



The Observer

VOLUME 13, No. 4/DECEMBER 2003

AK Chamber of Commerce - AK Wilderness Recreation & Tourism Assoc. - Chugach Alaska Corp. - Cordova District Fishermen United - OSREC - PWS Aquaculture Corp.

INSIDE

- Volunteer profile: POVTS' Cliff Chambers, p. 2**
- Council compiling database on oil-spill equipment, p. 2**
- Project manager Janelle Cowan leaves staff, p. 2**
- Devens: Firefighting symposium demos partnership, p. 3**
- Alyeska Viewpoint: Aligning SERVVS with its mission, p. 4**
- Tesoro drill tests response to offshore spill, p. 4**
- Board meeting schedule, p. 4**
- A visit to Seldovia, p. 5**
- New double-hull tankers for Valdez trade, p. 6**
- Europe's Prestige spill reported worse than Exxon Valdez, p. 6**
- Valdez symposium teaches techniques of shipboard fire-fighting, p. 7**
- Community Corner: Council staff visits Cordova orgs, p. 8**

EPA decision would allow most air pollution to continue at tanker terminal

As the Observer went to press, the citizens' council was still awaiting final word from the Environmental Protection Agency on what it will do about dangerous air pollution from Alyeska's Valdez tanker terminal.

After years of deliberation, EPA on Aug. 25 announced new regulations intended to control pollution from the terminal and other oil facilities across the nation. The regulations – called National Emissions Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants/Organic Liquids Distribution – do cover some significant pollution sources at the terminal, such as oil storage tanks and leaking pumps, valves and other connections. But the regulations exempt one of the largest single sources of dangerous benzene vapors in the United States: the system that cleans crude oil remnants from the ballast water of arriving tankers before discharging it into Prince William Sound.

The Ballast Water Treatment Facility is estimated to release from 140 to 342 tons of hazardous air pollutants annually, including from 60 tons to more than 100 tons of benzene, a known human carcinogen. These levels of pollution mean terminal emissions are at least five times the 25-ton threshold at which EPA classifies a facility as a "major" source of hazardous air emissions and views it as a possible target for regulation.

EPA deemed the ballast water facility a wastewater

See page 3, *Air Pollution*



RIDING THE BREEZE — A sailboat heads out of Seldovia on a mellow September afternoon. The citizens' council held its fall board meeting in Seldovia, on the south shore of Kachemak Bay. For more pictures of the community, see page 5. Photo by Stan Jones, citizens' council.

Alyeska shows performance improvement in less surprising follow-up drill

By Tony Parkin
Project Manager

The state's second unannounced oil-spill drill this year in Port Valdez went better than the first, with improved performance by Alyeska Pipeline's Ship Escort/Response Vessel System, or SERVVS.

The drill was not, however, a total surprise. The SERVVS manager was included in drill planning, as was a representative from Alaska Tanker Company, which also participated in the drill. As an oil spill can happen at any time, the council believes it is important that unannounced drills are truly unannounced in order for a real response test to take place.

The second drill started at 6 a.m. on Sept. 30. The scenario was the same as for the first surprise drill in June: A tanker develops a leak in the vicinity of Gold Creek, approximately four miles west of the city of Valdez. Three SERVVS task forces are mobilized to capture the spilled oil with skimmers and suck it into

storage barges.

Since the first drill on June 4, SERVVS and its response contractors had been training intensively, and the effort appeared to pay off on Sept. 30. Barges were skimming and simulating the collection of oil within two hours of the drill's start. This was a marked improvement from the first drill, when the same actions took eight hours.

One area still needing improvement was decontamination, which refers to the process of making sure cleanup workers don't carry oil from the 'hot zone' into uncontaminated areas. On occasion, workers were observed leaving the hot zone and entering uncontaminated areas in full protective clothing that would have been covered in oil.

Another council concern had to do with staffing levels. Alyeska had a fishing vessel exercise sched-

See page 2, *Drill*



Participants in the Sept. 30 surprise drill check the flow rate from a TransRec oil skimmer. Flow rates are monitored so the tankerman can control the proper loading of the barge. The follow-up drill went better than the first surprise drill in June. Photo by John Engle, Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation.

Pipeline spill plan is under council review

The citizens' council is in the process of reviewing proposed changes to the oil spill prevention and response plan for the southern portion of the trans-Alaska pipeline, where a spill into a river could introduce oil into Prince William Sound.

The changes are intended to implement the latest reorganization effort by Alyeska Pipeline Service Co., which operates the 800-mile pipeline, as well as the Valdez tanker terminal and the fleet of rescue and response tugs that escort loaded tankers through Prince William Sound.

Alyeska's reorganization, which it calls "Strategic Reconfiguration," would modernize pump stations along the pipeline, primarily by converting them to electric power. The result would be lower costs for the company and fewer personnel at the pump stations.

