

## **Long-Form Abstract from Leah Shaffer – Icy Intersections: Worldview-based decision-making in Arctic frozen commons governance under climate change**

This paper broadly investigates governance in Alaska through the lens of worldviews within decision making processes, and the resulting differential impacts across communities, jurisdictional levels, and livelihoods. Specifically, this research explores conflictive and collaborative spaces resulting from multi-level stakeholders' management decisions around the communities of McGrath and Nikolai in the Upper Kuskokwim River region, Alaska, USA.

Arctic Indigenous communities have long conceptualized and used frozen landscapes as “commons”, building stewardship goals collectively instead of individually. However, goals that guide management entities at the regional, state, and federal levels often center around different worldviews. Composed of an Actor's underlying values, epistemological beliefs, and their understanding of social-ecological-economic relationships, worldviews set the foundation for conditioning the universe where actions come from. Actors operationalize their worldviews as norms, rules, and regulations which are layered over landscapes and people to create complex multi-level governance regimes. These regimes are composed of nested hierarchies of decision-makers, where decisions made at the outer level (e.g., international, federal) limit the decisions available to decision-makers at the inner levels (e.g., state, local).

Multi-level governance leads to multi-level management feedbacks, and literature identifies the need to understand these within social-ecological systems. This research addresses that gap by investigating the drivers of successful collective-action solutions to address frozen social-ecological system challenges. I will conduct thematic content analysis of archival documents, and narrative analysis of semi-structured interviews with frozen-landscape stakeholders across four levels (federal, state, regional, local). A proof-of-concept study was conducted, analyzing the content of mission statements from 26 stakeholders working at different jurisdictional levels in the Upper Kuskokwim River region and making decisions that affect frozen commons. Proof-of-concept results indicate that a vast array of worldviews are signaled through entities' written work. I expect that interview responses will yield key frozen-commons challenges, which I will use to investigate how stakeholder decisions at one level create feedbacks that affect decisions and outcomes across all levels.