

# THE OBSERVER

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## New pay rates negotiated for fishing-vessel program as spring training season gets under way

As this issue of the Observer went to press, Alyeska Pipeline appeared to be resolving a dispute with participants in the company's oil-spill fishing vessel program over compensation and other issues.

Even as Alyeska was working with fishermen to find short-term fixes to the problem, the company and the citizens' council were developing plans for a joint effort to find a long-term solution.

"It's a problem that has to be fixed," said Steve Lewis, president of the council. "The Exxon Valdez spill taught us the value of fishing captains, with their specialized knowledge of local waters and conditions, in oil-spill cleanup work. We at the council intend to make sure that lesson is never forgotten."

Fishing vessels played a crucial role in the response to the Exxon Valdez oil spill, providing most of the equipment and manpower for

protecting sensitive areas and for recovering and cleaning up oil.

The dispute unfolded during Alyeska's spring training for fishing vessel captains and crews. The training started in late March and ends early this month.

Under the state-mandated contingency plan for cleaning up tanker oil spills, Alyeska is committed to maintain contracts with at least 350 trained fishing vessels from communities in what is known as the Exxon Valdez oil spill region: Prince William Sound, Cook Inlet, and Kodiak Island. The plan requires that 275 of those vessels be ready to leave port within 24 hours of notification. (The reason that 350 are to be kept under contract and trained is to allow for the possibility that, at any given moment, some vessels may be unavailable for maintenance or other reasons.)

See page 6, **FISHING VESSEL PROGRAM**

## Council-supported invasive-species bill dies with end of winter legislative session

The Alaska Legislature adjourned last month without acting on a citizens' council-supported bill to establish the Alaska Council on Invasive Species.



Council representatives visited with Rep. Craig Johnson in Juneau to promote HB 12. Left to right: Staffer Joe Banta, board members John French and John Velsko, Johnson, and staffer Stan Jones. Photo courtesy of Stan Jones.

The measure, House Bill 12, was introduced by Rep. Craig Johnson of Anchorage. It would have set up the panel to coordinate efforts by state and federal agencies and non-governmental organizations to deal with invasions of Alaska's lands and waters by non-indigenous species of plants, animals, and fish.

Though the Legislature didn't actually vote down the invasive species measure, the lawmakers' failure to act on it before adjournment means the legislation is dead. In order to become law, it will have to be reintroduced and passed in the next legislature, which convenes next January.

"We were sorry to see the bill stall out," said John Velsko, chair of the council's Legislative Affairs Committee. "But we still support the concept of a coordinating council on invasive species and will be working to get it passed if

See page 6, **INVASIVE SPECIES**



A Prince William Sound fishing vessel practices towing oil spill containment boom during a recent training session. Photo by Roy Robertson.

## Iceberg radar system up and running again

Prince William Sound's iceberg-detecting radar system is back in service, thanks to repairs arranged by Alyeska Pipeline Service Co.

The system had been out of service since September due to integration problems that arose when the Coast Guard upgraded its own radar equipment at a shared facility on Reef Island.

The iceberg radar resumed providing its display of the waters between Reef Island and Columbia Bay to Alyeska's Valdez operations base for SERVS personnel and the tug fleet in mid-March. Service to the Coast Guard's Vessel Traffic Center is expected to resume soon.

"We salute Alyeska putting in the effort to get this important element of the Prince William

See page 7, **ICE RADAR**

Former Valdez Coast Guard Commander Mark Swanson recently joined the council as executive director. See page 3 for Swanson's first column as head of the council staff, and page 2 for more about his background.



AK Chamber of Commerce - AK Wilderness Recreation & Tourism Assoc. - Chenega Bay - Chugach Alaska Corp. - Cordova - CDFU - Homer - Kenai Peninsula Borough - Kodiak - Kodiak Island Borough - Kodiak Village Mayors - OSREC - Port Graham Corp. - PWS Aquaculture Corp. - Seldovia - Seward - Tatitlek - Valdez - Whittier

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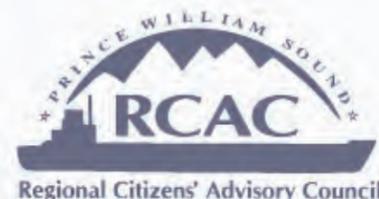
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**Council member entity profile****Newest council member works to boost Port Graham economy and pride in community and culture**

Tucked in a mountainous fjord on the southern tip of the Kenai peninsula, the tiny Alaska Native village of Port Graham sits on the ancestral homeland of the Alutiiq people who once populated the entire coast of Southcentral Alaska. In 1971, the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act put much of the land around Port Graham into the stewardship of the Port Graham Corporation.

Included in the 1971 settlement were over 100,000 acres of land, including Windy and Rocky Bays, next to the Kachemak Bay Wildlife Preserve. Over 40,000 of the original 100,000 acres are now within the boundaries of the Kenai Fjords National Park, and corporation staff works closely with park employees to manage Port Graham lands inside those borders.

A five member board of directors is elected annually by the shareholders, while day to day operations are managed by president and chief executive officer, Lloyd Stiassny.

Corporation-owned businesses provide services to the community, including a general store, purchase and distribution of fuel, and management of the corporation's lands. Port Graham Corp creates and develops businesses which empower and advance local native communities. Stiassny emphasized the importance of Native corporations in small communities such as Port Graham.

"Native corporations have a responsibility to the shareholders, and are an integral part of the local business community," Stiassny says. "We help grow business opportunities."

