

# THE OBSERVER

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## Two new ExxonMobil tankers expected to begin service in the Sound in 2014

SeaRiver Maritime, the marine shipping arm of ExxonMobil, announced in late July plans for construction of two new crude oil tankers. Construction is to begin in 2012 and the new vessels are expected to begin service in Prince William Sound during 2014.

"All cargo and fuel compartments will be equipped with double hull protection. Both vessels will feature the latest in navigation and communications equipment. Main engine and auxiliary systems will be energy efficient and generate lower air emissions than what is required by current regulatory standards," according to a July 25 press release from the company.

These ships will be among the first U.S. oil tankers built to meet specifications in the Common Structural Rules for Oil Tankers. These rules were developed in 2006 by the three biggest ship classification societies, the American Bureau of Shipping, Norway's Det Norske Veritas, and the U.K.'s Lloyd's Register. Ship classification societies are non-governmental organizations that establish and maintain technical standards for the construction and operation of ships and offshore structures. The 2006 rules combined best practices of these three societies into one commonly accepted set of rules.

The new ExxonMobil ships will be designed

to withstand operations in the North Pacific for a minimum of twenty-five years without suffering hull metal fatigue. Previous standards used by the company were based on a twenty year design life. The new tankers are designed to carry 730,000 barrels of oil, which is about 12 percent less than the vessels they will be replacing, the Kodiak and Sierra, which were built in the late 1970's.

The new ships will be driven by a single slow-speed diesel engine and will have an oil mist and gas detection system for the space between the double hulls. This system will detect the presence of these flammable materials and help prevent fires from occurring aboard the vessels. While the ships will not be constructed with double propellers, engines, or rudders, a SeaRiver representative indicated the design does include other navigational and propulsion redundancies. Specifically, SeaRiver has tried to eliminate the possibility of single points of failure leading to loss of power or navigational failure. This will include items like the inclusion of redundant engine cooling water, installation of additional low fuel level alarms and increasing the reliability of things like fuel flow meters.

See page 7, **NEW TANKERS**

## Cordova group petitions to support citizen oversight council for trans-Alaska pipeline

Cordova's Copper River Watershed Project is circulating a petition advocating for an independent citizen oversight council for the trans-Alaska pipeline.

The organization's overall mission is to provide residents with a forum to consider and implement innovative approaches for achieving balance between a diverse economy and healthy ecosystems while maintaining quality of life and cultural heritage.

One of the group's projects over the last few

years has been to promote the idea of a citizen oversight council for the pipeline, similar to the councils for crude oil operations in Prince William Sound and Cook Inlet. In 2009, after several pipeline explosions in the Lower 48, the organization received a \$48,000 grant from the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration to study the feasibility of a council for the Alaska pipeline.

See page 7, **TRANS-ALASKA PIPELINE**

## Council book about Exxon Valdez spill used in Wisconsin college classroom

By **MARIANNE UNGER**  
Adjunct Professor of Sociology  
Carthage College

At Carthage College in Kenosha, Wisconsin, students in my Adult Education class "Alaskan Settlers" find themselves especially fortunate to have access to "THE SPILL: Personal Stories from the Exxon Valdez Disaster," which was produced by the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council.

This book opens the doorway to understanding the impact of the Exxon Valdez



Marianne Unger

See page 7, **THE SPILL**

## Alaskan students learn protection and stewardship of Sound

Two 2011 summer programs emphasized stewardship and protection of the unique ecology present in Alaskan waters.

Read more about the lessons teens from the Copper River basin learned during their trip to Wrangell St Elias and Prince William Sound on page 2, and high school students from Valdez visit Kachemak Bay on page 5.



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

### INSIDE THE OBSERVER

Committee volunteer's childhood experience with Lake Erie pollution inspires career, p. 2



Council staffer appointed to state boating safety council, p. 4

Educating Alaska's youth is key to future of Sound, p. 2

Mark Swanson: The merits of increased transparency in spill response p. 3



Swanson appointed to Valdez Ports and Harbor Commission, p. 4

Committee support in Valdez office changes hands, p. 4

Alyeska: Stewardship of Sound important to new SERVS director, p. 3



Students study Alaska's coastal ecology and environment monitoring, p. 5

Community Corner: Out and about in the communities, p. 8

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## Science committee volunteer's childhood experience with Lake Erie pollution inspires career

Paula Martin, newest member of the council's Scientific Advisory Committee, clearly recalls the fish kills, the raw sewage and the pollution that in the 1960's infamously fouled the waters of Lake Erie near her childhood home in Buffalo, New York, spawning headlines such as "The lake is dead!"

"It was totally disgusting," Martin said. "It smelled and there were dead fish piled up to my waist along the shores."

