



The Observer

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

Report shows high profits for the oil industry, sparks lawsuit with Alyeska

An analysis by a Fairbanks-based economic consultant indicates Alaska's North Slope oil industry has been highly profitable in recent years, even at very low oil prices.

Dr. Richard Fineberg, in a report prepared for the citizens' council, concluded the industry made profits of over \$5 billion on the North Slope in 2004, when oil prices averaged about \$39 a barrel.

But the industry made more than \$800 million even in 1998, when oil prices averaged less than \$13 a barrel, according to Fineberg.

The council commissioned Fineberg's report to address claims by the oil industry that it needs to reduce certain environmental protections in Prince William Sound, or is unwilling to add new protections, because of financial considerations.

"This report indicates the industry can easily afford to do things right in the Sound, as we've always maintained," said John Devens, executive director of the citizens' council. "Alaskans don't need to worry that asking the industry

to protect our environment will drive it out of the state."

The council board voted to commission the \$25,000 report in September 2004 and Fineberg began his work a few weeks afterward.

The council planned to pay for the report with funds it collects under a long-term contract signed with Alyeska Pipeline Service Co. shortly after the 1989 *Exxon Valdez* oil spill. However, eight months after the board vote, Alyeska demanded the council not use contract funds to pay Fineberg for the report and requested the matter be submitted to arbitration. In late May, as provided for in the contract, the council exercised its option to take the matter to state court and filed suit in Valdez to defend its right to use contract funds for the profits review. The Alyeska contract provides almost all of the council's operating income and guarantees its independence from the oil industry.

"We've realized that understanding

See page 3, **PROFITS**

Federal panel identifies areas where more dispersant research is needed

Chemical dispersants are on the list of response measures for oil spills in many areas, including Prince William Sound, but this is despite the fact that relatively little reliable scientific research is on file to show when they should be used, and what happens when they are.

As a result several players in the area of oil-spill response asked the National Academies to form a committee to review the existing data and recommend how to fill the gaps.

After more than a year's work, the Committee on Oil Spill Dispersants of the National Research Council released its report – "Understanding Oil Spill

Dispersants: Efficacy and Effects" – this spring.

According to the May 2 report, the crux of any decision about using dispersants is determining which part of the marine ecosystem should be protected – surface waters and shorelines, or the water column and seafloor.

"The objective of dispersant use is to enhance the amount of oil that physically mixes into the water column, reducing the potential that a surface slick will contaminate shoreline habitats or come into contact with birds, marine mammals or other organisms that exist

See page 4, **DISPERSANTS**

DUAL ESCORTS



ExxonMobil's *SeaRiver Baytown* participates in a July 10 towing exercise with two of Alyeska's escort tugs. The escort requirement could be reduced from two tugs to one as a result of a push by the oil industry for changes to the system. See article on risk assessments, p. 2, and John Devens' column, p. 3. Photo by Roy Robertson.

Council wants more work on state's best available technology report

The citizens' council has long been an advocate of the use of best available technology for preventing and cleaning up oil spills. The council was instrumental in creating the 1997 state regulations that require a Best Available Technology Conference every five years, and more recently helped work an appropriation through the Alaska Legislature to pay for the first such conference, held in May of last year.

But the event and the state's draft report on the proceedings didn't live up to council expectations, according to June 14 written comments from Executive Director John Devens to the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation.

"Overall, the report does not provide substantive information on the technologies available to Alaska spill response efforts," Devens wrote. "Instead of specific guidelines . . . about specific technologies required

for the best possible spill response, the report identifies all the technologies to be included for consideration in contingency plan BAT (Best Available Technology) analyses, with only spotty guidance on potential weaknesses of each technology."

The council's comments offered several suggestions for improving the report:

- Create a definitive findings document on the conference. The council said such a document, delineating technologies to be used in contingency plans, would comply with the intent of the regulation and provide a continual driver for companies and spill responders to seek and utilize the most effective technologies available.

- Establish a clear timeline and expectations for the next Best Available Technology Conference. The report said the next conference would be held

See page 4, **TECHNOLOGY**

INSIDE

Volunteer profile: John Kennish found direction early, p. 2



Alyeska viewpoint: Maintenance is crucial for SERVS, p. 4

Symposium teaches shipboard firefighting techniques, p. 5

SeaRiver buying used double-hulls for OPA-90 deadline, p. 5

Conference focuses on worldwide oil-spill issues, p. 6

Council documents are available to public, p. 7

Community Corner: Spreading the council message, p. 8

Council makes switch to three meetings a year, p. 2

Valdez's Sharry Miller joins the council board, p. 2

Report analyzes risk assessments for the Sound, p. 2

Devens: Big issues loom for council, p. 3

Sound's telecoms analyzed, p. 3

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Volunteer Profile

Committee volunteer found his direction in life early

It wouldn't be much of a stretch to say that John Kennish has taken to heart the advice of Horace Greeley.

Greeley was the newspaper editor who counseled "Go West, young man!" in an 1865 editorial.

And that's about what John Kennish has been doing since he reached the age of independence. He was born in New Jersey, got his bachelor's degree in chemistry from a New Jersey school – Rutgers University – and landed his first job out of school, with DuPont.

It's been westward ho! ever since: A master's degree from a college in central Pennsylvania, then a move to Oregon for graduate study that led to his doctorate in chemistry.

"I wanted to go where the fishing was better," Kennish explained in an interview with the Observer. "And that's a fact."

He spent six years in Oregon, enjoying the beautiful mountains and water. Then came another jump.

"There were two things I was interested in," Kennish said. "I really like teaching, and I wanted to be living somewhere where the fishing was really great."

He started applying for jobs in Alaska, and in 1979 landed one at the University of Alaska Anchorage. He and his wife, Patricia, piled three-week-old Meghan Kennish into the car and headed up the AICan Highway.