Pipeline workers would instead operate out of regional response centers in Prudhoe Bay, Galbraith, Prospect Creek, the Yukon River crossing, Fairbanks, Delta Junction, Glennallen and Valdez.

See page 2, *Pipeline*

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Volunteer Profile**Cliff Chambers builds life around Prince William Sound and volunteer work**

The newest member of the council's Port Operations and Vessel Traffic Systems Committee is also one of the most active.

Since joining in March, Cliff Chambers has not only faithfully attended meetings of the committee, but has also become a regular visitor to the council office in Valdez to keep up with events.

And that's in addition to being a full-time student at Prince William Sound Community College – where he's vice president of the academic honor society Phi Theta Kappa – and donating his time to a cancer fund-raiser called the Relay for Life.

Plus, of course, spending as much time as possible on the Sound itself. Chambers has been in Alaska for ten years, but says he still doesn't know if he likes it, because he's never seen most of it. "I love Prince William Sound because it's the only place I've spent a lot of time," he said.

Chambers, 57, was born in San Antonio, Texas, and lived in Colorado and Montana before coming north in 1993. That happened after his son told him of a boring job: driving trucks between the Petrostar refinery and tank farm in Valdez. "A boring job sounded fine to me," Chambers said. "Four days working, three days fishing and exploring the Sound."

The job ended in 1996, when Chambers sustained serious injuries to his back and legs in a fall while on vacation. After a series of surgeries, he's much improved but will never return to the active life of a truck driver.

Instead, he's working on degrees in marine oil spill technology and indus-

trial safety at the community college, enjoying the Sound, and volunteering for the citizens' council and the cancer drive. After he graduates, Chambers has hopes of becoming a project manager for the council, or perhaps an instructor at the community college.

Chambers' involvement with the council began

by happenstance. He used to tie up his boat – since sold – in the slot next to a boat owned by Tom Kuckertz, a project manager for the citizens' council. The two got to talking and as Chambers heard about what the council does, he asked Kuckertz how to become involved. Kuckertz suggested joining the Port Operations and Vessel Traffic Systems Committee – known as "POVTS" – and that's what Chambers did.

That committee's focus is the safe loading, travel and escort of North Slope crude oil tankers in Prince William Sound and the Gulf of Alaska.

Chambers is a member of a POVTS subcommittee on places of refuge,



Cliff Chambers caught this 125-pound, 64-inch halibut near Naked Island in Prince William Sound last May. Photo by Dave Cropp, Nothing Fancy Charters.

which he expects to become a controversial issue.

The places of refuge concept requires the citizens, industry and regulators of an area traversed by oil tankers to squarely confront a painful trade-off that may arise in marine accidents.

Suppose a tanker begins leaking oil in the middle of Prince Wil-

liam Sound. The tanker, though damaged, is sound enough to be moved at least a few miles.

The dilemma: Is it better to leave it in the middle of the Sound to continue leaking and possibly pollute hundreds of miles of shoreline, or to move it into a protected bay – a place of refuge – where the spill can be contained, the remaining oil can be removed from the vessel, and the leak can be stopped?

The place of refuge will be drenched in oil, but is that a reasonable price to pay to avoid lighter contamination of hundreds of miles of beaches elsewhere?

That was the dilemma facing Europeans in November of last year in the

Prestige spill. Because no port would take the damaged vessel, it was towed to open water, where it sank and continued to leak its cargo of heavy fuel oil, causing widespread damage along the Spanish and French coasts.

If Europe had a places-of-refuge program, "the Prestige would have been towed in and they would have had a small geographic area oiled," Chambers said. "But they would not have oil washing up for the next five years from a sunken tanker."

The places of refuge subcommittee is identifying potential places of refuge in Prince William Sound – bays large enough to accommodate a tanker and the vessels that would come to work around it. The next step will be to evaluate the resources that would be damaged if a given bay became a place of refuge.

The end product will be a list of potential places of refuge identifying the resources at risk for each. It will be used by Coast Guard officials who will have to make the decision if the awful day ever comes.

The problem is, any bay suitable as a place of refuge is almost inevitably going to be one much beloved by fishermen, kayakers and other users in Prince William Sound.

One example is Jack Bay. It's the site of a marine park near Valdez – and a possible haven for a disabled tanker. It's big and deep with a good holding bottom and no rocks.

"This is going to be a political hot potato," Chambers predicted. "Jack Bay is one of the favorite places in the Sound. That really hits home right here."

PIPELINE: Spill into Lowe or Copper River could reach the Sound

Continued from Page 1

The first round of comments ended Sept. 17. The council was among many commenters who contended the first version of the new plan did not provide enough information to determine whether Alyeska would remain in compliance with planning requirements after the reconfiguration.

