



The Observer

VOLUME 17, No. 3/JULY 2007

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

Council seeking strengthened escort rules as federal mandate phases out

The citizens' council has adopted a new stance on the Prince William Sound tanker escort system. The position, voted in by the council board at its May meeting in Valdez, calls for preservation of the two-tug escort requirement now in place for loaded tankers, and for a limit of two loaded tankers in the system at any one time.

The council also called for a requirement that a tug kept at Hinchinbrook Entrance for emergency response be a high-performance vessel called a Prevention/Response Tug, or PRT, rather than a conventional tug.

This latest position is in keeping with past council actions on the issue, but is stronger in some ways. It demands that each loaded tanker be escorted by one Enhanced Tractor Tug, or ETT, and by one PRT. The ETT is also a high-performance vessel considered superior to conventional tugs. Currently, one of the escorts can be a conventional tug.

Alyeska Pipeline has only three PRTs and two ETTs in the Sound, meaning no more than two tankers could be escorted simultaneously while keeping a PRT at Hinchinbrook Entrance.

The action comes in response to two major upcoming events that will affect the Sound's tanker escort system. One occurs in November, when current contingency plans covering tanker safety and spill response expire and must be renewed.

The other is the end of the federal

two-tug requirement in Prince William Sound. That requirements applies only to single-hull tankers. The Valdez fleet is converting to double-hull vessels as mandated by the Oil Pollution Act of 1990, a transition that may be complete within a year.

"With the sunset of this critical federal requirement," the council staff advised the board, "the use of a two-escort system will hinge on voluntary compliance and state-level requirements."

The new position on tanker escorts is as follows:

A) *All laden tankers in Prince William Sound, including double-hulled tankers, should continue to be escorted by two escorts. A PWS class/ETT tractor tug will be the primary escort and the PRT tractor tug will be the secondary escort.*

B) *The Hinchinbrook Tug, pending future technological improvements, should always be a PRT. When it is rotated during its maintenance schedule, it should be replaced by an equivalent vessel.*

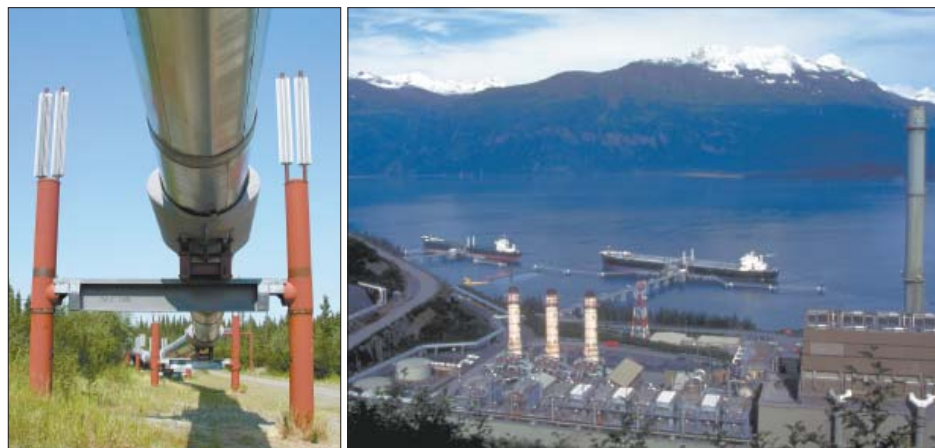
C) *The escort system should utilize full response capability per contingency plan and statutory regulations without waivers of prevention requirements.*

D) *The PWSRCAC recognizes that the above positions can only be met at all times with no more than two laden tankers underway in the system at one time and requests that the TAPS shippers manage the system appropriately.*



Current rules require two escort tugs for each loaded tanker. Photo courtesy of Alyeska Pipeline.

Three Decades of Oil



The Trans-Alaska Pipeline System, which completed its 30th year of operation on June 20, has moved over 15 billion barrels of North Slope crude oil. The system includes the pipeline itself, left, and the Valdez tanker terminal, right. Photos by Stan Jones, citizens' council.

Alyeska system marks a milestone

The trans-Alaska pipeline and the tanker terminal at its southern end in Valdez turned 30 this summer.

Since oil flow began on June 20, 1977, the system has moved more than 15 billion barrels of North Slope crude, according to Alyeska Pipeline Service Co. That was enough to make up 19,000 tanker loads.

