

1992 YEAR IN REVIEW

# Regional Citizens' Advisory Council



OF PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND



PURPOSE OF THE PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND  
REGIONAL CITIZENS' ADVISORY COUNCIL:

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



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# Executive Director's Letter

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*Sheila K. Gottehrer*

**T**HE MEMBERS OF THE PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND REGIONAL Citizens' Advisory Council are representatives of the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill's affected communities and boroughs, Native groups, commercial fishermen, and aquaculture, environmental and other organizations in Prince William Sound and the Gulf of Alaska. We have 18 different entities with 18 different voices.

When council directors meet to discuss issues, they naturally bring to the table different interests, concerns, motivations and points of view. Attend our meetings and you will witness discussions that are intense, powerful, penetrating, sprinkled with humor, at times heated, but always filled with a probing examination of perspectives and loaded with issues. Boring is not in our vocabulary.

From the very first meeting I attended, I was struck by the diversity of perspectives applied to a multiplicity of matters. No matter what the issue, however, one strong and enduring constant has always characterized the results—good and reasonable decisions.

Our directors will continue to make good and reasonable decisions under the direction offered by our long range plan. During 1992 the Council journeyed through a long range planning process designed to guide the organization. This plan will help RCAC increase its effectiveness, improve the organization and maintain a clear focus. Our long range plan emphasizes that directors are part of something larger than themselves or their individual organizations. The Council's purpose of "Citizens promoting environmentally safe operation of the Alyeska terminal and associated tankers" requires that broader concern and commitment.

# From the President

Scott A. Sterling



**W**ELCOME TO THE 1992 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PRINCE William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council. As you read our report, please note any questions or comments. We welcome feedback from anyone interested in preventing oil spills and oil pollution in the Exxon Valdez impact area.

During 1992, the Prince William Sound RCAC citizen-volunteers and staff from the Oil Spill Prevention and Response (OSPR) and Port Operations and Vessel Traffic Systems (POVTS) committees participated in numerous working groups and committees. Examples include a working group organized to develop a plan for heading off spilled oil that threatens shorelines, a federal committee charged with negotiating oil spill contingency plans for tank vessels carrying crude oil, and a work group studying options for towing disabled tankers at sea.

Prince William Sound RCAC's participation in such groups illustrates how citizen involvement in regulating and overseeing crude oil industry operations helps to

change the relationship between industry and communities from confrontation to consensus.

In 1992, the council also commissioned multi-year studies of socio-economic mitigation measures for coastal communities affected by oil spills, and the first phase of an independent environmental monitoring study. These long-term scientific studies are expected to yield valuable insight and information. Both studies are being supervised by the council's Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC).

In Valdez, the council's Terminal Operations and Environmental Monitoring Committee (TOEM) executed the council's review of Alyeska's study of harmful air emissions from the Valdez Marine Terminal. The council's process included review by a panel of independent scientists and public meetings. Although Alyeska criticized the process at times and ultimately declined to follow the council's main recommendation for controlling such emissions, the process demonstrated that local citizens are fully capable of reviewing and understanding complex scientific studies and policies that affect their communities.

The RCAC's newest committee, the Community Information and Education Committee (CIEC), laid a strong foundation in 1992 for public outreach and communications, much-needed work that promises to make all the council's efforts more effective.

Our best wishes for a safe and pollution-free 1993.

# Responsibilities

**T**HE WORK OF THE REGIONAL CITIZENS' ADVISORY COUNCIL IS guided by its contract with Alyeska and the Oil Pollution Act of 1990. The RCAC exists independently of both, but its funding and work plan stem from the contract and its certification under OPA 90.

## CONTRACT

The contract between Alyeska and the Regional Citizens' Advisory Council is explicit about RCAC's independence:

*"The independence, and public perception of independence, of the Committee is of overriding importance to the Committee in fulfilling its functions and in meeting public needs. This contract shall be interpreted in such a way as to promote the independence, both actual and perceived, of the Committee from Alyeska . . . Alyeska shall have no right . . . to have any degree of control over the formation or operation of the corporation . . ."*

Under the terms of its contract, the RCAC provides specific services to Alyeska and the public. They include:

