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Title

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Theme -Theme 2: Observing in Support of Adaptation and Mitigation

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Poster title (brief) Here's what 3oC looks like: Communicating climate impacts through local observations in SW Alaska.

Abstract - text box

Over the last year, five communities throughout southwest Alaska have been working independently and together to gather and better understand available climate resources for their area. Gathering and understanding these resources will allow them to better prepare effective climate adaptation plans, funding applications, and public comments. However, due to their remote locations and the general lack of instrumentation in Alaska, western climate science resources only describe a certain number of parameters that can be difficult to conceptualize for the general public and planning efforts. In an effort better understand the impacts of these changes, we have paired some of the available western science (see Littell et al. poster) with local observations to gain a better understanding of the impacts associated with climate change. Through a series of workshops and meetings with these five communities, we have documented: 1) an area of climatic interest, 2) changes to subsistence practices, and 3) a wide variety of local observations of change over the past 50 years. The areas of climatic interest to these communities are quite large and include not only subsistence areas but also travel routes for intra-community events. Many of these local observations correspond to a temperature increase of approximately 3oC over the same time period. Subsistence activities have changed with respect to travel, timing, species loss/gain, and harvest quality. Other local observations include changes in weather, climate and permafrost that often result in impacts on infrastructure, travel, food security, archaeological sites and purchasing decisions. Additionally, we were also able to document several critical community questions and data needs for community planning efforts. For this presentation, we hope to better communicate how some of the western science 'numbers' translate to impacts felt by local communities.