

THE OBSERVER

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Alyeska and City of Valdez agree to plan for joint firefighting response

By **AUSTIN LOVE**

Council Project Manager

In December, Alyeska Pipeline Service Company and the City of Valdez agreed to a plan for the Alyeska Fire Brigade and the Valdez Fire Department to work together to fight fires. This agreement defines the roles, relationships, jurisdiction, and responsibilities of the two parties in advance of an emergency. The agreement provides the framework for a coordinated emergency response within Valdez city limits.

The council supports the agreement as it will improve the ability of Alyeska Fire Brigade and the Valdez Fire Department to work in coordination both on and off Valdez Marine Terminal property. The agreement will help limit the possible loss of life and property in the event of an emergency, and decrease the potential environmental impacts of a fire at the terminal.

The agreement says that the Alyeska Fire Bri-

gade may assist the Valdez Fire Department during an emergency within the city limits but off of Alyeska property. While not required to do so, Alyeska may provide emergency assistance to the City of Valdez, if a number of conditions are met. Foremost, their service must be specifically requested by the Valdez Fire Department and Alyeska must be able to maintain their minimum required fire and rescue staffing levels at the terminal even while assisting the City of Valdez. Alyeska will not charge the city for emergency services under this agreement.

The agreement also provides a framework outlining how the Valdez Fire Department responds to emergen-



Alyeska's new fire and rescue engine, known as "Squad 1," is at the terminal and ready for action. Photo courtesy of Alyeska.

See page 7, Firefighting agreement

Report shows air pollution from tankers in Prince William Sound reduced by hundreds of tons per year

By **AUSTIN LOVE**

Council Project Manager

A new council study found that the low-sulfur fuel used in oil tankers has resulted in far less air pollution from crude oil tankers than just a few years ago.

The study, by Starcrest Consulting Group, evaluated the air pollution from tankers that traveled through Prince William Sound during 2014. The study looked at three air pollutants: nitrogen oxides, particulate matter, and sulfur oxides. These pollutants are produced by internal combustion engines and released in a vessel's exhaust. Each of the pollutants can have negative

impacts on human health, contributing to heart and lung disease. Researchers calculated the amount of each of these pollutants that would have been released if the tankers had been using fuel with a sulfur content of 2.7, 1.0, or 0.1 percent. The results were then compared to determine the amount reduced.

Study results

The study found that both

particulate matter and sulfur oxides emissions are substantially reduced, and nitrogen oxides emissions are somewhat reduced. By using

See page 6, Tanker emissions



Photo by Jeremy Robida.

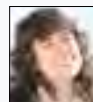
AK Chamber of Commerce - Chenega Bay - Chugach Alaska Corp. - Cordova - Cordova District Fishermen United - Homer - Kenai Peninsula Borough - Kodiak - Kodiak Island Borough - Kodiak Village Mayors - Oil Spill Region Environmental Coalition - Port Graham Corp. - Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corp. - Seldovia - Seward - Tatitlek - Valdez - Whittier

INSIDE THE OBSERVER

Volunteer Spotlight: A life on the water inspires stewardship of the sea, p. 2



Swanson resigns as head of citizens' council, p. 2



Schantz: Ignore the lessons of history at our own peril, p. 3

Alyeska: Alyeska crew carries out pipeline maintenance and response readiness from base in Glennallen, p. 3

What is an oil spill contingency plan? p. 4-5

Interns help fulfill council's mission, p. 7

Community Corner: The importance of public comment, p. 8



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Volunteer Spotlight

A life on the water inspires stewardship of the sea

Jeremy Talbott, member of the council's Port Operations and Vessel Traffic System Committee, is enthusiastic about his new hometown. He moved to Valdez with his wife Keri and their two daughters in May of 2014 to become the new harbormaster for the city.

"I didn't even know where Valdez was," Talbot said. "But it was in Alaska."

Talbott had dreamed of moving to Alaska for a while. He applied for the Homer Harbormasters job several years ago, and later almost got a position in Juneau as Harbormaster. Talbott was disappointed, but Juneau's port director told him about the opening in Valdez.

"In hindsight, I'm really glad I got Valdez instead of Juneau," he says. "I love it. I hit the lottery."

Another reason Talbott was excited about getting the position in Valdez was there is a brand new harbor in the works.

"Where I come from, people don't build harbors anymore, they're already built."

A young pirate explores the San Juan Islands

Talbott loves being on the water. He was born and raised in Washington State, and spent summers with his grandfather in the San Juan Islands.