"The Buffalo incident was very much a formative experience for me in terms of my interest in water quality."

This event early in her life inspired her to head to Berkeley, California for college. It was one of the few schools in the country that had a program in aquatic entomology, where she could study the use of insects as indicators of water quality.

After completing graduate work at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, Martin spent several years as a college professor and instructor.

Martin often used the case of the Exxon Valdez oil spill to spark conversations with her students about the benefits and disadvantages that come with different energy resource choices.

"The reality of accidents has to be part of the story when we think about the use of resources because those accidents can have dramatic impacts and can be difficult to prevent," Martin said.

"To try to plan for energy policies or research using approaches that assume that we won't have accidents is probably not a good idea."

Martin led and helped establish environ-

mental science programs at universities in Pennsylvania and Georgia, before moving to Alaska in 2007. She is now the Assistant Director for Academic Affairs at the Kenai Peninsula College in Soldotna.

Martin said she loves living in Alaska, which she describes as, "absolutely the most amazing place to live when you are interested in the environment, because the environment here is still pretty intact compared to the Lower 48."

"I really enjoy my work with the council because a big part of the mission is to try to protect that environment."

"One of the things I like about the council's approach is it gets the voice of the local community directly connected to the decision makers," Martin said, "so the citizens of Prince William Sound have a voice in what happens in their area. They may not have control over it at all times, but at least the council provides them a seat at the table."

Martin joined the council's science committee last year. "I have been quite impressed with the focus of the group on issues of particular importance not just for Prince William Sound, but that have applications globally," Martin said.

One example is the committee's interest in the use of chemical dispersants on oil-spills. The council has long had concerns about the use of dispersants and their effectiveness in Alaskan waters. After the unprecedented use of dispersants during 2010's spill in the Gulf of Mexico, which Martin said is becoming more common, interest in dispersant research has become even more of a priority.

"Not only has the group, over time, collected

a great deal of information about dispersants, but it is also looking to have that information brought up to date. The committee also wants to expand the studies to understand more about the effect of dispersants on ecosystems, particularly cold water ecosystems," Martin said.

Another area of interest for Martin is the science committee's work on aquatic nuisance species. These non-native species can travel from port to port in the ballast water that ships take on to help balance when they have no cargo, and by attaching themselves to the outside hulls of ships. Alaska has so far been spared the kinds of devastating invasions that have occurred elsewhere, but it may be only a matter of time before the state's waters are successfully invaded by a harmful new species, threatening valuable native species such as commercial fish. The council has been part of a collaborative effort with the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center and the San Francisco State University to monitor for non-native tunicates and to study changes in native marine invertebrate populations.

"Alaska has shipping, those ships come from all over the world, and things get transported," Martin said. "Having some monitoring going on so there is a chance for fast response is a good thing."



Paula Martin

## Educating Alaska's youth is key to future of Sound

By **BRUCE JAMES**  
Executive Director  
Wrangell Institute for Science & Environment

History is a mandatory part of high school curriculums to educate students how civilization has developed and to learn from past mistakes. As the often repeated phrase goes, "Failure to understand history will doom you to repeat it."

Over twenty years after the Exxon Valdez, we now have an entire generation of youths that did not live through the tragedy. As they finish their education, they will begin to take management positions that could have significant impact in a similar disaster. Educating this new generation

is one of the keys to preventing another disaster.

Wrangell Institute for Science and Environment has taken on that challenge. Along with our partners, the National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, Prince William Sound Science Center and the Copper River Watershed Project, we have annually conducted the Copper River Stewardship Program. This educational event takes ten youths from the area on a ten day exploration of the watershed, discovering the unique environment we live in and the threats to it. Our hope is to encourage this new generation to become the stewards of this land in the future.

Each year our program has focused on different parts of the Copper River area. In 2011, the key places were McCarthy, Valdez and Cordova. While in McCarthy, we learned about the special geology that created the fabulous copper deposits of Kennecott and the misunderstood mosaic of land ownership in the basin. The multitude of



Participants found coho smolt, Dolly Varden and a sculpin in the minnow traps they set along the McCarthy Road. All photos courtesy of Copper River Stewardship 2011 team.

different owners complicates the management of the one resource that transcends all the boundaries, our rich runs of Pacific salmon. In Cordova, the program looked at the commercial fishery and related research and then spent some time in the delta, hiking and canoeing in the Chugach National Forest.

The highlight in Valdez for the students (and chaperones!) was the Columbia Glacier cruise. Stan Stephens took us through Columbia Bay and the Sound, pointing out the incredibly rich ecosystem that was impacted by the Exxon Valdez disaster. Included in the tour was visual evidence of the damage and a discussion about the oil that still remains unaccounted for today. The students were impressed with the diversity of the wildlife and expressed concern for its protection from another catastrophe.



