Mission

ELOKA provides data management services and user support to facilitate the collection, preservation, exchange, and use of local observations and knowledge of the Arctic.

ELOKA also seeks to help make local and traditional knowledge (LTK) and community observations discoverable, so more information is available for research and community planning.

Philosophy

Local and traditional knowledge (LTK) and scientific expertise are complementary and reinforcing ways of understanding the Arctic system. Collecting, documenting, preserving, and sharing knowledge is a cooperative endeavor, and ELOKA is dedicated to fostering understanding and shared knowledge between northern communities and community members, scientists, educators, policy makers, and the general public. ELOKA operates on the principle that all knowledge should be treated ethically, and intellectual property rights should be respected.

Objectives

1. Provide core data management services to researchers and organizations involved in community-based research

2. Collaboratively enhance technology to better support the collection and sharing of community data

3. Ensure a sustained, enduring preservation system of community data to support the exchange of information

Contact Us

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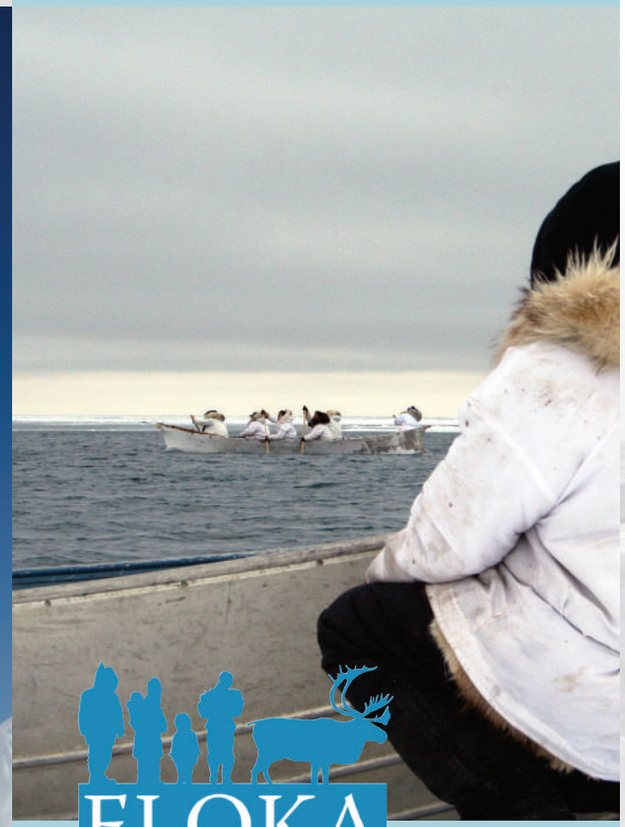
"I believe it is time for the harpoon and computer to work together"
— Peter Kattuk (Sanikiluaq, Nunavut)



ELOKA

Exchange for Local Observations and Knowledge of the Arctic

eloka-arctic.org

What is ELOKA?

ELOKA, the Exchange for Local Observations and Knowledge of the Arctic, was launched during the 2007-2009 International Polar Year (IPY).

ELOKA seeks to help people who are conducting research on local and traditional knowledge (LTK) or who are gathering community-based monitoring data and information. ELOKA is a service available for research projects, communities, organizations, schools, and individuals who need help storing, protecting, and sharing the LTK information they have collected. ELOKA works with many different types of data:

- Written interview transcripts
- Audio or video tapes and files
- Photographs, artwork, illustrations, and maps
- Quantitative data such as temperature, snow thickness, wind data, etc.

To achieve our objectives, we are working with international organizations and initiatives including Inuit Quajisarvingat, Inuit Circumpolar Council, Sustaining Arctic Observing Networks, the International Arctic Science Committee, and others.

Advisory Committee

The ELOKA advisory committee consists of six members of Indigenous professionals from around the world who can offer a unique expertise from their communities. The committee will help guide and advise activities of community-based research, data management technologies, and LTK.

