

Reaching an Ecosystem Approach through an Alaskan Inuit Food Security Lens Inuit Circumpolar Council-Alaska. Carolina Behe

Inuit homelands in Alaska for the Iñupaiq, St. Lawrence Island Yupik, Central Yup'ik and Cup'ik peoples encompass the Arctic Ocean coastline from the Beaufort and Chukchi Seas southward to the Northern Bering Sea coastline at the Yukon and Kuskokwim River delta. The Alaskan Inuit understanding of food security encompasses complex and interlinked cultural and environmental systems. These systems are comprised of connections among the health of people, animals, and plants; the different states of land, sea, and air; and the cultural fabric held together by language, cultural expression, and social integrity. In Inuit knowledge system it is impossible to disentangle some of these relationships; when we discuss an Inuit food security perspective, it is this interconnectivity and these relationships that we refer to.

Inuit knowledge and management practices are both a part of Alaskan Inuit food security. Understanding this food security lens will aid in moving overall management of Arctic systems to better include whole knowledge, (i.e., “ecosystem-approach towards management”).

This presentation will provide an overview of an Inuit led project, *Alaskan Inuit Food Security Conceptual Framework: How to Assess the Arctic from an Inuit Perspective*. The discussion will concentrate on the developed conceptual framework that guides us through the pieces needed to gain a holistic view of the Arctic. Additionally, traditional management practices will be discussed to demonstrate the link between applying a food security lens and decision making.