

# THE OBSERVER

January 2012 Volume 22, No.1

A publication of the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council

## Council conducts audit of maintenance procedures at Valdez Marine Terminal

Oil spills along the Alyeska pipeline in 2009 and 2010, along with other less-reported issues at the terminal, have been attributed to underlying maintenance problems. These issues raised concern among the council's board of directors. In response to these concerns, in September of 2010, the council approved a project to verify that maintenance commitments at Valdez Marine Terminal were being identified and met by the current procedures.

The council contracted with two former Alyeska employees with extensive experience with Alyeska's maintenance system, Dan Hisey and Darryl Hammond. Hisey — formerly chief operating officer for Alyeska, Hammond — formerly a maintenance program lead with Alyeska, and council staff spent several months in early 2011 reviewing the procedures. Alyeska cooperated fully, allowing the contractors access to its systems and providing staff support to facilitate the process.

The project's goal was to conduct a very straightforward vertical audit of Alyeska's

maintenance management practices of its oil-handling assets.

The audit report found that Alyeska's maintenance processes have become overly complex and complicated. Many of the problems highlighted in the report stem from the use of Passport, the computer software Alyeska uses to manage its maintenance tasks. The overall maintenance management system and associated computer software no longer provide a clear process for the generation, assignment, execution, and tracking of maintenance tasks. The report found that the system relies too heavily on a very few people who know in-depth how the maintenance software systems work.

Alyeska's senior management received briefings on the audit, as did regulatory agencies with responsibilities for the terminal, and the staffs of Alaska's congressional delegation.

Alyeska's response to the auditing process has been open and receptive. Alyeska has begun

See page 6, **MAINTENANCE**

## Author documenting effects of oil spills on youth

By **KATE ASPEN GAVENUS**

Project director, Children of the Spills

Early in my work with Children of the Spills, one of those children—Micah Ess of Homer—affirmed the importance of sharing stories from the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill: "everybody has a different story with the spill, but it's nice to hear people who have similar stories ... a big component to my emotional suffering from [the spill] was kind of feeling a little bit alone."

And so, in search of these stories, I have followed the path of the oil to the communities of Cordova, Seldovia, Port Graham, Nanwalek, Kodiak and my own hometown of Homer. It is obvious that the oil affected these coastal places, forever changing ecosystems and economies, communities and kids.

Though only five at the time of the spill, Mike Mickelson of Cordova explains, "When people talk about the oil spill, my blood pressure rises ... it's almost like having someone or some family of people you know die, and there was just no conflict resolution."

Ess understands this sense of loss. Twelve at the time of the spill, he spent most of his summers trapping shrimp on his family's houseboat in a remote part of Prince William Sound. The trip from Homer to their houseboat following the spill was unnaturally quiet. He saw only a few of the animals he had come to know as childhood friends. The biggest shock was to find the houseboat full of oily material stored

See page 6, **CHILDREN**



Small teams of attendees work together to haul fire hose into the lower level of the vessel Emerald Isle and to rescue a "victim" during the 2011 Marine Firefighting Symposium, hosted by the council October 4-6 in Valdez. For more about this event, see pages 4-5. Photo by Amanda Johnson.

## Annual oil spill drill held in Valdez in September

By **ROY ROBERTSON**

Council Project Manager

BP and the Alaska Tanker Company conducted the annual Prince William Sound Tanker Oil Discharge Prevention and Contingency Plan oil spill exercise over three days late last September.

The scenario for the drill imagined that a tanker, the Northern Dancer, ran aground on Zaikof Point at Hinchinbrook Entrance in Prince William Sound and that oil continued to leak from the tanker for seven days.

This annual drill tests the industry's ability to respond to an "809 Scenario." The scenario gets its name from the amount of oil the largest tanker that travels through the Sound can hold:

See page 6, **SPILL DRILL**

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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## New volunteer has variety of professional maritime experiences

Kari Anderson, newest member of the council's Port Operations and Vessel Traffic System Committee, has been immersed in Alaska's maritime culture her entire life.

Anderson grew up in Seward, and her family has been involved in the tugboat industry for several generations. She started working on boats in high school.

Anderson served the city of Seward as

harbormaster for the past three and half years, but recently decided that she missed working on vessels at sea. Last fall, she took a job with Raytheon Polar Services, and now works as a marine tech on research vessels in Antarctica.

On trips that last from six to eight weeks, she helps deploy oceanographic equipment, operates cranes and drives Zodiac inflatables to get cargo ashore to the permanent U.S. stations and remote field camps. She also helps with scientific research trips and logistical support for the research bases in the Antarctic.