Participants hold a chunk of ice aboard the Stan Stephens Columbia Glacier cruise.



The National Park Service staff explain the history of the mines during the students' tour of Kennecott.

See page 6, **EDUCATION**

From the Executive Director

## The merits of increased transparency in spill response

As seen in the BP Deepwater Horizon incident in the Gulf of Mexico last year, Exxon-Mobil's pipeline spill in Montana this summer, and again with Shell's recent spill in the North Sea, the public expects reasonable transparency when disclosing the magnitude of oil spills and the scope and progress of spill response efforts.

In each case, the amount of oil spilled was calculated by the party responsible for the spill and the industry and government response effort was sized to reflect these estimates. Each time, the responsible party initially dramatically underestimated the spill size and the potential environmental impacts.

Nobody likes bad news, but industry's trivializing and significantly underestimating the magnitude and consequences of a problem it has caused doesn't engender public confidence. Estimating spill volumes can be extremely challenging, but, when public access to information and local community participation in spill response efforts are severely limited, it exacerbates mistrust.

**"Public trust requires regulatory independence and transparency in disclosing the size of the problem and how the public's interests are being protected."**

We live in an environment of readily available cameras and electronic communications. Any significant visible disconnect between reality and what is reported is captured and becomes newsworthy. The public and media outcry is loud and predictable, but, with a few tweaks to the incident management process, it could be prevented. Retired U.S. Coast Guard Admiral Thad Allen, national incident commander for the response to the Gulf spill, has publicly lamented what he called the "social and political nullification of the National Response Plan" during that response. (The National Response Plan, which grew out of the federal Oil Pollution Act of 1990,

establishes a nationwide framework for dealing with oil spills.)

The public isn't keen to see the government eagerly "partnering" with an oil industry entity that doesn't appear particularly trustworthy or competent at the moment of an ongoing oil spill. But that's exactly what the National Response Plan calls for.

It is only right that the party responsible for the spill should mount and fund an appropriately robust clean up. But it is not acceptable that industry should visibly lead the response, appear to be unchallenged when informing, or potentially misinforming, regulators and the public on how serious a spill is, and then restrict public access to reports of damage and spill response information.

Firing back at a skeptical media and public with statistics like miles of boom and the numbers of boats and people deployed comes across as a smoke screen and doesn't really answer the questions that often need answering. Faced with this scenario earlier this year, Montana's governor removed his representatives from the Unified Command, the spill response management team made up of the government and the responsible party. Public trust requires regulatory independence and transparency in disclosing the size of the problem and how the public's interests are being protected.

In Alaska, I'm happy to report, we have a relatively high level of transparency during oil-spill responses. The Department of Environmental Conservation takes part in the Unified Command. The department establishes a real-time public website where summaries of the spill size estimate, descriptions of the actions taken, and goals of the response team are posted. This information is the guts of what is called an "Incident Action Plan." This information-sharing model seems to work and promote public trust. Years later, one can still go back and see how, at any point in an Alaskan spill response, the folks working in the public's interest understood the magnitude of the problem and organized

their response efforts.

In an era of limited public funding and an increasingly complex oil industry with offshore and underground operations, it is difficult for governments and regulators to have the expertise to independently verify industry estimates of spill severity and impact and to direct appropriate spill response efforts with transparency. Allowing industry to make many of the estimates and drive many of the "who gets what information" decisions during a spill response under the umbrella of the Unified Command further erodes public trust and is not in the long term interests of the public, the government, or of industry.

Alaska's model of state-directed transparency in incident response and the federally mandated citizen stakeholder involvement in oil spill prevention and response for Alaska's Cook Inlet and Prince William Sound, put in place after the Exxon Valdez spill of 1989, are good models that address these recurring transparency and public trust issues.

With the national media reporting that trust in our oil industry and our government is at historic lows, hindering the safe and environmentally responsible development of our natural resources, isn't it time to learn from past disasters and improve how effectively we prevent and respond to future spills by maximizing transparency and accountability to the public? • Mark Swanson is executive director of the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council



Mark Swanson

From Alyeska Pipeline

## Stewardship of Sound important to new SERVVS director

By **ANDRES MORALES**  
Director of Ship Escort Response Vessel System

Last fall, I was offered and accepted an opportunity to be interim Director at the Ship Escort and Response Vessel System (SERVVS). As many of you know, this is a challenging job and is supported by a high-quality, dedicated team. When the job was offered to me officially in July, I did not hesitate to accept. I am excited by the job, the mission, and the team.