"We are gravely concerned about the scope of the proposed amendments, because they appear to significantly reduce the oil spill prevention and response capability for the pipeline," the council wrote on Sept. 15. "We are staunchly opposed to any reduction in the oil spill prevention and response readiness."

State regulators agreed with those comments and directed the company to

supply additional information by Nov. 17, with the next round of comments due by Dec. 8.

The citizens' council operates primarily on funds provided by Alyeska under a contract signed shortly after the Exxon Valdez oil spill of 1989. That contract specifies the council is to oversee operations of the terminal and tanker fleet, but bans it from using Alyeska funds to conduct oversight of the pipeline.

However, the council has always taken the view that the lower portion of the pipeline – approximately 170 miles – is within its purview because oil spilled there could travel down the Lowe or Copper River into Prince William Sound. In the words of Executive

Director John Devens, "the question of whether the oil comes from a tanker, the Valdez terminal or the pipeline is pretty much a quibble."

To pay for its review in the past, the council has obtained grant funds. It has done so again this year, receiving a

\$10,000 grant from the Alaska Conservation Foundation in September.

The council's September comments on the pipeline contingency plan can be viewed on our web site at www.pwsrca.org/projects/cplanrvw4.html

DRILL: More successful, less of a surprise

Continued from Page 1

uled in Cordova the same day as the "unannounced" drill. That exercise was canceled because it could have drawn Alyeska's resources below the level needed to respond to the drill scenario. This suggests that, if a real spill should coincide with an Alyeska exercise, the company might have trouble responding

promptly and effectively to the spill.

Overall, however, this drill went well. Lessons learned from the June 4 drill appeared to be implemented and there is now a procedure for planning and conducting unannounced drills.

The citizens' council has recommended to the Alaska Department of Environment that it call an unannounced drill focusing on personnel availability and decontamination procedures.

Project manager leaves staff

Janelle Cowan resigned from the council staff in mid-October for health reasons.

She worked as a project manager in the Anchorage office about a year and was known there not only as a hard and cheerful worker, but also for distributing packages of candy and other treats at holiday time.

"Janelle has been an exceptional addition to our team," said John Devens, executive director. "We all wish her good fortune during this difficult time."

Council compiling public database on oil-spill equipment

The citizens' council is inviting manufacturers and vendors of crude oil spill prevention and response equipment to submit information for an electronic database of best available technology.

The database will be made available to organizations such as Alyeska Pipeline Service Co., tanker companies and oil-spill response cooperatives for use in performing best available technology reviews. These reviews are required by Alaska law whenever an oil spill contingency plan is filed or renewed.

The council will put the database on its web site

so that it will be accessible to contingency planholders, oil-spill responders, the state of Alaska, and anyone else interested.

Information for the database must be submitted in a specific format described in Alaska state law. The deadline is Feb. 29, 2003. For instructions, visit the council web site at www.pwsrca.org/BAT4all.html.

For further information, contact Dan Gilson, Project Manager, at the Valdez office address on the back page of the Observer. Or call him at 907-834-5040 or email him at gilson@pwsrca.org.

Shipboard firefighting symposium shows how powerful partnership can be

By John S. Devens, Ph.D.
Executive Director

Many Alaskans probably think of the citizens' council as being in constant conflict with the oil industry.

It's true the council was born of crisis – the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill – and spent many of its early years in head-to-head confrontations with the industry over safety and pollution issues raised by that spill. And it's true that we still frequently disagree with the industry, as you can see in articles elsewhere in this issue of the Observer.

But it's also true that many of the council's significant accomplishments have come from partnering with the industry, a goal Congress laid out after the *Exxon Valdez* spill in the Oil Pollution Act of 1990. One example of this is the series of technical studies in the mid-1990s that led to the fleet of rescue and response tugs that now escort loaded oil tankers out of Prince William Sound. Another is the iceberg-detection radar system that recently began operating on Reef Island.

Yet another example occurred early in October when some 70 firefighters from all over coastal Alaska gathered

in Valdez for a training symposium on fighting shipboard fires. The council, as it has done twice before, organized the symposium and paid much of its cost. But the event would not have been possible without the support of numerous partners, many of them from the oil industry.

This training is important because, in most coastal communities, land-based firefighters accustomed to battling blazes in buildings are the only forces available to deal with fires on ships.

And a fire on a ship is a different and dangerous animal, because of the confined spaces, the possible presence of hazardous cargo, and the danger that the same water used to fight the fire will collect in the ship and sink it.

The curriculum at our October symposium – as shown in the photographs on page 7 – included live exercises with hands-on training for fighting fires on small vessels, at tank farms, and on oil

tankers.

The challenge was, where do you find a small vessel, a tank farm, and an oil tanker whose owners are willing to allow several dozen firefighters to tramp through?

