

1: Alaska Hacked Like Equifax: Industry Needs to Evolve to Prevent Repeat - Avionics

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Abstract Background Wild berries are a valued traditional food in Alaska. Phytochemicals in wild berries may contribute to the prevention of vascular disease, cancer and cognitive decline, making berry consumption important to community health in rural areas. Little was known regarding which species of berries were important to Alaskan communities, the number of species typically picked in communities and whether recent environmental change has affected berry abundance or quality. Objective To identify species of wild berries that were consumed by people in different ecological regions of Alaska and to determine if perceived berry abundance was changing for some species or in some regions. Design We asked tribal environmental managers throughout Alaska for their views on which among 12 types of wild berries were important to their communities and whether berry harvests over the past decade were different than in previous years. We received responses from 96 individuals in 73 communities. Results Berries that were considered very important to communities differed among ecological regions of Alaska. Low-bush blueberry *Vaccinium uliginosum* and V. For 7 of the 12 berries on the survey, a majority of respondents indicated that in the past decade abundance had either declined or become more variable. Conclusions Our study is an example of how environmental managers and participants in local observer networks can report on the status of wild resources in rural Alaska. Their observations suggest that there have been changes in the productivity of some wild berries in the past decade, resulting in greater uncertainty among communities regarding the security of berry harvests. Monitoring and experimental studies are needed to determine how environmental change may affect berry abundance. Understanding how subsistence resources have been affected by recent climate change, and may be affected by changes yet to come 5 , is necessary to plan for food security in Alaska. Evaluating changes to subsistence resources across a region as large and ecologically diverse as Alaska is challenging. However throughout Alaska, government, tribal and private environmental managers live and work in rural communities. These individuals are knowledgeable about the local environment and can provide a network for reporting on environmental change. Wild berries are valued as a traditional food and for medicinal purposes in rural Alaska, and berry picking is an important cultural activity 6 “ 8. Berries add diversity to the diets of people in rural areas and are an important alternative to domestic fruits, which in remote areas can be difficult to obtain and are expensive. Many species of wild berries have high antioxidant activity 9 “ 12 that has been shown to reduce the risk of diabetes, heart disease, cognitive decline and cancer 13 “ Berries also provide food to wildlife species that are important to subsistence harvest 17 “ Thus, wild berries are important to cultural heritage, food security and human health in rural Alaska. Despite their importance to rural communities, we know little regarding how berry-producing plants may be affected by climate change. Change in precipitation and temperature could affect berry production 20 “ 22 , as could changes in pollination rates Change in berry harvests could serve as an indicator of environmental modification at a landscape level. In Alaska, there are approximately 50 species of plants that produce berries People regularly consume berries from about half of those species However, there is little published information regarding which species of berries are important to communities in different regions of the state. That information was needed to guide further monitoring and research on the effects of climate change on berry resources. Therefore, we conducted a survey in which we asked local environmental managers throughout Alaska: Our goals were to contrast species composition of the berry harvest among ecological regions of Alaska, and identify regions or species for which berry abundance was perceived to be changing. Methods Survey approach Between November and February , we distributed a survey to 3 groups of environmental managers that were knowledgeable about berries and their use: Contents of the online and paper surveys were the same. In the survey, we first asked people to identify the community in which they lived and the number of years they had lived there. We then asked questions about 12 types of berries that we believed were most likely to be picked in various regions of Alaska see Supplementary file. Some berries were combinations of species that

were closely related and similar in appearance. If they responded positively, we asked that they classify the importance of the berry to their community as either: It is very important. It is the berry that people pick most often It is important. People sometimes pick this berry. It is not important. People rarely pick this berry. If the respondent indicated that people in their community picked a berry, we asked that they provide their perception of whether abundance and harvests of that berry had changed over the past 10 years: It is more abundant. The berry harvest is larger now than in previous years. It is less abundant. We pick fewer berries of this species than we used to. Its abundance has not changed. Its abundance is more variable from 1 year to the next than it used to be. We considered that increased abundance or no change in abundance were indicators of certainty in berry harvests, and suggested that a family could plan whether to incorporate that berry into their diet. Conversely, decreased abundance or increased variability in abundance indicated uncertainty in harvests, and suggested that a family could not plan on that berry being available. For each berry, we also asked participants to indicate the volume of berries that families in their community picked on average, and the distance people travelled to the best berry-picking areas. Data analysis We summarized regional differences in berry importance based on Level I ecoregions of Alaska 26 Fig. This classification broadly divides Alaska into 3 ecological zones 26 that also reflect distributions of Native cultures 27 and some berry species The polar ecoregion of northern and western Alaska is a treeless, windswept region typically underlain by permafrost and in which land cover is mainly sedge and grass tundra, low shrubs and wetlands. It includes the montane regions of the Brooks Range. The boreal ecoregion of interior Alaska is dominated by spruce and birch forests, but it includes alpine tundra in mountainous regions. There are many areas in the boreal ecoregion where forests give way to sedge meadows and ericaceous shrubs in poorly drained sites. Numerous groups of Athabascan people live in the boreal ecoregion. The maritime ecoregion occurs along the southern coast of Alaska and includes the more windswept areas of the maritime ecoregion on the Alaska Peninsula and Aleutian Islands of southwest Alaska. Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian mainly live in southeast Alaska.

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As an economist specializing in the Alaska seafood industry, Wink brings nearly a decade of expertise in analyzing seafood market trends and the effects of development efforts to the RSDA. His past work with the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute and many other industry groups will lend a broad perspective to the mission of the BBRSDA.

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