"It's fun! It's challenging and a little bit dangerous at times," Anderson said, "but it's really great."

Prior to her time as Seward's harbormaster, Anderson was an instructor in the Alaska Vocational Technical School's Maritime Department for several years. She taught a variety of subjects including basic maritime safety and a standard cap-

tain's class called "master/mate," and helped develop the school's maritime curriculum.

"I've worked on tugs, I've worked on sailing ships, expedition yachts, research vessels, all sorts of different things, so I have a pretty varied background," Anderson said. "The majority of my time and experience has been in Alaska."

She also wrote a marine firefighting online course for the University of Alaska Southeast. With this background in marine safety, she is excited about the future of the council's Marine Firefighting Symposium.

"Fires at sea are one of the scariest things that can happen," Anderson said. "That coordination between the shipboard firefighters and the firefighters in the coastal communities is just critical and I don't think we all train enough together."

Anderson is also interested in improvements in the technology and research stemming from the citizens' council's ice radar project.

"That's what I do on a professional level, navigating through the ice in Antarctica and up here I've run sightseeing vessels and worked on tugs in Cook Inlet," she said, "There always seems to be ice wherever I'm working."

Anderson had nothing but good things to say about her experience so far with the committee and the council.

"It's a great committee to be on. I really like the discussions we've had about weather buoys and weather patterns," Anderson said. "All these things just sort of come together with my marine background, so it's fun to be a part of it."



Anderson poses for a photo just outside of Palmer Station, a permanent US base in Antarctica. Photo courtesy of Kari Anderson.

## Council expands online vessel monitoring system

By ALAN SORUM  
Council project manager

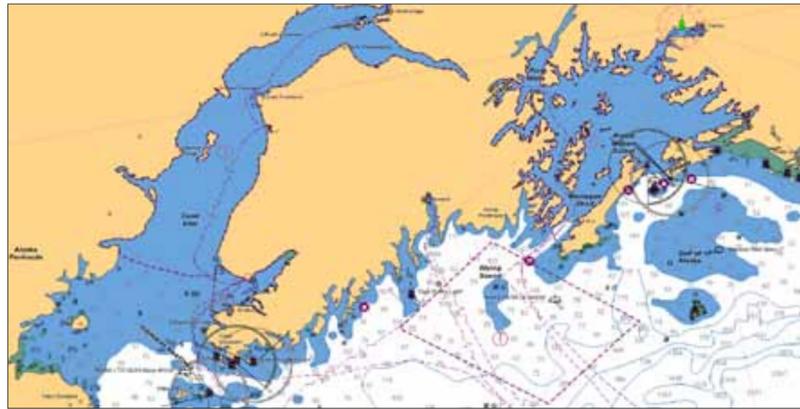
In 2006, the council acquired a vessel location monitoring technology known as Automatic Identification System that enabled the council to monitor tanker traffic in Prince William Sound. Recently the council expanded coverage to access the system's data for the waters of Cook Inlet.

Some tanker traffic moves from the Sound to terminals in Cook Inlet, namely the vessels operated by Tesoro. They often come in and out of the Sound carrying loads that can include diesel fuel, crude oil and jet fuel. Council staff is now able to monitor the activity of equipped vessels in all of South-central Alaska.

This vessel tracking system has transponders that receive and transmit vessel navigation information about marine vessels that is shown on electronic charts or radar displays. Each vessel equipped with the system and within range of its receiver broadcasts its name, position, speed over ground,

course, radio call sign, rate of turn and other data to the transponders. This technology was previously only available to the Coast Guard's Vessel Traffic Service facilities, but now operators of any vessel equipped with this system can access the information at the press of a button.

The type of signals used by this system can only transmit in a straight line and can't curve to match the earth's surface or obstructions like mountains. This limits the useful range of the system to less than 50 miles. One strategy used to circumvent this shortcoming has been employed by the Marine Exchange of Alaska. They installed receivers at key high points across Alaska and relay the data received



Screenshot of the Automatic Identification System showing Prince William Sound and Cook Inlet.

via the Internet to their office in Juneau.

The Marine Exchange broadcasts a feed of this navigational data to the Internet, making this available to organizations like the council, shippers and Coast Guard. Through this system, the council has been able to track tankers and other equipped vessels in Prince William Sound for several years.

Large monitors displaying navigational charts with the system's data are installed in the public areas of council offices in Anchorage and Valdez. Take some time during your next visit to see this safety technology in use.