And the university's Anchorage campus is where he's been ever since. He's a full professor now, teaching chemistry courses like Quantitative Analysis and Instrumental Methods of Analysis, conducting research and writing scholarly articles with titles like "Fatty Acid Analysis of Blood Serum in Black-Legged Kittiwakes: What's Chromatography Got To Do With It?" and "Cytochrome P-4501A1 Isozyme



Besides being a chemistry professor and researcher at the University of Alaska Anchorage, John Kennish is an avid outdoorsman, which is a big part of what drew him to Alaska. **Upper left**, with a couple of salmon at Deep Creek on the Kenai Peninsula. **Bottom**, hauling out a load of caribou from Monument Mountain, near Eureka. **Top right**, during a visit to the citizens' council offices in Anchorage. Photos courtesy of John Kennish, except top right photo by Stan Jones.

Induction in Kenai River Sculpin as a Monitor of Freshwater Pollution Effects."

Besides teaching at UAA, he volunteers with Habitat for Humanity and

is a board member of the Alaska Public Interest Research Group.

He's also, as the reader may have guessed already, a member of the council's Scientific Advisory Com-

mittee. SAC, as it's known, is tasked with ensuring council projects are based on the best available scientific information and its membership roster is heavy with Ph.D.s like Kennish. (The other doctorate holders on SAC are John French, Peter Armato, Roger Green, and A.J. Paul.)

Kennish was recruited by Lisa Ka'aihue, the council staffer whose projects are primarily of interest to the the science committee. That grew out of a tour by Ka'aihue and Green of UAA's Applied Science, Engineering and Technology Laboratory, where Kennish does much of his research.

"It was evident that he thoroughly enjoys his profession as well as working with the students," Ka'aihue said. "John brings a lot of knowledge and experience to the Scientific Advisory Committee."

Kennish had long been interested in environmental chemistry and toxicology, and had worked with Jeff Short, a frequent council contractor on scientific research. In addition, he was aware in a general way of the council and its work after the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill of 1989.

So he joined SAC, where he soon found himself involved in – among other things – one of the council's perennial preoccupations: chemical oil-spill dispersants.

"I'm really fascinated by the fact that the dispersant issue is still unresolved after all these years," he said.

The diversity of the council has impressed him, along with its focus on preserving the citizen voice in oil-transportation decisions.

"It's an attempt to maximize input, to keep all the stakeholders involved at every level," he said. "I wish government worked that way because, in some ways, it seems to be the mission of government to ignore input."

Council switches to three meetings a year

Since its earliest days, the citizens' council board has met four times a year. But no more: at its May meeting in Valdez, the board voted to adopt a new schedule of only three full meetings a year.

The first two meetings of each year will occur in late January in Anchorage and in early May in Valdez. The third meeting will rotate among the council's other member communities and will take place in mid-September.

The next three meetings are scheduled as follows:

Sept. 15-16, 2005: Seward

Jan. 26-27, 2006: Anchorage

May 4-5, 2006: Valdez

The board made the change to reduce the cost and staff time required to prepare for and conduct board meetings. Each meeting requires hundreds of hours of staff work, as well as thousands of dollars in travel and lodging costs for staff, board and committee members who attend.



NEWMEMBER – Sharry Miller of Valdez joined the citizens' council board at its May meeting in Valdez. She was appointed to replace Lou Beaudry as representative of the Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corp. Miller was raised in Eagle River and has been active in Prince William Sound for over 15 years. She and her husband commercial fish there. She works as a technical writer and environmental consultant. Photo by Stan Jones, citizens' council.

Report analyzes standards for risk assessments in Prince William Sound

The citizens' council is making available a report by Dr. Martha Grabowski on risk assessments, particularly as applied to possible changes to the tanker escort system in Prince William Sound.

The 32-page report, "Prince William Sound Risk Assessment Overview," can be downloaded from the council web site, www.pwsrca.org.

Grabowski, an expert in marine safety, is a program director and professor at Le Moyne College. She is also a research professor at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. Both schools are in New York. Grabowski was a contractor during the mid-1990s risk assessment that led to today's system of escort tugs in the Sound.

The council commissioned the new report because of possible reductions to the tug escort fleet. At present, each laden tanker leaving Valdez is escorted by two rescue and response

tugs until it reaches the Gulf of Alaska. But the tanker operators have started discussions with regulators about cutting the requirement to one escort, and have also said they plan to conduct a risk assessment to determine how any changes would affect safety.

The council believes the two-escort requirement should remain in force, and that, consequently, no risk assessment is needed. It regards the new report as a tool for evaluating any proposal to conduct one.

Grabowski's report concludes that a risk assessment for Prince William Sound could take three years, and should analyze not only the technology employed, but also human factors.

The *Exxon Valdez* spill of 1989 was a classic human-factors accident. No equipment malfunctions were involved when the tanker hit Bligh Reef and spilled an estimated 11 million gallons of North Slope crude oil.

From the Executive Director

Past year seems to point to big issues in the future

Each year at this time, we pause to review the past 12 months, to take stock of what's been accomplished and what lies ahead.

On the list of accomplishments, we note that this year saw significant progress on the issue of exercising Alyeska's escort tugs and on addressing some problems with towline breaks that turned up in those exercises.

The past year also saw release of the state's report on Alaska's first Best Available Technology Conference. While it wasn't perfect from the council's point of view, it's a start and we look forward to working with the state to improve the Best Available Technology process.

Two examples of the partnership approach favored by the council came to fruition in the past year. One was our work with the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation and the Coast Guard on potential places of refuge in Prince William Sound. These are bays where a stricken tanker could be towed so that the leak could be confined to a relatively small area, rather than contaminating hundreds of miles of shoreline as the *Exxon Valdez* spill did in 1989.

Another partnership example was the firefighter training symposium we sponsored in May. This symposium trains land-based firefighters from coastal Alaska to deal with shipboard fires, as they would have to do if a vessel caught fire near one of their communities. As usual, we had many partners, but we were particularly gratified that ConocoPhillips made available its *Polar Endeavour*, allowing the firefighters to see for themselves what the new double-hull tankers entering service are like.

