

Joint Ocean Commission Initiative Overview

In 2005, former commissioners from the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy and the Pew Oceans Commission established the Joint Ocean Commission Initiative, a collaborative effort to capitalize on the work of the two commissions. Since its formation, the Joint Initiative has sustained a broad-based, bipartisan effort to catalyze ocean policy reform and action at the national, regional, and state levels. These reforms are grounded in the concepts, themes, and recommendations embodied in the two commissions' reports, with the Joint Initiative regularly updating the recommendations for continued relevance in the face of changing ecological and political conditions.

The Joint Initiative is guided by a highly respected, bipartisan Leadership Council originally co-chaired by The Honorable Leon E. Panetta and Admiral James D. Watkins, U.S. Navy (Ret.) (1927-2012). The Honorable William Ruckelshaus and the Honorable Norman Mineta currently serve as the Leadership Council Co-Chairs. Members of the Leadership Council represent the diverse ocean community including former government officials, ocean industry leaders, and representatives from ocean-focused scientific organizations and environmental nongovernmental organizations. With extensive experience in ocean and climate sciences, policy, and politics, the Joint Initiative Leadership Council brings extraordinary expertise and diverse perspectives to the ocean policy dialogue. Meridian Institute serves as the secretariat for the Joint Initiative.

Among entities working on ocean and coastal policy issues, the Joint Initiative is unique in its ability to provide high level, credible, and bipartisan leadership and engagement on ocean and coastal policy issues. The Joint Initiative distills priorities, communicates them effectively to key decision makers, and cultivates and educates ocean champions. Among its activities, the Joint Initiative develops and implements the most recognized and credible accountability tool for ocean policy reform (the U.S. Ocean Policy Report Card) and serves as a trusted advisor to key members of the Administration and Congress. It also serves as a convener and facilitator of dialogue among diverse perspectives including the nongovernmental community, private sector, and federal and state governments. Through the engagement of its Leadership Council and the relationships it has established with key leaders in all sectors, the Joint Initiative is well positioned to continue playing a critical and catalytic leadership role.

Joint Initiative Co-Chairs

- William Ruckelshaus – Strategic Director, Madrona Venture Group; former Administrator, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (1970-1973, 1983-1985); Member, U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy
- Norman Mineta – President and Chief Executive Officer, Mineta & Associates, LLC; former Secretary of Transportation (2001-2006); former Secretary of Commerce (2000-2001); Member of Congress (1975-1995)

Joint Initiative Leadership Council members

- Frances Beinecke – President, Natural Resources Defense Council
- Don Boesch – Professor of Marine Science and President, University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science

- Lillian Borrone – Former Assistant Executive Director, Port Authority of New York and New Jersey; Member, U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy
- Norm Dicks – Senior Policy Advisor, Van Ness Feldman; former Member of Congress (1977-2013)
- Quenton Dokken – President and Chief Executive Officer, Gulf of Mexico Foundation, Inc.
- Vice Admiral Paul Gaffney, U.S. Navy (Ret.) – President Emeritus, Monmouth University; Member, U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy
- Robert Gagorian – President, Consortium for Ocean Leadership
- Sherri Goodman – Senior Vice President, General Counsel and Corporate Secretary, CNA; former Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (1993-2001)
- Scott Gudes – Vice President of Legislative Affairs for Space Systems and Operations, Lockheed Martin Corporation; former Deputy Under Secretary for Oceans and Atmosphere (1998-2003)
- Vice Admiral Conrad Lautenbacher – Chief Executive Officer and Director, GeoOptics, Inc.; former Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere and NOAA Administrator (2001-2008)
- Margaret Leinen – Director, Scripps Institution of Oceanography; Vice Chancellor for Marine Sciences and Dean, School of Marine Sciences, University of California, San Diego
- Christopher Lischewski – President and Chief Executive Officer, Bumble Bee Foods
- Jane Lubchenco – Professor of Marine Biology and Zoology, Oregon State University; former Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere and NOAA Administrator (2009-2013); Member, Pew Oceans Commission
- Julie Packard – Executive Director, Monterey Bay Aquarium; Member, Pew Oceans Commission
- Leon Panetta – Co-founder, The Panetta Institute for Public Policy; Former Secretary, U.S. Department of Defense (2011-2013); former Director of U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (2009-2011); former White House Chief of Staff (1994-1997); Chair, Pew Oceans Commission
- John Pappalardo – Chief Executive Officer, Cape Cod Commercial Hook Fishermen’s Association; former Chair, New England Fishery Management Council (2006-2011)
- Pietro Parravano – President, Institute for Fisheries Resources; Member, Pew Oceans Commission
- Diane Regas – Senior Vice President for Programs, Environmental Defense Fund
- Randy Repass – Founder and Chairman of the Board, West Marine, Inc.
- Andrew Rosenberg – Director of the Center for Science and Democracy, Union of Concerned Scientists; Member, U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy
- Christine Todd Whitman – Founder and President, The Whitman Strategy Group; former Administrator, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (2001-2003); former Governor, State of New Jersey (1994-2001)

For questions, please contact Laura Cantral at 202.354.6444 or lcantral@merid.org.

