

# AMERICAN GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY

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## **American Geographical Society Endorses World Economic Forum Report on Arctic**

*Description: The World Economic Forum (WEF), at its recent annual meeting, issued a report, "Demystifying the Arctic". The American Geographic Society, which is one of the original international organizations to support Arctic exploration and research, announced that it is endorsing the WEF report.*

**[New York City, NY] -- [20 February 2014]** – The American Geographical Society (AGS) announced today that it is endorsing the recent report issued by the World Economic Forum (WEF) Agenda Council on the Arctic, "Demystifying the Arctic". The report was originally issued on 23 January 2014 in Davos-Klosters, Switzerland following its presentation at the Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos.

In preparing its report, WEF notes that:

For longer parts of the year, Arctic sea ice is melting and the permafrost on land is thawing, with different implications for accessibility at an international level and way of life at a local level. The region possesses unique natural and cultural landscapes that are sensitive to a warming climate and enhanced human activity. Some changes, like increased risk of oil spills, are perceived as negative impacts. Other shifts present new opportunities, such as economic empowerment of native communities and seasonal shipping routes. However, keeping opportunities viable and minimizing negative climate change impacts require conscientious environmental and cultural stewardship that focuses on sustainable change. Diplomatic and economic actions can greatly affect the extent to which factors such as climate change and global commodity price fluctuations lead to economic, environmental and social changes...the complexities of transformations reshaping the region are profound, often lending themselves to misinterpretation and misplaced emotions. The natural starting point for the Council was to write a short booklet highlighting the five most prevalent myths, opportunities and challenges facing the region.

"AGS was at the heart of Arctic exploration and research for over 100 years and continues to focus on Arctic futures", noted AGS President, Dr. Jerome Dobson. "We believe that the recent WEF report on the Arctic is an extremely valuable study that ought to guide development and highlight the importance of preserving the precious natural and human resources of the area. The myths about the Arctic have caused confusion among the general public and potential explorers and investors to the area for decades. We commend the WEF for issuing a report that so clearly debunks the myths and offers reasonable recommendations," added Dr. Dobson.

The full report can be found at: <http://www.weforum.org/reports/demystifying-arctic>.

Established in 1851, the American Geographical Society (AGS) is the oldest professional geographical organization in the United States. It is recognized worldwide as a pioneer in geographical research and education in Geography for over 163 years. The mission of the American Geographical Society is to advance and promote geography in business, government, science, and education. Our goal is to enhance the nation's geographic literacy so as to engender sound public policy, national security, and human well-being worldwide. AGS seeks to engage the American public, from its youngest to its oldest citizens,

with new and amazing ways to understand and characterize our changing world. The Society maintains its headquarters in Brooklyn Heights, New York.

The World Economic Forum is an independent international organization committed to improving the state of the world by engaging business, political, academic and other leaders of society to shape global, regional and industry agendas. Incorporated as a not-for-profit foundation in 1971, and headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, the Forum is tied to no political, partisan or national interests.

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