Building the 800-mile line from Prudhoe Bay to salt water in Prince William Sound cost \$8 billion, took three years, and employed some 70,000 people.

Alyeska is a non-profit corporation set up to operate the pipeline and terminal, known as the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System, on behalf of the major North Slope oil producers. Most of the system is owned by ConocoPhillips, Exxon Mobil, and BP.

The citizens' council was established after the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill to provide oversight of the terminal and the tankers that use it.

"We've seen a lot of progress on both prevention and response since pipeline startup, particularly after the Exxon Valdez," said John Devens, executive director of the council. "But we must also remember that the system is 30 years old and at the beginning none of us thought oil would still be flowing by this time."

The council is funded through a long-term contract with Alyeska. Besides giving the council operating money until the oil runs out and the pipeline is decommissioned, the contract includes express provisions guaranteeing the council's independence from Alyeska.

Cordovan chosen council president

Patience Andersen Faulkner is the new president of the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council. Faulkner, who represents Cordova District Fishermen United on the council board, replaces Stan Stephens. He did

not seek re-election.

Steve Lewis, who represents the city of Seldovia, will continue as vice president, while John French will serve as treasurer and Marilynn Heddell as



Patience Andersen Faulkner

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A response barge participates in exercises during BP's May drill in Prince William Sound. (See Alyeska Viewpoint, p. 3.) Photo by Susan Sommer.

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Volunteer Profile

Committee member is an international seal expert

By **SUSAN SOMMER**
Project Manager

How does a mammal make a living in the ocean? That was the overarching question for Jennifer Burns as she made her way through college studying marine biology. Now an associate professor of biology at the University of Alaska Anchorage, Burns is an expert on how seals and other marine mammals survive.

She's been sharing that expertise as a member of the council's Scientific Advisory Committee, or SAC, for about a year.

Like many council volunteers, Burns learned about the council by word of mouth. Her husband, Chris, works in the oil-spill-response industry with John LeClair, a volunteer on another council committee. One of Burns's fellow professors, John Kennish, is a SAC member. Both LeClair and Kennish urged her to join.

Originally from the San Francisco Bay area, Burns made her way north in the mid-1990s to study marine biology at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, the "best place," she says, "to do work in marine mammal research." She fell in love with the Fairbanks summers, and managed to avoid the harshest winter months by heading south—all the way to Antarctica. There, she researched the diving behavior of Weddell seal pups, which are born on the sea ice in October, during the Antarctic spring. While it wasn't much above freezing in McMurdo Sound, it was warmer than Fairbanks and had more daylight.

She lives in Eagle River with Chris and two enthusiastic husky/blue heelers named Buster and Roo. Their house sits on the edge of Chugach State Park, meaning occasional glimpses of

wildlife and plenty of opportunity for adventure, usually with the companionship of the dogs.

Her position at UAA includes teaching and research, and she works with undergraduate students in the classroom and in the laboratory.

An important part of her job is mentoring graduate students. "I teach them how to be scientists," Burns says, blue eyes sparkling with enthusiasm. "I help raise them to a professional level."

Burns earned a bachelor of science in marine biology and zoology in 1990 from the University of California Berkeley; a master of science in fisheries in 1993 from the University of Washington; and a Ph.D. in marine biology in 1997 from the University of Alaska Fairbanks. She was a post-doctoral research associate from 1997-2000 at the University of California Santa Cruz. She began teaching in Alaska in 2000 as an assistant professor.

Volunteering on the Scientific Advisory Committee gives Burns a different perspective on how science can work in the community. She likes the change of pace from teaching, and the immediacy of results from actions of SAC. In the research end of science, getting results may take years.

Burns brings to the committee a practical knowledge of how scientific research is conducted. She understands the proposal process and the most efficient way to turn an idea into reality.

Besides teaching and conducting research, Burns has published many papers on how seals and sea lions are able to make a living by foraging underwater. Her presentations at conferences around the world,

Polar traveler



Jennifer Burns's work has taken her to Antarctica, top, and to the sea ice of the Alaskan Arctic, right. Photos courtesy of Jennifer Burns.



including in the U.S., Canada, New Zealand, Monaco, Italy, Botswana, and South Africa, cover such topics as physiological development in juvenile harbor seals, and modeling the nutritional relationships between fish and marine mammal populations

in Alaska. Next year, she'll be attending a conference in Namibia.

"Africa's parks are really neat, and the wild animals are amazing to see," says Burns, who always tries to find time for personal adventures when traveling for work.