This was also the year when one issue emerged as perhaps the most important the council has faced since its birth: the future of the Prince William Sound tanker escort system.

That system, instituted after the *Exxon Valdez* spill, requires two powerful tugs to accompany each loaded oil tanker out of the Sound. The tugs can rescue a tanker if it runs into trouble, or begin the response

if, despite all efforts, an oil spill occurs.

However, the oil industry and its government regulators are talking about reducing the requirement to a single tug. Under the Oil Pollution Act of 1990, escort requirements could even disappear altogether when the tanker fleet serving the Valdez oil terminal has switched entirely to double-hull vessels. As the Observer went to press, the council was still formulating its strategy for ensuring that the escort system not be changed in any way that would increase oil-spill risk.

The oil industry is pressing for cost reductions in other areas, as well. One example is Alyeska's proposal for major changes at the Valdez tanker terminal. The council has commented extensively on this proposal, and continues to monitor Alyeska's plans.

Even as we address the technical aspects of such issues, we are also tackling the common thread that increasingly runs through them: the oil industry's claim that cutbacks are necessary for financial reasons. For the first time in our history, the council in autumn 2004 commissioned a study of oil-industry profits in Alaska, as detailed elsewhere in the Observer.

That study, by Fairbanks economic consultant Dr. Richard Fineberg, shows that the industry – unsurprisingly – makes enormous profits at oil prices around the \$50-a-barrel level seen recently. But it also produced the more surprising finding that the industry makes a healthy return in Alaska even at prices as low as \$13 a barrel. So, at any imaginable price level, oil companies can afford to protect our environment, and Alaskans needn't worry the cost will drive the industry out of the state.

However, the council's right to conduct such studies is under attack from Alyeska. Even before the Fineberg report was finished, the company served notice it considers profitability analysis outside the scope of its contract with us, and demanded that we not use Alyeska contract funds to pay Dr. Fineberg. Because we believe this type of information to be

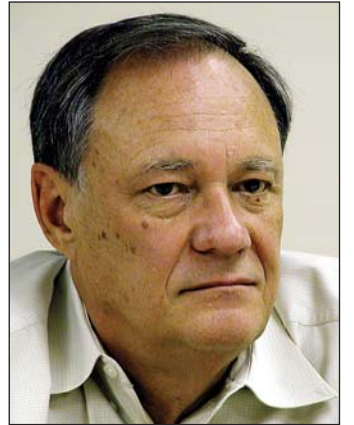
essential in dealing with the financial arguments being made more and more frequently by Alyeska and other players in the oil industry, we went to court in May to establish our right to conduct such studies.

Although we sometimes find ourselves at odds with the industry, we know they share our desire to make sure nothing like the *Exxon Valdez* spill befalls Alaska again. So we are always eager to give credit where credit is due and to spotlight noteworthy accomplishments. Such was the case when we recommended that the major Valdez oil shippers – ConocoPhillips' Polar Tankers unit, ExxonMobil's SeaRiver Maritime, and Alaska Tanker Co., which hauls oil for BP – receive a 2004 Legacy Award for spilling no oil in the Sound the previous calendar year. The award is given annually by the Pacific States/British Columbia Oil Spill Task Force for commendable work in the areas of oil spill prevention, preparedness, or response.

As noted above, the next few years promise to confront the council with some very high-stakes issues, the two most noteworthy being the prospect of reductions to the tug fleet, and Alyeska's proposed changes to the tanker terminal in Valdez.

Through it all, the council will bear in mind its central mission: working with industry and regulators to make sure the oil transportation system in Prince William Sound is as safe as can be, so that future Alaskans can enjoy the state's natural wonders as much as we do today.

• John Devens is executive director of the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council.



John Devens

PROFITS: Prudhoe payoff is still healthy

Continued from Page 1

the industry's finances is central to our mission of seeing that they do everything possible to prevent another *Exxon Valdez*," Devens said. "Our bottom line is, we have to see their bottom line in order to understand their behavior and influence it for the better where environmental protection is concerned. That's why we commissioned this report, and it's why we're asking the courts to establish once and for all that this type of analysis is within our mandate."

Dr. Fineberg's 98-page report, "The Profitability and Economic Viability of Alaska North Slope and Associated Pipeline Operations," is available for download at www.pwsrccac.org, the council's web site.

Key findings of the report include:

- Oil industry profits on the North Slope were \$5.5 billion in 2004, when prices averaged \$38.84 a barrel. That's about \$15 million a day, or \$625,000 an hour.

- Even in 1998, when prices averaged \$12.55 a barrel, the industry made \$825 million on the North Slope.

- At prices of \$50 a barrel, the industry's North Slope profits would amount to about \$5.7 billion a year.

Those findings put into perspective some of the industry's costs for envi-

ronmental protection in Prince William Sound, and its claims that cost reductions are needed:

- The existing tug system costs about \$25 million a year to operate, according to Alyeska. At \$15 million a day, that is about 40 hours worth of profits.

- Industry representatives, including Alyeska's president, have discussed cutting the tug fleet. Eliminating one tug could save about \$2.5 million annually, or four hours of profits.

- The council has long advocated the installation of vapor controls on Alyeska's ballast water treatment facility, the single largest remaining source of cancer-causing hydrocarbon emissions at the Valdez tanker terminal. According to engineering estimates obtained by the council, the cost of controlling emissions from the two largest sources within the treatment facility is only about \$1.5 million, just over two hours worth of industry profits.

"Closing off the whole area of profitability to us would be a kind of nuclear option," Devens said. "It would give the industry the power to terminate discussion on virtually any subject by claiming it was a financial matter, and that's not something we can live with."

As the Observer went to press in mid-July, no trial date had been set in the lawsuit over Fineberg's report.

AMOP Conference



Community Liaison Linda Robinson chats with a visitor to the council booth at the Arctic Marine Oilspill Program Conference, held in Calgary in early June. Photo by Tom Kuckertz, citizens' council.