"My grandpa and I built a boat when I was ten."

He spent summers cruising around the islands, fishing from his 14 foot boat with a 20 horse power engine.

"I was in the San Juan Islands with my tent and my stove. I ran crab traps and I sold my crab to the tourists. I was pretty much a pirate. As long as I checked in at sunset on the VHF with my grandpa to let him know everything was going OK, I could stay out," Talbott says. "If I didn't check in he'd get in his boat and come looking for me."

"It was pretty amazing to grow up out there in that environment and to have that amount of trust. If my parents knew what was happening, they would have flipped out."

Interest in emergency response started early

As a teenager, Talbott spent time with his dad, who worked in wilderness rescue.

"We were out rescuing lost hunters in the Cascade Mountains in Washington State. I got that bug early."

Those early experiences led him to study emergency response. With his grandfather's encouragement, after high school he left the Pacific Northwest to attend the University of Alabama, where he earned a paramedic certificate.

After school, Talbott moved back home. There were no full time positions he was qualified for, so he went to work, helping his dad start a septic company. Meanwhile, he volunteered with the fire department.

"I've always looked for work in public service. Community service is really important to me."

Talbott later attended the law enforcement academy, however budget cuts meant his position was cut. He ended up finding his place as the assistant harbormaster for Friday Harbor in the San Juan Islands. He stayed there for ten years before his move to Alaska.

He worked on a flight medical evacuation team in the evenings, and found time to volunteer with the Island Oil Spill Association, a nonprofit organization that responds to oil spills in the San Juan Islands.

"The Puget Sound has no idea. They don't get it. After living up here for 18 months and seeing what we have here," Talbott continues, "they don't have the containment or anything set up with the fishermen like SERVS does."

"It makes me sad because the San Juan Islands is just like Prince William Sound in that it's a special place."

Participation in drills and exercises

With his background in emergency medicine and the fire department, Talbott helped coordinate a lot of drills and exercises for the region.

"I'd invite everybody in to play on our large scale exercises," Talbott said. The Coast Guard, fire department, the state ferry, and law enforcement all participated.

"We had 150-250 people partake in those each time. We would do a large scale exercise and then do a tabletop exercise the following year."

The group practiced responding to fuel spills, terrorist attacks, ferry accidents. They deployed oil spill boom and practiced evacuations.

"We'd do the drill and then come back and critique it," Talbott said.

He says the drills and exercises were helpful when a real event happened.

"Everybody knew what to do. Everybody knew where to meet and things went smoothly. The representatives were all the people that were in the drills. It works out nice when you practice."

San Juan Islands versus Prince William Sound

During his training for oil spill response in Washington State, the instructors used photos of the Exxon Valdez disaster to show students the consequences of not being prepared. Now that he's been in Valdez for a while, he says the thought of a spill the size of the Exxon Valdez is frightening.

"In hindsight, those trainers don't have any idea what it's like. Actually living here for 18 months, I'm starting to understand the magnitude."

"I didn't live through the spill and I wasn't in Alaska during the spill. It's absolutely beautiful out there. And I know if you dig down in some places you can still find the oil, but at least on the top it looks pretty pristine to me."

Jeremy Talbott is a member of the council's Port Operations and Vessel Traffic System Committee. The committee supports the council's mission by monitoring port and tanker operations and the vessel escort system in Prince William Sound, and by identifying and recommending improvements in the vessel traffic navigation systems. This committee is one of five committees of volunteers from communities affected by the Exxon Valdez oil spill. Volunteers like Talbott dedicate their time and expertise to advise the council on technical issues related to the safe transportation of oil through Prince William Sound.



Jeremy Talbott

Swanson resigns as head of citizens' council

Mark Swanson has resigned as executive director of the council. His resignation was unanimously accepted by the council board on November 24.

"On behalf of the council, I'd like to thank Mark for his service to the organization," said board President Amanda Bauer. "We wish him the very best in the future."

Swanson had been the council's executive director since April 2010, and was commander of the Coast Guard's Valdez Marine Safety Office from 2002 until he retired from the agency in 2005.

"Fortunately, after a number of careers and a lifetime of work, I have reached a point where I

have the opportunity to stop working" Swanson said via email. "I look forward to enjoying the spectacular place I've brought my family to, and that we call home."

As the Observer went to press, the board was developing a process to hire a permanent replacement. Meanwhile, Donna Schantz, the organization's director of programs, will serve as acting executive director.

