

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

***Connecting People and Raising Awareness in the Interests of Public Health***

***No. 9, April 13, 2010***

**UAF Researchers Focus on Dangerous Ice Conditions** - On March 3rd an eleven year old boy was riding his snow machine on the Chena River when he hit some open water, fell off his snow machine, slid under the ice and drowned ([ADN](#)). On March 13th, another snow machiner, this time in Willow, fell through the ice of the Susitna River and drowned ([ADN](#)). Traveling on river ice in Alaska can be dangerous, especially when the ice conditions are unusual or unpredictable. Climate change may be contributing to unusual ice conditions. Poor ice conditions are not only hazardous but can also prevent people from traveling, and interfere with subsistence activities. Sometimes ice conditions can be unsafe even when the temperatures are far below zero. The University of Alaska Fairbanks performing research aimed at understanding the dynamics of river ice. They want to determine why in some areas the ice breaks, while in other areas the ice remains firm. With funding from the National Science Foundation they are bringing together scientists and rural residents who are experienced in river travel. The *Center for Climate and Health* sees this project as an example of applied science with the potential to increase safety for many rural Alaskans. Anchorage Daily News > [full story](#)

**New Web-Based Tool Tracks Walrus and Sea Ice Observations** - Sea Ice for Walrus Outlook (SIWO), an activity of the [SEARCH Sea Ice Outlook](#), is a resource for Alaska Native subsistence hunters, coastal communities, and others interested in sea ice and walrus. The SIWO is updated weekly with information on sea ice conditions relevant to walrus in the Northern Bering Sea and southern Chukchi Sea regions of Alaska. The SIWO webpage includes: (1) An assessment of current ice conditions relevant to distribution and access of walrus, (2) a 10-day outlook of wind conditions, (3) up-to-date satellite imagery for the Bering Strait and St. Lawrence Island (4) written observations of ice development from Alaska Native hunters, sea-ice experts, or NOAA or university researchers, (5) additional data and resources on ice conditions, and (6) additional comments provided by local experts and other contributors. This is a web based tool that has practical application for rural Alaska residents. ARCUS > [visit SIWO website](#)

**Traditional Inuit knowledge combines with science to shape weather insights** (April 7, 2010) -- Tribal Environmental Coordinators in the Northwest Arctic Region in Alaska, are working with the National Weather Service to develop their capacity, to man weather stations and provide coastal and climate change observations. The linked story describes Inuit forecasters in the Canadian Arctic who, equipped with generations of observational experiences, are helping scientists learn more about Arctic weather by providing information and stories that can be combined with statistical climate measurements. Science Daily > [full story](#)

*If you have an observation or an update you would like to include in our E-News or added to our [Alaska Climate Events Map](#), you can e-mail me at [mbrubaker@anthc.org](mailto:mbrubaker@anthc.org)*

Regards - Mike

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