- Review, monitor and comment on:
  - Alyeska's oil spill response and prevention plans;
  - Alyeska's prevention and response capabilities;
  - Alyeska's environmental protection capabilities; and
  - the actual and potential environmental impacts of terminal and tanker operations;

- Increase public awareness of:
  - Alyeska's oil spill response and prevention capabilities,
  - Alyeska's environmental protection capabilities, and
  - actual and potential environmental impacts of terminal and tanker operations;
- Comment on/participate in monitoring and assessing the environmental, social and economic consequences of oil related accidents;
- Provide input on actual or potential environmental impacts in or near Prince William Sound;
- Comment on the design of measures to mitigate the potential consequences of oil spills and other environmental impacts of terminal and tanker operations;
- Participate in development of the spill prevention and response plan; annual plan review; periodic review of operations under the plan, including training and conducting exercises;
- Comment on/participate in selection of research and development projects.

The contract states that the council may work on other related issues not specifically identified when the contract was written.

The RCAC was initially funded at \$2 million per year. The funding level is reviewed every three years.

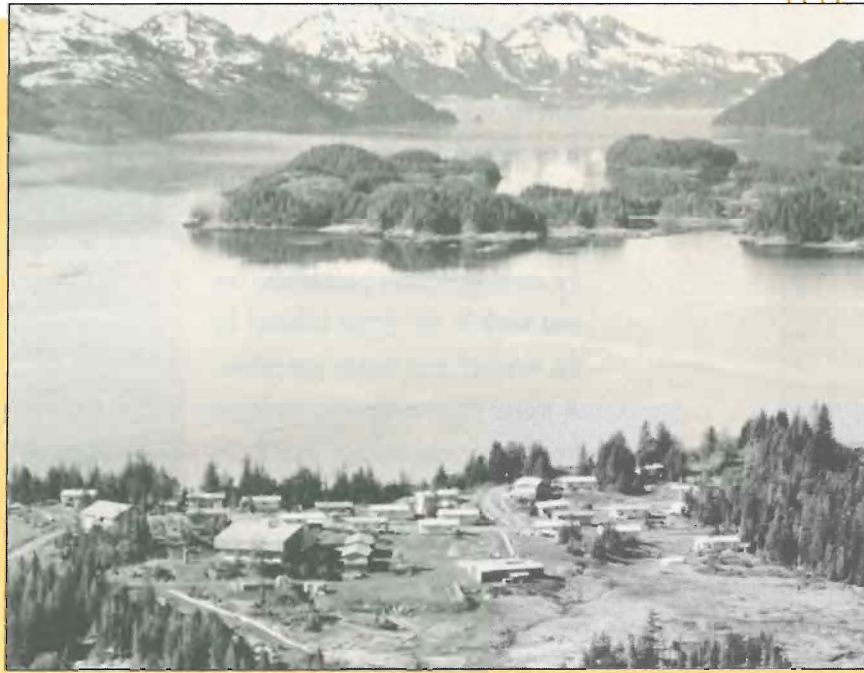
## OIL POLLUTION ACT OF 1990

RCAC's contract with Alyeska pre-dates the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (OPA 90), but the similarities are not coincidental. Many of the people involved in the establishment of the RCAC also actively promoted citizen involvement provisions in the federal law.

OPA 90 establishes two demonstration projects in Alaska—one in Prince William Sound, the other in Cook Inlet—designed to promote cooperation between local citizens, industry and government; build trust and provide citizen oversight of environmental compliance by oil terminal facilities and tankers.

The RCAC is certified by the President of the U.S. as the voluntary alternative advisory council for Prince William Sound. The law specifically allowed for an existing organization to meet the requirement for a citizen group. As the certified advisory council for Prince William Sound, RCAC's job is to:

- Advise and make recommendations on policies, permits, and site-specific regulations relating to the oil terminal and tankers;
- Monitor the environmental impacts of the terminal and tankers;
- Monitor terminal and tanker operations that affect or may affect the environment in the terminal vicinity;
- Review the adequacy of oil spill prevention and contingency plans for crude oil tankers operating in Prince William Sound;
- Advise and make recommendations on port operations, policies and practices;
- Recommend standards and modifications for terminal and tanker operations to minimize the risk of oil spills and other environmental impacts, and enhance prevention and response.



*RCAC recommends ways to minimize the risk of oil spills and other environmental impacts.* COURTESY ALYESKA PIPELINE SERVICE CO.