Stiassny notes that Port Graham's location and environment provide unique opportunities to generate that economic lift.

"Port Graham has a business economy model for a tourism industry," Stiassny says, which the corporation tries to boost through various partnerships.

One such union is with Alaska Wildland Adventures, specializing in eco-conscious wilderness tourism. Port Graham Corp partnered

with the company to develop the Kenai Fjords Glacier Lodge, located in the Pedersen Lagoon Wildlife Sanctuary on corporation lands. The arrangement helps to preserve and protect the unique environment and culture of the area.

Alaska Wildlands operates the lodge under a lease with Port Graham Corp. Included in that lease agreement is an internship program, requiring the lodge to employ Port Graham shareholders. Educational programs at the lodge teach visitors about Alutiiq heritage and values along with "Leave No Trace" travel practices while strengthening employees' self-esteem in the local Native Alaskan culture.

"The lodge is a source of pride for the community," Stiassny said.

In the future, Port Graham hopes to develop more of its land and explore similar economic opportunities. Stiassny has confidence about the tourism industry.

"The tourism industry has slowed a little due to the bad economy, but over time this will grow," Stiassny said.

This past January, the citizens' council board officially seated Port Graham Corp. as a member entity. The corporation has been a part of the council's sister organization, the Cook Inlet Regional Citizens' Advisory Council, since that organization's inception, but was not previously represented on Prince William Sound's council.

Stiassny says that Diane Selanoff, vice president of the Port Graham Corporation and its representative on the citizens' council board, inspired the corporation to request membership. Selanoff brought to the corporation's attention that oil from the Exxon Valdez spill had previously reached the area and could do so again.

Stiassny said the corporation realized they were removed from the decision-making process and an accident could again have a devastating effect on their lands.

"Port Graham Corporation is now one of the largest private land owners in the region, and a



The community of Port Graham sits near the mouth of Cook Inlet. Map courtesy of Port Graham Corp.

new event could impact the region even more with the local economy becoming so dependent on tourism," Stiassny said.

Selanoff spoke of the importance of adding the Port Graham voice to the council's deliberations now.

"This is such an important time for both the corporation and the council. The corporation is starting to develop their lands for business. And for the council, complacency has seemed to increase as the oil throughput begins to decline, and the age of the terminal means we must be more diligent than ever."

"We are excited to become an active and engaged part of the council," Stiassny said, "And we now feel that we have a stronger presence."

"The oceans are our life, tying us to our culture, our children's culture, and our future. It is important to keep the waters pristine," Selanoff says.

"I've had several people ask me why we are jumping on the bandwagon so late," Selanoff mused. "I tell them we are not late. We have always been here and watched. We have always been a part of the oversight."

**Former Coast Guard commander heads citizens' council**

Retired Valdez Coast Guard commander, Mark Swanson, has been appointed executive director of the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council.

He replaced John Devens, who left the post in February 2009. In the interim, Donna Schantz served as acting executive director. She has returned to her former job as director of programs for the council.

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

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

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

"We're extremely happy to get someone of

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

Swanson is a native of the Florida Keys and a 1984 graduate of the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, with a Bachelor of Science degree in Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering. Additionally, Swanson holds masters degrees in Mechanical Engineering and Naval Architecture from the University of Michigan.

Previous to his position at Shell, Swanson worked from 2005-2008 with the international ship classification group Lloyd's Register as their external training manager delivering technical, environmental protection and maritime safety training to shipping companies and shipping terminal operators throughout North and South America.

Swanson's Coast Guard career encompassed a broad mix of technical engineering and instruction, and marine safety and marine environmental protection. Positions and experiences include

teaching seamanship and sailing to incoming freshmen at the Coast Guard Academy, working as an engineer and deck watch officer, naval architecture instructor, co-leading a salvage team to assist with major marine casualties, acting as liaison and lecturing at the World Maritime University in Malmö, Sweden, helping to manage flood response during tropical storms Frances and Alison and the mobilization of reservists to provide homeland security following 9/11.

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

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

**From the Executive Director**

# Citizen council oversight still needed in third decade of oil operations in Prince William Sound

Hello, and welcome to my first column as executive director of the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council!

I am starting my new job as the council enters its third decade of overseeing the safety of crude oil transportation in Prince William Sound.

Alaska's oil is the lifeblood of the state's economy and is a critical energy source for the U.S. West Coast and Hawaii. Prince William Sound and nearby coasts are the environmental crown jewels of America's natural bays and harbors.

Thanks to the efforts of the council, the oil shippers, federal and state regulators, and lawmakers, many of the hazards of transporting oil through Prince William Sound are better understood and better managed today than when the North Slope began producing in the 1970s.

These improvements result from a combination of factors:

- well-informed state and federal laws and regulations.
- a world-class vessel traffic control system
- a state-of-the-art tug escort system.
- shipping company investments in double hulls and redundant propulsion systems.
- technological improvements to the trans-Alaska pipeline, to ballast water treatment at the tanker terminal in Valdez, and to oil spill recovery equipment.
- and of course, informed citizen oversight.

But the system and the hazards associated with it are not static. Equipment ages and needs maintenance. Yesterday's preparedness, hazard awareness, and proficiency can rapidly become tomorrow's complacency and unpreparedness. Shippers and pipeline operators are continually

pressured to reorganize and re-equip to reduce costs. State and federal regulators are frequently subject to budgetary and staffing constraints, as well as changes of mission and organization.