**"Like members of the council, we live here, our families live here, and we want to make sure it is here for future generations."**

A little background about me: I've worked in Prince William Sound for more than twenty years, and alongside the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council many of those years. As general manager with Crowley Marine, I collaborated with the council on many marine safety issues. I joined Alyeska in 2000, and worked in the Oil Movements and Storage and the Maintenance departments at the Valdez

Marine Terminal. In these roles, I helped provide the council with information on operations and maintenance at the Terminal.

We have a world-class response operation here in Prince William Sound. As SERVVS director, I want to ensure we continue to use the most effective methods of response available. We're looking at lessons learned from other spills, such as the one in the Gulf of Mexico. The council has been active in producing independent research on these spill-related issues. Moving forward, I want to make sure this information is captured and applied appropriately.

I am personally committed to open communications with the council, and all stakeholders in Prince William Sound. Along with Scott Hicks, the new Valdez Marine Terminal director, I'll be meeting with Mark Swanson on a regular basis to discuss current and ongoing issues and concerns. I'm also looking forward to continued input on drills, exercises and other activities of mutual interest. Independent, constructive analysis of our operations is valuable, and I believe it makes us a better organization.

My very first job on a tanker brought me into Port Valdez, and since 1995 I've called it home. Prince William Sound was and is the most beau-

tiful place I have ever sailed into.

I have great respect for the mission of the council. Indeed, we share the same goal: Safely transporting crude oil through the Sound and protecting this special ecosystem we call home. This stewardship is on the minds of everyone at Alyeska and nowhere more than here at SERVVS. Like members of the council, we live here, our families live here, and we want to make sure it is here for future generations. There is tremendous common ground between us, and I look forward to bringing new energy and focus to our relationship.



Andres Morales



## Council staffer appointed to state boating safety council

Alan Sorum, a Valdez project manager for the citizens' council, was recently appointed by Alaska Governor Parnell to a seat on the Boating Safety Advisory Council.

The boating safety council consists of seven Alaska boaters appointed "on the basis of interest in public affairs, knowledge of boating issues as they relate to both safety and water of the state, and good judgment and ability concerning boating safety," according to the website of Alaska Department of Natural Resources' Office of Boating Safety.



Alan Sorum

The council supports the department by reviewing and recommending boating safety educational materials and proposed boating regulations, considering regional boating safety needs and promoting boating safety education programs throughout the state. It also advises the department on state, regional, and national boating issues.

"We're delighted and proud that Alan's been appointed to the governor's boating safety council," said Mark Swanson, executive director of the council, "it's a privilege to have someone of his caliber and credibility on our staff to help monitor and advise on safe port and tanker operations in Prince William Sound."

## Council is inviting proposals for educational projects related to mission

Teachers, students and educational groups, are you looking for a partner in a new or ongoing educational program?

The council is inviting proposals for projects to educate students in the Exxon Valdez oil spill region about the council and topics relating to its mission.

Proposed topics could include, but are not limited to: citizen oversight; environmental impacts of the operation of the Alyeska Pipeline Service Company terminal in Valdez and the oil tankers that call there; oil spill prevention and

response planning; or other topics related to the council's mission.

Funds may be awarded to any student or educational group within the Exxon Valdez oil spill region. Projects or activities must relate to council's mission and responsibilities. Limited funding is available, therefore funds will be awarded to those proposals deemed most relevant to the mission of the council. The successful proposer will provide a direct link to our mission and will provide a tangible product, such as a report, article or lesson plan.

Past and ongoing projects have included funding for:

- Alaska Geographic's Sound Stories: <http://bit.ly/SoundStories>
- Prince William Sound Science Center's Ocean Science and Learning Expedition: <http://bit.ly/OSLEarticle>
- Green Crab Monitoring
- Travel for students to present at the council's annual Science Night: <http://bit.ly/ScienceNight>
- Students to attend the Youth Eco Forum and the Classrooms for Climate symposium
- Wrangell Institute for Science and Environment's Copper River Stewardship program. (Page 2 of this issue of The Observer)

The next deadline for submissions will be in December 2011. For more information on this funding opportunity, please contact the council's Outreach Coordinator Linda Robinson: [robinson@pwsr-cac.org](mailto:robinson@pwsr-cac.org)



JiYeon Im, Valdez High School student, holds a sea urchin found on a class trip sponsored by the council in 2009. Photo by Jenny Heckathorn.

**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 staffer Amanda Johnson.

## Swanson appointed to Valdez Ports and Harbor Commission

Mark Swanson, the council's executive director has been appointed to Valdez's Ports and Harbor Commission.

The commission advises the Valdez City Council by studying and recommending policies relating to the city's port and harbor and transportation. The commission looks at issues such as development, design, operation and maintenance of the Valdez port, airport, small boat harbor, and others.

The commission consists of seven members appointed by the mayor of Valdez for three year terms.