Schantz, a Valdez resident, has worked for the council in various roles since 1999.



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From the Executive Director

Ignore the lessons of history at our own peril

Twenty six years have passed since the Exxon Valdez grounded on Bligh Reef, spilling an estimated 11 million gallons of crude oil



Donna Schantz

into Prince William Sound. The spill devastated the environment, fishing industry, our economy, and livelihoods. Our organization was created in the wake of this disaster to work with industry, government, and

local communities to understand how this happened and to use the lessons from the Exxon Valdez spill to advocate for safeguards designed to make sure nothing like it happens again. Thanks to the foresight, vigilance and tireless efforts of elected officials, regulators, industry, and citizens, the oil spill prevention and response system now in place in Prince William Sound is a model to the rest of the world.

Alaska's strong spill prevention and response system

Immediately after the 1989 spill, the Alaska Legislature introduced a series of bills that resulted in some of the strongest laws in the nation for preventing and cleaning up an oil spill. The Legislature understood that in order to be effective, a spill response must be immediate, with adequate resources and trained

personnel available to contain and remove the oil within the shortest possible time. Because of these measures, the Sound has more clean-up equipment and capacity than any other U.S. port. Extensive amounts of equipment and new technologies, coupled with vigorous training programs for operators and oil spill responders, represent vast improvements over the system in place in 1989.

This year, we expect the oil spill prevention and response plans for the tankers operating in Prince William Sound to be submitted for review and renewal. These plans, known as contingency plans, are prepared by oil tanker operators to meet state and federal regulations. The plans contain specific measures that will be taken to prevent and clean up oil spills from their vessels.

Reviewing contingency plans is part of the council's mandate under the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 and our contract with Alyeska Pipeline Service Company and we take this duty very seriously. We advocate for continuous improvement and best available technology in these plans, and view the details in the plans as mini insurance policies designed to protect the citizens and environment.

Possible reductions on the horizon...to what cost?

More recently, we have reason to believe that some of the improvements in prevention and response, including equipment, new technology and vigorous training programs put in place over the last 26 years, may be in jeopardy. More and more often we hear statements that the systems in place to protect Prince William

Sound from another spill are "too costly" or "burdensome" in light of declining oil flow through the trans-Alaska pipeline and the low price of oil. Low oil flow through the pipeline has played a significant part in the state's budget deficit, necessitating a reduction in overhead and administrative costs. But oil continues to flow and must still be transported through the Sound. There may now be fewer tankers travelling through Prince William Sound, but each tanker carries the same risk.

This past year, the Alaska Legislature challenged the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation to develop a plan to reduce the cost to the state and private entities for oil spill response drills and exercises. We do not yet know how this legislative challenge will be addressed, but our organization is very concerned about any reduction in the number of drills, exercises, and training. Having trained and proficient responders is a key element for mitigating oil spill damage to sensitive areas.

It took a tragedy like the Exxon Valdez to create the world-class prevention and response system we have today, and it would be even more tragic if we ignored the hard-won lessons of our own history and let them slip away because of a focus on cost cutting. For our council, which represents the people, communities, and businesses hardest hit by the Exxon spill, the cost of prevention and preparedness does not outweigh the cost of another spill.

• Donna Schantz is the acting executive director of the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council.

"We advocate for continuous improvement and best available technology in these plans, and view the details in the plans as mini insurance policies designed to protect the citizens and environment."

-Donna Schantz

From Alyeska

Alyeska crew carries out pipeline maintenance and response readiness from base in Glennallen



Jeff Streit, a supervisor at the Glennallen Response Base, on a brisk winter morning tour of the facility. Photo courtesy of Alyeska.

The Glennallen Response Base is located in Alaska's Interior, a little over 100 miles north of Valdez. Originally designated as Pump Station 11, the facility was constructed as a response and maintenance base after it was decided that another pump station wasn't necessary. Now, a small Alyeska team, supported by a focused and energetic Ahtna baseline crew, coordinates and carries out maintenance and prevention activities along the pipeline right of way, while maintaining a constant state of oil spill response readiness. Their accountable area stretches from south of Paxson all the way to the gate of the Valdez Marine Terminal.

"I wake up in the morning and my first priorities are the safety of our team and spill response preparedness," said supervisor Jeff Streit, a TAPS veteran who traces his work history back to construction. "This area, we have it all. Mountains, fault lines, and rivers and

streams, many of which drain directly into the Copper River. I think it's some of the most challenging and complex geography on TAPS."