Even our understanding of the long- and short-term environmental and operational risks of oil transportation continually evolves. In this dynamic environment, the citizens' council, in keeping with its charter to monitor and advise, has much to do and much to contribute.

In my first months on the job, I will meet individually with the council staff, and I will meet and actively listen to the concerns and perspectives of our 19 member organizations and other key stakeholders.

In addition, I will review the council's ongoing projects, and the expected results to better understand how they relate to the council's planning efforts and fit within the council's priorities.

No group has infinite resources, so it is important to seek efficiencies and opportunities to partner with regulators, shippers, educational institutions, and other interested groups and individuals as we work to make oil transportation in the Sound as safe as possible.

It's also important to recognize that many of our oil transportation issues exist in other areas. Accordingly, we will seek to learn from the efforts of others, and to employ our own outreach activities and award-winning website to share what we've learned since 1989.

Shipping, oil transportation and storage, emergency response, and the regulatory and environmental implications of these activities are surprisingly complex undertakings that involve many agencies and many technical and

managerial disciplines. One critical function of our council is to educate ourselves so that we can not only better monitor and advise the oil industry and its regulators, but can also better inform the public. This ongoing process of learning and then educating is critical to the continued credibility and effectiveness of the council. It will be one of our highest priorities.

In this third decade of oil transportation in Prince William Sound, the need for citizen oversight is as great as ever and we have our work cut out for us. I am excited to be part of this effort and feel privileged to have the opportunity to serve the board of directors and our member organizations in leading such a dedicated and talented group of staffers and volunteers.

Like our counterparts in government and industry, we are on a path of continuous improvement. Watch this space for more updates on your citizens' council in action.

• Mark Swanson is the executive director of the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council.



Mark Swanson

**Alyeska People**

## New operations manager has long history in sound

Mike Day will never forget the feeling of running past Bear Cape after a trip across the Gulf of Alaska.

"I spent several years commercial fishing throughout the state," Day, a life-long resident of Valdez, said. "The feeling you get when you're back home in Prince William Sound, back in the most special place I've ever been, is hard to put into words. Anyone who knows the water and has been here knows that Prince William Sound is unique. I have been fortunate that my family has made a living here for generations. It's in my blood. It's one of the reasons I chose to work for Alyeska."

In 1990, Day launched a career at the newly formed Ship Escort Response Vessel System or SERVS as foreman and supervisor in charge of implementing the newly mandated oil spill recovery equipment and plans.

He performed the initial fit-testing deployments of boom to protect the salmon hatcheries in Prince William Sound. Day helped develop and instruct some of the first fishing vessel training programs in ports throughout Alaska.

The crowning project of that assignment was supervising work on the planning, organization, and construction of the Nearshore Response Barge 500-2 and construction of mini-barges for a nearshore response.

Day's career at Alyeska over the next 14 years was primarily at the Valdez Marine Terminal maintenance and operations organization. He has also had assignments in Alyeska's corpo-

rate office, revamping Alyeska's maintenance policies and procedures, implementing new technology applications, and working on many pipeline-wide initiatives.

An insider with knowledge of how to get things accomplished within the Alyeska organization, Day will be a welcome addition at SERVS as the Interim Operations Manager, providing some greater visibility and accountability to management and concerns within Alyeska. He brings a strong maintenance and operations background, as well as SERVS experience.

"Serving the stakeholders and communities of Alaska is important to me," Day said. "I have a vested interest in Prince William Sound. It's where I intend to make my living when I'm done working, and I would be delighted if my children chose to enjoy the same way of life I've come to love. It is literally in my blood, and it's a commitment I will never forget. I know that all of us together can produce a better result than any one of us alone can accomplish."

Day will play a critical role implementing SERVS operations and maintenance goals to ensure an effective vessel escort system and safety and compliance. He will deploy new technology, and meet oil spill response planning commitments.

One of his goals is to produce results, and also show and effectively communicate those results.

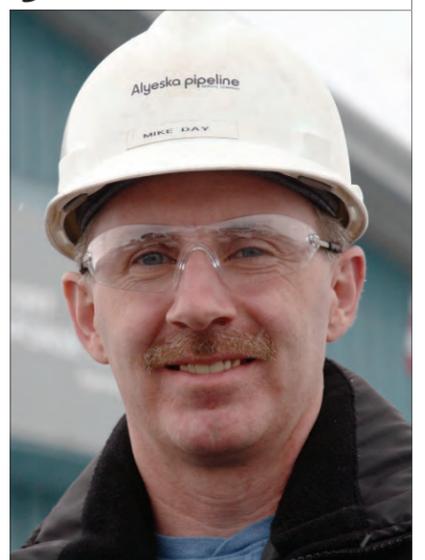
"I think we know we have some assurance of our processes, but I believe in measuring what

we do," Day said. "One of my goals for the team is to identify those core commitments to safety, the environment, and our stakeholders, and make sure I support my team and management to communicate our status effectively. I believe in knowing if you are getting better or worse, and measuring and communicating that."

The SERVS job is a "dream assignment," Day said.

"I get to be a member of a world-class organization, with some of the finest people I've ever worked with, and I love Prince William Sound," Day said. "The sense of fulfillment I get keeps me smiling every day when I know I've done all I can to make sure my home, and my children's home, is in the best care."

• This article was submitted by Alyeska Corporate Communications.