In this case, it was the Southwest Alaska Pilots Association that provided the small vessel, a pilot boat called the *Emerald Island*, and even allowed it to be filled with stage smoke for added realism during the exercise. ConocoPhillips conducted tours of its double-hull tanker, the *Polar Resolution*, while the vessel was berthed to load oil at Alyeska's Valdez terminal. And Petrostar managers led the trainees through the company's Valdez tank farm, including a climb to the top of one of the tanks.

There were many other partners in this endeavor, as well, including the Alaska Division of Emergency Services; Tatitlek Chenega Chugach (TCC); Prince William Sound Community

College; the City of Valdez; Alaska Tanker Company; SeaRiver Maritime; Crowley Marine; and Alyeska Pipeline Service Co.

We thought the training went well, and so did the participants. Here are some of the comments they wrote on evaluation forms at the symposium:

"Outstanding!"

"You're doing great."

"This symposium exceeded my expectations."

"This gathering was very good and extremely worthwhile."

When it came to ideas for improving future symposiums, the most common suggestions were to make them longer and to hold them more often.

While we haven't yet decided how frequently to mount our firefighting symposiums, or how long to make the curriculum, we do know one thing: partnership is one of the most powerful tools available to citizens determined to make oil transportation as safe as possible.

Sometimes, confrontation is unavoidable in our line of work. But partnership is always preferable, and we'll continue to use it whenever it is possible.



John Devens

AIR POLLUTION: New federal rule would allow it to continue at Valdez terminal

Continued from Page 1

system. Under the new rule, wastewater systems at Organic Liquid Distribution Facilities are unregulated with respect to air pollution, although such systems are regulated at refineries and chemical plants.

"This makes absolutely no sense," said John Devens, executive director of the council. "It doesn't matter what you call this facility. What's important is that it releases more than a hundred tons of dangerous pollutants into the air around Valdez every year and will be allowed to do so indefinitely if the EPA decision stands."

To become official, EPA's new regulations have to be published in the Federal Register. Normally, this happens relatively quickly after an agency makes a decision. But the air pollution regulations have yet to be published in the Register, though exactly why they have not appeared is unknown.

EPA's authority over the terminal and other facilities that handle oil and other organic liquids comes from the federal Clean Air Act, which requires the agency to issue rules to protect the public and the environment from continuous exposure to high levels of toxic air pollution.

According to a council review of EPA's new regulations, the agency erred or was inconsistent in several ways when it decided not to require Alyeska to cut emissions from the ballast water facility:

- EPA failed to complete a thorough technical and economic evaluation of emissions and emission control requirements for the Valdez terminal, even though it is one of the largest oil terminals in the country.

- EPA decided to regulate much smaller sources of hazardous air pollution at oil terminals, such as the transfer racks used to load trucks. These sources may emit as little as 7 tons a year of pollution, a tiny fraction of emission levels from the Alyeska ballast water facility.

- EPA's technical analysis incorrectly concluded that emissions from water treatment facilities were insignificant, and that few options existed for controlling them. In fact, air pollution control technology for wastewater facilities and ballast water facilities is well developed and readily available. The council cited numerous instances, including facilities at West Coast refineries owned by ConocoPhillips and BP – companies that are also major owners in the Alyeska terminal in Valdez. For example, vapor recovery and carbon adsorption control devices reduce benzene emissions by 98 percent at these refineries.

- EPA's technical analysis also said the new rule would target facilities emitting 100 or more tons of pollutants per year, despite the fact that unregulated emissions from the Valdez terminal will greatly exceed that threshold.

The council's comments did sway EPA on another important issue at stake in the rulemaking: the so-called "black oil" exemption.

This proposed exemption in the draft rule was an apparent attempt to exclude from regulation oils that don't emit significant amounts of hazardous

Most air pollution at the Ballast Water Treatment Facility comes from the dissolved air flotation tanks, right, or the biological treatment tanks, below. The council has called for measurements of emissions from the facility.

Photos by Tom Kuckertz, citizens' council



vapors. The council objected because the agency's proposed definition of black oil was so loose it would have included virtually all crude oil produced in the United States. Thus, the numerous facilities handling these crudes – including the Valdez terminal – would have been exempt from the regulations.

After reviewing the council's analysis and comments, EPA agreed that the black-oil exemption was unjustified and removed it from the final regulations. It was this change that will lead to the regulation of such pollution sources at the terminal as oil storage tanks and leaking connections.

"One commenter provided data on crude oils handled throughout the country, including the Alaskan

oil pipeline and the Valdez Marine Terminal," the agency wrote in explaining the change. "Based on the comments received and additional data . . . we have discovered that most crude oil being distributed (in the U.S.) would have been excluded from the final rule, even though our impacts analyses assumed most crude oil was subject to control."

