like Utqiagvik, Alaska (formerly known as Barrow) but as that ice retreats, these communities are becoming more vulnerable to natural hazards such flooding, destructive wave action, and loss of human life.

Additionally, Utqiagvik's Iñupiat residents rely on bowhead whale and other sea and land animals for food and culture. As the Arctic heats up—twice as fast as anywhere on Earth—the behavior of animals is changing, putting Iñupiat food security at risk.

To boost Utqiagvik's ability to manage climate change threats, Alaska Sea Grant is supporting research driven by local citizen scientists. Project leaders are building local capacity and providing training to volunteers who monitor and document changes to the coast. The project focuses on observing and forecasting storm surges, flooding and erosion with the goal of providing local risk managers with information they need to better protect the community.

[Full story](#)

This is the last 2018 Sea Grant Postcard from the Field - see you in 2019!

Image description: Two photographs, both courtesy of Paula Dobbyn/Alaska Sea Grant. Left: An abandoned building sits near a bluff in Utqiagvik, Alaska. Right: Community volunteer Jason Russell trains with University of Alaska Anchorage associate professor John Bean.

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