Mike Day

# Citizens' council timeline

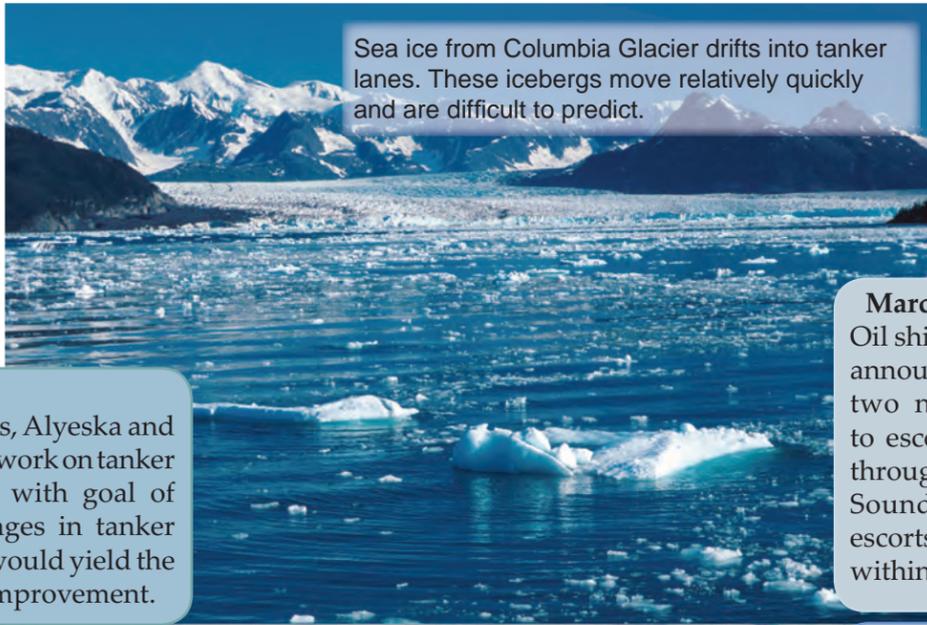
This second installment of our retrospective covers the years 1995 through 2002 of the council's work on behalf of citizens in the region affected by the Exxon Valdez oil spill.

During this period, reforms and improvements included:

- state approval in 1995 of the first tanker oil spill contingency plans adopted under new rules adopted after the 1989 spill
- startup in 1998 of a system at the Alyeska terminal for controlling oily

- vapors released during tanker loading
- arrival in 1999 of the first of a fleet of new high-performance escort tugs
- arrival in 2001 of the first double-hull tanker built to comply with the Oil Pollution Act of 1990
- to the startup in 2002 of an iceberg-detecting radar system near the Hinchinbrook Reef.

Here is a timeline of these and many other milestones in the ongoing work by the council and other stakeholders to make sure Prince William Sound continues to have the world's safest crude-oil transportation system.



Sea ice from Columbia Glacier drifts into tanker lanes. These icebergs move relatively quickly and are difficult to predict.

**March 1995:** Council, shippers, Alyeska and regulators begin work on tanker risk assessment with goal of identifying changes in tanker operations that would yield the greatest safety improvement.

**September, 1995:** EPA orders vapor controls on two tanker loading berths at Valdez terminal by early 1998, partly ending a years-long dispute between Alyeska and council. Still at issue: are two berths enough?

**1995**  
**October, 1995:** DEC approves contingency plans prepared by oil shippers for tanker spills, the first such plans drafted under rules adopted after Exxon Valdez spill. City of Cordova and Kodiak Island Borough file appeals.

**May 1996:** Council awards contract to study icebergs calved from Columbia Glacier and their effects on tanker traffic.

**1996**  
**April, 1996:** In the first step to combat possible invasion of Prince William Sound by aquatic nuisance species, President Clinton requires at-sea ballast exchange for foreign tankers bound for Valdez to export North Slope crude. Federal officials say the measure is a direct result of council recommendations.

**March, 1997:** Oil shipping companies announce plans to build two new tractor tugs to escort laden tankers through Prince William Sound, with the new escorts to be in service within two years.

**May, 1997:** Council board passes resolution calling for vapor controls at a third tanker berth at the Alyeska terminal, arguing that rising projections for North Slope oil production mean two berths won't be enough.

**1997**  
**July, 1997:** ARCO Marine announces plans to construct Millennium-class double hull tankers to meet OPA 90 phase-out requirements for single hull tankers.

**December, 1997:** The council's non-indigenous species study is completed, with the researchers concluding that live plankton from distant ports are routinely flushed into Prince William Sound in ballast water of oil tankers. The question of whether any non-indigenous species have colonized the Sound will be explored in two-year follow-up study.



1997: A ballast water sample taken for the council's non-indigenous species project teems with plankton.

**September 1996:** Smithsonian Environmental Research Center is hired by council to do a pilot study of the risk that Prince William Sound could be invaded by non-indigenous aquatic nuisance species carried in ballast water of arriving tankers.

**December, 1996:** Tanker risk assessment is released with several recommendations for improving tanker safety. In response, shippers promise changes including bigger tugs at Hinchinbrook Entrance, tests to see if tractor tugs should be used in Valdez Narrows, and "sentinel" plan to station a tug in central Prince William Sound.



Council staffer Joe Bar Brookman chat with fellow International Oil Spill C...

**March, 1998:** Vapor control system at terminal 5.

**1998**  
**May, 1998:** Council begins study of dispersants, resort. A study to investigate the effects of the vapor control system is completed.