Streit works hand in hand with Larry Huelskoetter, the Ahtna Superintendent and longtime Copper River basin resident.

"The (Ahtna) crews are skillful," said Huelskoetter. "They go out into the elements at do important work safely. These individuals are connected to the area and it shows."

The team uses a variety of tools and vehicles to accomplish their work, from airboats to tuckers, which provide access to remote areas of TAPS in the winter time. They also maintain staged equipment in locations along TAPS, which can be deployed to protect sensitive areas in the event of a spill.

"At the end of the day, our job is to make sure every inch of pipe is sound," said Streit.

"And every inch of our employees is sound, too," added Huelskoetter.

• Submitted by Alyeska Corporate Communications.

What is an oil spill contingency plan?

An oil spill contingency plan is a document which contains both:

- Detailed information on steps to be taken before an oil spill to prevent a spill from happening
- Detailed instructions describing activities that will be done during and after an accident to clean up an oil spill.

What is the Prince William Sound Tanker Oil Spill Contingency Plan?

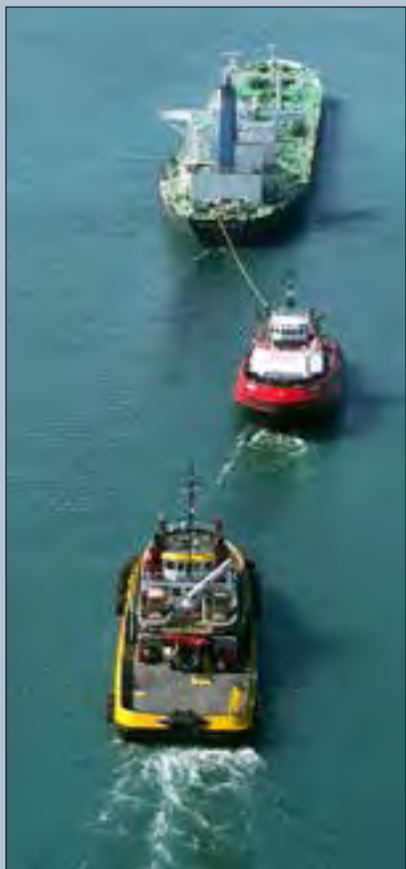
This contingency plan describes the measures Prince William Sound shippers take to try to prevent, or clean up, an oil spill from a tanker.



Planning for prevention

Preventing an oil spill is the most effective strategy to protect human health and the environment. The tanker contingency plan contains detailed descriptions of the steps and equipment shippers are using to keep oil out of the water. Examples include:

- A tanker escort system to help rescue a tanker in distress.
- The U.S. Coast Guard's vessel traffic system that helps guide tankers safely in and out of Prince William Sound.



Examples include:

- Equipment that is in place to prevent oil or other chemicals from discharging into the water
- Alcohol and drug testing which are required for mariners
- Maintaining equipment to keep proper function
- Tankers following speed limits and staying in designated lanes
- The system may be restricted or closed completely during dangerous weather or when ice is present
- Thorough training for mariners in the safe use of all equipment.

Photo by Kate Golden, courtesy of Alyeska/SERVS.

Planning for response

If an oil spill occurs, it is necessary that a systematic and well-organized plan is already in place with trained personnel on hand to quickly contain and control the spill. An efficient and effective spill response requires that planning be done ahead of time.

The tanker contingency plan:

- Defines immediate response actions, including emergency action checklists.
- Describes how to report that an incident has occurred.
- Identifies resources available for response.
- Contains supporting information such as sensitive resources to protect.
- Describes specific response scenarios and strategies.
- Assigns specific radio channels for communications during a spill.
- Describes how the response is organized and coordinated between the spiller, the state and federal agencies, and the region's stakeholders.
- Describes how drills and training exercises will be conducted.
- Outlines a plan for managing the collected oil and associated waste.

POSITION	IMMEDIATE RESPONSE ACTION
INCIDENT OBSERVER	<input type="checkbox"/> Assess safety of situation, determine whether source can be stopped, and stop the source of spill if possible. <input type="checkbox"/> Immediately report the spill to the tank vessel Master. <input type="checkbox"/> Provide information on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personnel safety, • Source of the spill, • Type of product spilled, • Amount spilled, and • Status of control operations.