"Mark's background in naval architecture and marine engineering, along with his experience in Prince William Sound, makes him a good candidate for examining issues at the harbor and making recommendations to the City of Valdez," said Dorothy Moore, member of the Valdez City Council and president of the citizens' council.

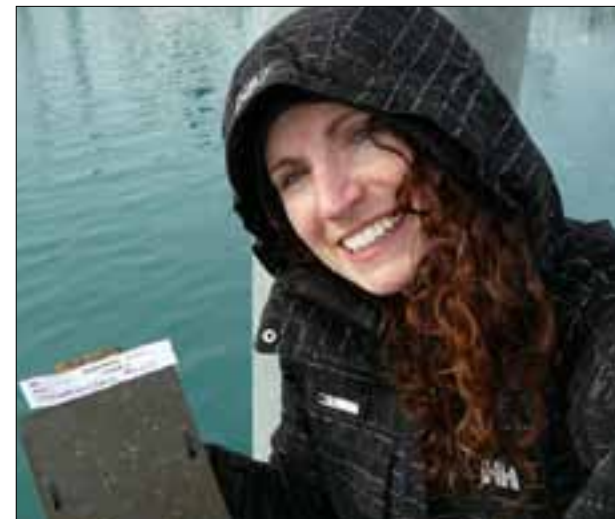


Mark Swanson

## Committee support in Valdez office changes hands

Long time staffer Jacquelyn Kennedy left the citizens' council staff in May of this year. Kennedy started work with the council in May 2006 as the Valdez project manager assistant. She provided support to project managers and Terminal Operations and Environmental Monitoring and Port Operations and Vessel Traffic Systems Committee volunteers and their projects.

Kennedy assisted with tunicate monitoring efforts in Valdez as part of a larger project conducted by the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center. Tunicate monitoring consists of deploying a brick with an attached plate into the water column, letting it sit for three months, and then documenting and photographing any organisms that have attached themselves to the plate. Plates are deployed at various times throughout the year at the Valdez Marine Terminal, the container dock, and the small boat harbor. Kennedy also assisted with green crab monitoring



Kennedy holds a tunicate monitoring plate that had been deployed for the previous three months. Photo by Jeremy Robida.

efforts in Valdez and helped with outreach and education presentations in the Valdez schools.

Taking her place is Anna Carey, a native of Wisconsin. Carey studied biology at the University of Wisconsin Eau Claire and holds a Masters in Environmental Science from the University of Idaho. Carey started working with the council in May of this year.



Right: Anna Carey. Below: Valdez council staff, committee and board members gathered in May to wish Kennedy farewell. Photo by Jeremy Robida.



## Students study Alaska's coastal ecology and environment monitoring

By JENNY HECKATHORN  
Biology Teacher  
Valdez High School

Thanks to funding from the citizens' council, fifteen students in my second year biology class from Valdez High School attended a three day, two night Alaska Coastal Ecology program held at Peterson Bay Field Station near Homer this past April. The students had been studying marine biology and learning monitoring techniques to help monitor our local port for invasive aquatic species.

The "Homer trip," as it has been popularly called, has become a favorite for many students even though it is academically rigorous and physically taxing.

Upon arrival in Homer, the students were greeted by Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies' staff members and boarded the Rainbow Connection, our water-taxi. On the way to Peterson Bay, students were treated to the sight of a large male sea lion feasting on halibut right off the dock in the boat harbor, and got an up-close view and smell of Gull Island's seabirds before arriving at the field station. Beautiful early spring weather allowed the students to gather around the large fire pit for the orientation, rules, and expectations for the next few days.

After settling into their yurts, students donned snowshoes for a forest ecology hike. Students witnessed an area of forest recovering from a spruce bark beetle attack and learned how some trees were able to survive. After dinner, students explored the unique geology of



Jenny Heckathorn and student Lacey Albright on a monitoring field trip for invasive species.

Peterson Bay and several tide pools.

The next morning, students were out the door early to hike to China Poot Bay for tide pooling activities and to conduct a survey of aquatic species found during low tide. This type of survey is done from the high tide line to low tide line, and shows where and how many marine invertebrates currently live in that area. Students were amazed by the incredible diversity of intertidal invertebrates including colorful sponges, chitons, Christmas anemones, decorator crabs, green urchins, sea stars, and octopus.

Once the tide came in, students were split into two groups. One group learned about the geology of the area through activities and games designed to demonstrate the rock cycle and movement of the earth's crust. The other group visited an Alaska Native Dena'ina house site, held artifacts and imagined what it would be like to live and subsist on the coast of Kachemak Bay.

After hiking back to the field station, students completed a biodiversity check-list, which included of all the species identified during the tide pooling session and analyzed and discussed the species survey. Students realized just how unique this area is compared to Valdez and other coastal areas in Alaska.