Report assesses telecoms in Sound

After the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill, one of the many problems faced by residents and responders alike was an overloaded communication system. It could take forever to find an open cell-phone or long-distance line in Prince William Sound.

But the system would fare better if a big spill happened today, according to a study commissioned by the citizens' council. Thanks to a vast expansion in capacity since 1989, the authors concluded, "the proper telecommunications tools are

deployed in the Prince William Sound region to support disaster response activities in the region."

The study was conducted by SHall Engineering of Anchorage to inventory telecommunications facilities in the council region and identify any limitations and vulnerabilities.

The 54-page report, titled "Telecommunications Review Within Prince William Sound," can be obtained from either council office. See the back page of the Observer for contact information.

Alyeska Viewpoint**Maintenance crucial to SERVS' response readiness**

Maintenance is one of the most important activities SERVS (the Ship Escort Response Vessel System) undertakes to assure its readiness to respond to a spill. Maintenance seldom receives the attention given to major equipment acquisitions, large oil spill drills, or significant research projects. SERVS' maintenance team works to keep SERVS equipment "response ready." This maintenance objective not only means maximizing equipment life but also reducing the risk of spills – including non-crude spills from equipment meant to respond to crude oil spills. At SERVS, we feel it is important for you to understand the importance we assign to maintenance.

People often think of SERVS as a single place, the teal-colored building that houses the Valdez Emergency Operations Center (VEOC), but SERVS is more accurately thought of as an archipelago of equipment sites scattered around Prince William Sound. The SERVS base alone is a collection of assets and facilities, each of vital importance to preparedness and response. It is a center for operations that includes the duty office, the VEOC, a repair shop, a helipad, and the dock where many (but not all) repairs to vessels and barges take place. Within the VEOC alone there are some 46 computers, 66 telephones, five fax machines and an array of other office equipment whose reliability can make a real difference in response.

SERVS' assets beyond the water's edge include ten tugs and eight barges and the response equipment they carry, 48 mini barges, five self-propelled skimming units, 34 workboats, three landing craft, and 42 miles of containment boom. Other response equipment is located across Port Valdez at the Valdez Marine Terminal, near the Valdez Duck Flats and the Valdez Fisheries Development Association Hatchery,

and at four other hatcheries and six additional sites around the Sound. SERVS maintains seven mooring buoys in Port Valdez and four more across Prince William Sound, along with 26 non-mooring buoys, including those associated with hatchery protection boom. SERVS operates and maintains four communications sites, including the SERVS base, Reef Island, Johnstone Point, and Mt. Etches.

While SERVS' marine contractor, Crowley Marine Services, is responsible for maintenance of the tugs and barges, SERVS and Tatitlek Chenega Chugach (TCC) employees perform maintenance on the response equipment found on both types of vessel, and work on many of the smaller work boats as well. SERVS and TCC teams maintain the mooring systems that, like the tugs and barges, endure a marine environment that is hostile to steel and machinery on a 24/7 basis. Maintenance of the buoy and anchor systems requires commercial dive support, just as can happen with maintenance of large vessels, along with readiness to tackle challenging weather conditions. Logistical support is required for many maintenance activities, some of which can be complex and dangerous jobs, such as the move of a repeater station to Mt. Etches entirely by boat and helicopter.

From radios and repeaters to skimmers and containment boom, SERVS maintenance activities involve over 6,000 preventative maintenance tasks per year. Just as with successful response, effective maintenance requires accurate documentation. It also requires that SERVS and TCC personnel work not only as good mechanics but also as careful observers, noting conditions of equipment that may not seem quite right and correcting them. Successful maintenance also requires attentiveness to experience and to lessons learned.

Maintenance is more than simply "fixing broken stuff;" done well it ensures that equipment is replaced in a methodical and economic manner prior to the end of its operational life.

SERVS has developed a cross-functional team to assure the long-term success of its maintenance effort, a team that includes specialists with skills in electronics, telecommunications or marine systems, with generalists with good mechanical aptitude, a willingness to "measure twice and cut once," and a willingness to test ideas and to learn from each other. This team approach extends to include the entire SERVS work force, from mechanics and responders to financial business analysts and planners.

SERVS' emphasis on effective maintenance has received agency scrutiny, and agency commendation. An unannounced inspection from ADEC earlier this year resulted in a letter from the agency that described SERVS maintenance as a "new system which appears to enable Alyeska to more effectively manage their oil spill response resources." At SERVS, we appreciate that sort of recognition, but we realize that just like the art of maintenance itself, the key is not performance in the past, but preparedness for the future.

• Mike Meadors is interim manager of Alyeska's Ship Escort/Response Vessel System.



Mike Meadors

DISPERSANTS: More research needed

Continued from Page 1

on the water surface or shoreline," the report states. "Conversely by promoting dispersion of oil into the water column, dispersants increase the potential exposure of water-column and benthic (i.e., bottom-dwelling) biota to spilled oil."

The committee's task was to identify the research needed to help oil-spill responders make that decision.

The scarcity of solid information on dispersants has long been a concern of the council, which for years has called for more research and has sponsored studies of its own. Many of the dispersant committee's recommendations match what the council has advocated.

Some of the committee's recommendations include:

- The effectiveness of dispersants should be studied for different oil types and environmental conditions.
- Better computer models should be developed for predicting the trajectory and fate of dispersed oil.
- The acute and long-term toxicity of dispersed oil should be studied.
- The weathering rates and final fate of chemically dispersed oil should be studied, as compared with undispersed oil.
- Regulators and private industry should devise a program for monitoring the results of actual dispersant applications on spills in U.S. waters.

The 248-page report is available on the Internet at <http://books.nap.edu/catalog/11283.html>. A printed version can be ordered, or it can be read online, though the interface is somewhat laborious to use.

Tom Copeland, a former member of the citizen's council board, was a member of the Committee on Oil Spill Dispersants. He said the most important thing for Alaskans in the report is the call for studies of dispersant effectiveness for different oil types and environmental conditions.