Updating and improving contingency plans

All Prince William Sound contingency plans are reviewed and updated every five years. This planning cycle is as important as the plan itself. Improvements such as updated prevention and response methods or new technologies are sometimes added. Incorporating lessons learned from spills, drills, and training exercises can improve future plans.



One such improvement, put in place after the Exxon Valdez spill, is the world class oil spill response program to train fishermen and crews of other local vessels to help clean up spills. Alyeska's Ship Escort Vessel Response System, known as SERVS, annually contracts with many vessels within Prince William Sound, Seward, Kodiak and Cook Inlet. The mariners receive training every year to learn how to use technical response equipment such as skimmers and oil spill containment boom. The contingency plan describes how many and what kinds of vessels are needed to respond, the level

of training for the crew, and how fast those vessels can be ready to leave the harbor.



Mariners in Prince William Sound are trained before a spill to use technical equipment such as oil skimmers and oil spill containment boom. Photos by Jeremy Robida.

The plan ensures better spill prevention and response

The tanker contingency plan helps ensure that shippers have trained personnel and resources available to prevent and respond to a spill. It contains lists of specific equipment and vessels that shippers have committed to be ready in case of an emergency, such as:

- Pre-positioned barges with response equipment
- Proper number and types of vessels and skimmers
- Local fishing vessels and trained crews

In the tanker plan, shippers explain how the resources come together in a response in order to be as effective as possible, and meet state and federal requirements. Shippers explain, in detail, what they are doing to prevent oil spills and what they plan to do to protect resources and livelihoods if a major spill occurs. Through these plans, the shippers publicly commit to have enough spill response resources always ready.



The 500-2, a barge large enough to land a helicopter on, stays loaded with oil skimmers and other spill response equipment, ready to respond at a moment's notice.



Response equipment, such as oil skimmers (above) and oil spill containment boom (right) are stored in various locations around the Sound.



Due to the extensive planning and training that go into oil spill contingency plans in Prince William Sound, an effective cleanup can be ready to go within only a few hours. Photos by Jeremy Robida.

The council's role

When Congress passed the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 they noted that complacency on the part of the industry and government was one of the contributing factors to the Exxon Valdez oil spill, and that only when local citizens are involved in the process will the trust develop that is necessary to change the present system from confrontation to cooperation.

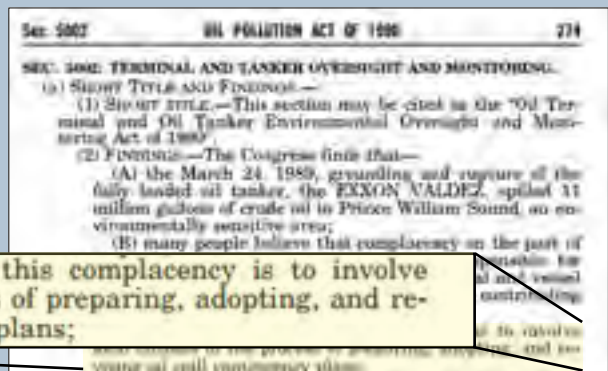
As part of the council's work to fight that complacency, volunteers and staff spend a great deal of time reviewing the hundreds of pages in the detailed contingency plans. Tasks include:

- Making sure the assumptions and information the planners used to create the document are realistic by comparing the plan to previous accidents, the results of many drills and exercises observed by the

council, and council studies.

- Comparing new plans to previous plans to ensure there is nothing lost between versions.
- Ensuring there are no inconsistencies within the plan. For example, do resources listed match throughout the plan? Are there enough vessels, equipment, and people?
- Identifying areas of concern based on previous plan concerns or new issues that have arisen.
- Advocating for improvements in new technologies in prevention and response equipment.

Once the council has reviewed the plans, comments are submitted to the government agencies that review and approve the plan. The agencies review comments received from the public and decide whether to approve the plan, request additional information, or require changes.



Tanker emissions: Cleaner air in Prince William Sound due to new regulations for low-sulphur fuels

Continued from page 1

0.1 percent sulfur fuel, tankers in the Sound reduced emissions by approximately 426 tons of sulfur oxides, 33 tons of particulate matter, and 29 tons of nitrogen oxides annually compared to using 2.7 percent sulfur fuel. Those changes represent a 96 percent reduction in sulfur oxides, an 80 percent reduction in particulate matter, and a 6 percent reduction in nitrogen oxides each year. A reduction of 33 tons of particulate matter is the equivalent to the emissions from about 5,000 heavy-duty diesel trucks operating for a year, while a reduction of 426 tons of sulfur oxides would be equal to the annual emissions from approximately 444,000 heavy-duty diesel trucks.