The Automatic Identification System marks an excellent step forward helping vessels avoid collisions at sea.

## Subscribe to The Observer!

Want to keep up with the news about oil tankers, oil spill prevention and response, activities of the citizens' council, and other issues related to oil transportation in Alaska waters? Now you can receive The Observer through your mailbox or your inbox!

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From the Executive Director

## "Belt and suspenders" approach is needed for spill prevention

Twice in the month of December, Alaskans were very glad the Coast Guard was on scene and commercial rescue tugs were able to arrive in time to assist two commercial vessels with fuel aboard and in distress.

The week before Christmas, the tug Le Chavel Rouge made the save of a tug and fuel barge with over 2.5 million gallons of fuel aboard. The tug in distress, which incidentally was not required to be inspected by federal regulators even though it was pulling a barge loaded with millions of gallons of fuel, was having engine problems in rough weather east of Yakutat.

Two weeks earlier, another just-in-time save was orchestrated for a foreign-registered cargo ship carrying timber as cargo and bunker oil as fuel rendered temporarily helpless by busted hydraulics in the steering gear. It was finally taken in tow or repaired just a few miles from shore in the Aleutians. Alaskans owe a big thank-you to the rescue tugs and to the Coast Guard for both of these saves and for all the oil not on the beaches this Christmas!

Rescues are great if rescuers are around and available, but it's time for us all to get realistic about the near inevitability of maritime accidents where there is abundant maritime commerce. We also need to get realistic about the degree to which, in winter and darkness and bad weather, environmentally effectual spill response is largely an impossibility.

We simply cannot afford an accident we can't respond to and that is why we need LOTs of prevention—e.g., a "belt and suspenders" strategy.

Here are the response effectiveness problems as the citizens' council understands them:

First, responding to spills and other emergencies in Prince William Sound as well as most of Alaska's arctic and sub-arctic waters is very difficult, to such a degree that it can be quite confidently predicted to be almost entirely ineffectual in many seasons and common circumstances such as darkness, ice, bad weather, and remote locations.

Second, based upon years of hydrocarbon toxicity studies and human impact research we know that many near-shore maritime and shoreline species and human populations are very fragile and vulnerable to environmental disruption.

Third, we know that oil and other pollutants are significantly more persistent in colder regions, often remaining in the immediate environment for decades after a spill.

These three factors lead to the inevitable conclusion that the best environmental protection strategy in Prince William Sound as well as Alaska's arctic and sub-arctic regions is prevention rather than response. We need to be tireless in trying to improve response—and we have been—but we are just not there yet in terms of demonstrated response capability and not likely to get there any time soon.

Risk is a combination of probability and consequence. Given the persistence of pollutants, the frustrating ineffectuality of spill response, and the vulnerability of the environment and animal and human populations in these remote regions, we know the consequences of another major oil spill would be horrific. So, to reduce the probabilities of an accident, preventive measures over and above those employed in other regions are required and completely justified in order to reduce the risk of oil and gas activities in Prince William Sound and throughout Alaska to a level comparable with other well managed maritime regions and environments.

This "belt and suspenders" philosophy regarding prevention measures is largely what we have today in Prince William Sound. To manage and track shipping traffic, shippers and the Coast Guard have conventional radar, cameras, and enhanced ice detection radar at their disposal. The Coast Guard has its own federally operated Automatic Identification System receivers and a supplemental feed from the Alaska Marine Exchange, which provides vessel direction, speed, and location information in real time. Each laden tanker is accompanied in its transit by both escort and response tugs. Each tankers' mechanical and structural reliability is periodically assessed by both the Coast Guard and by classification societies, the non-governmental organizations that maintain technical standards for construction and operation of ships. Still, Alaskans and the U.S. Congress have determined that even this isn't enough. Accidents can still happen and so state and federal regulations require the terminal and the Prince William Sound oil shippers to have the most robust spill response capabilities

existing anywhere in the country.

Outside Prince William Sound, the idea of enhanced prevention is slowly catching on. The Coast Guard is developing new regulations that would require inspection of towing vessels like the one that lost power while towing the barge with 2.5 million gallons of fuel aboard the week before Christmas.

In November, we read about the new Shell/Edison Chouest ice-breaking, anchor-handling, and platform-support vessel nearing completion for assignment in Alaska to bring new spill response and spill prevention capabilities to the Arctic.