"Dispersants are by far the most environmentally dangerous oil spill response tool . . . while their actual value to the response is uncertain," Copeland said in comments emailed to the Observer. "It is imperative that we know as much as possible about the effects of a particular dispersant on a particular spilled oil in a particular environment before we take the substantial risk which dispersant use will always entail."

One lesson he learned from his time on the committee, Copeland said, is the difficulty of being sure that dispersant sprayed from the air will actually hit the target. One of the most famous cases occurred after the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill, when the dispersant missed the oil and instead hit vessels attempting to remove the remaining oil from the grounded tanker.

"Unfortunately, this was not an unusual incident," Copeland wrote. "Large aircraft of opportunity, flown by pilots who have never sprayed anything before, let alone dispersants, and who have received no formal training in how to do so, are unfortunately the norm."

Overall, Copeland said, he found the process to be very careful and conservative.

"I do believe this report points the way forward, and does a good job in discussing what we need to learn about dispersants before they can be a major tool in oil spill response," he wrote.

TECHNOLOGY: State report out

Continued from Page 1

when needed, but the council noted that regulations require these conferences to be held every five years. That would mean the next one should be held no later than 2009 and possibly as early as 2007, as that is when the second conference would be due on the required five-year cycle after the 1997 start date.

• Provide extended lead and planning time to facilitate diverse vendor participation. In 2004, the council pointed out, an accelerated planning schedule left a very limited window for vendors to be invited, to respond, and make plans to attend. The conference was held near Memorial Day weekend, which is a popular vacation weekend and may have compromised attendance further. The conference report acknowledged that scheduling considerations limited the technologies considered, as

those "unavailable" for the conference were deemed "unavailable" for Alaska and were not, therefore, included among the Best Available Technologies.

"We submit that the availability of a vendor to attend a conference is not necessarily a reflection on the availability of that vendor's technology for use in Alaska oil spill response," Devens wrote.

• Provide more and better information on the technologies. "The report does not consider technologies from Canada, Japan, the North Sea, or any other foreign nations," Devens wrote. "We are concerned that this cursory level of research may have resulted in overlooking key technological advances."

The comment period on the draft report closed in mid-June. As the Observer went to press, the state had not yet issued a final version.

THE OBSERVER is the quarterly newsletter of the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council. Except where noted, Observer articles are written by Public Information Manager Stan Jones. For a free subscription, contact either council office, as listed on the back page.

Symposium teaches tactics in shipboard firefighting

By **RHONDA WILLIAMS**
Citizens' council project manager

In early May, land-based firefighters from Alaska coastal communities gathered in Valdez for marine firefighting training sponsored by the citizens' council. Fighting a fire on a vessel is very different from firefighting on land. Vessel fires pose risks often not present in land based fires. Yet, most firefighters in Alaska are not trained to fight fires on vessels, although many of the state's communities have small boat harbors and receive visits from larger vessels.

One goal of the symposium is to offer hands-on exercises with a variety of vessels. With a great deal of in-kind sponsorship this year, the symposium was able to offer a live shipboard drill in an oil tanker. ConocoPhillips' shipping unit for North Slope crude, Polar Tankers, provided the *Polar Endeavour* for an afternoon of training.

Students were divided into engine companies, each with its own instructor and vessel crew member. Captain Kevin Garnier and his crew on the *Polar Endeavour* were outstanding in their enthusiasm and participation in this drill. The scenario was a fire in an air purifier room.

Also participating in the exercise were the tugs *Stalwart*, *Alert* and *Tan'erliq*. During the exercise these tugs practiced their roles for water supply and boundary cooling. These tugs are equipped to assist in firefighting by providing the vessel with an

additional water supply for the hose teams and cooling the metal of the areas in close proximity to the location of the fire.

Once again the South West Alaska Pilots Association donated the use of its boat, the *Emerald Island*, for training. Students practiced search and rescue and finding the source of the fire. The Coast Guard participated by stationing inflatable boats nearby for such activities as rescue in case a firefighter or crew member fell overboard during the training.

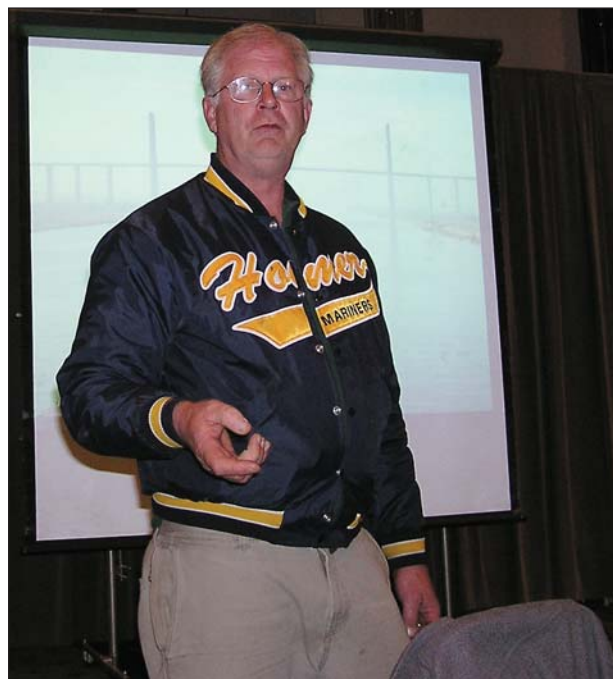
The symposium, the fourth the council has offered in the past few years, also had classroom sessions on such topics such as initial engine company actions, small-boat and marina fires, understanding fire plans, and vessel familiarization.

The symposium receives support from many organizations. The Alaska Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management once again provided funding to cover the travel, room and board expenses of firefighters from small coastal departments. The city of Valdez, Valdez Fire Department, Alyeska, the Coast Guard, Crowley Marine, the pilots association, and Polar Tankers all made generous in-kind donations.

Most important was the participation of the firefighters. Without their interest and enthusiasm there would be no symposium. Many attendees are volunteers for small fire departments who take vacation time from their paid jobs to train at the symposium.