In the afternoon, the students split into groups for the afternoon marine ecology stations. Students collected plankton using a special finely meshed net, then observed and identified the organisms using compound light microscopes and dissection scopes.

After learning about plankton, students were then challenged to design their own plankton in a competition to see who could achieve "negative buoyancy" or the ability to hover in the water column. Pieces of sponge, washers, toothpicks, and yarn were the building materials used to build the plankton and a large aquarium tank provided the "ocean" for testing. After dinner, students got time to relax around

a campfire and roast marshmallows.

Students woke early the next morning to be packed before a hike to Otter Rock for another intertidal discovery experience during low tide and were accompanied by marine biologist Conrad Fields.

Fields talked to the students about the wonders of marine biology, recent discoveries, biomimicry (the examination of nature for inspiration to solve human problems), and reasons for studying marine biology as a career. He then helped students discover and identify organisms in the intertidal zone. Once again, students were amazed by the extreme diversity of marine life, finding species different from those discovered in China Poot Bay.

After hiking back to the field station, students added the new species to the biodiversity checklist and were amazed to discover that they had found almost 90 different species!

Later that morning, students were divided up into teams and challenged to make up an imaginary marine invertebrate. Students were given household objects such as fly swatters, wire whisks, colanders, sheets, and safety glasses. While one person was dressed as the invertebrate, teams also had to

The Information and Education Committee saw this as a great opportunity to teach students about Alaska's coastal ecology and for them to learn about various monitoring methods. Awareness of these issues is vital for the future protection of these important resources, to encourage students to consider protection of the environment in their future lives and careers.

-Patience Andersen Faulkner, committee chair, and member of the council's board of directors



Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies staff member (right) demonstrates the starfish's ability to grab arm hair on student Nick Fischer. All photos by Jenny Heckathorn.

decide how their invertebrate lived, what they ate, and how they reproduced. Students, Center staff, and chaperones laughed until they had tears in their eyes while presenting their "Invent-an-Invert".

After lunch, students cleaned their yurts and the field station and said good-byes to the wonderful staff members from the coastal studies center before departing on the long trip home.

I would like to thank the citizens' council for funding this opportunity for my students to experience a program like this at virtually no cost to themselves. And kudos to my chaperone, Rob Johnson, who also endured the more than 10 hours and 1,000 miles of driving from Valdez to Homer and back.



Student Michael Smith standing on the rock strata during the geology activity.

## Council Board Meetings

The citizens' council board of directors meets three times annually. The January meeting is held in Anchorage, the May meeting in Valdez, and the September meeting is rotated between the other communities affected by the Exxon Valdez oil spill. This September's meeting will be held in Kenai.

Here is the tentative board meeting schedule for the coming year:

January 20-21, 2012: Anchorage

May 3-4, 2012: Valdez

September 13-14, 2012: Seward

Board meetings are open to public, and an opportunity for the public to provide comments is provided at the beginning of each meeting. Agendas and other meeting materials are available on the council web site at [www.pwsr-cac.org/about/boardintro.html](http://www.pwsr-cac.org/about/boardintro.html). Or, contact either council office: Anchorage, 907-277-7222, or Valdez, 907-834-5000.



Members of the citizens' council's board of directors stand outside the Seldovia Conference Center in September 2010. Each September, the council holds a public meeting in a different community affected by the Exxon Valdez oil spill. Photo by Amanda Johnson.



# EDUCATION: Key to future environmental protection of Sound

Continued from page 2

The next day we visited the Valdez salmon hatchery and learned about the incredible run of pink salmon that call the Sound home, then to Ship Escort Response Vessel System, or SERVS, to be introduced to the changes to tanker operations in the Sound since 1989. Then it was on to the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council to meet with their staff and learn some background of the disaster and the council's mission to help prevent reoccurrence. Our final stop on that busy June day was the Coast Guard station that monitors tanker traffic travelling through Valdez Arm and the Sound.

Overall, the 2011 edition of our Copper River Stewardship Program

was a smashing success. The students were exposed to many issues in the area that threaten our fabulous resources and what is being done to minimize those hazards. We would like to thank our many sponsors and partners that have made this year's program possible. Specifically, the citizens' council's Youth Involvement program was instrumental in funding most of the Valdez portion of the trip to allow this important story to be told. It is our hope that through educational programs such as this trip, the next generation of leaders will take on the challenges our environment faces in the years to come.

For more information on the Copper River Stewardship Program and other Institute programs, visit [www.wise.edu.org](http://www.wise.edu.org).



At SERVS the stewardship team learned about tanker escorts in the Sound.



Mark Swanson discusses the council's mission with the Copper River Stewardship team over lunch.