Please visit the Joint Initiative website at www.jointoceancommission.org and follow the Joint Initiative on Twitter @JointOceanCI.

Joint Ocean Commission Initiative Arctic Ocean Leadership Roundtable

Date: Thursday, December 4, 2014, 8:00 am to 4:00 pm

Location: Washington Marriott at Metro Center—775 12th Street NW, Washington, DC 20005

Metro Directions: The hotel is nearest the Metro Center station (Blue, Orange, or Red lines). Exit the station using the 12th and G Street exit. Walk one block north and the hotel will be on the right.

Objectives:

- Generate ideas about how local, state, and regional priorities can inform national Arctic policies and ways that national efforts can support local, state, and regional priorities
- Discuss ways to support the United States as it assumes chairmanship of the Arctic Council
- Provide input to the Joint Initiative as it implements its 2014-2017 strategy and develops its Ocean Action Agenda for how leaders should be addressing national priorities for the Arctic

Agenda

7:30 am **Registration & Breakfast**—*Grand Ballroom Pre-Function Space, B Level*

8:00 am **Welcome, introductions, and agenda review**— *Ballroom AB*

Laura Cantral, Director, Joint Ocean Commission Initiative

8:15 am **Setting the stage: Joint Initiative 2014-2017 strategy overview**

This Arctic Ocean Leadership Roundtable is the first of four regional roundtables the Joint Initiative will conduct as part of a three-year strategy that aims to (1) increase awareness of the importance of our oceans, (2) create an expanded network of leadership at the state, regional, and national levels to advocate for significant change in how we manage our oceans, and (3) ensure that meaningful actions are committed to by government, the private sector, and civil society to improve the health and productivity of our oceans.

Bill Ruckelshaus and Norm Mineta, Co-Chairs, Joint Ocean Commission Initiative

8:30 am **U.S. Arctic policy: Arctic Council, opportunity and leadership**

In April 2015, the United States will assume the chairmanship of the Arctic Council, which presents an important leadership opportunity. The U.S. Department of State has outlined three thematic areas that the U.S. will focus on in its role as Chair. These themes are (1) addressing the impacts of climate change in the Arctic, (2) stewardship of the Arctic Ocean, and (3) improving economic and living conditions. Participants will hear from the State Department about the Arctic policy priorities, with a particular focus on promoting stewardship of the Arctic Ocean.

Remarks: Ambassador David Balton, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Oceans and Fisheries, U.S. Department of State

9:15 am **Discussing Arctic policy priorities: environment, stewardship, and climate change**

The Arctic is undergoing the most rapid change of any place on Earth. In this session, participants will discuss topics including appropriate protection of Arctic resources, resilience and disaster preparedness, ocean acidification, understanding climate, and enhancing scientific understanding.

10:15 am **Break**

- 10:30 am** **Discussing Arctic policy priorities: infrastructure and commercial activities**
- The changing Arctic creates new opportunities for commercial and economic development in the region, including shipping, oil and gas development, rare earth element extraction, commercial fishing, Naval activity, and tourism. Increases in commercial activities in this remote and fragile region mean that it is imperative to have adequate infrastructure in place to support those activities. This session will explore how to ensure that development proceeds responsibly and infrastructure needs are met.
- 11:30 am** **Discussing Arctic policy priorities: safety and security**
- New dynamics in the Arctic present challenges and opportunities for ensuring that safety measures are in place and national security priorities are addressed. This session will consider obstacles and identify efforts to develop and maintain the capacity necessary to promote safety and security in the Arctic.
- 12:30 pm** **Lunch—Ballroom C**
- Remarks: Catherine Novelli, Under Secretary for Economic Growth, Energy, and the Environment, U.S. Department of State (invited)*
- 1:30 pm** **Tying it all together: integrated approaches to addressing issues**
- Having spent the morning identifying important issues facing the United States regarding management of the Arctic, participants will spend the afternoon discussing how the U.S. should proceed, both in the international and domestic contexts. This discussion will focus on how to implement more integrated management approaches that can help balance the long-term health and sustainability of this fragile ecosystem, while supporting communities and economic prosperity.
- 2:30 pm** **Break**
- 2:45 pm** **Tying it all together (continued)**
- The day will conclude with a continuation of the previous session and will include discussion of the Joint Initiative’s role in moving these ideas forward as it implements its 2014-2017 strategy and develops its Ocean Action Agenda.
- 3:45 pm** **Wrap up and next steps**
- 4:00 pm** **Adjourn**

