



"Citizens promoting environmentally safe operation of the Alyeska terminal and associated tankers."

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Former Valdez Coast Guard commander to head citizen watchdog group

The Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council announced today that Mark Swanson has been hired as executive director, effective April 15.

He replaces John Devens, who left the post in February 2009. Since then, Donna Schantz has served as acting executive director. She will now return to her former job as director of programs for the council.

Swanson, who has been serving as an emergency response manager for Shell Oil in Texas, was commander of the Coast Guard's Valdez Marine Safety Office from 2002 until he retired from the agency in 2005 after a 21-year career.

"We're extremely happy to get someone of Mark's caliber to lead our group," said Steve Lewis, president of the council board. "He brings not only long experience in marine safety issues, but also very specific familiarity with the crude-oil facilities and operations we oversee in Prince William Sound."

One of Swanson's duties as Coast Guard commander in Valdez was to serve as a non-voting member of the council board.

"I am familiar with and in passionate agreement with the goals and objectives of the council," Swanson said. "Even conscientious politicians, regulators, and industry can sometimes need encouragement to make sure they're doing everything required to safeguard the environment and protect the interests of citizens."

Swanson holds a bachelor's and a master's degree in naval architecture and marine engineering, as well as a master's degree in mechanical engineering.

Swanson is married to the former Emmie Keesler, a native of North Carolina. Swanson and his wife have three children: twins Alfred and William, age 21, who are studying at universities in Bozeman, Mont., and Montpellier, France, respectively; and Benjamin, age 10. The Swansons will live in Valdez.

The Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council, with offices in Anchorage and Valdez, is an independent non-profit corporation whose mission is to

promote environmentally safe operation of the Valdez Marine Terminal and the oil tankers that use it. The council's work is guided by the Oil Pollution Act of 1990, and its contract with Alyeska Pipeline Service Company. The council's 19 member organizations are communities in the region affected by the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill, as well as aquaculture, commercial fishing, environmental, Native, recreation, and tourism groups. More information on the council is available at www.pwsrcac.org on the Internet.

Mark Swanson's resume' follows. A high-quality digital photograph is available from Stan Jones at the email address shown above. Swanson can be contacted by telephone for interviews at 281-538-0854 or 832-655-8496, though he will be in the process of moving to Alaska through the first week of April. His email address is swansonuofm90@hotmail.com.

Mark A. Swanson

Recently appointed executive director for the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council, Mark Swanson is a retired U.S. Coast Guard Officer with the rank of commander. Mr. Swanson is a native of the Florida keys and a 1984 graduate of the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, with a Bachelor of Science degree in Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering. Additionally, Mr. Swanson holds masters degrees in Mechanical Engineering and Naval Architecture from the University of Michigan. Prior to joining the PWSRCAC, Mr. Swanson worked for Shell Trading and Shipping based in Houston Texas as an Emergency Response Manager. Previous to his position at Shell, Mr. Swanson worked from 2005-2008 with the international ship classification group Lloyd's Register as their external training manager delivering technical, environmental protection and maritime safety training to shipping companies and shipping terminal operators throughout North and South America.



Commander Swanson's 25-year Coast Guard career encompassed a broad mix of technical engineering, technical instruction, and marine safety and marine environmental protection. His first assignment was teaching seamanship, small boat handling and sailing to incoming freshmen at the Coast Guard Academy. Next Swanson returned to his native Florida, assigned as a student engineer and damage control assistant, aboard the Coast Guard Cutter Ute, earning seagoing qualifications as a both an engineer and a deck watch officer. Following his service on the Cutter Ute, he was selected for future post-graduate training and an intermediate 2 year assignment as the USCG liaison and lead Naval Architecture instructor at the U.S. Navy's Damage Control Assistant School in Newport Rhode Island.

In 1990, following postgraduate studies at the University of Michigan, Swanson was assigned to the Marine Safety Center (MSC) in Washington, DC, as a staff naval architect reviewing commercial vessel structures and stability, and specializing in the review of novel craft and material applications. While at the MSC, Commander Swanson helped establish and eventually co-led the MSC's Salvage team responding with naval architectural expertise to assist field commands with major marine casualties such as the 1993 three-vessel collision, explosion, and oil spill in Tampa Bay.

Returning to instruction, in 1994 Swanson was selected for assignment as the Coast Guard liaison and engineering lecturer at the International Maritime Organization (IMO)'s World Maritime University in Malmö, Sweden. Following that assignment, in 1996, he returned to the United States and to field operations with an assignment to Marine Safety Office Houston-Galveston. There, he served three tours spanning several positions including: Marine Inspector, Port State Control Officer, Assistant Chief of Marine Environmental Response, Chief of the Compliance department, and ultimately serving as the unit's Executive Officer. Highlights of that assignment included involvement with the Coast Guard's response to severe flooding from tropical storms Frances and Alison and the mobilization of reservists to provide homeland security following the events of 9/11. From 2002 until his retirement in 2005, Commander Swanson served as commanding officer of Marine Safety Office, Valdez, Alaska. Under Commander Swanson's leadership, MSO Valdez was selected to receive the Coast Guard Foundation's 2003 Pacific Area Admiral John B. Hayes Award for unit excellence, the 2004 Alaska region award for unit excellence, and the Commandant's 2003 innovation award for pioneering technological improvements in sharing a Vessel Traffic Service common operating picture.

Mr. Swanson is a competitive sailor and a two-time national champion in the 16-foot windmill class sailing dinghy. His personal military awards include two Commandant's Letters of Commendation, the Navy Achievement Medal, two Coast Guard Achievement Medals, two Coast Guard Commendation Medals and the Coast Guard Meritorious Service Medal.◇