

Technical Summary

Study Title: Managing Environmental Risks: A Workshop for the Minerals Management Service, Alaska OCS Region.

Report Title: Managing Environmental Risks: A Workshop for the Minerals Management Service, Alaska OCS Region.

Contract Number: 14-35-0001-30570.

MMS Study Number: OCS Study MMS 92-0062.

Sponsoring OCS Region: Alaska

Applicable Planning Areas: Alaska Outer Continental Shelf Region.

Fiscal Years of Project Funding: 1992-1993.

Completion Date of Report: November 1992.

costs : FY 1992: \$ 9,500
 FY 1993: \$88,020
 Cumulative Project Cost: \$97,520.

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Key Words: Risk management, decision analysis, perceptions, stakeholders, tradeoffs.

Background:

The knowledge of environmental risk-management procedures is now viewed as an element critical to the success of federal resource management agencies. The increasing importance of public attitudes in risk decision-making means that an appropriate range of perspectives on risk must be incorporated as part of any analysis of the social costs and benefits of action alternatives. This project used a workshop setting as a vehicle for teaching state-of-the-art risk management techniques to members of the MMS staff as well as key stakeholders.

Objectives:

There were three primary workshop objectives: To provide participants with information on the basic issues and techniques of risk management, including risk perceptions and risk communication; to provide participation with experience in decision analysis, including identifying the values of stakeholder groups; to provide participants with experience in negotiation and mediation practices.

Description:

The workshop took place in Anchorage, Alaska, over nine days. Two three-day sessions took place during March 1992 and a third three-day session, focusing on an illustrative case study, occurred in June 1992.

Significant Conclusions:

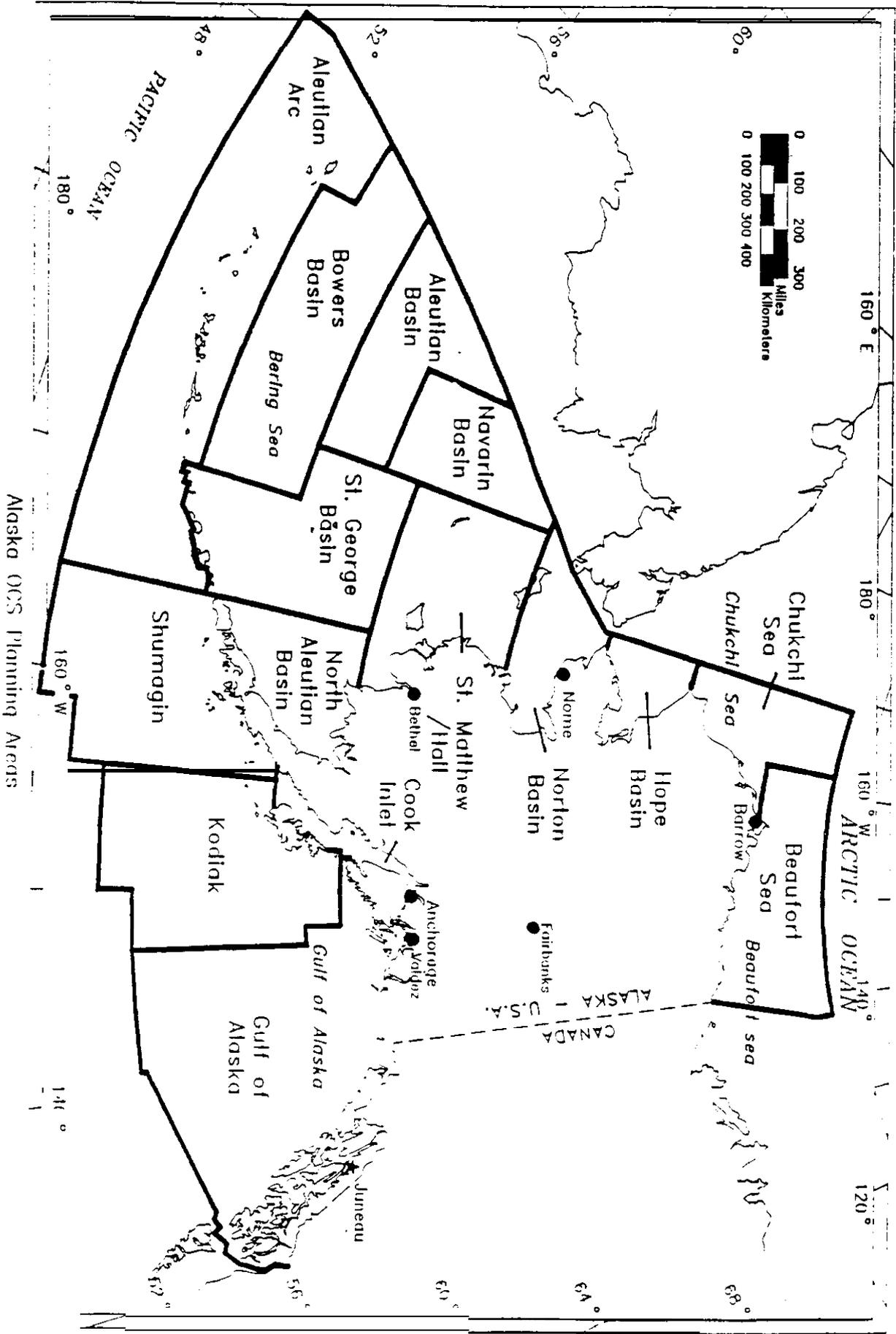
The workshop participants concluded that significant improvements can take place in the risk-management practices of the MMS. Key to these improvements is the early and meaningful participation of stakeholders, whether from public, native, environmental, or governmental groups. The group concluded that the current process by which risks are assessed is both overly lengthy, because of the lack of clear link between data-collection efforts and their importance to the risk decision-making process, and overly expensive. New and unfamiliar elements of the proposed decision analysis process--such as developing a flexible decision process or eliciting probability judgement from experts or communicating with public groups regarding perceptions of risks--will require additional training of MMS personnel, but significant and offsetting savings are expected to occur in terms of time, good will, and legal costs.

Study Results:

An improved understanding of risk management needs and opportunities among MMS Personnel and key Alaska stakeholders, based on the lectures and discussions that took place during the three workshop sessions.

Study Products:

Decision Research Institute. 1992. Managing Environmental Risks. OCS Study MMS 92-0062. A workshop report for the Minerals Management Service. 50 pp.



Alaska OCS Planning Areas