# History

**T**HE REGIONAL CITIZENS' ADVISORY COUNCIL GREW OUT OF the Exxon Valdez oil spill of 1989. The idea of a citizens' group to advise Alyeska Pipeline Service Company, which operates the trans-Alaska pipeline and terminal on behalf of the oil company owners, had been proposed by local residents before. The Exxon Valdez oil spill generated a change in leadership and attitude at Alyeska; the new leadership sought citizen involvement.

The concept of a citizens' advisory group was adapted from Scotland, where the local governing body in the Shetland Islands is a partner with industry in the operations of the Sullom Voe Terminal.

The Exxon Valdez experience had demonstrated that the oil industry could learn from people who live and work in the region affected by the terminal and tanker operations. A moral imperative also emerged from the Exxon Valdez: that those people with the most to lose from an oil spill ought to have a voice in the decisions that put their lives and communities at risk.

In July 1989, Alyeska's new President, Jim Hermiller, pulled together a group representing various communities and interests in the areas impacted by the oil spill to work with Alyeska on revisions to its oil spill prevention and response plan for Prince William Sound.

In December 1989, the Regional Citizens' Advisory Council incorporated as a non-profit corporation. In February 1990, after six months of negotiations, RCAC and

Alyeska signed a contract. RCAC had insisted on absolute independence from Alyeska, access to Alyeska facilities, a guaranteed source of annual funds and assurances that the contract would last as long as oil flows through the pipeline. Alyeska agreed to all four conditions.

Under the terms of the contract, RCAC provides specific services to Alyeska and the public. They include environmental monitoring; research; local and regional input on contingency planning, environmental and oil transportation issues; and public information about Alyeska's capabilities in oil spill prevention, spill response, and environmental protection.

While the contract between RCAC and Alyeska stands on its own, the relationship is reinforced and codified by provisions in the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (OPA 90), the federal law enacted in response to the Exxon Valdez.

OPA 90 established two pilot projects—one in Prince William Sound, the other in Cook Inlet—for citizen involvement in contingency planning and environmental monitor-

ing of oil terminal and tanker operations. OPA 90 requires that terminal operators or industry cooperatives in those two areas establish and fund citizens' advisory groups. The law specifically allows existing voluntary organizations to be certified as the citizen groups. RCAC qualified as an alternative group meeting the intent of OPA 90. As such, RCAC must be recertified by the President every year.



Anchorage Daily News, March 25, 1989.



# Organizational Structure

**R**CAC'S MEMBERSHIP CONSISTS OF COMMUNITIES IN THE path of the Exxon Valdez oil spill, and interest groups with a significant stake in the environment and resources at risk from marine oil transportation in the region. The 18 member organizations include villages, towns, small cities and boroughs, Native and conservation groups, tourism and recreation interests, commercial fishing and aquaculture.

Each member organization appoints a representative to the RCAC Board of Directors, frequently referred to as "the council." Member organizations have one seat each on the board, with the exception of Valdez, which has two seats. Board members serve at the pleasure of the organizations they represent, so long as they comply with RCAC bylaws and policies. Board members serve two-year terms; there is no limit to the number of terms a director may serve.

Much of RCAC's work is conducted through volunteer committees. The committees, with support from RCAC staff, design and implement work plans and formulate advice and recommendations for the board of directors' consideration. Although formal advice and comments must be approved by the board, committees frequently work directly with industry and government agency representatives on a range of projects.