While congress hasn't funded any Alaskan Vessel Traffic Centers outside Prince William Sound, the Coast Guard sectors in Juneau and Western Alaska each get the Automatic Identification feed from the Alaska Marine Exchange and track traffic and radio communications so that the Coast Guard has the best chance possible to know when maritime problems are developing and initiate communications with a troubled vessel in contrast to waiting until the vessel's crew decides they have no other option than an embarrassing and potentially expensive and occasionally too-late call to the Coast Guard for help.

This past year our council contributed to a risk assessment in Cook Inlet with the expectation that a more complete understanding of risk and vulnerability and probability will lead to justification of seriously robust and redundant prevention measures for our downstream communities covered by this study.

Clearly more needs to be done. With clear reminders about maritime pollution and safety risks like the two recent near misses, hopefully the "belt and suspenders" philosophy towards prevention will continue to catch on.

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



Mark Swanson

From Alyeska Pipeline

## Longtime Alaskan becomes Valdez terminal operations director

Scott Hicks, a longtime Alaskan and Alyeska employee, has become Valdez operations director. He will oversee all operations and maintenance on the Valdez Marine Terminal.

Hicks has extensive operations and maintenance experience with the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System, and knows the Valdez Marine Terminal well. He worked on the terminal from 1986-1991 as a project manager with CH2M Hill, specializing in major maintenance work. His projects included the first major repairs of the Ballast Water Treatment piping system, loading arm overhaul, firewater system improvements, incinerator refractory replacement, and coating the berths. Additionally, he coordinated air quality testing for the terminal.

Hicks joined Alyeska in 1998 and since then has held several positions along the pipeline, including area project manager, pump station operations and maintenance supervisor. He served as the Galbraith area manager before transitioning into his new role at the terminal.

He has emergency response experience, most recently working on the unplanned pipeline shutdown in January 2011.

"I always hoped I would return to Valdez and the terminal," Hicks said. "Prince William Sound is a unique and beautiful place and the people who live and work here exemplify the Alaskan way of life, and terminal operations presents exciting and challenging professional opportunities."

Hicks expects these next several years to be critical for Valdez operations. The Valdez Marine Terminal will continue to manage challenges created by declining throughput and cold weather operations. Ongoing and upcoming projects include replacing the loading arms on Berth 4 and 5, conducting tank inspections, and repairing the piping in the Industrial Waste Water System.

"There is work to be done here," Hicks said. "The terminal is an aging facility, and I believe my experience in major maintenance has pre-

pared me well for the job. We have a dedicated team here in Valdez, and they are all fully committed to Alyeska's mission of safely transporting crude oil from the terminal, onto tankers and out through Hinchinbrook Entrance."

In October, Hicks returned moved to Valdez from Fairbanks with his wife, Paula. He has two children, Todd and Kelli. In his spare time, he enjoys skiing, rafting, fishing and woodworking.

"Paula and I are looking forward to making Valdez our home and becoming active members of this special community," Hicks said.

• Submitted by Alyeska Communications



Scott Hicks

# Firefighters from Alaska's coastal communities meet in Valdez to learn about marine fire response

Responding to a fire aboard a vessel such as a tug boat or oil tanker can be very different from responding to a fire on land. Most firefighters in Alaska's coastal communities are trained only for land-based response, but could be called upon to help with a marine fire in an emergency.

In early October, seventy-five professional firefighters gathered in Valdez to learn how to respond to a fire aboard a ship. The 2011 Marine Firefighting Symposium, sponsored by the council, provided hands-on training tailored to challenges faced in Alaska.

Attendees came from port towns all over the state, including Anchor-

age, Juneau, Seldovia, Homer, Kenai, Nikiski, Seward, Kodiak, Unalaska, Whittier, and Valdez.

Several sponsorships enabled the council to provide this training at no cost to participants, including stipends for travel and textbooks.

Professional marine firefighting Captains Jeff Johnson and John Taylor coordinated the symposium and taught several topics. The two, along with council staff, spent nearly a year preparing for this event, incorporating feedback from previous symposiums and local stakeholders.

Besides techniques for fighting a fire aboard a ship, the curriculum included shipboard basics; familiarization with vessels and special fire plans; information on new regulations; differences between large vessels (such as oil tankers), cruise ships, small boats and marinas; politics of a marine accident such as a fire on board a ship; fire safety; coordination with ship's crew and professional marine industry firefighters; and potential environmental effects of a ship fire.

ConocoPhillips and Polar Tankers provided participants a tour of the tanker Polar Discovery at the Valdez container terminal, giving participants a chance to learn how complex a response to a fire aboard such a large vessel would be.