Upper right, a trainee is silhouetted against a doorway on the *Emerald Island*. **Bottom right**, trainees and instructors beside the *Endeavour*. **Bottom left**, trainees pull fire hose during the symposium. **Center left**, Captain John Taylor, one of the instructors. Photos by Tom Kuckertz and Rhonda Williams.



SeaRiver buying used double-hulls for Valdez trade

The shipping arm of ExxonMobil plans to buy and overhaul two older double-hull tankers to help meet federal requirements for taking single-hull tankers out of service.

The double-hull requirement appears in the federal Oil Pollution Act of 1990, enacted in response to the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill of 1989.

SeaRiver Maritime announced its plans in late June during a meeting with staff and board members of the citizens' council.

The vessels involved are the *Kenai* and *Tonsina*, both nearly 30 years old. They are now hauling BP's oil under charter to Alaska Tanker Company. SeaRiver said the purchase is an interim step in a plan to upgrade its Valdez fleet. That plan could include building new double-hull tankers, according to SeaRiver.

SeaRiver's overhaul plans for the *Kenai* and *Tonsina* include equipping the bridges with the latest technology, analyzing the ships' steel for signs of

fatigue, and installing additional safety systems.

Under the Oil Pollution Act, single-hull vessels must be removed from service in U.S. waters not later than 2015, though the Valdez fleet is expected to be all double-hulls seven or eight years ahead of that deadline.

Double-hull tankers can sail indefinitely, even older vessels like the *Kenai* and *Tonsina* that were built before 1989.

Conference focuses on worldwide oil-spill issues

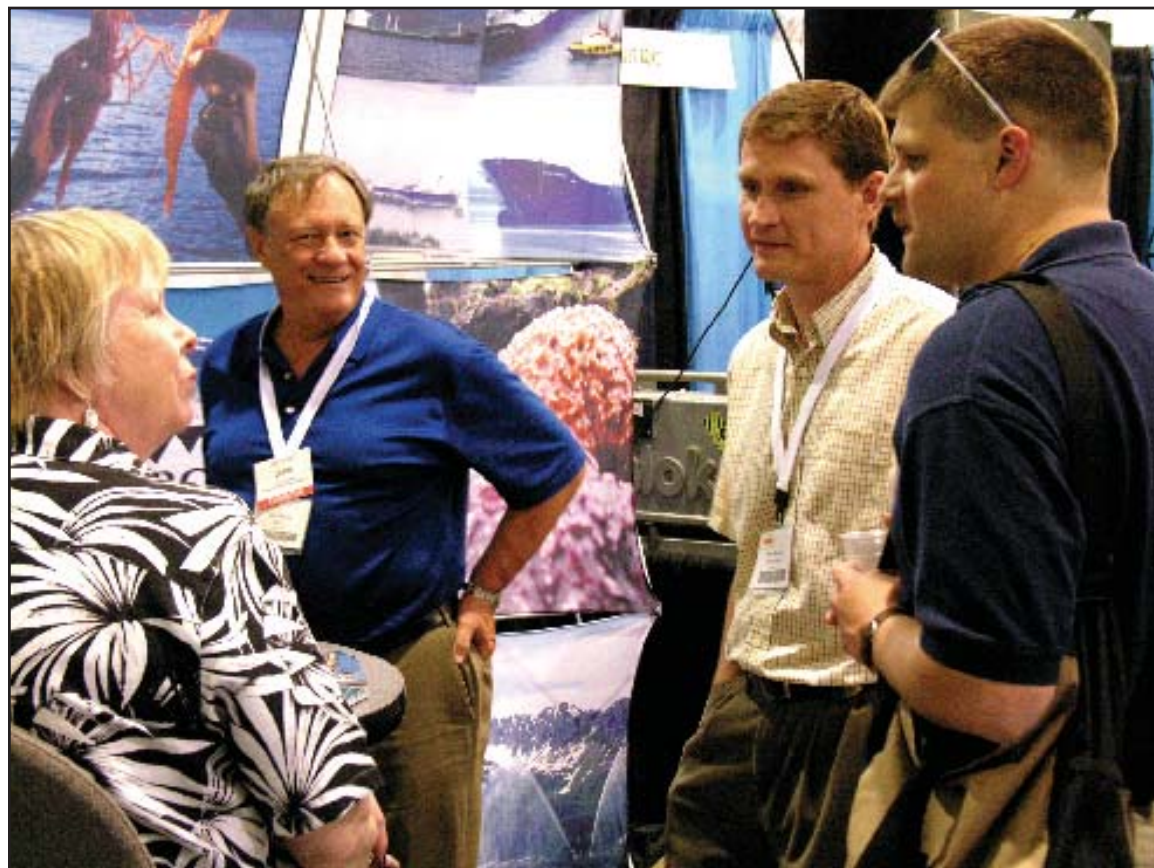
The triennial International Oil Spill Conference is a gathering of companies, regulators and vendors focused on preventing and responding to oil spills. This year's conference, with the theme "Prevention, Preparedness, Response and Restoration: Raising Global Standards," was held May 15-19.

The event runs on two main tracks. One is technical. Dozens of experts present papers and poster sessions on oil-spill issues. Topics this year included cold-region response, spill modeling, mechanical response, dispersants effectiveness, and net environmental benefit analysis. The other track is commercial. Approximately 150 exhibitors set up at the Miami Beach Convention Center to show products and provide information related to oil spill prevention and response.