Regulations bring about change

These reductions are a result of regulations developed by the International Maritime Organization. To limit these substances, the regulations mandate that large ships either use technologies such as exhaust scrubbers or cleaner fuel to reduce emissions. The tankers in Prince William Sound are complying by burning fuel with a low sulfur content.

As of August 2012, large ships were required to use fuel with a sulfur content of 1.0 percent or less if they operated in North American waters. This area extends approximately 200 miles offshore of the United States and includes Prince William Sound. As of January 2015, regulations require vessels in the emissions control area to burn even

cleaner fuel, with a sulfur content of 0.1 percent or less. Comparatively, tankers in international waters, more than 200 miles offshore, are allowed to burn fuel with a sulfur content of up to 3.5 percent. Low sulfur fuel is about 60 percent more costly than traditional fuels.

This study did not quantify the potential positive impacts of these reduced emissions on human and environmental health or measure impacts to local air quality. However, reductions in nitrogen oxides, particulate matter, and sulfur oxides emissions from tanker ships should improve local air quality by greatly reducing the mass of pollutants released in the region each year. A full report on the tanker air emissions study is available on our website at this address: www.bit.ly/PWSTankerEmissions.

Firefighting agreement: Alyeska and Valdez to work jointly to fight fires

Continued from page 1

cies on the terminal. Since the terminal is within city limits, the Valdez Fire Department is responsible for responding to emergency calls and requests for assistance from Alyeska. The new framework defines:

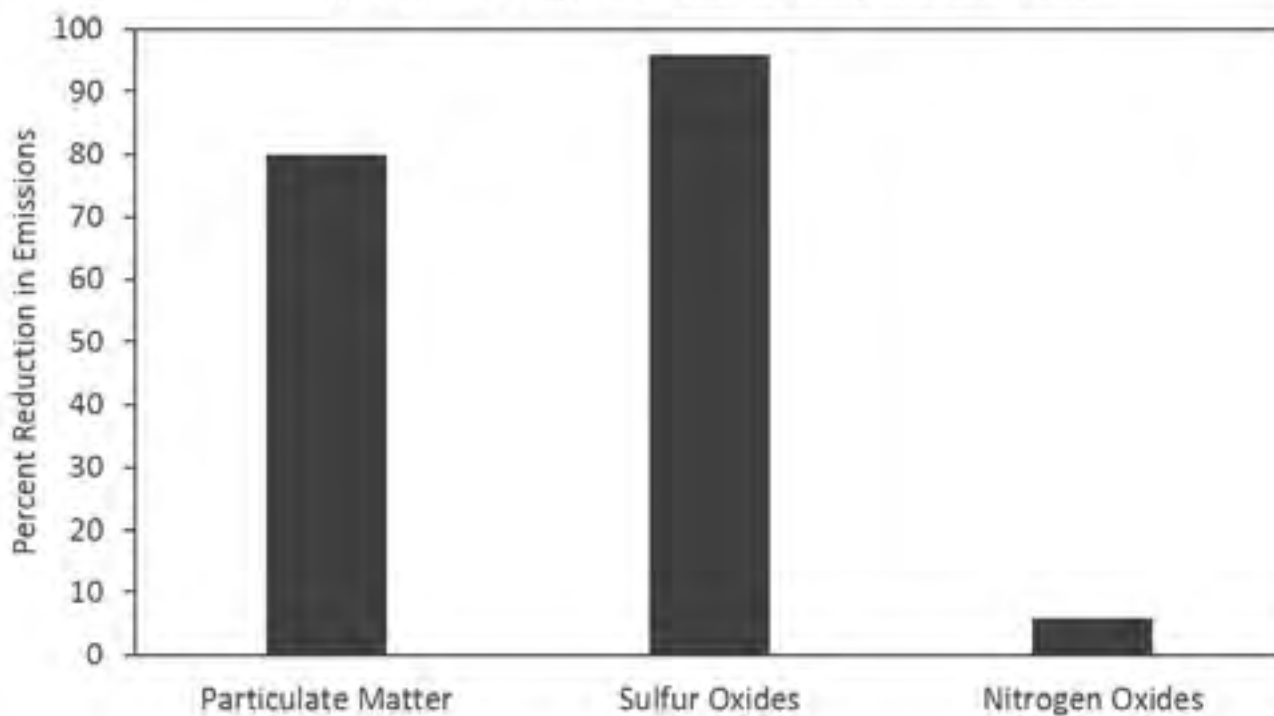
- site security measures;
- joint incident management procedures;
- pre-emergency site familiarization;
- state and federal safety standards;
- Valdez Fire Department review of Alyeska's plans and procedures for fire and rescue.