Joint Ocean Commission Initiative Arctic Ocean Leadership Roundtable Key Issues

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The call for action in the Arctic

The United States is a maritime nation, and we are also an Arctic nation. The Arctic region—the Bering, Beaufort, and Chukchi seas and the Arctic Ocean—is an emerging frontier, vital to our national interests, economy, and security. Conditions in the Arctic are changing faster than anywhere else on Earth. One important change underway is the retreat of Arctic sea ice. As a result, companies are beginning to explore for oil and gas and will probably develop the outer continental shelf (OCS) of Alaska and the remote, icy waters of other Arctic nations in the coming years. This likelihood, along with the expansion of other activities, including shipping, oil and gas development, rare earth element extraction, commercial fishing, Naval activities, tourism, and others, raises questions about how to best manage the Arctic’s ocean and coastal areas. Better emergency preparedness procedures and improved infrastructure are required, including better spill response and recovery strategies and equipment tailored to extreme Arctic conditions.

Environmental changes in the Arctic will affect—and in many places are already affecting—human communities in the form of reduced food security, more severe storm damage, coastal erosion, greater risk to localities from commercial activities, and, in some cases, displacement of entire communities. Furthermore, the loss of sea ice in the Arctic may have profound impacts on weather patterns, not only in the Arctic, but within the continental United States. As activities increase and environmental conditions continue to change, the impacts on Arctic species will be unpredictable; they will likely include shifts in migration patterns, fluctuations in abundance, and changing habitats. The challenges facing Arctic communities and Arctic marine ecosystems require immediate and urgent action and funding to support such action. That is why the Joint Ocean Commission Initiative has identified Arctic issues as a high priority in its 2014-2017 strategy.

Joint Initiative 2014-2017 Strategy

The Joint Ocean Commission Initiative, created in 2005, is a collaborative, bipartisan effort to catalyze meaningful ocean policy reform at the national, regional, and state levels. As part of its 2014-2017 strategy, the Joint Initiative will convene a series of regional ocean leadership roundtables that will provide opportunities to engage important state, regional, and national perspectives and identify priorities for action. These regional ocean leadership roundtables will build the foundation for a national forum that will identify actions that must be taken to address the major challenges facing our oceans and coasts. The actions identified through the roundtables and the national forum will shape an ocean action agenda that will be delivered to the new administration and other national, regional, and state leaders in early 2017.

Through the implementation of this strategy, the Joint Initiative aims to achieve the following outcomes to improve how the United States uses and manages our oceans and secures their health and productivity into the future:

- **Awareness:** Increased visibility and attention by key decision makers regarding the importance of the oceans to our economy, environment, climate, security, public health, and other national priorities.
- **Leadership:** An expanded and coordinated network of national, regional, and state ocean champions, including from the private and public sectors, to advocate for significant improvements in the way our nation manages and uses ocean resources.
- **Commitment:** Meaningful actions committed to by the government, private sector, and civil society and significant steps taken to improve the health and productivity of our oceans.

This Arctic Ocean Leadership Roundtable brings together U.S. Arctic leaders and key stakeholders from multiple sectors to generate ideas for how local, state, and regional work can inform and influence national policy with regard to Arctic Ocean and coastal issues. The Joint Initiative is convening key leaders with a strong interest in the way our Arctic Ocean and coastal areas are managed to gather valuable input in refining our recommendations for how leaders should be addressing national priorities for the Arctic.