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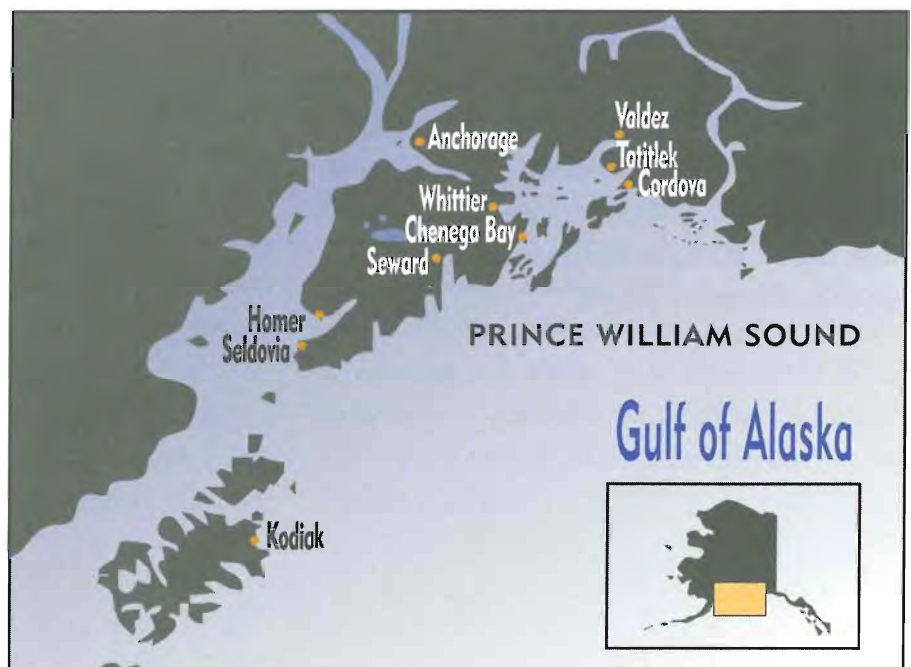
*Executive Director Sheila Gottehrer confers with Tex Edwards. Edwards represents the City of Homer on the RCAC Board.*

# RCAC Member Organizations

ORGANIZATION	MEMBER SINCE:
City of Cordova .....	Charter (1989)
City of Homer .....	Charter (1989)
Kenai Peninsula Borough .....	Charter (1989)
City of Kodiak .....	Charter (1989)
Kodiak Island Borough .....	Charter (1989)
City of Seldovia .....	Charter (1989)
City of Seward .....	Charter (1989)
City of Valdez .....	Charter (1989)
City of Whittier .....	Charter (1989)
Community of Chenega Bay .....	1992
Community of Tatitlek .....	1992
Alaska State Chamber of Commerce .....	1990
Alaska Wilderness Recreation & Tourism Assoc. ....	1992
Chugach Alaska Corp. ....	Charter (1989)
Cordova District Fishermen United .....	Charter (1989)
Kodiak Village Mayors Assoc. ....	Charter (1989)
National Wildlife Federation .....	Charter (1989)
Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corp. ....	Charter (1989)

## EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS *(Class II non-voting)* ADDED THROUGH 1992 BYLAWS AMENDMENT:

Alaska Department of Military and Veterans  
Affairs, Division of Emergency Services  
Alaska Department of Environmental  
Conservation  
Alaska Department of Fish and Game  
Alaska Department of Natural Resources  
U.S. Coast Guard  
U.S. Department of Interior,  
Office of Environmental Affairs  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
U.S. Forest Service  
U.S. National Oceanic and  
Atmospheric Administration



# RCAC Board of Directors '92

BOARD MEMBERS ARE SEATED AND OFFICERS ELECTED AT THE ANNUAL MEETING IN MARCH

## REPRESENTATIVE

## APPOINTED TO BOARD

Charles Christiansen (Kodiak Village Mayors Assoc.) .....	1989-91; 1992
Wayne Coleman (Kodiak Island Borough) .....	1989
Tex Edwards (City of Homer).....	1992
Larry Evanoff (Community of Chenega Bay).....	1992
Mike Gallagher (City of Valdez/Seat 2) .....	1992
Chris Gates (City of Seward) .....	1989
Keith Gordaoff (Chugach Alaska Corp.) .....	1989
<i>Replaced by Jim La Belle, July 1992, Michael E. Brown, Dec. 1992</i>	
John Herschleb (Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corp.).....	1992
Lynda Hyce (City of Whittier) .....	1990
<i>Replaced by Carol Till, December 1992</i>	
Andy Mack (Kenai Peninsula Borough).....	1991
<i>Replaced by Floyd Heimbuch, December 1992</i>	
Carl Marrs (Alaska State Chamber of Commerce) .....	1992
Michelle O'Leary (Cordova District Fishermen United) .....	1991
Darrel Olsen (Community of Tatitlek) .....	1992
Ann Rothe (National Wildlife Federation ) .....	1989
Kristin Stahl-Johnson (City of Kodiak) .....	1991
Stan Stephens (Alaska Wilderness Recreation & Tourism Assoc.)* .....	1992
Scott Sterling (City of Cordova) .....	1990
Bill Walker (City of Valdez/Seat 1).....	1989
Ivan L. Widom (City of Seldovia ).....	1992

