

Briefing for PWSRCAC Board of Directors – September 2019

INFORMATION ITEM

Sponsor: Joe Lally
Project number and name or topic: 6531 Port Valdez Weather Buoy Update

1. **Description of agenda item:** Staff will present on the installation of the weather buoys at the Valdez Marine Terminal (VMT), preliminary (May-August) VMT weather buoy data and conclusions, and current status of the second buoy at the Valdez Duck Flats.

2. **Why is this item important to PWSRCAC:** Congress mandated formation of the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens’ Advisory Council in the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (OPA 90). OPA 90 requires the Council to study wind and water currents and other environmental factors in the vicinity of the terminal facilities which may affect the ability to prevent, respond to, contain, and clean up an oil spill.

Developing a better understanding of the metocean or sea current and weather conditions experienced at the VMT is vital to any effort made to plan for or respond to an oil spill coming from that facility.

In January 2019, a settlement agreement was reached with Alyeska Pipeline Service Company (APSC) that allows the Council to install equipment necessary to measure surface currents and other weather data in front of the Valdez Marine Terminal (VMT). Shortly after entering into this agreement, Fairweather Scientific, a subsidiary of Edison Chouest Offshore, donated two DART-style weather buoys including spare equipment, sensors, and parts to the Council for use in Port Valdez. The Council then partnered with the PWS Science Center to assist with the assembly, testing, deployment, and data collection and storage from this weather buoy. The buoy was deployed on May 16, 2019, and is located off of Jackson Point between Berths 1 and 3 at the terminal. A link to the data was established a few days after deployment and can be found here: www.pwswx.pwssc.org/MOBI.html.

The Council has since entered into a contract with the PWS Science Center to assemble, test, and deploy a second weather buoy at the Valdez Duck Flats as well as maintain both buoys as needed. The City of Valdez also provided a grant of \$40,000 for any maintenance and repairs needed by either buoy during the five-year pilot period established in the Settlement Agreement. Fairweather Scientific is also assisting the Council with the required permitting from the U.S. Coast Guard, Alaska Department of Natural Resources, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for the second weather buoy at the Valdez Duck Flats.

The information from both weather buoys will be used during the Collaborative Process established by the Settlement Agreement to verify VMT oil spill trajectories and to ensure that the Solomon Gulch Hatchery and Valdez Duck Flats environmentally sensitive areas are protected from an oil spill from the VMT before they are oiled.

3. **Previous actions taken by the Board on this item:**

<u>Meeting</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Action</u>
Board	January 2019	Project Funding Approved

Update on VMT Weather Buoy Deployment 4-2

4. **Summary of policy, issues, support or opposition:** The importance of timely and accurate weather information during an oil spill response cannot be overstated and until recently, this information has not existed. The Council has been interested in establishing weather measuring equipment at the VMT for many years in an effort to improve oil spill response and preparedness in Port Valdez and Prince William Sound. In 2016, the Council passed a resolution seeking the installation of a shore side weather station at the VMT that was never acted upon.
5. **Committee Recommendation:** The POVTS and OSPR Committees have been briefed and updated on this project as it has progressed and recommended this update be provided to the Board.
6. **Relationship to LRP and Budget:** Project 6530 - Weather Data and Sea Currents is in the approved FY2020 budget and annual workplan.

6530--Weather Data & Sea Currents - as of August 22, 2019

FY-2020 Budget

Original	\$19,000.00
Modifications	
Revised Budget	<u>\$19,000.00</u>

Actual and Commitments

Actual Year-to-Date	
Commitments (Professional Services)	
Actual + Commitments	<u></u>
Amount Remaining	<u>\$19,000.00</u>

7. **Action Requested of the Board of Directors:** Information report only.
8. **Attachments:** None.