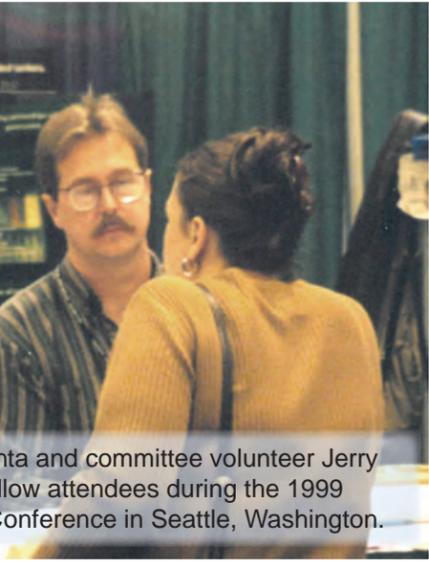
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**January, 1999:**  
First of two new Alyeska enhanced tractor tugs, the Nanuq, arrives in Prince William Sound.



Council members Stan Stephens and John Allen at a 1999 conference with France's Senator Alphonse Arzel, President of Syndicate Mixte.

**March, 1999:**  
On the tenth anniversary of Exxon Valdez oil spill, council issues special 28-page report concluding Alaska waters are safer today because of improvements made since 1989. But more remains to be done, the council concludes, and continued vigilance is essential to make sure safety is not reduced as memories of the spill fade. Council co-sponsors a major symposium in Valdez to mark the tenth anniversary, and participates in another in Anchorage.



anta and committee volunteer Jerry follow attendees during the 1999 conference in Seattle, Washington.

**June, 1999:**

- Culminating almost eight years of work, council issues "Coping with Technological Disasters," a guidebook for communities facing the socioeconomic impacts of man-made catastrophes such as the Exxon Valdez oil spill.
- Second enhanced tractor tug, the Tan'erliq, arrives in Prince William Sound.

**January 2000:**

- The council looks into methods of detecting icebergs in tanker lanes after the tanker risk assesment study determined that ice from Columbia Glacier was a factor in the Exxon Valdez oil spill, and identified them as a major ongoing risk for tanker traffic in the Sound.
- Council staff and volunteers visit France by invitation of Syndicate Mixte, an organization formed after the December 12, 1999, oil spill off the coast of France.

**1998:**  
ontrols go into  
at Alyeska  
on Berths 4

## 2000

**1998:**  
board reiterates position on dis-  
calling for their use only as a last  
Also, board hires its own experts  
gate the first of what will become  
of claims by whistleblowers that  
control system at Valdez tanker  
could cause a catastrophic explo-  
review panel concludes the vapor  
"safe from all reasonable risk of  
nic fire and explosion."

**1999**  
**August, 1999:**

- Whistleblowers continue to claim the vapor control system is unsafe, but an investigation by council, like one by the state-federal Joint Pipeline Office, rebuts the latest claims as well.
- Council calls on Gov. Tony Knowles to insist on safety requirements including continued commitment to double hulls as condition for state support of BP's proposal to buy ARCO.

**May, 2000:**

- Council scientists say lingering Exxon Valdez oil is still affecting the environment of the sound.
- A two-year ballast water taker study confirms non-native species are being transported to Alaska.
- Ice detection radar project begins.

**September, 1999:**  
Council board passes resolution repeating its call for vapor controls at third berth at Alyeska terminal in Valdez.

**June, 2000:**

- The council's "Coping with Technological Disasters" guidebook wins the 2000 Legacy Award from the States/British Columbia Oil Spill Task Force.
- Tatitlek hosts the first test of Geographic Response Strategies.

**October, 1999:**

- First ARCO Millennium double-hull tanker is christened in Louisiana.
- DEC approves the second set of contingency plans for tanker spills drafted under the post-Exxon Valdez rules. The first set of tanker contingency plans, approved by DEC in 1995, is still under appeal.

**October, 2000:**  
Council calls for additional vapor control equipment at the third loading berth of the Valdez Marine Terminal.

**December, 1999:**  
Council gears up to analyze the new oil-spill contingency plan for the Valdez Marine Terminal, and hires experts to investigate the latest whistleblower claims of unsafe conditions at the Valdez tanker terminal, this time in the fire-suppression system.

**December, 2000:**  
Council begins production of peer listening training video based on the "Coping with Technological Disasters" guidebook.



**1997:** Council staff member Joel Kopp secures a crab trap in the intertidal area in SE Port Valdez for the non-indigenous species project.

# FISHING VESSELS: Hopeful signs

Continued from page 1

After a check in late January, Alyeska reported a 20-vessel shortfall in the Prince William Sound-based part of the fleet. However, a careful analysis of contingency-plan requirements by the council suggested the actual shortfall could have been as large as 33 vessels.

After the shortfall was identified, Alyeska began working to address it and bring more vessels into the program.

As of Observer press time, most fishing vessel captains in the region affected by the Exxon Valdez oil spill region seemed to be accepting new terms proposed by Alyeska in mid-April. According to an April 20 article in the Anchorage Daily News, those terms included a 48 percent increase in base-rate compensation for training exercises and a 63 percent increase for actual oil-spill response.

Many fishing vessel captains had vowed to leave the program if no resolution was reached by early this month. But word of the new rates reportedly led some Cordova fishermen not currently in the program to inquire about joining it.

