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Scientists look to predict seas

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Over the past several years oceanographers have begun to plan for an ocean observing system that would allow us to predict marine conditions. **Regional** observatories will be part of a nationwide Integrated Ocean Observing System; the Alaskan component is called the Alaska Ocean Observing System (AOOS).

Once implemented, the system will provide: 1) both real-time information and long-term trends about Alaska's ocean conditions and marine life; 2) cost-free access to data and information on coastal conditions; and 3) products tailored to meet the needs of mariners, scientists, industry managers, resource managers, educators and other marine resource users. These products should improve marine safety, mitigation of natural hazards, predictions of climate change and sustainable use of marine resources.

The system will be constructed, in part, by collecting existing resources < such as the Kachemak Bay Research Reserve's nearshore water quality data < and if appropriate sensors don't exist, the program will look at adding sensors, such as wind and wave measurements, as required by potential users. The data will then be made available to scientists who might provide modeled products similar to weather predictions, as well as to anyone else interested in the data.

The first stage of implementation will focus on physical measurements, such as currents, waves, wind speed, temperature and salinity. To inform interested data users about existing physical ocean science resources and to gather input on the needs of potential data and product users, the Alaska Ocean Observing System, **Cook Inlet Regional Citizens Advisory Council** and Kachemak Bay Research Reserve will be sponsoring a workshop in late February 2005 on physical oceanography in **Cook Inlet**. People interested in attending or providing input into the observatory design should contact me at KBRR (226-4654) or Molly McCammon with AOOS (644-6703).