Draft Arctic policy recommendations to launch discussion

As a point of departure for discussion, this document lists below priority actions included in the Joint Initiative's June 2013 report, [Charting the Course: Securing the Future of America's Oceans](#), which presented recommendations that address (1) demonstrating international and domestic leadership, (2) improving Arctic research and management, and (3) investing in ocean observing systems and infrastructure. They are presented for the purposes of jumpstarting discussion at the December 4 Leadership Roundtable. In considering those earlier recommendations, please note that the Joint Initiative is particularly interested in further exploring:

1. Are these the right priority actions for the Administration in the short-term? In the long-term? What priority actions are missing?
2. Through what existing or potential new mechanisms, platforms, or venues can leaders across multiple sectors and at multiple levels work in a coordinated manner to implement these recommendations and accomplish these goals?
3. Where might there be opportunities to cultivate national, regional, and state ocean champions, to advance these priority actions?
4. What specific commitments by government, private sector, and civil society to take action should be a focus for the next two years?

Recommendation 1: Demonstrating leadership at home and abroad

The United States must work domestically and through multilateral efforts to address the challenges facing the Arctic, especially with regard to changing ecosystems, national security, commerce, fisheries, and energy. In April 2015, the United States will assume the chairmanship of the Arctic Council, an important international opportunity to take a leadership role on Arctic issues that affect our national interests. In May 2013, the White House released the [National Strategy for the Arctic Region](#), which must now be fully implemented with robust stakeholder input.

Diligently prepare to assume Chairmanship of the Arctic Council

The United States is one of eight Arctic nations that comprise the Arctic Council, a high-level international body that addresses issues faced by the Arctic governments and the indigenous people of the region. Chairmanship of the Arctic Council rotates among the members, and the United States will assume the Chair in April 2015. This offers an opportunity for the United States to provide strong leadership.

In its role as Chair, the Joint Initiative recommends the United States provide effective leadership to help the Council address the following Arctic Ocean and coastal priorities:

- **Improve shipping safety**, including improving maritime domain awareness, capacity for search and rescue, and oil spill response.
- **Strengthen the Council's focus on integrated management approaches of the Arctic marine environment** including increased scientific research, implementation of integrated approaches both nationally and across boundaries, better understanding of ocean acidification and how acidification of the Arctic Ocean might be addressed, and agreement to establish special management areas for the conservation of living resources and for enhancing resilience of communities and natural systems.
- **Intensify mitigation and adaptation activities in response to climatic changes underway in the Arctic**, including those focused on reducing black carbon and methane, facilitating community approaches to improving resilience and adaptation, increasing scientific research on the link between Arctic change and global impacts, and encouraging global efforts to reduce carbon emissions.

Implement the National Strategy for the Arctic

In addition to addressing Arctic issues in an international context, the United States must work domestically to manage challenges facing the Arctic, especially with regard to changing ecosystems, national security, commerce, fishing, and energy. The Obama Administration has taken steps toward these objectives in this rapidly changing region, including through the [National Strategy for the Arctic Region](#) and the [Arctic Strategy Implementation Plan](#), as well as the [Department of Defense 2013 Arctic Strategy](#), and the [U.S. Navy Arctic Roadmap](#). However, more action is needed.

The Joint Initiative recommends fully implementing the *National Strategy for the Arctic* to improve federal agency coordination, enhance high-level Executive Branch leadership and decision making, and ensure opportunities for public input and engagement. In particular, the United States should:

- **Increase capacity for federal agencies operating in the region**—including the U.S. Coast Guard, NOAA, EPA, DOD/Navy, DOI, and NASA—to improve the ability of commercial interests to operate safely in the region and ensure effective response and recovery in the event of natural or human-caused disaster. This should include:
 - improved collaboration and stronger partnerships with the State of Alaska and Alaskan Native tribal governments and organizations;
 - greater investment in ocean observing systems; and
 - additional infrastructure including vessels, polar class icebreakers, and research platforms.

- **Provide direction to federal agencies, including DOI, USCG, and NOAA, and the private sector to develop greater understanding of the complexities of oil and gas exploration and potential spill response needs in the Arctic prior to approval of future development.**

Accede to Law of the Sea Convention

The challenges emerging related to the Arctic Ocean demonstrate the importance and urgency of the United States accession to the Law of the Sea Convention, a comprehensive international accord to which 155 nations and the European Union belong. It establishes overarching rules governing all uses of the world's oceans and their resources, including the Arctic. As the sole industrialized nation not party to the Convention, due to inaction of the U.S. Senate, the United States remains sidelined in current dialogues about access to and management of Arctic resources. Recent data on the melting of the Arctic ice cap has both businesses and governments involved in a multi-billion dollar rush to secure rights to access natural resources and energy sources in areas immediately adjacent to their respective exclusive economic zones. For the United States, this new frontier could support a variety of economic activities and new jobs in the coming decades, including traditional and alternative energy exploration and development, shipping through the Arctic, and sustainable development of new fisheries.