Front Cover: Bowhead whale hunting off the floe edge in Barrow, Alaska. (Credit: S. Gearheard)

Back Cover: A research team for the Siku-Inuit-Hila Project rests on sea ice off the coast of Clyde River, Nunavut. (Credit: H. Huntington)

Why is ELOKA Needed?

There has been a rise in local and traditional knowledge (LTK) research in the North, including an increase in community-based monitoring projects, which, for example, conduct local sea ice and snow monitoring and record wildlife observations. Unfortunately, there has not been a comparable increase in support systems to care for the information being collected.

An urgent need to manage garnered information should be met so that:

- the information is not lost, but rather protected and preserved.
- the information is "discoverable." To assist in the exchange of knowledge for the benefit of all people, ELOKA will organize the information being collected for others to find and learn from.
- the information has an influence on Arctic research, policy, and public awareness. Those in research or who live in Arctic communities agree that making LTK and community-based monitoring data well organized and available can improve its inclusion and consultation in science, education, and decision making about the Arctic.

Hunters Peter Kattuk (left) and Johnassie Ippak (right) were interviewed for the Sanikiluaq Sea Ice Project. (Credit: C. McNeave)

Featured ELOKA Products

ELOKA is currently collaborating with Indigenous community members around the Arctic. The communities are not only observing and reporting changes, they are sharing wisdom that has long been gleaned from generations of people living in an Arctic environment, thereby providing a valuable link to science.

Whale harvest on the beach during fall whaling in Barrow, Alaska. (Credit: M. Druckenmiller)

Narwhal Tusk Research

Harvard researcher Martin Nweeia interviewed fifty-five elders and hunters from Inuit communities in Canada and Greenland about the purpose of the narwhal tusk. Eleven Canadian Inuit interviews are currently available with English translation.

Sea Ice in the Belcher Islands, Nunavut, Canada

This data set contains interviews of three hunters from Sanikiluaq, located on the Belcher Islands in the territory of Nunavut, Canada. Gathered from their hunting expeditions, observations of sea ice conditions around the Belcher Islands reveal that ice is changing and becoming more dangerous, less predictable than it once was.

Silalirijiit Project: Kangiqtugaapik (Clyde River) Weather Station Network

This site, initiated as a community-driven project, provides access to the current weather conditions at several locations around Kangiqtugaapik (Clyde River), Nunavut. Meteorological measurements are displayed in near-real time, and include air and ground temperature, wind direction and speed, and humidity.

SIZONet

The Seasonal Ice Zone Observing Network (SIZONet) is an interdisciplinary project that implements an integrated program for observing seasonal ice in the context of a changing Arctic. The project's scientific goal is to track intertwined changes and selected important impacts in a rapidly evolving Seasonal Ice Zone (SIZ) in order to improve understanding and predictions of the Arctic sea ice cover. Carried out by sea ice experts from different Alaska coastal communities, sea ice observations are documented in a database that will facilitate synthesis of different types of sea ice knowledge and expertise, and can help track sea ice change from a user perspective.

Traditional caribou clothing made by Inuit at Clyde River, Nunavut, 2006. (Credit: S. Gearheard)

Young Nenets boy Anton Taleev on a reindeer sledge in Nenets Autonomous Okrug, Northwest Russia, July 2006. (Credit: B. Forbes)

SnowChange

This site is devoted to two Indigenous Chukchi communities, Turvaurgin and Nutendli, in the settlement of Kolymskaya, which is in the northeastern corner of the Republic of Sakha-Yakutia, Siberia in the Russian Federation. Community residents practice seasonal nomadic reindeer herding and other subsistence activities that are being affected by climate change.

Yup'ik Environmental Knowledge Project

This project aims to document Indigenous place names and environmental knowledge in the Yup'ik communities of the Yukon-Kuskokwim delta in southwest Alaska under the guidance of the Calista Elders Council—a non-profit research organization representing 1,300 Yup'ik tradition bearers. Partnered with ELOKA, the project has developed a data management strategy, ensuring the preservation and accessibility of this garnered knowledge.

To learn more about these and other ELOKA products, see: eloka-arctic.org/data.