

Federal committee OKs Arctic plan

The U.S. Interagency Arctic Research Policy Committee last month approved the nation's first Arctic Research Plan, and according to U.S. Sen. Frank Murkowski, "proved that 'official Washington' finally recognizes that the United States, by virtue of Alaska, is an Arctic nation."

The plan focuses on research needs in four main areas:

- Arctic oceans and atmosphere, including study of Arctic and global weather systems, ice dynamics, marine ecosystems and upper atmosphere phenomena.

- Land, resources and environment, including the development of renewable and nonrenewable resources while protecting the fragile Arctic ecosystem.

- People, including human health and habitation in the Arctic, as well as the effects of social change, both past and present, on Arctic residents.

- Information and data management, research logistics and research tools, including the use of information sharing, computer networks and remote sensing by satellite.

"This plan is the cornerstone of a new spirit of cooperation and planning Arctic research," Murkowski said.