Southwest Alaska Pilots Association provided the pilot boat Emerald Isle for a hands-on exercise, allowing participants to practice fire response aboard a "smoky" boat in a safe setting. Photo by Amanda Johnson



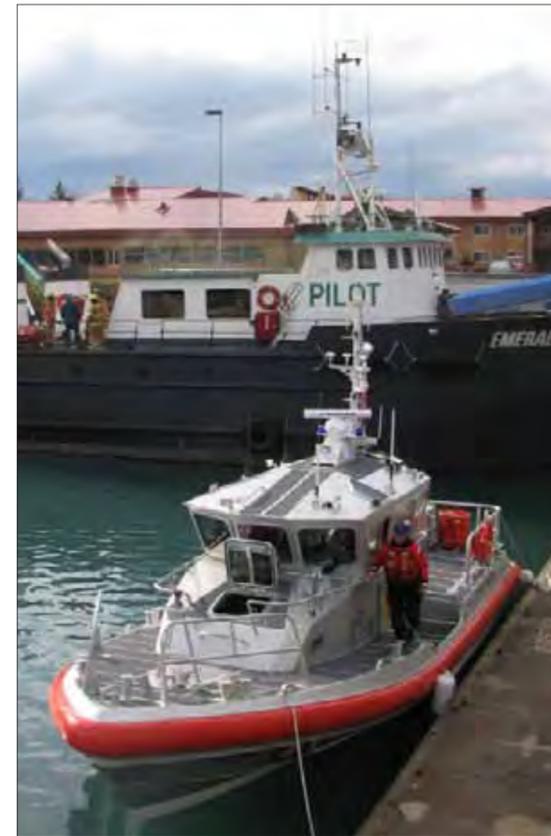
A "Hollywood" smoke machine simulated a smoky atmosphere without danger of inhaling real smoke. Participants were able to experience how disorienting a fire response could be on a vessel with narrow halls and steep stairways. Photos by Amanda Johnson.



T & T Bisso staff demonstrate their portable firefighting water pump. Above: photo by Amanda Johnson. Below right: photo by Alan Sorum.



**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 Amanda Johnson, public communications project manager for the council.



The U.S. Coast Guard, along with help in planning and participating in discussion panels, also provided an opportunity for touring a Coast Guard vessel. Photo by Amanda Johnson.



Above: Participants got a chance to see the inside of the tanker Polar Discovery. The interior of large oil tankers can be disorienting and full of hazards that a fire responder should be aware of. Below: The deck of the Polar Discovery. Photos by Alan Sorum.



For more photos from the 2011 Marine Fire Symposium, visit the council's photo stream on flickr.com: [www.bit.ly/MFS2011](http://www.bit.ly/MFS2011)



All participants, instructors and industry representatives stand on the container dock in front of the tanker Polar Discovery. Photo by Amanda Johnson.

**Many thanks to the generous sponsors, participating organizations, companies and individuals who made the 2011 Marine Firefighting Symposium possible: Polar Tankers/ConocoPhillips, the U.S. Coast Guard, Marine Response Alliance/Crowley, T&T Bisso, Donjon-SMIT, City of Valdez, Valdez Fire Department, Barry Roberts of Alyeska Pipeline Service Company, Southwest Alaska Pilots Association, Karen Ables, Alaska Steamship Response, Offshore Systems, Resolve Marine Group, R&R Diving, Southeast Alaska Lighterage, Alaska Department of Public Safety and AVTEC.**



# CHILDREN OF THE SPILLS: Project documents mental health effects of Exxon Valdez and BP Deepwater Horizon oil spills on children

Continued from page 1

there during clean-up efforts. The family turned around and went back to Homer, never returning to their houseboat. Instead of anger in the face of these injuries, Ess tells his story with surprising grace and strives to learn from his experiences: "When you're out there and you get kind of taken without any warning, it is a wonderful lesson in looking for the good and to see what's next," he explains.

Makena O'Toole was three at the time of the oil spill. He grew up in a fishing family in Cordova and

*Children of the Spills is an oral history project documenting the experiences of young people in Alaska who grew up in communities affected by the Exxon Valdez oil spill and children in Gulf of Mexico coast states impacted by the BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill.*

*This project strives to broaden the public understanding of the long-term effects of oil spills and assist communities to support their children growing up in the wake of an oil spill.*

*You can learn more about the project at: [childrenofthespills.org](http://childrenofthespills.org)*

*The council is co-sponsoring the Alaska portion of this project through the Youth Involvement program. Find out more about this program on our website: [www.bit.ly/PWSRCAC\\_Youth](http://www.bit.ly/PWSRCAC_Youth)*

saw his family and friends struggle with the financial and emotional toll of the oil spill. Yet, he always knew that fishing was next for him.

