



United States Department of the Interior
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
INVENTORY AND MONITORING PROGRAM
SOUTHEAST ALASKA NETWORK
3100 National Park Road
Juneau, Alaska 99801



January 29, 2016

To: Kirsten Gallo, Inventory and Monitoring Division Chief

From: Mike Bower, Southeast Alaska Network Program Manager

Re: Monitoring Protocol Reprioritization

In accordance with your memo dated July 2, 2015, “Completion Deadline for Monitoring Protocols”, this memorandum documents a revision to the monitoring plan for the Southeast Alaska Network. The network's Vital Signs Monitoring Plan, published in 2008, presented a list of Vital Signs that were considered “core” in Table 3.1, designated as “...the top priority Vital Signs that SEAN will address in the first five years of program implementation...” The monitoring plan was published prior to completion of several protocols, and prior to a clear understanding of the magnitude of the data management, data analysis, safety, and other operational costs and staff time required to implement scientifically sound and effective monitoring of the network's Vital Signs. The network cannot sustainably implement the original list of “core” Vital Signs described in the monitoring plan because the operational costs were underestimated.

In August, 2015, the network held internal staff meetings and a conference call with Technical Committee members to introduce the new national guidance and begin to consider adaptations to improve the sustainability of network operations. At the network's annual Technical Committee meeting on October 22, 2015 recommendations for adaptations were finalized. Recommended adaptations were discussed, adjusted, and approved by the network Board of Directors on January 26, 2016.

At this time, the original “core” Vital Signs will not be re-prioritized, but in several cases it is necessary to defer protocol development and implementation until additional resources can be secured to realize the original program vision. Deferred Vital Signs will include Glacier Dynamics, and Intertidal Communities. The Marine Predators vital sign will be refocused towards development of a protocol for sea otter monitoring, while development of a community-scale monitoring program for marine predators will be deferred due to insufficient resources. The Landform and Landcover Vital Sign will be partially deferred and partially implemented through the new national Land Cover Vital Sign. While the national Land Cover Vital Sign is expected to partially fulfill the original needs associated with land cover mapping identified in the SEAN monitoring protocol, limited satellite image availability for Southeast Alaska could constrain the scope of analysis. Development and implementation of additional, site-specific sampling and analysis approaches will likely be needed, but will be deferred for the time being. Also, the Streamflow Vital Sign will be implemented by enlisting the USGS to operate gages in KLGO

and SITK while relying on the new national Streamflow protocol for analysis and reporting functions, thus eliminating the need for an original SEAN protocol.

The following pages contain a table of the network's Vital Signs, original priorities, and adaptations approved by the network Board of Directors to improve program sustainability:

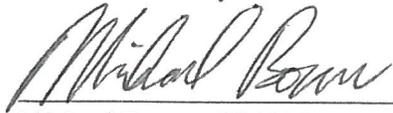
Table of Vital Signs and additional network functions.

Protocol (Vital Signs)	Current Cost (2015)	Original Priority	Current Priority	Updated Status (Cost Savings if Deferred)	Explanation
Environmental Contaminants (Airborne Contaminants, Freshwater Contaminants, Marine Contaminants)	TBD	Core Protocols (3)	Primary	In development	Three Vital Sign monitoring protocols being combined in a single Environmental Contaminants monitoring protocol for efficiency and better integration.
Freshwater Water Quality	\$4,009	Core Protocol	Primary	Implemented	
Glacier Dynamics	N/A	Insufficient Resources	Primary	Deferred	Highest priority for additional resources. Intent is to adopt CAKN methods pending verification. No cost savings. Protocol has not been developed or implemented.
Intertidal Communities	N/A	Insufficient Resources	Primary	Deferred	No cost savings. Protocol has not been developed or implemented.
Kittlitz's Murrelets	\$6,767	Core Protocol	Primary	Implemented	
Landform and Landcover	N/A	Insufficient Resources	Primary	Deferred	The national Land Cover protocol is expected to partially fill this need. Additional resources will likely be needed to tailor sampling and analysis approaches to Southeast Alaska where there are unique remote sensing constraints (e.g., near continuous cloud cover). No cost savings. Protocol has not been developed or implemented.
Oceanography	\$4,867	Core Protocol	Primary	Implemented	
Marine Predators	TBD	Core Protocol	Primary	In development (sea otters), deferred (community-scale monitoring)	Reflects re-focusing of Vital Sign towards monitoring of sea otters given limited resources. Marine predator community surveys deferred pending additional resources. No cost savings. Protocol has not been developed or implemented.

Protocol (Vital Signs)	Current Cost (2015)	Original Priority	Current Priority	Updated Status (Cost Savings if Deferred)	Explanation
Streamflow	\$11,475	Core Protocol	Primary	Replaced by national Streamflow protocol	Original protocol no longer needed. Agreement with USGS for stream gage operation using published methods in place for priority streams in KLGO and SITK. Will rely on national protocol for analysis and reporting of USGS gage data for efficiency. No cost savings. Will continue to contribute funds towards USGS partnership.
Weather and Climate	TBD	Core Protocol	Primary	In development	

¹ An Original Priority of “Insufficient Resources” indicates “Vital Signs that need to be monitored in the future but due to funding limitations protocol development or implementation is being deferred.”

Recommended by:



Michael Bower, SEAN Program Manager

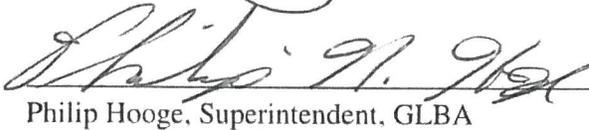
1/26/2016
Date

Concurrence:



Brinnen Carter, Acting Superintendent, SITK

1/26/16
Date



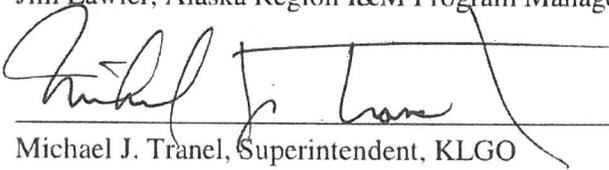
Philip Hooge, Superintendent, GLBA

1/25/16
Date



Jim Lawler, Alaska Region I&M Program Manager

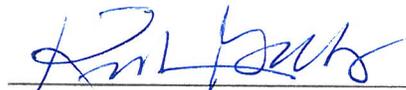
1/26/2016
Date



Michael J. Tranel, Superintendent, KLGO

1/26/16
Date

Approval:



Kirsten Gallo, Chief, Inventory and Monitoring Division

18 Feb 2016
Date