The council has supported increased coordination and cooperation between these two organizations for many years. Since the early 2000's, the council has been advocating for better cooperation and coordination between the Valdez Fire Department and the Alyeska Fire Brigade. A 2006 council study by Loss Control Associates Inc. found that the ability of the two departments to work together had greatly improved through effective leadership and joint training. While cooperation was improving, no formalized working agreement was in place. In 2012, another council study by Haines Fire and Risk Consulting recommended Valdez and Alyeska develop a firefighting agreement.

"The council spent a number of years advocating that firefighting and emergency response services be addressed," said Donna Schantz, the council's acting executive director. "We commend Alyeska and the City of Valdez for entering into this memorandum of understanding."

"Having a formal agreement like this MOU is considered a best practice in our industry, and I believe that training and increased coordination between the City of Valdez Fire Department and Alyeska Fire and Rescue team brings a value to our community; it makes us all safer," said Sean Wisner, team captain for Alyeska's Fire and Rescue.

Reductions in Tanker Air Emissions when using 0.1 Percent Sulfur Fuel vs. 2.7 Percent Sulfur Fuel



COUNCIL BOARD MEETINGS

The citizens' council board of directors meets three times annually. The January meeting is held in Anchorage, May in Valdez, and the September meeting is rotated among communities affected by the Exxon Valdez oil spill.

Board meetings are open to the public, and an opportunity for public comments is provided at the beginning of each meeting. Agendas and other meeting materials are available on our website: www.pwsrca.org

The tentative board meeting schedule for the coming year is:

- May 5 and 6, 2016 in Valdez
- September 15 and 16, 2016 in Cordova
- January 19 and 20, 2017 in Anchorage

Photo: The council's board of directors met in Kodiak this past September. Photo by Amanda Johnson.



THE OBSERVER is published in January, May, July and September by the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council. Except where credited to others, articles are written by Amanda Johnson, the public communications project manager for the council.

Interns help fulfill council's mission

The council has three interns, two college and one highschool, hard at work on projects this spring.

Ashana Armstrong began taking the Alaska Oil Spill Curriculum on the road, with two days of programs at the Whittier School in January. She plans to head next to Port Graham and Homer, followed by Cordova and Kodiak later this spring. Armstrong is a senior at Alaska Pacific University studying marine biology.

Seth Suydam began his research into the current and historical properties of Alaska North Slope crude oil. Suydam is from Seldovia, and is currently a junior studying petroleum

engineering at the Colorado School of Mines. Suydam will report on his findings at the board meeting in May.

Cadi Moffitt, senior at Cordova High School is sharing her green crab and tunicate invasive species monitoring work with fellow Cordova students this spring. She will begin monitoring the Cordova area for aquatic invasive species soon after.

"These internships allow Ashana, Seth, and Cadi to gain experiences that will benefit them in their future career, while helping us do work related to our mission," said Lisa Matlock, outreach coordinator for the council.



Ashana Armstrong is working with Lisa Matlock, the council's outreach coordinator, and the Information and Education Committee. Photo by Lisa Matlock.



Cadi Moffitt is working with Joe Banta, the council's science project manager and the Scientific Advisory Committee. Photo by Sarah Hoepfner.



Seth Suydam (right) is working with Austin Love (left), project manager for terminal operations, and the Terminal Operations and Environmental Monitoring Committee. 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 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 advisory committees:

Terminal Operations & Environmental Monitoring:

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

Members:

Chair: Harold Blehm, Valdez
 Vice-chair: Mikkel Foltmar, Anchorage
 Amanda Bauer, Valdez*
 Steve Goudreau, Valdez
 Tom Kuckertz, Anchorage
 George Skladal, Anchorage

Port Operations and Vessel Traffic Systems:

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

Members:

Chair: Amanda Bauer, Valdez*
 Vice-chair: Pat Duffy, Valdez*
 Cliff Chambers, Seward
 Pete Heddell, Whittier
 Orson Smith, Seward*
 Jeremy Talbot, Valdez

Scientific Advisory:

The Scientific Advisory Committee 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: John Kennish, Anchorage
 Vice-chair: Paula Martin, Soldotna
 Sarah Allan, Anchorage
 Wayne Donaldson, Kodiak*
 Roger Green, Hope
 Dorothy M. Moore, Valdez*
 Debasmita Misra, Fairbanks
 Mark Udevitz, Anchorage

Oil Spill Prevention and Response:

The Oil Spill Prevention and Response Committee works to minimize the risks and impacts associated with oil transportation by reviewing and recommending strong spill prevention and response measures, adequate contingency planning, and effective regulations.