In high school, he was the first Cordova kid in a long time to risk buying the permits, boat, and equipment necessary to get into the commercial salmon fleet. "I think that it was just always something that I wanted to do. My dad tells a story about when I was a little kid ... just kind of like sleep talking, saying, 'My daddy's a wisherman and I'm gonna be a wisherman too.'"

O'Toole has worked tirelessly to become the fisherman he always dreamed he would be. Loss of the Prince William Sound herring fishery (something many blame on the spill) has forced him to spend his winters and springs fishing elsewhere throughout Alaska and the West Coast.

For a number of coastal towns and villages, the spill also curtailed important subsistence traditions. Port Graham Elder Simeon Kvasnikoff remembers the pain he felt when he took his children to the beach after the oil spill and had to tell them not to touch some of the bidarki chitons, clams, or mussels: "You want to live? Don't touch anything on the beach ... they've got oil, and oil kills." Kvasnikoff explains, "You can see they really wanted the food down on the shoreline, they wanted that food, because they lived with it, they were raised with it... tell your little one, 'you are not to eat the candy that's there, they get hurt.'" A number of people

in the villages like Port Graham feel that this oil killed some of their subsistence traditions forever.

It seems inevitable that, in the aftermath of the Exxon Valdez oil spill, jealousy, anger, frustration, and bitterness would develop. Surely it did, but the young people I have interviewed have been able to learn from the oil spill and move forward as much as is possible. For some, the oil spill serves as motivation for the work they are doing now. For others, the oil spill is a reminder to cherish what exists now and to plan wisely for the future.



Cordova fisherman Makena O'Toole describes his memories of the oil spill. Photo by Katie Gavenus.

## SPILL DRILL: BP and Alyeska conduct exercise in Prince William Sound

Continued from page 1

809,080 barrels. The 809 Scenario is considered a worst-case spill for Prince William Sound.

The exercise began on September 27 with Alyeska Pipeline Service Company's Incident Management Team responding to the spill for the first day. BP's Incident Management Team transitioned into the spill management role on the second day.

Key drill objectives included transferring management of the spill response from Alyeska to BP; developing three days of Incident Action Plans, a document that describes current response plans; a strategy to salvage the stricken tanker; and showing the ability to carry out a wildlife response in the field.

The command post for the exercise was in Valdez. BP also placed representatives in the coastal communities of Cordova, Kodiak, Seward, and Tatitlek. These communities also sent representatives to Valdez to participate in the Regional Stakeholders Committee. This committee was established to relay concerns from the communities about the oil spill response to the spill response team's leaders, known as the Unified Command. The council has a seat on this committee along with the community delegates. Executive Director Mark Swanson participated as the council's representative during this drill.

Other council staff participated as evaluators, as part of the "control" team that verifies information, and as "injects." Injects test the

I will be taking the stories from Alaska with me this spring when the project travels to the bayous of Louisiana, Alabama, and Mississippi to work with young people affected by the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

spill response team's ability to field phone calls and quickly respond to questions from the public and the media.

Several lessons were learned from this exercise. For newcomers to the incident management process the learning curve is steep. The response team needs to get the members of the stakeholder's committee up to speed on their roles and the response activities very early in the process. Information posted about the incident needs to be frequently updated. Another observation was the need to get BP incident management team members familiar with the response operations quickly.

In addition to the tabletop portion of the exercise that was held in September, BP also conducted three different field exercises loosely associated with the drill. The first was a tethered surveillance balloon test and demonstration that BP co-sponsored with the council, conducted on April 19, 20, and 25. These tethered balloons could be used to provide a higher viewpoint that would help oil recovery vessels to find the thickest oil concentrations during a spill response.

BP and Alyeska also conducted an oiled wildlife field exercise on May 19 that included the deployment of a full wildlife task force with subject matter experts from industry and state and federal agencies.

The third field exercise was an unmanned aerial vehicle demonstration on July 15 that showed the capabilities of these types of aircraft for conducting beach or wildlife surveys.

## Student expedition studies Sound

By ANN MAYO-KIELY and SARAH WARNOCK  
Alaska Geographic

For one unforgettable week in July 2011, nine middle school students from Valdez, Cordova, Whittier and Anchorage explored Prince William Sound, living aboard the vessel Babkin, learning from each other about Alaska's diverse communities, and investigating environmental change with local scientists.