The team was impressed with the Coast Guard's commitment to safety during their visit to the Coast Guard station.

## 2011 Marine Firefighting Symposium

Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council is sponsoring the **6th Land-based Marine Firefighting Symposium** in Valdez, Alaska, October 4-6, 2011.



Through this program, 50-75 firefighters and responders from Prince William Sound and other Alaska coastal communities will be provided hands-on classroom and field training opportunities that are tailored for the challenges faced in Alaska.

Topics include: shipboard basics, cruise ship awareness, fire plans and ships crew coordination, politics of a marine incident, and more.

Classes will be a mix of hands-on training and classroom lectures.

Contact Project Manager Alan Sorum for more information about the event:  
907.834.5020 or  
[alan.sorum@pwsrccac.org](mailto:alan.sorum@pwsrccac.org)



Thank you to the generous sponsors of the 2011 Marine Firefighting Symposium!



# TRANS-ALASKA PIPELINE: Cordova group petitions for support for citizen oversight

Continued from page 1

The organization is suggesting a council consisting of "chapters," with each chapter responsible for overseeing the pipeline in a specific watershed.

"Each geographic segment of the pipeline corridor deals with different geographic conditions, and working in chapters would enable the sub-groups to address those specific conditions," said Kate Alexander, project and membership coordinator for the group. "For example, the North Slope deals with permafrost and the southern chapters would deal more with seismic activity."

The organization has a working mission, a modified version of the Prince William Sound council's mission: "Citizens promoting the safe transportation of oil and gas from the North Slope to Valdez."

"We plan to draw largely on Alaska's existing councils' experiences and lessons," said Alexander.

The group is proposing to use the southern-most segment, the Copper River watershed, as a pilot run for the other chapters.

The petition is addressed to the U.S. Senate, U.S. House of Representatives, the U.S. Congress, U.S. Senators Lisa Murkowski and Mark Begich, Rep. Ed Markey of Massachusetts, Alaska State Senator Johnny Ellis, President of Alyeska Pipeline Company Thomas Barrett, and Alyeska Corporate Communication Director Michelle Egan. The group is asking for passage of legislation that authorizes and funds independent citizen oversight for the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System.

The Copper River organization said it is concerned about recent leaks and spills and worries that major spills are more likely due to an aging pipeline and issues associ-

ated with low flow.

Less oil has been flowing through the pipeline in recent years, from a maximum of 2.1 million barrels per day in the 80's to about 570,000 barrels today. According to a recent study done by Alyeska Pipeline Service Co., which operates the pipeline and the Valdez tanker terminal, issues such as water separating from the oil and freezing, wax buildup, and damaging frost heaves can result from the lower flow of oil.

The pipeline crosses five major tributaries of the Copper River. The organization fears that a break in the line near any of these rivers could send oil into the Copper River before an effective cleanup effort could get going. A study done by the organization projected that a spill in the Copper River watershed could travel 23 miles downriver in six hours, which is Alyeska's estimated spill response time.

The Prince William Sound citizens' council does not oversee the pipeline, as its purview is limited to the oil terminal in Valdez and the tankers that use it. However, the council has always supported the concept of citizen oversight wherever a major industrial project could threaten the environment.

"The pipeline poses risks to Alaska's environment and economy similar to those from the terminal and tankers in Prince William Sound," said Mark Swanson, executive director of the council. "In fact, spills from the southern section of the pipeline could actually carry oil into the Sound. So we think citizen oversight for the pipeline is a great idea and encourage similarly concerned citizens to sign the petition."

Sen. Mark Begich said that, when it comes to the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System, the Joint Pipeline Office is a unique entity bringing all

state and federal agencies together. He said he will always listen to Alaskans and get their ideas, but is not promoting changes to existing oversight at this time.

"I appreciate the value of citizen involvement at the local level and have supported the existing regional citizens' advisory councils," Sen. Mark Begich said. "I've also proposed updated funding for them, along with stronger citizen involvement in Arctic outer continental shelf development."

"We know Alaskans are interested in our operation, especially given its importance to the state's economy. We encourage citizen input to Alyeska through numerous existing channels," said Michelle Egan, Alyeska's Director of Corporate Communications.

A link to the petition can be found on the Copper River Watershed Project's website: [www.copperriver.org](http://www.copperriver.org). 343 members of the public had signed it as of early September.

## THE SPILL: Lessons learned in college classroom

Continued from page 1

disaster of 1989, which many of my students recall. By inviting students into the lives and concerns of people who live about the area of Prince William Sound, this book creates awareness in students of what the people really went through, as livelihoods and life changed overnight.

This book demonstrates that, while people may suffer trials and tribulations, their spirit can pull them together. THE SPILL tells stories of courageous people, of hardship and hope, with hope triumphing in the end.