"We commend EPA for taking the right step on black oil," Devens said. "We just hope we can bring about a similar outcome for the Valdez ballast water facility."

If the final published version of the regulations is the same as the version announced in August, the council may ask EPA to revisit the issue in a process known as a Petition for Rulemaking.

SERVS changes align organization with mission of oil-spill preparedness

By Greg Jones

Senior Vice President
Operations and Maintenance
Alyeska Pipeline Service Co.

In several past Observer columns I have written about the continuing challenge to Alyeska to perform its work more cost-effectively, while continuing to achieve its operational, safety and environmental objectives. The recent realignment of the SERVS organization is another step in that direction – this time in the important mission of oil spill preparedness, prevention and response. Although the total number of SERVS employees remains the same, we believe the changes will deliver improved business performance in all aspects of our work.

Our goals are straightforward. We wanted to organize SERVS so that, where possible, business activities are the responsibility of one group. We intend to improve our ability to evaluate compliance by identifying and assigning a compliance assurance function within SERVS. We seek to balance the workload among the SERVS manager's direct reports. We also want to dedicate personnel to handle the many requests that come from outside SERVS for information, resources, and analyses.

What are the changes? The two operations groups (Response Operations and Vessel Operations) are being merged into one, reflecting internal and stakeholder expectations for SERVS operations. This establishes clear

lines with respect to decision-making authority and continuity in the day-to-day operations, including drills and exercises. The Maintenance Supervisor position is being changed to Maintenance and Logistics Manager and will be a direct report to the SERVS Manager. This reflects the importance and dollar value of the SERVS maintenance activity. The Senior Preparedness Advisor has been renamed the Programs Advisor and made a direct report to the SERVS Manager. The SERVS Advisor position has been changed from a business management focus to an operational one to provide additional support for our operations missions. Two new positions have been created: Compliance Assurance Supervisor reporting to the Compliance and Preparedness Manager; and an additional Response Coordinator. These replace one of the

Operations Manager positions and an Editor position. In addition the Marine Superintendent has been made a direct report to the SERVS Manager.

These changes at SERVS more closely align the organization with its activities to help SERVS manage its core business more effectively and efficiently. The SERVS realignment is an extension of the company-wide realignment that was completed last year. The new SERVS organizational structure has been posted internally and shared with agency and industry stakeholders and the citizens' council. However, SERVS is managing this organizational change in a deliberate manner, and until all positions are filled the existing organizational chart remains in effect, to be updated as changes are effected. Our focus remains on maintaining SERVS' ability to fulfill its preparedness, prevention and – where required – response objectives throughout the transition to a more effective organizational structure. The realignment has not caused any SERVS employees to

lose their jobs.

The SERVS organizational change reflects the importance of the work that SERVS employees do every day. SERVS employees have demonstrated their ability to stay focused and to carry out their work during this transition through a busy summer of exercises and from the results of the recent unannounced call-out exercise. Tankers continue to load oil at the Valdez Marine Terminal and to transit safely through Prince William Sound. Maintenance and upkeep continue on a daily basis on the SERVS fleet of tugs, response barges and support vessels, and on SERVS' unsurpassed inventory of response equipment. Inquiries on prevention or response issues come every day from industry and government alike. The expectation of readiness is ever present should SERVS be called upon to respond.

In the end, people are the key assets of any business, and SERVS is no exception. The test for an organizational structure is whether it empowers – not hinders -- the people who do the work. We believe the new organizational alignment at SERVS will enable a world class organization to perform even better.

Alyeska Viewpoint



Greg Jones

Tesoro drill tests response to an offshore tanker spill in Gulf of Alaska waters

By Tony Parkin

Project manager

An October drill gave the citizens' council the chance to observe how the response to a spill of North Slope crude oil outside Prince William Sound would be organized.

The drill scenario had a Tesoro tanker suffering an explosion – cause unknown – in the Gulf of Alaska over 100 miles east of Kodiak Island and spilling over 20,000 barrels of oil. It was mostly a tabletop drill, meaning few on-water or field activities took place. Instead, the Oct. 23 exercise chiefly tested how the companies and government agencies managing the response would interact.

The drill was managed from the Nikiski command center of Cook Inlet Spill Prevention and Response, a non-profit corporation formed in 1990 to provide oil spill prevention and response capabilities in the Inlet.

A second command post and logistics center was set up in Kodiak, a likely target of oil from a spill like the one in the scenario.

Because the spill was offshore, Alyeska Pipeline Service Co. had a relatively small role in the drill. The company's Valdez Emergency Operations Center was activated to operate as an equipment, personnel and vessel supply source.

To observe the drill, the citizens' council sent staffers and the drill monitor to Kodiak, Nikiski, and Alyeska's Valdez operations Center. In addition, staffers participated in the council's Anchorage and Valdez offices.