Members:

Chair: John LeClair, Anchorage
 Vice-chair: Jerry Brookman, Kenai
 Robert Beedle, Cordova*
 Mike Bender, Whittier*
 Colin Daugherty, Anchorage
 David Goldstein, Whittier
 Jim Herbert, Seward*
 Gordon Scott, Girdwood
 Alisha Sughroue, Seldovia*

Information and Education:

The Information and Education Committee's mission is to support the council's mission by fostering public awareness, responsibility, and participation in the council's activities through information and education.

Members:

Chair: Cathy Hart, Anchorage
 Vice-chair: Linda Robinson, Homer
 Trent Dodson, Kodiak
 Jane Eisemann, Kodiak
 Patience Andersen Faulkner, Cordova*
 Ruth E. Knight, Valdez
 Andrea Korbe, Whittier
 Kate Morse, Cordova

*council director

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Community Corner**The importance of public comment**

By Lisa Matlock
Outreach Coordinator

The council regularly provides public comment on behalf of our 18 member entities on matters



Lisa Matlock

that support our mission of safe oil transportation in Prince William Sound. We are proud of our role as advocates on many technical topics of importance to our local citizenry.

Public input helped save spill equipment in rural Alaska

An example of effective public comment, both by the council and by many of the individual communities within the Exxon Valdez oil spill region, includes continued U.S. Coast Guard funding of remote equipment caches. Due to federal budget pressures, the U.S. Coast Guard considered cutting funding for remote oil spill response equipment containers. The council alerted member communities to the potential loss of the caches. We also provided written public comments supporting the continued maintenance of remote equipment storage. In the end, remote equipment caches continue to be included in the U.S. Coast Guard budget, making Alaska coastal communities throughout the state better prepared in the case of a spill.

Comments helped support spill prevention and response funding

Sometimes public comment is provided in person. In 2014, the council's legislative visit to Juneau coincided with a House Finance Subcommittee hearing for environmental funding. The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation presented to the subcommittee on the funding gap faced by its Spill Prevention and Response Division. After the presentation, the council delivered public comment in support of the department's request for

additional funding. In 2015, the department's request, along with support by the council and others, resulted in the development of a small refined fuel product tax. This new funding stream will help the department meet its prevention and response obligations to citizens into the future.

Input incorporated into local spill response plans

Important resource updates to the 2014 Prince William Sound Subarea Plan (https://dec.alaska.gov/spar/PPR/plans/scp_pws.htm) were also made based on council comments. Accurate winter species information was not captured in the first draft of the plan; in fact, it described the Sound as relatively barren in the winter. The council contributed species presence information in the update. The council's comments also addressed sensitive area protection strategies, contributing to a multi-organization workshop to address the issues last year. The council's public comments also provided research information on Prince William Sound oceanography circulation and weather patterns. All of these additions helped make the current plan much more effective in protecting the Sound in case of a spill.

Coming soon

Upcoming public comment periods are expected soon on several important subjects. Chief among them are:

- the 24-month designation of geographical areas in Alaska where chemical dispersants would not be preauthorized, and
- a 30-day comment period on the amended Prince William Sound tanker contingency plan.

These two documents include matters that concern both the council and its member communities. The council will be soliciting input for public comments when these become available, and encourages communities to comment independently. Providing meaningful and diverse public comments is vital to helping ensure the environmental safety of Prince William Sound and downstream communities, a goal both the council and our constituents work toward each day.

Alicia Zorzetto, the council's digital collections librarian, and Kate Morse, Information and Education Committee volunteer presented at the Alaska Historical Society conference in October to share how Project Jukebox, a oral history project that documents the Exxon Valdez



disaster, is used to educate youth about the council's mission. Left to right: Morse, Zorzetto, Matlock, council volunteer Patience Andersen Faulkner, and David Janka of Cordova. Interviews with Faulkner and Janka about the spill are available on Project Jukebox website: www.bit.ly/ProjectJukebox.

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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