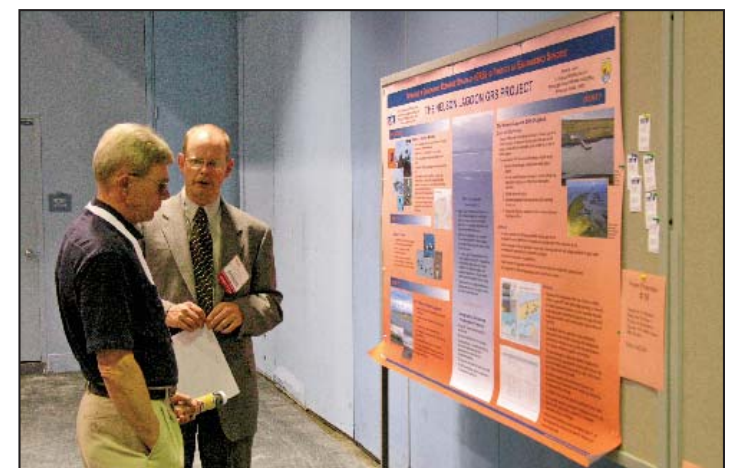
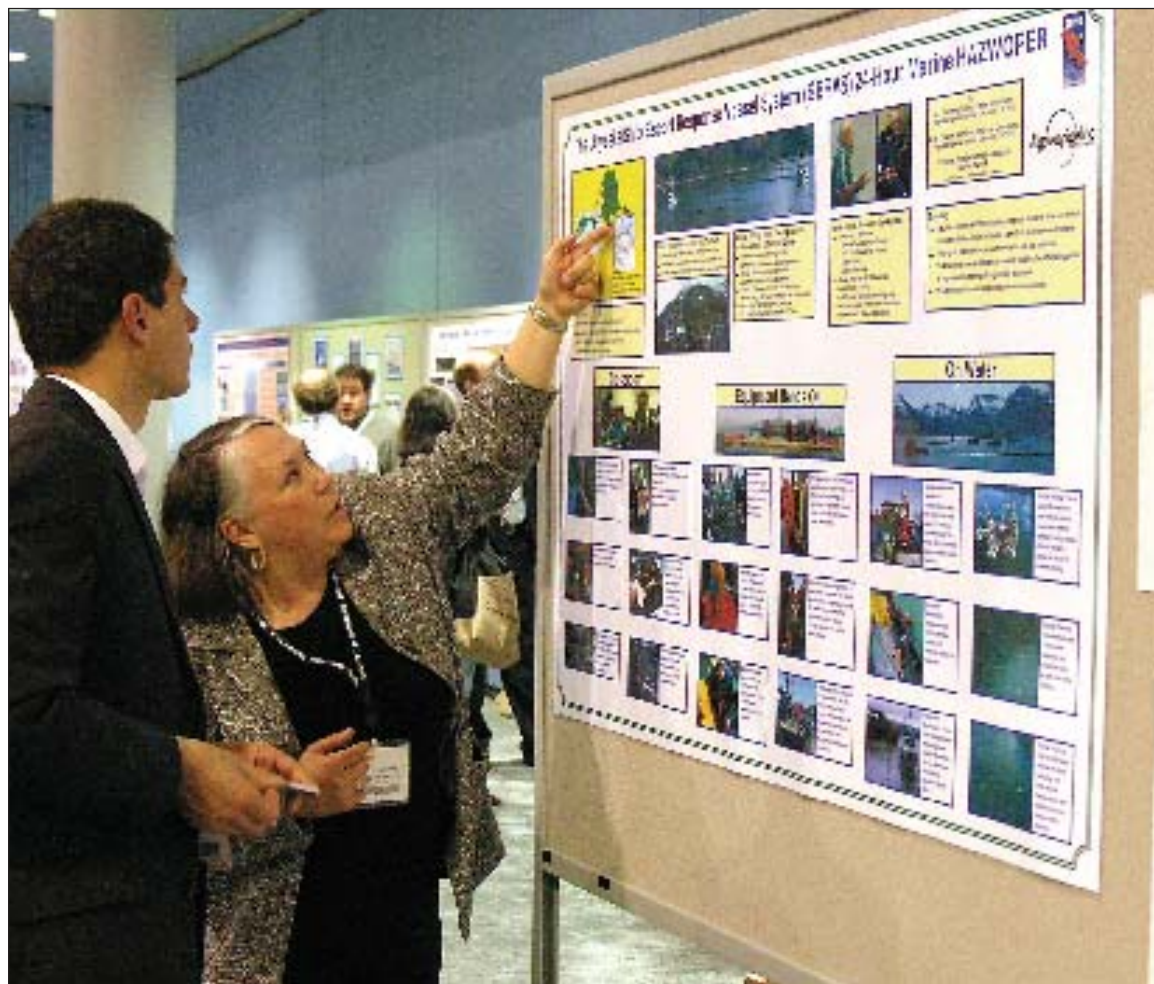
Several companies involved in the Valdez oil trade participated, including ConocoPhillips, Alyeska Pipeline Service Co., and ExxonMobil.

As usual, several people from our council attended. Some were involved in panel discussions or presentations, while others staffed the council information booth in the exhibit hall.

The event was formerly held once every two years; the next conference, in 2008, will be the first under the new triennial schedule.



Top, some 150 exhibitors set up displays at the convention. The council booth is just visible in the lower left corner of this shot. **Immediate left**, John Devens and Marilyn Leland of the council staff chat with visitors to the booth. **Lower left**, Alyeska's Diana Manning conducts a poster session on training for hazardous waste operations. **Lower right**, among the products exhibited was the Sea Slug, a huge bladder for holding recovered oil in a spill. **Middle right**, Tim Robertson, a frequent contractor to the council, conducts a poster session on Geographic Response Strategies. **Immediately below**, the conference took place at the Miami Beach Convention Center. Photos by Stan Jones.