The main action took place in the Nikiski command center. Several elements of the drill were of particular interest to the citizens' council.



Council staffers Linda Robinson (left), Tony Parkin (center) and Joe Banta (right) participated in the Tesoro drill at the command center in Nikiski. Photo by Tim Robertson.

Dispersants

According to the scenario, the first day of the spill saw four applications of chemical dispersants by plane. On the day of the drill, which was day two of the spill, the dispersant permit application was re-worked. It took almost five hours for the permit to be approved by the Coast Guard, which holds ultimate responsibility for managing oil-spill response. One question had to do with who held jurisdiction over the spill site, which was more than 100 miles offshore and therefore beyond the State of Alaska's jurisdiction. Questions were also raised over the monitoring of the effectiveness of the dispersant and whether the oil would be dispersible after being in the water more than 24 hours by the time of the fifth application.

Request for Equipment

Of current interest to the citizens'

council is the method for requesting equipment from Prince William Sound in the event of a spill elsewhere. The council staff in the Valdez operations center monitored the equipment requests as they came in, and the council drill monitor in Kodiak monitored the request when it was made by Alyeska to the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation there. This process involves a

series of mitigating measures such as identifying replacements for personnel and equipment to be sent to the scene. These measures had to be agreed on before the equipment could be cleared to leave the Sound.

Kodiak activities

In Kodiak, several activities were drilled. One was calling out the fishing vessels that would participate in a real spill response.

Also, the Tesoro logistics team set up a response logistics center and assessed what spill-response resources were available in Kodiak and the surrounding region, and what logistical difficulties could come up in a real event.

This was an interesting drill for the council, as it involved a command center outside Valdez and covered a large geographic area. Overall it appeared to go well with a lot of action in the morning. Situation updates were announced, equipment was sent to the scene of the spill and all sections of the Incident Command System were activated.

Decisions were made about securing the ship, cleaning up the oil and moving the ship to a bay of refuge. Press briefings were held and efforts were made to inform and include the local communities on Kodiak Island in the response.

Council Meeting Schedule

The citizen's council board holds quarterly meetings in March, May, September and December of each year. March and December meetings are in Anchorage, the May meeting is in Valdez, and the September meeting rotates among the council's other member communities. Here is the meeting schedule for the coming year:

March 2004: Anchorage, March 11-12

May 2004: Valdez, May 13-14 (tentative)

September 2004: Kenai, Sept. 23-24 (tentative)

December 2004: Anchorage, Dec. 2-3.

A visit to Seldovia

The citizens' council held its September 2003 quarterly board meeting in Seldovia, a scenic village of about 300 people on the south shore of Kachemak Bay. The main industry is commercial fishing and the main passion, as these glimpses of the community show, is anything to do with boats or salt water.



St. Nicholas Russian Orthodox church, on a hill above the village, is visible from nearly every point in Seldovia. The church was founded in the 1820s and the present structure is believed to have been built in 1891.



Houses along Seldovia Slough reflect the quiet beauty of village life at its best.

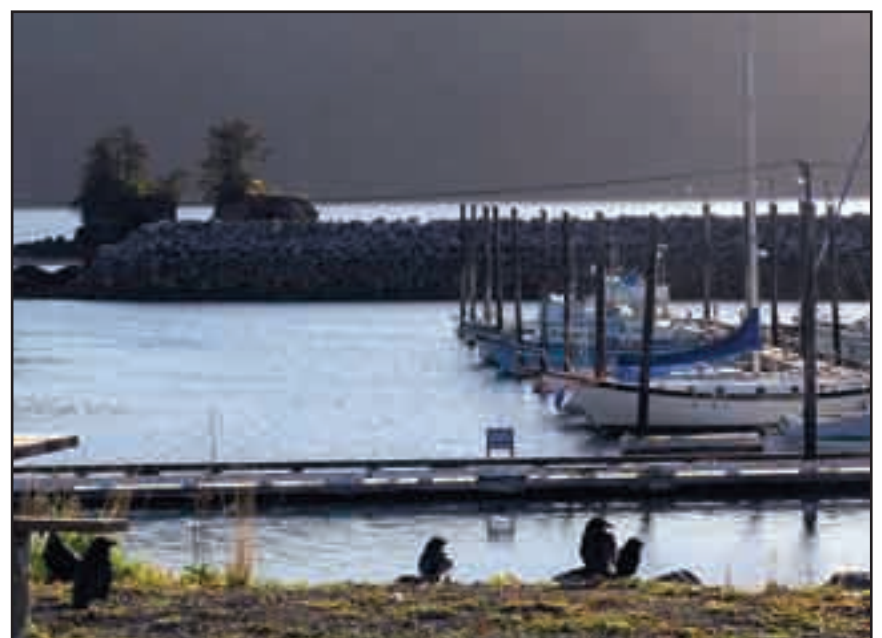


The Seldovia Village Tribe runs a small plant that makes wild berry products. Here, Patty Hansen-Bowdon and Kathy Giles concoct a batch of black currant jelly.