The student's expedition was part of the fourth year of a partnership between Alaska Geographic, the Chugach National Forest, and the council. The expedition is just one part of the Chugach Children's Forest program, which ranges from expeditions and last May's council-

supported International Youth Ecoforum to teacher trainings and service projects with schools.

From day one, the teens were immersed in the wild, observing whales and calving glaciers, kayaking and shrimping, and identifying birds. By day two, they were hiking in College Fjord, exploring intertidal areas, and working alongside scientists to complete plant surveys. The students also helped scientists document the lingering effects of the Exxon Valdez oil spill by studying herring and lingering oil on remote beaches. They learned firsthand about our responsibilities to prevent future oil spills through visits with council staff, the U.S. Coast Guard and Alyeska's Ship Escort Response Vessel System in Valdez. Along the way, students kept journals, and collected interviews and video footage.

This partnership and the expedition will continue in 2012 with the additional involvement of the Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies and a study of the impacts of marine plastics debris, as well as continuing investigation of oil spill recovery and prevention.

Parents and teachers report that these expedition programs inspire their teens to connect, care, and get more involved—"They learn more in this week than we could ever teach them in the classroom".

To learn more about this expedition and other Children's Forest Programs, contact Ann Mayo-Kiely or Sarah Warnock at Alaska Geographic, 907-274-8440 and visit [www.chugachchildrensforest.org](http://www.chugachchildrensforest.org).



A Valdez student looks closely at herring as part of learning about herring recovery at the Prince William Sound Science Center. Photo courtesy of Alaska Geographic.

## 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.

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

May 3-4, 2012: Valdez

September 13-14, 2012: Seward

January 17-18, 2013: Anchorage

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.pwsrcac.org/about/boardintro.html](http://www.pwsrcac.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.

## ABOUT THE COUNCIL'S ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Much of the council's work is done through permanent volunteer committees made up of board members, technical experts, and local citizens with an interest in making oil transportation safer in Alaska.

These standing committees work with staff on projects, study and deliberate current oil transportation issues, and formulate their own advice and recommendations to the council's full board of directors.

Our committees provide an avenue for public participation in the council's work.

The council has five technical committees that provide advice and recommendations to the council's board of directors.

### Terminal Operations & Environmental Monitoring:

The Terminal Operations and Environmental Monitoring (TOEM) Committee identifies actual and potential sources of episodic and chronic pollution at the Valdez Marine Terminal.

**Members:**

Chair: Bob Benda, Valdez  
Jo Ann Benda, Valdez  
Stephen Lewis, Seldovia\*  
George Skladal, Anchorage  
Stan Stephens, Valdez\*  
Rochelle van den Broek, City of Cordova\*

### Port Operations and Vessel Traffic Systems:

The Port Operations and Vessel Traffic Systems (POVTS) Committee monitors port and tanker operations in Prince William Sound. POVTS identifies and recommends improvements in the vessel traffic navigation systems and monitors the vessel escort system.

**Members:**

Chair: Bob Jaynes, Valdez  
Kari Anderson, Seward  
Duane Beland, North Pole  
Cliff Chambers, Seward  
Bill Conley, Valdez  
Pat Duffy, AK State Chamber of Commerce, Valdez\*  
Jane Eisemann, Kodiak\*  
Pete Heddell, Whittier

### Scientific Advisory:

The Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) sponsors independent scientific research and provides scientific assistance and advice to the other council committees on technical reports, scientific methodology, data interpretation, and position papers.

**Members:**

Chair: Dr. John Kennish, Anchorage  
Co-Chair: Dr. Mark Udevitz, Anchorage  
Dr. John French, Seward\*  
Dr. Roger Green, Hope  
Dorothy M. Moore, Valdez\*  
Dr. Debasmita Misra, Fairbanks  
Dr. Dave Musgrave, Palmer  
Dr. Paula Martin, Soldotna

### Oil Spill Prevention and Response:

The Oil Spill Prevention and Response (OSPR) Committee works to minimize the risks and impacts associated with oil transportation through strong spill prevention and response measures, adequate contingency planning, and effective regulations. The committee reviews oil spill response plans (contingency plans); monitors state and federal laws and regulations; monitors and participates in oil spill drills; and investigates developments in prevention, containment, response, and cleanup technology.

**Members:**

Chair: John French, Seward\*  
Vice Chair: Gerald Brookman, Kenai  
David Goldstein, Whittier  
Joe Jabas, Anchor Point  
John LeClair, Anchorage  
Walter Parker, Anchorage\*  
Gordon Scott, Girdwood  
John Velsko, Homer\*

### Information and Education:

The Information and Education Committee (IEC) supports the council's mission by fostering public awareness, responsibility, and participation through information and education.

