

Just Ask the Kids: Climate Resilience Engagement through Dirty Snow Citizen Science Inquiry Investigations in Alaska and Montana

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November 26, 2022

Abstract

With shore-fast sea ice disappearing along the coast of the Chukchi Sea causing winds with deep snow drifts, variable snowpack in Bristol Bay in Alaska, and winters without snow in West Central Montana, youth from these areas have personal stories of environmental changes witnessed firsthand. In a virtual “Dirty Snow” citizen science STEM engagement program that met weekly for 5-weeks, middle and high school youth across different time zones and cultures shared such snow stories, implemented a protocol to measure light absorbing particles (LAPs) in snow, and conducted their own Global Learning and Observations to Benefit the Environment (GLOBE) snowpack and pH investigations. Teachers, parents and researchers teamed up to support students as they asked their own questions about how LAPs affect their local communities and measured, collected, filtered, and analyzed snow samples. Students learned that LAPs in snow affect the Earth’s climate system by reducing snow reflectivity, affecting albedo. On a local scale, LAPs capture heat energy leading to snow loss. Students wondered if LAPs also affect water quality. Middle school students from Shishmaref, Alaska (located on an island in the Chukchi Sea) selected snow sampling locations in areas important to their community’s resilience to climate change, such as the sole water supply lagoon. The Shishmaref students shared their results with their community, showcased their project in both the GLOBE International Virtual Science Symposium and a tribal climate resilience webinar, and have been featured in the July 2021 Association of Women in Science Magazine issue on sustainability and innovation. In this session, we will share the lessons learned from multiple perspectives - including surveyed youth participants - on conducting a remote synchronous and asynchronous STEM and climate resilience engagement on a short timescale.

ED55H-06: Just Ask the Kids: Climate Resilience Engagement through Dirty Snow Citizen Science Inquiry Investigations in Alaska and Montana

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AGU Fall Meeting 2021

Final Paper Number: ED55H-06

Presentation Type: Poster Session

Session Date and Time: Friday, 17 December 2021; 16:00 - 17:15 CST

Session Number and Title: ED55H: Strategies for Empowering Youth to Contribute to Climate Resilience Efforts in Their Communities II Poster

Poster Link: <https://agu2021fallmeeting-agu.ipostersessions.com/Default.aspx?s=59-28-94-D9-16-B4-F1-13-32-C0-72-70-6F-55-AE-41>



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UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA FAIRBANKS(1), SHISHMAREF SCHOOL(2), UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO(3), ARCTIC and EARTH STEM INTEGRATING GLOBE and NASA(1,2,4)



Listening to Students' Climate Concerns

In my classes, I heard that the kids were concerned about their daily life and how they live with anxiety, how they live with a concern for fresh water. I heard their concern for the marine mammals around us. When I heard them say that they had these concerns, they also had ideas in what they wanted to do.

NANA, Roben Itchoak



OPEN

Students Sharing Science across the GLOBE

Norman Stenek and Trevor Eningowuk submitted a report and this poster to the 2021 GLOBE International Virtual Science Symposium.



DIRTY SNOW IN SHISHMAREF

BY NORMAN STENAK AND TREVOR ENINGOWUK
ROBEN ITCHOAK, GLOBE TEACHER

ABSTRACT

The study was conducted in Shishmaref, Alaska, a coastal village that is experiencing significant erosion and sea level rise. The study was conducted in the winter of 2020-2021. The results show that the study was successful in gathering data on the snow and ice conditions in the village.

RESEARCH METHODS

The study was conducted using a combination of field observations and interviews with the community members. The data was collected over a period of several weeks.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The results show that the study was successful in gathering data on the snow and ice conditions in the village. The data was collected over a period of several weeks.

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Shishmaref Panelists Present at Conference

Eighth graders Norman Stenek and Trevor Eningowuk, along with their teacher Roben Itchoak were panelists at the Community and Citizen Science in the Far North Arctic Research Consortium of the U.S. (ARCUS) in October, 2021.



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Sharing Snow Stories and Asking Questions

Roben Itchoak's approach of listening to students' ideas meshed well with the Arctic and Earth SIGNs Learning Framework, which includes sharing personal stories and honoring knowledge of Indigenous Elders (Spelman et al. 2018).

The Dirty Snow team co-designed a 5-week "Dirty Snow Science" synchronous virtual course around sharing stories, listening to students' ideas and modeling the question formulation technique, an inquiry practice by the Right Question Institute.

Dirty Snow Virtual Inquiry

Class 2

- Stories of "Field Fails"
- Learn how to measure snowpack, collect & filter snow
- Make Hypotheses

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Siblings Study Snow Science in Montana



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Photo Credit: Roben Itchoak



Youth Authors on Poster

Trevor Eningowuk and **Norman Stenek** of Shishmaref, Alaska and **Freya Elias** of Helena, Montana. These youth share their reflections and inquiry investigations with permission on this poster.

Abstract Authors

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Katja Stromnes-Elias, Editor, E.L. Achieve; Parent participant in Arctic and Earth STEM Integrating GLOBE and NASA (SIGNs) project

Acknowledgements

The authors thank the following:

GLOBE, Global Learning and Observations to Benefit the Environment, a science education program in 125 countries;
 GLOBE Clouds Team, especially Marilé Colón Robles;
 Arctic Research Consortium of the U.S. (ARCUS), which hosted the Fall, 2021 Citizen and Community Science in the Far North Conference and provided the video of Trevor Eningowuk, Norman Stenek and Roben Itchoak presenting as panelists at the virtual conference;
 Alaska Tribal Climate Learning Resilience Network, which invited Trevor Eningowuk, Norman Stenek and Roben Itchoak to present at a spring, 2021 webinar;
 Lisa Villano (teacher in Shishmaref, Alaska) for leading the Shishmaref Climate Heroes Club;
 Katie Spellman (faculty in Fairbanks, Alaska) for modeling how to engage youth in citizen and community science through stories and storytelling;
 Bonnie Murray (science communicator with NASA) for engaging youth in NASA Meet-the-Scientists Sessions;
 University of Alaska Fairbanks Summer Sessions and Lifelong Learning Office, which hosted the 365 SMART Academy in Spring, 2021 and advertised the Dirty Snow Science sessions;
 Students, teachers and parents who participated in the Dirty Snow Science pilot project in the following communities: Takotna, Alaska; Anchorage, Alaska; North Pole, Alaska; Fairbanks, Alaska; Dillingham, Alaska; Boise, Idaho; Littleton, Colorado; Polson, Montana, and Shawnee, Kansas

Funding for this Dirty Snow Science 5-week session is provided by the Arctic and Earth SIGNs project, which is supported by **NASA under Award No. NNX16AC52A**. Any opinions, findings and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.