

ONLINE LEARNING: BEST PRACTICES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE WEBINARS WITH ALASKA NATIVE COMMUNITIES

Session: In-Person

Emma Radisch*, @EmmaRadisch, Program on the Environment, History, University of Washington

Site Supervisor: Lisa Hiruki-Raring, NOAA Alaska Fisheries Science Center

Faculty Advisor: Dawn Hardison-Stevens, American Indian Studies, University of Washington

The increase in online learning since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic has provided an opportunity to share information to wider audiences, bring communities together, and listen to diverse perspectives. I specifically looked at webinars, and how they can be used for environmental education. The purpose of this study was to outline the best practices for environmental science webinars with a specific focus on outreach, engagement, and accessibility with Alaska Native communities. The work I did with the NOAA Alaska Fisheries Science Center looked at adapting their webinar program, NOAA Live! Alaska, to best fit the needs and resources of communities in the Northwest Arctic, North Slope, and Bering Strait regions of Alaska. To accomplish this task, I worked closely with the NOAA AFSC education team and webinar presenters to plan and execute season 2 of NOAA Live! Alaska, conducted interviews with educators in Alaska that had attended NOAA Live! Alaska webinars, and researched scholarly peer-reviewed sources on these issues. My findings showed that in order to create an effective environmental science webinar program for Alaska Native students one needs to build a genuine long-term relationship with that community, work with the community to incorporate culturally responsive teaching methods into the webinars, and adapt the technology being used to the technology available in that community. This work fosters engaging and supportive environmental education programs for Alaska Native students that are culturally and place relevant, bridge western and Native science, and inspire and uplift Alaska Native students.