**Members:**

Chair: Patience Andersen  
Faulkner, Cordova\*  
Co-Chair: Kate Alexander, Cordova  
Savannah Lewis, Seldovia  
Jane Eisemann, Kodiak\*  
Cathy Hart, Anchorage\*  
Ruth E. Knight, Valdez

\*council director

Are you familiar with oil spill planning or response, marine science or engineering, journalism, mass communication or public relations? We need committee volunteers with knowledge in these areas! Please consider volunteering for the council. For more information, visit: [www.bit.ly/PWSRCACvolunteer](http://www.bit.ly/PWSRCACvolunteer)

**Community Corner****Wishing you all a happy New Year!**

By LINDA ROBINSON  
Council Outreach Coordinator

Here at the council, 2011 was another busy year. Since September's column we have attended three conferences with our information booth.

In October, the Arctic Marine Oilspill Program was held in Banff, Alberta, Canada. Amidst a beautiful mountain setting, we heard numerous presentations on topics such as contingency planning, preparing and preventing spills of chemicals and hazardous materials; oil spill modeling; the BP Deepwater Horizon spill; and the physical and chemical properties and behavior of oil. Volunteers Debu Misra and Jerry Brookman joined staff Mark Swanson and me at this event. Copies of the presentations are available for viewing in the Valdez and Anchorage offices.

Also in October, board member John French joined Mark Swanson and me on a visit to Seward. We started at the Alaska Sealife Center where we met with Howard Ferren, director of conservation, and Ian Dutton, CEO of the center, who was leaving the following day for a new position. We then visited the Alaska Vocational and Technical Education Center, where we met with Robert Thomas, Maritime Department Head, and Captain Scott Hamilton, Maritime Instructor. We toured the Center's ship simulator, a state-of-the-art marine training system that lets the user simulate being the captain of tugboat or tanker in a safe environment. We are planning a tour of the simulator for volunteers and staff who attend our September 2012 board meeting in Seward.

In November, we were at the Alaska Municipal League conference in Fairbanks with the council information booth. This conference pulls in representatives from

cities, boroughs, and many other organizations from around the state. Dorothy Moore, chair of the council's board of directors, attended representing Valdez.

Also in November, we attended the Pacific Marine Expo in Seattle. Board member Blake Johnson assisted Mark Swanson and me in answering questions from visitors to the booth. It was a very busy event, allowing us the opportunity to chat with many people from the Exxon Valdez spill-affected region as well as contractors and legislators.

The sixth Annual Science Night was held on December 8 at the Crown Plaza in Anchorage. Presentations focused on hydrocarbon toxicity, and the event was well attended. Topics ranged from the council's Hydrocarbon Toxicity Project; the effects of chemically and physically dispersed hydrocarbons on the fertilization and hatching success of eggs collected from Atlantic cod; the toxicity of chemically dispersed crude oil to herring embryos; factors affecting toxicity of dispersed and undispersed crude oils on herring species, spawning stocks and environmental conditions; previous knowledge about embryo toxicity, and the significance to the future; and the swimming performance, heart morphology, and gene expression changes in juvenile pink salmon and herring following embryonic exposures to North Slope crude oil.

Staff is once again participating in the planning committee for the Alaska Forum on the Environment, being held February 6-10 at the Dena'ina Convention Center in Anchorage. Several presentations on topics related to oil spills are scheduled for February 8. For more information on the forum visit: [www.akforum.com](http://www.akforum.com).



Linda Robinson



Council staff and volunteers attended an oil spill conference in Banff, Alberta, Canada. Left to right: Mark Swanson, Linda Robinson, volunteers Jerry Brookman and Debasmita Misra. Photo courtesy of 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.*

### Board of Directors

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Vice Pres.: Pat Duffy - Alaska State Chamber of Commerce  
Secretary: Thane Miller - Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corp.  
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Larry Evanoff - Community of Chenega Bay  
Patience Andersen Faulkner - Cordova District Fishermen United  
John S. French - City of Seward  
Cathy Hart - Alaska Wilderness Recreation and Tourism Association  
Marilynn Heddell - City of Whittier  
Blake Johnson - Kenai Peninsula Borough  
Steve Lewis - City of Seldovia  
Iver Malutin - Kodiak Village Mayors Association  
Walter Parker - Oil Spill Region Environmental Coalition  
Diane Selanoff - Port Graham Corporation  
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Rochelle van den Broek - City of Cordova  
John Velsko - City of Homer

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