\*Stephens represented the Alaska State Chamber of Commerce 1990-1992

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

PRESIDENT: Scott Sterling  
 VICE PRESIDENT: Keith Gordaoff, Lynda Hyce  
*(July-December), Tex Edwards (December-)*  
 SECRETARY: Michelle O'Leary  
 TREASURER: Bill Walker  
 MEMBER-AT-LARGE: Andy Mack, Ivan Widom  
*(December-)*

## EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS (non-voting)

Jerry Brossia  
*(Alaska Dept. of Natural Resources)*  
 Bruce Van Zee  
*(U.S. Forest Service)*  
 Cindy Gilder  
*(U.S. Environmental Protection Agency)*  
 CDR Bill Hutmacher  
*(U.S. Coast Guard)*  
 Simon Mawson/Steve Provant  
*(Alaska Dept. of Environmental Conservation)*  
 Doug Mutter  
*(U.S. Dept. of Interior, Office of Environmental Affairs)*  
 Pete Petram  
*(Alaska Dept. Military and Veterans Affairs, Division of Emergency Services)*  
 Claudia Slater  
*(Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game)*  
 John Whitney  
*(National Oceanic & Atmospheric Admin.)*



Board members John Herschleb, Ann Rothe and Michelle O'Leary.

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## RCAC Work: *PRODUCT AND PROCESS*

**T**HE WORK OF RCAC IS BOTH PRODUCT—WRITTEN DOCUMENTS—and process. The written work of RCAC primarily takes two forms:

- **REPORTS AND STUDIES**— These projects are usually done under contract with consultants, typically experts in specific fields. The consultant frequently works very closely with and under the direction of the committee that is sponsoring the project. Reports and studies may be used to formulate RCAC's position on specific issues, or to educate the committee or council as a whole.

- **ADVICE AND COMMENTS** - RCAC gives advice and comments on a wide range of issues.

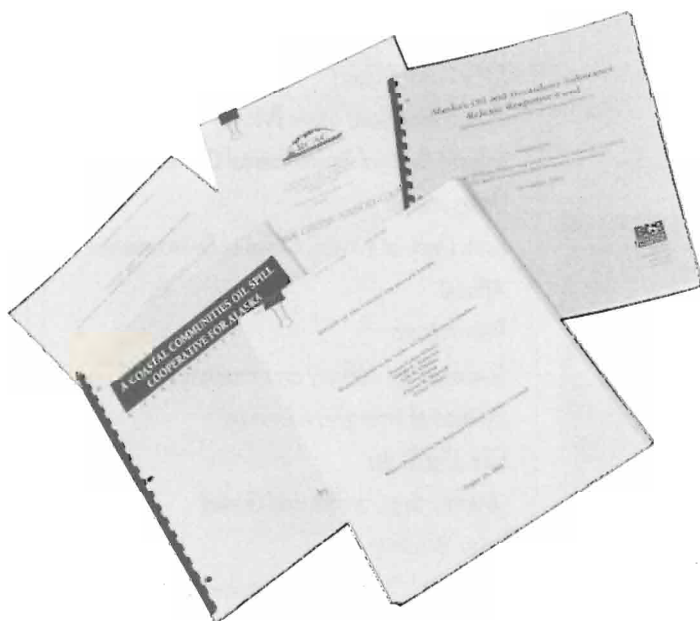
—Federal rulemaking - As part of the regulatory process to implement the Oil Pollution Act of 1990, the U.S. Coast Guard and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency issue "notices of proposed rulemaking" and invite public

comment. RCAC submits comments on pertinent issues.

—State regulations - RCAC formally comments on state laws and regulations related to terminal and tanker operations, and environmental impacts of marine oil transportation.

—At the council and committee level, RCAC advises Alyeska, regulatory agencies and the oil industry on matters pertaining to terminal and tanker operations, oil spill prevention and response, and other ways to prevent and mitigate adverse environmental impacts of marine oil transportation.