Seldovia's harbor is home to dozens of vessels, many of them used in commercial fishing.



At day's end, even a flock of crows stops off at the waterfront to bask in the sun's last rays.





NEW BOATS – The *Polar Discovery* is ConocoPhillips' newest double-hull tanker. Above, it takes on its first load of North Slope crude at Alyeska's Valdez terminal in mid-November. The *Alaskan Frontier*, right, was floated out of drydock and towed to a fitting dock at the National Steel and Shipbuilding Company Shipyard in San Diego on Nov. 5. The vessel, Alaska Tanker Co.'s first new double-hull, is expected to begin service to Valdez next June. Alaska Tanker vessels haul BP's North Slope crude out of Valdez.

Alaskan Frontier photo courtesy Alaska Tanker Co. and BP.
Polar Discovery photo by Richard Ranger.



SPY AT WORK? Not really, but Vladimir Lazarev is definitely a Russian – and a grad student in engineering at the University of Alaska Anchorage. He visited the council's Anchorage office to review the Tanker Risk Assessment Study for possible application of its findings to oil development on Russia's Sakhalin Island. Rather than make photocopies, he shot the pages with his digital camera. Photo by Stan Jones, citizens' council.

Europe's *Prestige* oil spill was worse than the *Exxon Valdez*, wildlife organization reports

An oil spill off the Spanish Coast last year was two-thirds again as bad as the 1989 *Exxon Valdez* disaster in Prince William Sound, according to a report by the World Wildlife Fund.

Last year's spill involved the *Prestige*, a tanker carrying heavy fuel oil. It sank on Nov. 19, 2002, in open water, fouling long stretches of coastline. Because it went down with the cargo still aboard, it continues to leak today.

The wildlife group put the *Prestige* spill at 71,000 tons versus 42,769 tons for the *Exxon Valdez* (which is also estimated as 11 million gallons), and estimated 14,000 tons are still aboard the wreck.



The November 2002 *Prestige* spill oiled hundreds of miles of the Spanish coast. Photo by Tony Parkin, citizens' council.

The *Prestige* oiled 1,800 miles of coastline, according to the group, versus 1,300 miles for the *Exxon Valdez*.

Council Documents Available to Public

Single copies of documents produced or received by the citizens' council are available free to the public. To make a request, contact either council office. Addresses are listed on the back page of the Observer.

Reports

- 2003 PWSRCAC-EVOS Long Term Environmental Monitoring Program. 10/1/2003. 951.431.031001.EVOSannuProR.pdf
- Review of Monitoring Protocols for Dispersant Effectiveness. NOAA Special Monitoring of Applied Response Technologies. RCAC, Environmental Technology Centre, 8/1/2003. 955.431.030801.FingasSMART.pdf
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Shipboard firefighting

In early October, the council sponsored a Marine Firefighting Symposium for Land Based Firefighters. Nearly 70 participants turned out, including firefighters from all over Alaska and officials from the Coast Guard. Land-based firefighters need training for shipboard fires because in most communities they are the only responders available.



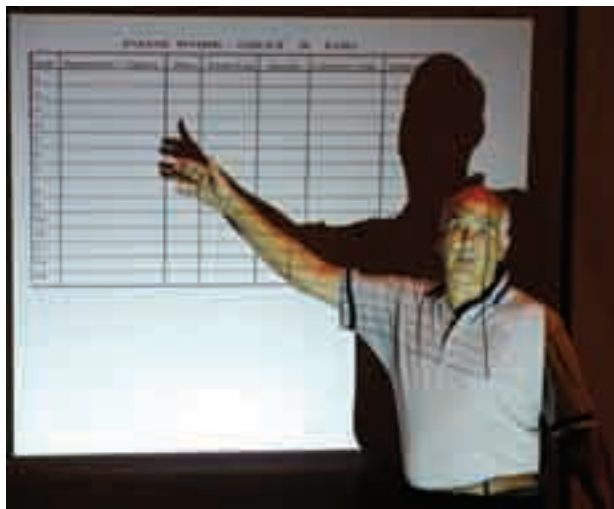
One exercise involved searching for a missing crewman on a pilot boat, the Emerald Island, provided by the Southwest Alaska Pilots Association. For realism, the boat was filled with stage smoke produced from banana oil.



The firefighters and instructors brought their own gear.



Patrick Duffy, Petrostar's terminal manager in Valdez, gave participants a tour of the company's tank farm.



Classroom sessions took place at the Valdez Civic Center. Here, Ron Raschio, a veteran Portland fireman, discusses firefighting foam.