Accession to the Convention would secure sovereign rights over extensive marine areas, promote international commerce, protect our national security interests, and further the conservation of ocean resources. It would also give the United States a seat at the table and a leadership role in international negotiations regarding the implementation, interpretation, and enforcement of the Convention. As Canada, Denmark, Russia, and other nations assert territorial claims to Arctic resources, the United States must be in a position to protect its sovereign rights and prevent unsubstantiated claims by other nations by acceding to the Convention. There is overwhelming bipartisan support for accession from a broad and diverse range of interests, including all major U.S. ocean industries, environmental organizations, and scientific institutions. For all these reasons, **the Joint Initiative recommends that the U.S. Senate provide its advice and consent to the President to accede to the Law of the Sea Convention.**

Recommendation 2: Improving Arctic research and management

The Administration and Congress should increase funding for federal agencies operating in the region, particularly the U.S. Coast Guard and NOAA. The Coast Guard is responsible for monitoring activities and responding to emergencies—including search and rescue missions and oil spill disasters—and is not adequately equipped to do so at this time. Funds are needed to maintain the aging fleet of Coast Guard aircraft and vessels, including existing icebreakers, as well as to acquire new ones, and to develop the infrastructure along the northern Alaskan coastline that is needed to sustain even basic shore-based operations. NOAA provides a range of important services, including weather and sea ice prediction, mapping and charting, stewardship and management of living marine resources, and scientific research essential to increasing our understanding of this dynamic and ecologically sensitive region.

The Joint Initiative recommends that federal agencies better collaborate with state and local governments, Alaskan Native governments, and industry to improve the ability of commercial entities to operate safely in the region and ensure effective response and recovery in the event of a

natural or human-caused disaster. This includes improving coordination and data-sharing on oil spill planning, preparedness, and response, vessel tracking, and search and rescue, as well as investment in new icebreakers, aircraft, and shore-based infrastructure.

Recommendation 3: Investing in ocean observing systems and infrastructure

In order to effectively manage the rapidly changing Arctic, we must enhance our scientific understanding of Arctic marine ecosystems, including fish stock migration patterns and trends in weather and climate that could have significant economic, environmental, and human health impacts. We must also gather the critical baseline information needed to evaluate and guide economic development in the region and allow us to prepare for contingencies. This will require significant investment in research infrastructure and monitoring programs.

The Administration should further partner with the oil and gas industry, other commercial interests, nongovernmental organizations, state governments, local and tribal communities, and other interested stakeholders to assess challenges, identify research priorities, and develop coordinated solutions. The engagement of local communities and Alaska Natives is especially critical to ensure that traditional knowledge is integrated into research programs and decision making. The recently released [Interagency Arctic Research Plan: FY2013-2017](#) provides a strong foundation to guide public and private investment in Arctic science. However, greater support must be provided to fully implement the Arctic observation network to better inform local and regional decision makers.

The Joint Initiative recommends that the Administration and Congress implement a coordinated scientific research and monitoring program in U.S. Arctic ocean and coastal areas that is supported by a strong ocean observing system and adequate infrastructure—including vessels, polar class icebreakers, and research platforms. The program should prioritize gaps in current research and connect research, monitoring, and decision making needs, such as oil spill response and recovery.

The research and monitoring program should include:

- **Baseline assessments** of environmental conditions.
- **Risk assessments** for various activities.
- **Socioeconomic analysis.**
- **Incorporation of traditional knowledge** into research and decision making.

Joint Ocean Commission Initiative

Arctic Ocean Leadership Roundtable

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Participant List

Nils Andreassen

Executive Director
Institute of the North
nandreassen@institutenorth.org

Melanie Bahnke

President and CEO
Kawerak, Inc.
mbahnke@kawerak.org

David Balton

Deputy Assistant Secretary for Oceans and Fisheries
U.S. Department of State
baltonda@state.gov

Heather Conley

Senior Vice President for Europe, Eurasia and the Arctic and Director, Europe Program
Center for Strategic and International Studies
HConley@csis.org

Eric Cooper

Director, Maritime Security and Arctic Region Policy
National Security Council
Eric_M_Cooper@nsc.eop.gov

Joe Cox

President
Chamber of Shipping of America
jcox@knowships.org

Quenton Dokken

Joint Initiative Leadership Council
President and CEO
Gulf of Mexico Foundation, Inc.
qdokken@gulfmex.org