Council documents are available free to the public

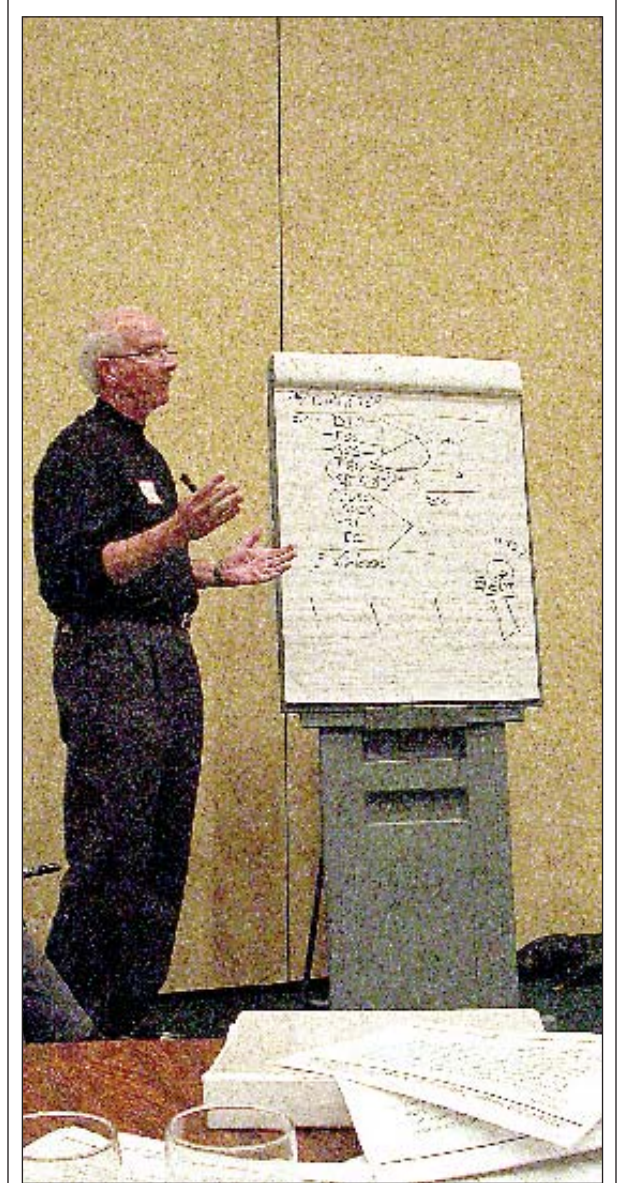
Single copies of most documents produced or received by the citizens' council are available free to the public. To make a request, contact either council office. Addresses appear on the back page of the Observer.

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PLANNING SESSION – Patrick McGinn, a public affairs manager for ExxonMobil, discusses plans for a major oil-spill drill to be conducted Sept. 27-29 by SeaRiver Maritime. As usual, council staffers and volunteers will participate in the exercise. The planning session shown here, one of several for the drill, took place May 25 in Valdez. Photo by Stan Jones.



FLOORTOP DRILL – Council project managers Dan Gilson and Roy Robertson look over the models representing a fleet of response vessels in Prince William Sound. Modeling a Prince William Sound oil spill on the floor of the Valdez Convention and Civic Center, as here, lends realism to the indoor drills held frequently by Alyeska and the oil shipping companies. This one, sponsored by ConocoPhillips, was held in early June. Photo by Donna Schantz.

Community Corner

Conferences provide opportunities for spreading the council message

Council staff and volunteers attended the International Oil Spill Conference May 16-19 in Miami. This show covered a multitude of oil-spill related issues including cold region response, spill modeling, mechanical response, and dispersants effectiveness. Marilyn Leland co-chaired a session on net environmental benefit analysis. Among the approximately 150 exhibitors were several vendors for spill response equipment, as well as the two citizens' councils for Prince William Sound and Cook Inlet. This has been a biennial event but will now be held every three years.

Staff members Tom Kuckertz, Linda Swiss and Linda Robinson participated in the annual Arctic Marine Oilspill Program conference this year in Calgary, Canada. Contractor Jim Payne presented a paper co-authored by Lisa Ka'aihue and Tom Kuckertz, among others, titled "Tankers to Tissues - Tracking the Biodegradation of Oil Discharges in Port Valdez". And a poster co-authored by Merv Fingas of Environment Canada and Lisa Ka'aihue titled "Literature Review of Dispersant Effectiveness and Salinity" was presented. The conference included sessions on physical and chemical properties and behavior of spilled oil and spill modeling, contingency planning and oil spill response methods, and shoreline protection. Copies of the proceedings are available at each of the council offices, and information can be obtained on-line at www.amop.com.

Alaskan Events

John Devens, Tamara Byrnes, Jennifer Fleming, Roy Robertson, and Rhonda Williams worked the booth at the annual Valdez Marine Expo held over Memorial Day. Committee members Joe Jabas and Agota Horel also donated their time. This is the second year Valdez has hosted this event, and both Jennifer and John are on the committee that sponsored it. Over 2,000 people were in attendance.

Marilyn Leland, Lisa Ka'aihue and Patience Andersen Faulkner (board member representing Cordova District Fishermen United) represented the council at the Copper River Nouveau in Cordova on June 11. This event is a fundraiser for the Prince William Sound Science Center and this year's guest host was Senator Lisa Murkowski. The Prince William Sound Science Center was founded to facilitate and conduct research that will increase understanding of the ecosystems in both Prince William Sound and the Copper River Delta.

The third annual Alaska Oceans Festival was held July 16 on the Park Strip in Anchorage. The council was represented by a booth and sponsored activities for children, including coloring and origami. This well attended festival provides an opportunity to distribute information on the council to residents of Anchorage and visitors. The festival provides information booths on Alaska's oceans, food and art vendors and free music.

World Wilderness Congress

The 8th World Wilderness Congress is being held September 30-October 6 in Anchorage. The congress - comprised of governments, the private sector, native peoples, non-governmental organizations and academia - is held every three to four years around the world. The council will have an information booth, and is facilitating a panel discussion on citizen oversight. The theme is "Wilderness, Wildlands and People - A Partnership for the Planet." There will be a special focus on Alaska, the Russian Far East, Canada, and the North Pacific. For more information on this event, go to www.8wwc.org.

Coloring Book

A third edition of the Prince William Sound coloring book will be published this summer. Watch our web site, www.pwsrccac.org, for an announcement.



Linda Robinson



OCEANS FEST

Riena and Bethany Harker visited the council booth at the Alaska Oceans Festival held July 15 in Anchorage. Here, they're coloring green crab drawings to be made into wearable buttons. Photo by Linda Robinson.

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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