



"Citizens promoting environmentally safe operation of the Alyeska terminal and associated tankers."

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Partnerships result in new Port Valdez weather buoys

Data collected will support improved oil spill prevention and response

The Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council has recently been working with regional partners to deploy two new weather buoys in Port Valdez. These buoys will collect data to improve understanding of the meteorological and physical oceanographic environment at the Alyeska Pipeline Service Company Valdez Marine Terminal and Valdez Duck Flats.

The council is mandated by Congress to study wind and water currents and other environmental factors in the vicinity of the Alyeska terminal which may affect the ability to prevent, respond to, contain and clean up an oil spill. These buoys will improve understanding of conditions in Port Valdez that could affect marine vessel safety and movement of spilled oil, as well as help with decisions regarding the timing of protecting environmentally sensitive sites in the area.

The first buoy was recently anchored off Jackson Point at the Valdez Marine Terminal in partnership with the Prince William Sound Science Center, Alyeska Pipeline Service Company, the City of Valdez and Valdez Fisheries Development Association. It is collecting weather data such as temperature, wind speed, wind direction and barometric pressure, as well as oceanographic information like surface current direction and speed, wave heights and water temperature. The installation has been permitted by several agencies and cooperation with the U.S. Coast Guard has allowed the council access into the marine security zone that borders the terminal.

"Partnerships like these result in collaborative science, which is the best base for providing answers to challenging questions related to planning an effective oil spill response," said Donna Schantz, executive director for the council. "We have advocated for this kind of data collection at the terminal and believe the information generated from both buoys will certainly contribute to best practices for prevention and response."

A second buoy will be deployed near the Valdez Duck Flats once permitting is completed. The second buoy has been made possible by partnerships with Prince William Sound Science Center, the City of Valdez and Valdez Fisheries Development Association.

Fairweather Science, a subsidiary of Edison Chouest Offshore, donated the buoys to the council for use in this project. Fairweather Science used these buoys previously to study weather and oceanographic conditions in the Chukchi Sea.

The council would like to thank all of the parties involved in this effort, including the City of Valdez for grant funds to support maintenance of the buoys, Valdez Fisheries Development Association for providing storage space and Sisioohl Marine, Inc. for donating bottom paint. Thanks are also due to the City of Valdez, Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corporation, Alyeska Pipeline Service Company and the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation for their efforts in the collaborative process resulting in the buoy near the Valdez Marine Terminal, which is founded upon the transparent sharing and use of technical and scientific information among all involved parties.

Data from the buoy now in place near the Valdez Marine Terminal is available at <http://www.pswsx.pwssc.org/MOB1.html>. The council has a direct interest in the successful operation and maintenance of weather buoys and stations installed in Prince William Sound because weather affects safe oil transportation and spill response. Other council-supported weather tracking resources can be found at <http://bit.ly/TrackingWeather>.

Timely delivery of data from the buoy(s) through the internet is not guaranteed. The user assumes the entire risk related to its use of information on this site. The Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council and the Prince William Sound Science Center will in no event be liable to individuals or third parties for any direct, indirect, incidental, consequential, special or exemplary damages or lost profit resulting from any use or misuse of this data. For further information contact Brooke Taylor or Alan Sorum at 907-277-7222. More information on the council can be found at www.pwsrca.org.

The Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council, with offices in Anchorage and Valdez, is an independent non-profit corporation whose mission is to promote environmentally safe operation of the Valdez Marine Terminal and the oil tankers that use it. The council's work is guided by the Oil Pollution Act of 1990, and its contract with Alyeska Pipeline Service Company. The council's 18 member organizations are communities in the region affected by the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill, as well as aquaculture, commercial fishing, environmental, Native, recreation and tourism groups.