The council's joint effort with Alyeska to identify longer-term solutions will involve hiring an independent consultant to identify the causes of the problems in the fishing vessel program and recommend how to put it on a sustainable footing. It was expected to be launched sometime this month, after Alyeska reached agreement with the fishermen on the short-term problems.

"This program is the backbone of the oil-spill response system, and we're happy Alyeska is joining with us to make sure it remains strong and effective," Lewis said. "We'll do all in our power to bring this effort to a successful conclusion."

The council began alerting

Alyeska and its regulators to problems in the program in 2005, when fishing vessel captains at a council-sponsored meeting complained of declining participation and warned that, without changes, it could atrophy to the point of being ineffective for oil-spill response.

The captains said the biggest problems in the program were inadequate compensation, exclusion from the decision-making process, and lack of respect.

In 2009, the council retained a contractor to conduct a readiness audit of the entire fishing vessel fleet. The contingency plan splits the 350-vessel requirement into two tiers. Tier I, consisting of 50 vessels, must be ready to leave port within 6 hours. Tier II consists of 300 vessels, 225 of which must be ready to leave port within 24 hours. The readiness audit showed that, while the Tier I fleet appeared able to meet its 6-hour requirement, only about half of the 150 Tier II captains contacted in the survey could meet their 24-hour requirement.

More signs of a faltering fishing vessel program were reflected in Alyeska training records. In 2006, Alyeska gave 328 vessels the training necessary for participation in the program. By 2009, only 267 vessels were trained, a level far below the contingency-plan requirement for 350 trained vessels.

"I think the changes Alyeska is proposing and their acceptance by the fishermen are grounds for cautious optimism," said Mark Swanson, executive director of the council. "For the first time in a long time, it appears new participants are interested in joining the program and that's a very encouraging sign."

Numerous documents on the fishing vessel program are available online: <http://tinyurl.com/FishVP>

# Federal escorts legislation remains under consideration in nation's capital

As this issue of the Observer went to press, dual-escorts legislation pushed by the council was still awaiting action in the U.S. Senate.

The dual-escorts provision passed the U.S. House of Representatives last fall as part of the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2010. However, the Senate has yet to act on its version of the Coast Guard bill, and the council continues its effort to make sure the escorts language is included in whatever version of the bill goes to final passage.

Under a federal law passed after the Exxon Valdez oil spill of 1989, escorts are required for loaded single-hull tankers in Prince William Sound. The same law bans single-hulled tankers after 2015.

For now, all tankers are escorted, regardless of hull configuration. The council wants to ensure this practice continues after the phase-out of single-hull vessels is complete and so started its effort to have the escort requirement formally extended to double-hull tankers.

# Council staff sees changes

The council has experienced a number of staff changes in recent months. Venessa Dawson, administrative assistant in the Valdez office for the last two years, resigned in early March to work for the City of Valdez. Jean Cobb, part-time administrative assistant, will be increasing her time from two to three days per week to fill the void left by Dawson and the council is advertising for another part-time administrative assistant in Valdez.



Jean Cobb

# INVASIVE SPECIES: Maybe next year

Continued from page 1

it's reintroduced next year."

The issue of invasive species has long been of concern to the citizens' council because of the risk that non-indigenous organisms arriving in oil tanker ballast water could establish themselves in Prince William Sound and harm indigenous populations, including commercial fish species.

House Bill 12, introduced last year, would have created a 14-member council. Five seats would be held by the commissioners of various state departments with the remaining seats representing soil and water conservation districts, conservation organizations, farmers, landscapers, commercial fishermen, commercial shippers, the University of Alaska agricultural program, Native corporations, and the public at large.

The council, according to the bill, was to "plan and coordinate efforts that address the threats posed to the state and its residents by invasive species." It would have involved federal departments and agencies in the process.

nine months as Anchorage administrative assistant.

In early March, the council welcomed back a former employee, Barbara Penrose, to fill the administrative assistant position vacated by Lopez.



Barbara Penrose

Penrose is a retired kindergarten through 12th grade teacher of the deaf. Penrose worked for the organization part-time from 2003 through the summer of 2008, engaged in the management of the 17,000 plus historical documents collected by the council over the last 20 years. Currently, Penrose is coordinating the transfer of these files into a new, easily searchable filing system.

In Anchorage, Serena Lopez was promoted to fill the project manager assistant position vacated by the February departure of Telena McQuery. Lopez, a life-long Alaskan originally from Whittier, has worked for the council for the last



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## Council Meeting Schedule

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

September 16-17, 2010: Seldovia

January 20-21, 2011: Anchorage

May 5-6, 2011: Valdez

Board meetings are open to public. Agendas and meeting-related materials are available online: [www.pwsrca.org/about/boardintro.html](http://www.pwsrca.org/about/boardintro.html).

## Tanker company earns legislative honors for employee safety and marine environmental protection

The Alaska Tanker Company was recently recognized by the Alaska Legislature for two significant performance milestones.

The first is that the company's personnel recently completed 13 million hours of work-time over 8 years with no time lost due to

injury. The second achievement is that ATC has not spilled any oil into the sea in 7 years.

The resolution, passed on February 12, states: "No other tanker company in the world has achieved success for safety and environmental standards such as this."

## New Prince William Sound coloring book call for artwork submissions



The council is looking for submissions for the fifth edition of our popular children's coloring book. Previous coloring books have included work from artists such as Ray Troll and Chad Carpenter, of Tundra Comics, alongside student entries.

