

***Climate and Health E-News***

***Raising Awareness about Climate Change and Public Health in the Circumpolar North***

**No. 108, April 6, 2012**

**Circumpolar Climate Events Map** – See the circumpolar climate news, incidents and events. [March 2012](#), [April 2012](#).

**Vegetation cover affects speed of tundra snow melt** *April 4, 2012*. A satellite study by the Finnish Meteorological Institute finds that a warming climate is changing the vegetation in Arctic tundra regions, effecting snowmelt and also the amount of light reflection or “albedo”. Big differences were seen between snow melt in Norway and Finland. Vegetation on the Norwegian side of the border was thicker, and the snow disappeared more quickly. But on the Finland side intensive grazing by reindeer limited the growth of vegetation and resulted in longer snow cover. [ScienceDaily](#)

**Extreme weather events, preparing for the worst** *April 01, 2012*. Between 1970 and 1989 the economic loss from disasters of all sorts average about \$5 billion annually. Since 1989, losses have averaged \$30 billion annually, driven largely by weather-related disasters. A new report from the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) encourages the development of strategies to recover rapidly from severe storms, droughts, floods and heat waves and to learn from countries that have taken actions to limit both economic impacts and loss of life. [Christian Science Monitor](#)

**Wild winter weather for much of Alaska** *Spring 2012*. Weather conditions for much of Alaska this winter were more similar to the 1960s or 1970s than recent decades. In January temperatures in some areas were more than 20°F below normal. In January, Fairbanks recorded 16 days with temperatures at or below -40°F. Record low temperatures were recorded at several stations in Western Alaska and St. Paul Island set records for both low temperature and greatest snow accumulation. Cordova had more than 15 feet of snow accumulation for the winter, so far... [Alaska Climate Dispatch](#)

**Forest-destroying avalanches on the rise due to clear-cut logging** *March 29, 2012*. Understanding avalanche behavior and its destructive potential is an important factor in assessing risk of clear-cut logging of mature timber. A new article presents data collected from locations where avalanches have been released due to clear-cut logging. [ScienceDaily](#)

**Know the snow – understanding “glide” avalanches** *March 30, 2012*. Glide avalanches occur when the entire snowpack glides over the ground. The relatively slow gliding process can take place over a few hours or several months. If the gliding snowpack breaks free from its supporting boundaries, an avalanche will transpire. [Juneau Empire](#)

**Video of the Week: Russian soldiers trigger huge avalanche** *March 17, 2011* This is really amazing!! This 1 minute video records avalanche control efforts using artillery, by the Russian military in North Ossetia. This is the same technique employed by many ski areas, transportation departments and other entities to control avalanche risk. Note the effect on the power station. [YouTube](#)

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**Fur loss, lesions reported in Beaufort Sea polar bears** – Research scientists working for the U.S. Geological Survey reported that some Alaska polar bears are losing their fur. A [press release](#) issued Friday said that in the past two weeks, nine bears had been observed with alopecia -- loss of fur -- and other skin lesions in the southern Beaufort Sea region near Barrow. The scientists have been collecting blood and tissue samples from the afflicted bears but do not know the cause or the significance of the outbreak. They are particularly trying to determine whether there is a connection between the conditions observed in the bears with an outbreak of similar symptoms in seals and walrus that started last year. Read more here: [Anchorage Daily News](#)

See also: Circumpolar Climate Events Map: [April 2012](#)

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*Regards – Mike*

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