Fresh face joins staff

Emily Polley has become the citizens' council's newest project manager assistant. She started the job, at the Anchorage office, in late May.

Polley received a bachelor's degree in public relations from Drury University in Springfield, Missouri, last December. She decided to make Alaska her home after spending three months last summer as an intern for the American Red Cross in Anchorage.

She describes herself as "non-profit minded" since elementary school, when she volunteered with the American Cancer Society.

"After graduation I knew I wanted to work in a field where I was working toward a greater cause," she said of her decision to take the job with the council.

Her husband, Ben is a member of the Army's 1-501 Parachute Infantry Regiment. Though his official duty station is Fort Richardson, he's serving as a machine gunner in Iraq at present.



Emily Polley

COUNCIL: Cordovan takes over as board president

Continued from Page 1

secretary. French represents the city of Seward and Heddell represents the city of Whittier.

In addition to the four officers, the executive committee includes three members at large. They are: Blake Johnson, representing the Kenai Peninsula Borough; Stan Stephens, representing the Alaska Wilderness Recreation and Tourism Association; and John Velsko, representing the city of Homer.

Faulkner, who was born in Cordova, holds a degree in justice and sociology from the University of Alaska Anchorage. She has worked as a legal technician with the litigation team in the civil damage suit against Exxon over the Exxon Valdez oil spill and now works with the Oiled Regions of Alaska Foundation, set up to benefit communities and regions directly affected by the spill. Her interests include teaching Alaska Native crafts and

studying the uses of herbal plants. She has served on the council board since 1998.

"I am encouraged by the past presidents' leadership, and I feel the direction the council is going is a good steady one," Andersen said. "We have to remain alert to our mandate. We are partners with the agencies and the oil industry, but not always recognized as such."

Council Meeting Schedule

The citizens' council board of directors meets three times annually. Here is the tentative schedule for the coming year:

- September 20-21, 2007: Kodiak
- January 24-25, 2008: Anchorage
- May 1-2, 2008: Valdez

Board meetings are open to public. Agendas and other meeting-related materials are available on the council web site at www.pwsrccac.org/about/boardintro.html.

Or, contact either council office: Anchorage, 907-277-7222, or Valdez, 907-834-5000.

THE OBSERVER is a quarterly newsletter published by the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council. Except where noted, Observer articles are written by Stan Jones, director of external affairs. For a free subscription to the Observer, contact a council office in Anchorage or Valdez. Contact information is available on the back page.

From the Executive Director

Looking back on a pretty good year in the Sound

Each summer, we at the citizens' council pause to review the past 12 months, to assess what's been accomplished and what lies ahead. On balance, I'd say we've had one of our most productive years.

Our relations with the oil industry are on perhaps the best footing we've seen in a decade. Several old issues have been satisfactorily resolved, and the new ones mostly seem less contentious. And we're happy to note that interest in citizen oversight continues around the world.

Here are some key developments of the past year:

- We started an oral history of the Exxon Valdez oil spill, featuring interviews with people directly involved in the spill and its aftermath. We expect to publish their memories in book form by March 2009, the 20th anniversary of the spill.

- We were active on the threat that non-indigenous species from tanker ballast water pose to Alaska's maritime environment, especially its commercial, sport, and subsistence fish stocks. There is growing interest in Congress in legislation on this issue. We are pressing federal lawmakers to make sure any such legislation requires ballast-water exchange, which is the best practice presently available for deterring invasions by non-indigenous species. In February, we organized a successful film festival with a major focus on invasive species as part of the Alaska Forum on the Environment.

- Our concerns over the future of the escort tugs that accompany loaded oil tankers through Prince William Sound were partly resolved over the past year when the tanker companies agreed to maintain the present fleet of ten tugs, at least for now. However, another question remains: what will happen to the tug fleet as federal escort requirements end with the transition to double-hull tankers? As discussed elsewhere in the Observer, the council in May called

for continuing and strengthening the double-escort requirement.

- We produced "Where Do I Go From Here," a half-hour video aimed primarily at high-school students. It focuses on jobs in the marine sciences and seafaring. We hope it will help students find careers that let them work in their home communities.