I ask my students to write reflections on six persons whose experience of the Exxon Valdez disaster appear in the book: two professionals such as journalists, sociologists, or civic leaders; two Alaska Natives, and two individuals whose narratives appeal to them in a special way. Before the class ends, they share who they chose to write about. This way, we get a good cross-section of people and their personal experiences.

While reading THE SPILL, students watch Dr. Riki Ott's film, "Black Wave." People of the Sound who appear in the film also share their experiences more pointedly in THE SPILL. This book really puts the face of reality on the whole event. Doing the reading and the watching at the same time shows how a community that relies on the connections among its members and on its threatened renewable resources pulls together in order to survive.

Patience Andersen Faulkner has been our teleconference speaker. Students anticipate this event, pre-

paring questions that they want to ask her. The questions can be about Alaska Native life or about one of the multiple facets of the Exxon Valdez disaster. The students enjoy talking with Patience and truly appreciate her knowledge; I do too.

Patience recommended, in the spirit of "potlatch", that THE SPILL be recycled. So when the class is done, each student writes a short reflection in his or her copy of the book. I collect the books at our potlatch and pass them on to the next group of students.

Potlatching has become a sort of closing event at final sessions of this class. I take care to make certain that students understand that this event is this to honor the Alaska Native heritage. We smudge with white sage, we have a fire, and students bring Alaskan Native foods, which include pilot bread, berries, nuts, venison jerky, and smoked salmon roll.

Nature permitting, this event occurs outdoors on the shores of Lake Michigan. I usually read names from an honor roll—people who helped with the oil spill, and significant persons who contribute to advancing respect and honor for Alaska Native culture.

We light candles in a talking circle fashion and each student reads a paragraph of his or her own, often relating to the Exxon Valdez spill. Patience gives us her time (and sometimes hand-made goodies, too) and each class fashions something to send her.

So I continue to learn with my students and we enjoy a pleasant, reciprocal relationship with Cordova, Valdez, and all of Prince William Sound.

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**Community Corner**

**Out and about in the communities**

By **LINDA ROBINSON**

Council Outreach Coordinator

The Port Graham Corporation is the newest member entity of the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council. Diane Selanoff is their representative on our board of directors. This past July 29 and 30, executive director Mark Swanson and I visited Port Graham to discuss oil response and prevention issues with the corporation's board of directors and Lloyd Stiasny, president and CEO of the corporation.

On the first day of our visit, the village's annual Celebration of Life was going on. It included day-long family oriented activities and a Native food cook-off. Board member Diane Selanoff was one of the lucky judges! That evening the English Bay Band played at a community gathering. On Saturday, we participated in the corporation's board meeting. We were met with many questions and much interest in the council and our activities. We are looking forward to continuing to communicate with this member organization, and with Diane Selanoff and Lloyd Stiasny, to respond to some of their concerns about spill response and other oil related issues.

Port Graham, a mostly Alutiiq community of about 177 people, predates the Russians who arrived in the 1700s. Residents live primarily a subsistence lifestyle. Port Graham is located southwest of Seldovia, is next to Nanwalek, and is only accessible by plane or boat. A cannery was built in 1911 but burned in 1960. It was rebuilt in 1968 and sold to the village corporation. In 1998 the hatchery and cannery were again destroyed by fire. They were rebuilt again but are currently not in use. There is one school with approximately 20 students, and there is also a health clinic.

In Whittier, Marilyn Heddell, who

represents the city on the citizens' council board, assisted Mark Swanson in hosting a lunch for Whittier's mayor, interim city manager, harbormaster and public works director on August 19. The purpose was to update the city on council issues and to see if they had any concerns. Any communities that wish to discuss concerns or interests to the council are welcome to contact me and I can arrange informational meetings in your community.



Linda Robinson

**Education kit available**

We have received an educational kit from the Kachemak Bay Research Reserve called "Could it Happen Here? Coastal Mapping & Oil Spill Response Activities for Grades 4-7." This kit was used in April for a discovery day lab in Homer and is a multi-station kit that demonstrates habitat mapping, oil spill response activity, and marine animal rescue. This kit will be available for loan to teachers in our region. Requests for council staff to bring the kit and assist with the presentations can be sent to me. And remember that we have two other curriculums on our website.

**Volunteers needed!**

We are again looking for volunteers to sit on our committees. Committees include Information and Education; Port Operations and Vessel Traffic Systems; Oil Spill Prevention and Response; Terminal Operations and Environmental Monitoring; and Scientific Advisory. Please contact me if you are interested in joining one of our committees.



Above: Old pier at Port Graham. Below: Approaching scenic Port Graham from the air.

Photos 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 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.*

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