RCAC also works cooperatively with industry and regulatory agencies, through working groups, joint studies and task forces. RCAC is a member of the Prince William Sound Tanker Spill Prevention and Response Plan Steering Committee, a multi-organizational group organized by the State of Alaska to develop revisions to the Prince William Sound plan. RCAC has also participated in working groups formed to develop consensus on state and federal oil spill regulations.



*Representatives of RCAC, Alyeska, industry groups and agencies worked to develop a nearshore response plan. RCAC chaired the working group.*

# Role of Committees

**R**CAC DEPENDS HEAVILY ON THE EFFORTS OF VOLUNTEERS. Much of RCAC's work is done through five committees, consisting of experts, citizens with interest, knowledge and experience in specific fields, and members of the board. Committee members are appointed by the Board of Directors in an annual application and selection process. Each committee must have at least one board member.

The committees design and implement work plans and formulate advice and recommendations for consideration by the board of directors. Some of the committees also work directly with Alyeska, other industry groups and regulatory agencies through cooperative working groups, task forces and other issue-specific projects.

The council provides staff to assist each committee. Although individual staff members may work exclusively with one committee, all staff are accountable to the Executive Director. Most committees meet once or twice a month, with dates and times set by the committee itself depending on convenience and availability of the members. Because committee members usually live in different



*Jocelyn Barker, chair of the Community Information and Education Committee, and Gary Bader, Alyeska's civic liaison.*

communities, meetings are frequently held by teleconference. Although it varies from committee to committee, most try to hold at least one in-person meeting per quarter.

The time committee members devote to RCAC varies greatly, but prospective committee members should anticipate working 10-20 hours per month. Committee volunteers are reimbursed for travel and other expenses, but do not receive stipends.

The committee structure is stipulated in RCAC's by-laws and in the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (OPA 90). The committees have no authority independent of the council and are accountable to the council. However, committees may approve contracts up to \$10,000, direct consultants and manage their own budgets after the council approves the annual budget.

All RCAC committees work with Alyeska through liaisons assigned to them by Alyeska. Some state and federal agencies also assign liaisons to selected committees.

# Committees

**M**UCH OF THE COUNCIL'S WORK IS DONE THROUGH VOLUNTEER committees, consisting of council members and other citizens with interest, experience and background in a given field. The committees work for the council, with assistance from staff provided by the council. All official policy is presented to the full council for approval and further action. Public members of the committees are selected through a formal application process conducted annually. (\* Denotes member of the board.)

## COMMUNITY INFORMATION AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The Community Information and Education (CIEC) Committee was organized in 1992 to promote public awareness of oil spill prevention and response issues, the environmental impacts of marine oil transportation and efforts to mitigate those impacts.

The CIEC promotes communication between the RCAC and communities in the Exxon Valdez impact area; advises RCAC of information needs; identifies ways to improve communications between communities, RCAC and Alyeska; and educates Alaskans about the history, relationship and respective roles of RCAC and Alyeska.

Projects begun in 1992 include publication of a booklet on changes since 1989 in oil spill prevention and response; an RCAC handbook; a speakers' bureau and other public outreach activities.

COMMITTEE CHAIR: Jocelyn Barker  
MEMBERS: Rick Kurtz  
Andy Mack\*/Jim La Belle\*  
John Parker

## OIL SPILL PREVENTION AND RESPONSE COMMITTEE

The mission of the Oil Spill Prevention and Response (OSPR) Committee is to minimize the risks and impacts associated with oil transportation through strong spill prevention and response measures, adequate contingency planning and effective regulations.

The OSPR Committee monitors and comments on federal regulations implementing the Oil Pollution Act of 1990; reviews and comments on the Prince William Sound Tanker Spill Prevention and Response Plan; identifies strengths and weaknesses in prevention and response efforts; represents RCAC in the technical working groups of the Prince William Sound Steering Committee; and monitors and evaluates spill drills, exercises and training.

In 1992, the OSPR Committee completed work on the Nearshore Response Plan Working Group, chaired by an OSPR member; drafted final comments on the Prince William Sound nearshore response plans for the council; represented RCAC in the federal rulemaking process for





vessel response plans; prepared final comments on the vessel response plan rulemaking; drafted comments on facility response plan rulemaking; established a drill monitoring program; completed a report on Alaska's Oil and Hazardous Substance Release Response Fund ("470 Fund"); and developed the concept of a nearshore strike team demonstration project, which was subsequently endorsed by RCAC and established by the state legislature.