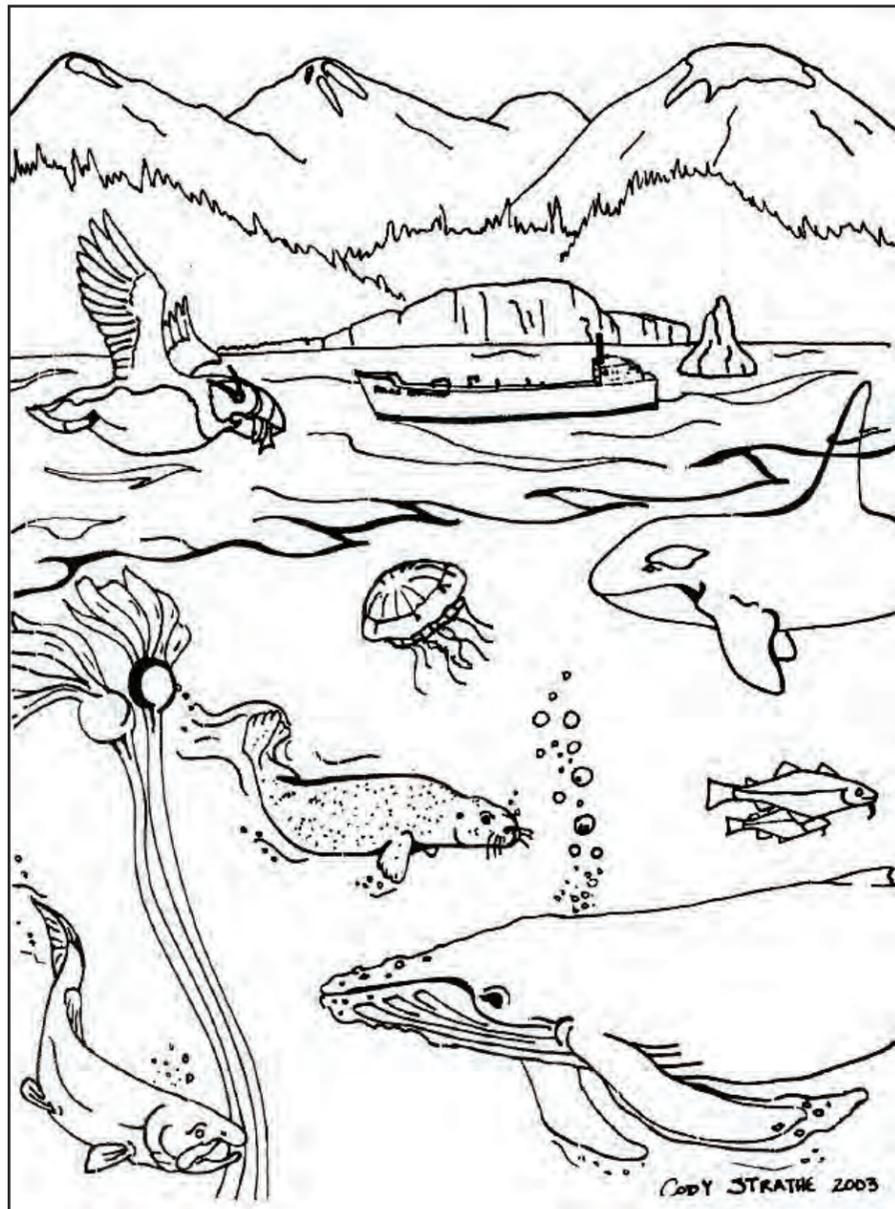
Please submit original black ink line drawing on white paper. Minimum size is 8 1/2 inches by 11 inches. Drawings must be received

by June 15, 2010.

Email drawings, and your grade and school or community to robinson@pwsrca.org or mail it to:

Linda Robinson  
3709 Spenard Rd., Suite 100  
Anchorage AK 99503

For more information on this coloring book, or to request a copy of a previous book, please call our Anchorage office: 907.277.7222



**THE OBSERVER** is a quarterly newsletter published by the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council. Except where credited to others, articles are written by council staff Stan Jones and Amanda Johnson.

## Former council staffer honored by Alaska Forum on the Environment



Lisa Ka'aihue, formerly the council's director of administration, recently received the Alaska Forum on the Environment's 2010 Outstanding Achievement Award for her work fighting marine non-indigenous species in Alaska. Ka'aihue was nominated by Peter Armato of the Kenai Fjords National Park, and Linda Robinson, the council's outreach coordinator. Photo by Linda Robinson.

## ICE RADAR: Returning to service

Continued from page 1  
Sound safety system back online," said Steve Lewis, president of the citizens' council.

At the suggestion of Rear Admiral C.C. Colvin, commander of the Seventeenth Coast Guard District, the council will be working with the agency to fashion a Memorandum of Agreement that will clarify the roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders in the use and maintenance of the radar system.

"We look forward to working with Alyeska and the Coast Guard to make sure the system is used to maximum advantage," Lewis said. "We believe it can make a valuable contribution to dealing with the iceberg threat in Prince William Sound."

Icebergs discharged in the retreat of Columbia Glacier have long been recognized as a threat to tankers in Prince William Sound. As early as 1984, a Coast Guard commander in Valdez proposed installing a radar system in the area to scan for icebergs.