The firefighters got a tour of the Polar Resolution at the Alyeska terminal, right. Above, the firefighters inspect the Resolution's fire plan.



Instructor John Lewis used a model harbor and ships in class. Here, he makes a point to a Sitka firefighter.

Photos by Stan Jones, citizens' council

Community Corner**Council staff visits Cordova, hears from the community's organizations**

By **Linda Robinson**
Community Liaison

In mid-October, members of the citizens' council staff traveled to Cordova to meet with member organizations and other groups in the town. Monday morning was spent at the Prince William Sound Science Center where presentations were given by Nancy Bird, the organization's president; Shelton Gay, oceanographer; Richard Thorne, deputy director of Nowcast/Forecast programs and director of research; and Kate Alexander, education staff.

The Science Center was established in 1989 to conduct and facilitate scientific studies on the ecology of the region. Its mission is to contribute to the comprehensive description, sustained monitoring and ecological understanding of Prince William Sound, the Copper River, and Gulf of Alaska; to promote the goal of maintaining long-term, self-regulating biodiversity, productivity and sustainable use of renewable resources; and to educate and inform the youth and the general public about the critical interdependence of the biology and regional economies of Alaska.

One recent project has been to survey three clam beds at Orca Inlet and Hinchinbrook Island. The average age of the clams was determined to be 3.3-5.4 years, in contrast with 7-9 years in the 1950s. The center's recommendation was that the Alaska Department of Fish and Game investigate the seeding of natural beds as a way to restore a recreational razor clam fishery.

The center's education department has a number of projects, including a "Discovery Room," in which an environment is transformed monthly to cover different topics. Students visit the Discovery Room to enjoy hands-on displays, experiments and games. Upcoming topics include astronomy, anatomy, chemistry, geology and the annual shorebird festival activities.

A recent project was developed when an orca whale beached itself and died in spite of attempts to rescue it. It was decided that the skeleton of the whale should be salvaged and re-assembled for educational purposes. This has been completed and the skeleton is displayed in the Native Village of Eyak's arts center.

In the afternoon presentations were given by Dave Regianni of Prince William Sound Aquaculture, Riki Ott of

Copper River Watershed, and Page Herring, Executive Director of Cordova District Fishermen United. Board member Patience Andersen Faulkner also discussed the Oil Spill Recovery Institute.

Monday evening a public reception was held at Orca Lodge. The reception culminated in a slide presentation by Milo Burcham, a well known wildlife photographer.



Linda Robinson

On Tuesday, we toured the Coast Guard buoy tender *Sycamore*. The crew showed us around the vessel and explained its capabilities, focusing especially on those related to oil-spill response.

We are very grateful to all of those who assisted and participated in this educational experience.

Environmental education conference

The North American Association for Environmental Education held its annual conference in Anchorage for the first time in early October. Approximately 800 environmental educators from throughout the United States and several foreign countries attended the conference, titled "Thinking Globally While Acting Culturally".

Presentations were given on ways to reach new audiences by adding diversity, and on urban-rural interfacing. Of particular interest to many participants was the council's information on invasive species, as this has been a major concern in many parts of the world. The council booth was visited by many interested educators and our mission was received with enthusiasm.

Environmental toxicology conference

The annual Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry conference was held this year in Austin, Texas. Representing the council were staffers Lisa Ka'aihue, Tony Parkin and Linda Robinson, Scientific Advisory Committee member Roger Green, and board member John French. The conference had over 700 sessions, and council contractors Jeff Short, Mace Barron and Jim Payne gave presentations. Jim Payne and Lisa Ka'aihue presented a poster session as did Mace Barron. This conference is attended by scientists and students from around the world and is a forum for the newest in toxicology and chemistry studies.

THE OBSERVER is a free quarterly newsletter published by the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council. Except where noted otherwise, articles are written by Stan Jones, the council's Public Information Manager. To subscribe, contact him at 907-273-6230 or jones@pwsrccac.org. Or, contact a council office at either of the addresses listed elsewhere on this page. Many Observer articles can also be read online at the council web site, www.pwsrccac.org.

Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council

The Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council is an independent, non-profit corporation formed after the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill to minimize the environmental impacts of the trans-Alaska pipeline terminal and tanker fleet.

The council has 18 member organizations, including communities affected by the Exxon Valdez oil spill and groups representing Alaska Native, aquaculture, environmental, commercial fishing, recreation and tourism interests in the spill region.

The council is certified under the federal Oil Pollution Act of 1990 as the citizen advisory group for Prince William Sound, and operates under a contract with Alyeska Pipeline Service Co. The contract, which is in effect as long as oil flows through the pipeline, guarantees the council's independence, provides annual funding, and ensures the council the same access to terminal facilities as state and federal regulatory agencies.

The council's mission: Citizens promoting environmentally safe operation of the Alyeska terminal and associated tankers.

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