COMMITTEE CHAIR: Floyd Heimbuch\*

MEMBERS: Wayne Coleman\*  
Tom Copeland  
Gail Evanoff  
John Herschleb\*  
Lynda Hyce\*  
Charles Lundfelt  
Skip Richards  
Tim Robertson  
Patti Saunders  
Gordon Scott

## PORT OPERATIONS AND VESSEL TRAFFIC SYSTEMS

The Port Operations and Vessel Traffic Systems (POVTS) Committee monitors port and tanker operations in Prince William Sound. In 1992, the POVTS Committee worked with government agencies and industry groups, including Alyeska, to co-sponsor a major study of escort and towing equipment and procedures in Prince William Sound.

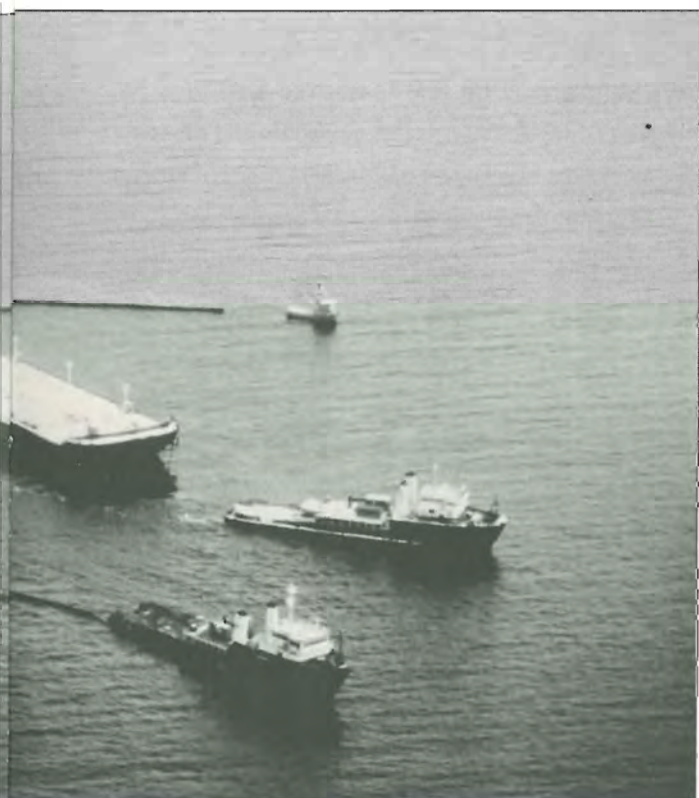
The committee also gathered data on tanker structural integrity, designed a survey of mariners to assess the adequacy of navigation aids in Prince William Sound, and began to seek ways to improve weather reporting and forecasting capabilities in Prince William Sound.

POVTS and TOEM formed a task force to determine the present capabilities of handling terminal and tanker fires and determine the potential consequences of a major tanker fire.

The POVTS Committee is based in Valdez.

COMMITTEE CHAIR: Stan Stephens\*/Tex Edwards\*

MEMBERS: Bill Conley  
Chris Gates\*  
Jeff Guard  
Vince Kelly  
Peter Kott  
Dennis Lodge  
Vince Mitchell  
Tom McAlister



DENNIS HARDING/ CHEVRON

Escort and response vessels corral a tanker during Chevron's Spill Drill in March.

## SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) provides scientific assistance and advice to the other RCAC committees on technical reports, scientific methodology, data interpretation and position papers. SAC recommends research priorities and policy, and reviews proposals. SAC reviews research sponsored by RCAC to ensure compliance with high contractual, scientific and technical standards.

SAC began two multi-year studies in 1992. The socio-economic study is assessing the social, cultural and economic impacts of major oil spills in order to develop mitigation strategies for communities in the spill-affected region. Most of the study's first phase—consisting of focus groups in selected communities—was completed in 1992.

SAC also completed the groundwork on an environmental monitoring program to establish a baseline for determining potential long-term effects of oil transportation and provide information for potential future impacts. Beginning in March 1993, field surveys will be conducted twice a year.