Reef Island overlooks Bligh Reef, scene of the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill. The vessel left the standard tanker lanes to avoid ice that had

been reported earlier by other vessels, but failed to change course again as scheduled and grounded on the reef, resulting in a crude oil spill estimated at 11 million gallons. In its report on the grounding, the National Transportation Safety Board recommended installing a radar system near Bligh Reef to detect icebergs, as well as monitor vessel traffic.

After the spill, evidence continued to mount about the threat posed by icebergs. An empty tanker struck an iceberg in the Sound in 1994 and suffered over \$1 million in damage. And a technical study in the mid-1990s identified icebergs as one of the major remaining threats to tankers in the Sound.

After a long effort by the council, the Coast Guard, Alyeska, and numerous other stakeholders, the iceberg radar was installed on Reef Island in 2002, where it operated until the compatibility problem developed last September following equipment upgrades at the site.

Information from ice scout vessels, supplemented by the radar system, is used to determine when conditions are safe for tankers and other vessels to travel the Sound.



Above is an image of sea ice in tanker lanes created by the ice radar system. Dotted lines mark tanker lanes. The large white shapes indicate Bligh and Glacier Islands. Clusters of small white shapes indicate sea ice.

**Community Corner****Council toasts 20 years of citizen oversight with special tradition**

To commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the founding of the citizens' council, an evening reception was held in coordination with the January board meeting in Anchorage. The contract between the council and Alyeska was signed in February of 1990.

Three of the original signers of the contract were in attendance: Ann Rothe, who represented the National Wildlife Fed-



Linda Robinson

eration on the council board of directors; Chris Gates, from the city of Seward; and Bill Walker, from the city of Valdez. Scott Sterling, who also once represented Cordova, proposed a toast using milk similar to the original toast done in 1990. Sterling then presented the council with his framed copy of the Oil Pollution Act of 1990.

The Marine Science Symposium was held January 18-21 in Anchorage. It opened with a workshop on communicating ocean science to formal and informal audiences, which was followed by sessions related to the Bering Sea, Arctic Ocean and Gulf of Alaska. Council staff also attended an informative session on exploring the Google Ocean layer in Google Earth.

The Alaska Forum on the Environment, held February 8-11, included a session on youth involvement. Students from the Chugach Children's Forest project showed a YouTube video they made about their adventures near Whittier, and the Girl Scouts modeled eco-friendly garments made from recycled materials such as juice cartons and magazine pages. Other presenters were from the Copper River Watershed project, Wrangell St. Elias Youth Conservation/Youth Partnership Program, Ground Zero Russian Green Exchange, and ATV-Education group. The forum's annual Outstanding Performance Award went to former council staff member Lisa Ka'aihue for her work on invasive species.

The Alaska Invasive Species Working Group gathered at Seward's Alaska SeaLife Center in March to focus on marine invasive species. Fifteen non-native species have been found in Prince William Sound, and several in Kachemak Bay. This group, which includes people from around Alaska, is working on state legislation to create an Alaska Council on Invasive Species.

The Alaska Wilderness Recreation and Tourism Association held its annual meeting in Palmer in March. It included excel-

lent presentations on social media. The association, represented on the council board by Cathy Hart, has developed a new website to promote Alaska tourism.

The National Weather Service recently partnered with the Valdez School District and other agencies in the area to create the First Annual Science and Technology Symposium for local elementary students. The inaugural symposium was held on March 6. The symposium is designed to expose elementary students to science and technology professions that exist in Valdez and Prince William Sound. Council staff participated in this year's symposium, presenting information about Columbia Glacier, green crab monitoring, and the lingering presence of Exxon Valdez oil in the Sound. There was a significant turnout for the inaugural symposium and the children in attendance were very knowledgeable and enthusiastic. Staff plans to participate in future symposiums.

In April, I worked with Alaska Geographic on their "Sound Stories" project, helping interview local people about their lives and activities in the Chugach region. Interviews included Rochelle van den Broek, executive director of Cordova District Fishermen United, Cece Wiese from Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corporation, Dave Janka, LaRue Barnes of the Ilanka Center; and elder Virginia Lacy.

These interviews will be viewable through an interactive map on the Alaska Geographic website where anyone can access them.

Several council projects will be highlighted on this map, including the recently installed weather monitoring station and invasive species monitoring.

Kodiak Comfish was held April 15-17 at the Kodiak Harbor Convention Center, council board members Jane Eisemann and Iver Malutin helped distribute information at the council's information booth during the event.

Please visit the online edition of the Community Corner for links to more information on topics in this article, and photos from recent council outreach activities:

[www.bit.ly/CommCornerMay](http://www.bit.ly/CommCornerMay)

**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 19 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.*

**Board of Directors**

Pres.: Stephen Lewis - City of Seldovia

Vice Pres.: Walter Parker - Oil Spill Region Environmental Coalition

Secretary: Cathy Hart - Alaska Wilderness Recreation and Tourism

Treasurer: Sherri Buretta - Chugach Alaska Corporation

John Allen - Community of Tatitlek

Board position vacant - City of Cordova

Al Burch - Kodiak Island Borough

Pat Duffy - Alaska State Chamber of Commerce

Jane Eisemann - City of Kodiak

Patience Andersen Faulkner - Cordova District Fishermen United

John S. French - City of Seward

Marilynn Heddell - City of Whittier

Blake Johnson - Kenai Peninsula Borough

Board position vacant - Community of Chenega Bay

Iver Malutin - Kodiak Village Mayors Association

Thane Miller - Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corporation

Dorothy M. Moore - City of Valdez

Diane Selanoff - Port Graham Corporation

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