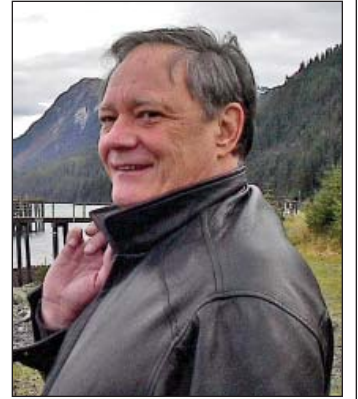
- Last fall, as Congress investigated a partial shutdown of the Prudhoe Bay oil field caused by pipeline corrosion, we were invited to provide information on how citizen oversight might work on Alaska's North Slope. We developed a whitepaper on the subject that was added to the Congressional record by Sen. Lisa Murkowski. This May, I traveled at the invitation of the U.S. State Department to Finland and Estonia to discuss citizen involvement in oil spill prevention and response. Interest was intense; I gave four major speeches and approximately 15 news interviews.

- This year saw an agreement that we believe will solve a long-running problem at Alyeska Pipeline's tanker terminal in Valdez: hazardous air pollution from the facility that cleans oily residue from tanker ballast water. After lengthy discussions among ourselves, Alyeska, and its oil-company owners, the owners committed to upgrades that will eliminate virtually all of this pollution by the end of 2008. In response, we published newspaper advertisements in Valdez and Anchorage commending the owners for their commitment, and we pledged to continue working with them to see the upgrades completed.

- We settled a dispute with Alyeska over the council's right to investigate the profitability of oil companies operating on Alaska's North Slope. Alyeska dropped its claim that the council may not use Alyeska contract funds for such investigations, and paid half our legal expenses.

- We participated with Alyeska and the

Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation in a remarkably cooperative work-group process to develop a new oil-spill contingency plan for the tanker terminal. The process was such a model of effective interaction among citizens,



John Devens

industry, and regulators that we nominated Alyeska and the environmental conservation department for recognition from the Pacific States/British Columbia Oil Spill Task Force.

We saw the other side of this coin in a highly unsatisfactory contingency-planning process conducted by the tanker companies. Their plan was prepared in private, without citizen participation, and was so deficient when first submitted that it was summarily rejected by the state. The tanker companies returned to the drawing board, set up a work-group process comparable to Alyeska's, and invited us to participate. The revised tanker plan was approved by the state for public comment, and we are optimistic the final version will be comparable in quality to Alyeska's terminal plan.

The federal Oil Pollution Act of 1990 called on citizens, industry, and regulators to work as partners to prevent a return to the complacency that led up to the Exxon Valdez oil spill. We believe the accomplishments of the past year prove that process is working, and we commit to continue it in the coming year.

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

Alyeska Viewpoint

Teamwork is essential element to maintain safety

Each year, Alyeska exercises a Prince William Sound response scenario to test the coordination between Alyeska, federal and state agencies and one of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System marine shippers. Members of these groups work months in advance to prepare the drill scenario to offer both realistic practice opportunities and a good learning exercise. This year's annual exercise was hosted by BP from May 1-3 in Valdez,

with drill objectives being exercised throughout various locations in the Sound. The initial feedback we have received from this May's drill has been positive and the integration of BP into our initial response actions was "textbook," according to some of the observers.

It is clear to us that success is a team effort and that in drills, real spills and day-to-day operations, SERVS-Alyeska's Ship Escort/Response Vessel System—is a part of a larger team.

In our prevention role, SERVS provides capable escort tugs to each laden tanker. The tanker's captain, crew and embarked pilot are equally critical mem-

bers of the prevention team. They are responsible for ensuring safe operation and navigation, for early recognition of problems, and for making prompt and effective use of the escort tugs if needed. Regular tethering exercises and periodic towing drills are conducted to maintain proficiency among the captains and crews of the tugs and tankers. Personnel at the Coast Guard Vessel Traffic Service are also critical members of the prevention team. They function as an additional set of eyes and ears.

In our response role, SERVS functions as an initial response team, but is quickly joined by other Alyeska personnel from the Valdez Marine Terminal, Fairbanks, and Anchorage to fill critical incident management functions. The Unified Command structure is another example of the team approach. The Unified Command includes the U.S. Coast Guard as federal on-scene coordinator, the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation as state on-scene coordinator, and an incident commander from industry. The incident commander post is initially filled by Alyeska, but

the party responsible for the spill takes over within 72 hours.