Bill Eichbaum

Vice President
Marine and Arctic Policy
World Wildlife Fund
bill.eichbaum@wwfus.org

Kelly Falkner

Director of Polar Programs
National Science Foundation
kfalkner@nsf.gov

John Farrell

Executive Director
U.S. Arctic Research Commission
jfarrell@arctic.gov

Paul Gaffney

Joint Initiative Leadership Council
Vice Admiral U.S. Navy (Retired)
President Emeritus
Monmouth University
Hawk1@monmouth.edu

Robert Gagosian

Joint Initiative Leadership Council
President
Consortium for Ocean Leadership
rgagosian@oceanleadership.org

Sherri Goodman

Joint Initiative Leadership Council
Senior Vice President & General Counsel
CNA Corporation
sherri.goodman@verizon.net

Marilyn Heiman

Director, U.S. Arctic Program
Pew Environment Group
MHeiman@pewtrusts.org

Bob Herron

Alaska State Representative
State of Alaska
representative.bob.herron@akleg.gov

Peter Hill

Director of Government Relations
Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution
phill@whoi.edu

Edward Itta

Commissioner
U.S. Arctic Research Commission
esitta@gci.net

Art Ivanoff

CEO
Bering Sea Alliance, LLC
ivanoffart49@gmail.com

Martin Jeffries

Program Officer and Science Advisor
Ocean Atmosphere and Space Research
Office of Naval Research
martin.jeffries@navy.mil

Brendan Kelly

Director of Conservation Research
Chief Scientist
Monterey Bay Aquarium
bkelly@mbayaq.org

Cathleen Kelly

Senior Fellow
Center for American Progress
cathleen.mary.kelly@gmail.com

David Kennedy

Deputy Undersecretary for Operations
National Oceanic and Atmospheric
Administration
david.kennedy@noaa.gov

Beth Kerttula

Director
National Ocean Council
Elizabeth_J_Kerttula@ostp.eop.gov

Jane Lubchenco

Joint Initiative Leadership Council
Valley Professor of Marine Biology
Oregon State University
lubchenco@oregonstate.edu

Tony MacDonald

Director, Urban Coast Institute
Monmouth University
amacdona@monmouth.edu

Norm Mineta

Joint Initiative Co-Chair
President & CEO
Mineta & Associates, LLC
norm@minetallc.com

Nicolette Nye

Vice President, Communications
National Ocean Industries Association
nicolette@noia.org

Chris Oliver

Executive Director
North Pacific Fishery Management Council
chris.oliver@noaa.gov

Jack Omelak

Executive Director
Alaska Nanuuq Commission
omelak1@gmail.com

Richard Ranger

Senior Policy Advisor
American Petroleum Institute
ranger@api.org

Cheryl Rosa

Deputy Director
U.S. Arctic Research Commission
crosa@arctic.gov

Bill Ruckelshaus

Joint Initiative Co-Chair
Strategic Director
Madrona Venture Group
bill@madronagroup.com

Michael Sfraga

Vice Chancellor
University of Alaska Fairbanks
Mike.sfraga@alaska.edu

Lisa Speer

Director, International Oceans Program
Natural Resources Defense Council
lspeer@nrdc.org

Simon Stephenson

Assistant Director, Polar Sciences
White House Office of Science and
Technology Policy
Simon_N_Stephenson@ostp.eop.gov

Fran Ulmer

Chair & Special Advisor on Arctic and
Science Policy
U.S. Arctic Research Commission/U.S.
Department of State
fran.ulmer@arctic.gov

Brooks Yeager

Principal
Birdwell Strategies
brooks.yeager@verizon.net

Joint Initiative Staff

Makkah Ali

Mediator and Program Associate
Meridian Institute
mali@merid.org

Laura Cantral

Director, Joint Ocean Commission Initiative
Partner, Meridian Institute
lcantral@merid.org

John Ehrmann

Senior and Managing Partner
Meridian Institute
jehrmann@merid.org

Kathleen Frangione

Executive Vice President
McBee Strategic Consulting
kfrangione@mcbeestrategic.com

Rich Innes

Senior Fellow
Meridian Institute
rinnes@merid.org

Meghan Massaua

Mediator and Program Manager
Meridian Institute
mmassaua@merid.org

Kevin Ranker

Consultant
Meridian Institute
kevinr@kevinranker.com

Kara Runsten

Fellow and Program Assistant
Meridian Institute
krunsten@merid.org

Danielle Youngblood

Project Coordinator
Meridian Institute
dyoungblood@merid.org