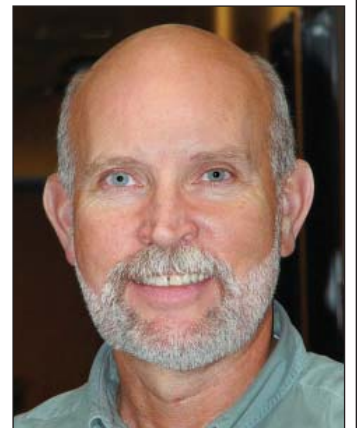
We emphasize prevention because we believe that a robust prevention system will minimize the possibility of an oil spill. Once the oil is in the water, our job is many times more difficult. We recognize, however, that a spill is always possible and that despite our prevention capabilities, we must remain response-ready. For this reason, we ensure our readiness by conducting regular maintenance of our equipment and vessels as well as conducting regular training of all SERVS personnel, including fishermen from the ports of Valdez, Cordova, Chenega Bay, Whittier, Seward, Kodiak, Homer, and Seldovia.

Finally, the people of the Prince William Sound communities and the regional citizens' advisory council are critical to prevention and response. We share the goal of safe transportation of oil through Prince William Sound and our working relationship promotes honest debate that results in a stronger prevention and response system. I'm proud to be part of such a great team.

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



Mike Meadors meets with Don Kompkoff of Chenega Bay and Blake Johnson of the citizens' council board during the BP drill. Photo by Susan Sommer, citizens' council.



Mike Meadors

Community Corner

New Ridicule Pole is old tradition

While I was in Cordova for the BP oil-spill drill in May, I got the chance to see the community's Ridicule Pole and spend some time with the man who carved it, Mike Webber. The pole was recently unveiled and now stands in Cordova's Ilanka Cultural Center.

The project started in February of this year. With the 18th anniversary of the Exxon Valdez oil spill at hand, Bob Heinrich of the Eyak tribal council commissioned Cordovan Mike Webber to carve a Ridicule Pole in connection with the spill.

The Ridicule Pole was carved in traditional times to force someone of high standing to meet or recognize an obligation to the community. This one is aimed at ExxonMobil, because it still hasn't paid off on a multi-billion dollar judgment that victims of the spill won in 1994.

For Mike, carving the pole was another chapter in all that has followed from one of the central events of his life, the 1989 oil spill.

Shortly after the Exxon Valdez hit Blight Reef, Mike realized the salmon hatchery on Evans Island, near the village of Chenega Bay, was in danger. He headed out in his fishing boat at midnight, fighting icing and winds of up to 100 miles an hour. At Evans Island, he helped place an arc of boom in front of the hatchery to protect it from incoming oil.

After the spill, Mike fished until 1999, when he injured his spine in a serious boat accident. During his recovery, he joined the Native Village of Eyak Tribal Council and became interested in his Native heritage, including carving.

He read books on carving for a year before actually starting to do it, then discovered he had a gift for it. Later on, he took classes from artists such as Nathan Jackson, Fred Trout, and Tommy Joseph.

Mike's Ridicule Pole focuses on Lee Raymond, president of Exxon in 1989. Oil flows from Raymond's mouth, and he has dollar signs for eyes and a Pinocchio nose. But he has no ears, symbolizing a refusal to listen.

In the center of the pole is a school of herring, with one showing lesions. The herring and its lesions, along with dollar signs littering an oil slick, are colored with the actual blood of Mike and Bob Heinrich. Also carved on the pole are casualties of the spill: an otter, an eagle, and a pigeon guillemot.

An orca spouts water and oil, and plaintiffs in the lawsuit against Exxon are carved on the bottom. Another section shows a blindfolded Lady of Justice.

Mike has carved totems, masks, and grease bowls, in which seal, bear, whale or smelt oil is purified and then used for dipping dried meat or fish. He plans to do a series of eight animal spirit masks.

He just completed a cremation box for his 91-year-old grandmother, Stella Jensen, and his grandfather, who is deceased. He has received a grant to carve ten paddles--three Alutiiq, three Eyak and four Tlingit, each representative of its culture. They will be used in ceremonial dances by a local dance group before they are displayed.

Samples of Mike's work can be seen on his website, www.alaskacarving.com.



Linda Robinson

Ridicule

Cordova fisherman Mike Webber carved Cordova's 'Ridicule Pole' to commemorate the unpaid damages and unkept promises from the Exxon Valdez oil spill.

After the spill, Webber helped set up boom to protect a salmon hatchery from floating crude oil.

Photo by Ross Mullins



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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