COMMITTEE CHAIR: Kristin Stahl-Johnson\*

MEMBERS: Sharon Araji, Ph.D.  
Ivan Frohne  
James Hemming  
Lynda Hyce\*  
Gary Kompkoff  
John Morsell  
A. J. Paul, Ph.D.  
Chuck Smythe, Ph.D.  
James D. Steward  
Carol Wilson

## TERMINAL OPERATIONS AND ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING

The Terminal Operations and Environmental Monitoring (TOEM) Committee evaluates operations at Alyeska's marine terminal with respect to their effect on the environment and identifies actual and potential sources of chronic pollution. TOEM recommends modifications to minimize risk and mitigate the impact of terminal facilities and



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*A panel of independent scientists, hired by the TOEM Committee to review Alyeska's air quality study, discuss their findings at a public meeting in Valdez.*

operations in the vicinity of the terminal. Major projects in 1992 were an independent review of an air health study conducted by Alyeska, and evaluation of sampling and testing programs at the marine terminal's ballast water treatment plant. TOEM also commented extensively to Alyeska and regulatory agencies on permits and site-specific regulations affecting air and water quality.

COMMITTEE CHAIR: Scott Sterling\*/Greg Winter/  
Dave Dengel

MEMBERS: Bob Benda  
Dave Dengel  
Julie Howe  
Judy Kitigawa  
E.A. Jim Levine  
George Skladal  
Stan Stephens\*  
Dennis Ulvestad

# Activities

## ■ DISABLED TANKER TOWING STUDY

After more than a year of negotiations, RCAC, the Prince William Sound Tanker Association, Alyeska, the U.S. Coast Guard and the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation agreed to co-sponsor a year-long study of towing and escort capabilities in Prince William Sound.

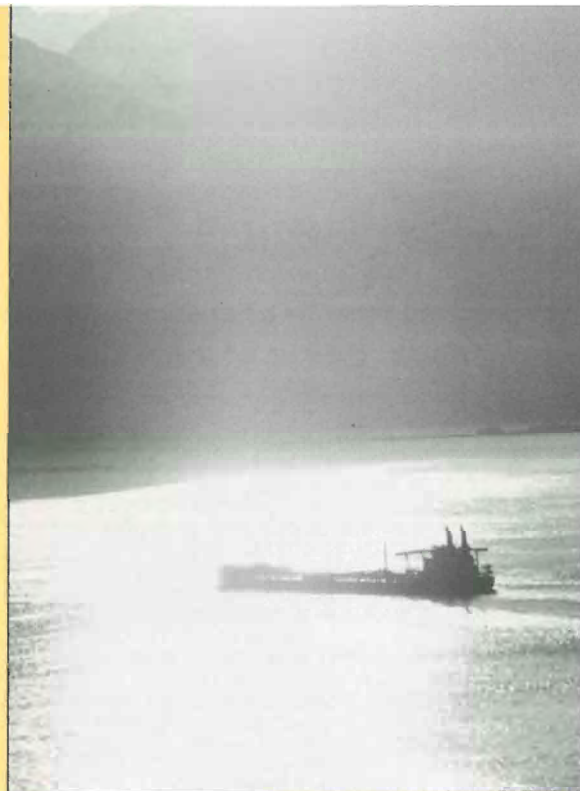
The study is evaluating the capability of existing emergency towing equipment and practices, and examining alternatives to enhance escort and assist capabilities for disabled tankers. Approximately two-thirds of the funding is from RCAC with the balance provided by the Prince William Sound Tanker Association. The study began in October 1992 and is expected to be completed in the fall of 1993.

## ■ NAVIGATION SAFETY SURVEY

The groundwork was laid for a survey of people who use the marine navigation system in Prince William Sound. Approximately 300 to 400 "users" will be surveyed to determine attitudes about suitability of current navigation aids and escort procedures. The results will be used to develop recommendations for improvements.

## ■ FIRE PREVENTION TASK FORCE

RCAC initiated a joint task force to assess current capabilities for responding to terminal and tanker fires. The task force includes representatives of RCAC, Alyeska and other oil industry representatives, the U.S. Coast Guard and the City of Valdez. The task force will develop recommendations for improvements, if needed.



COURTESY ALYESKA PIPELINE SERVICE CO. / RANDY BRANDON © 1990

## ■ T/V KENAI REPORT

RCAC staff reviewed information available about the October 20, 1992 incident in which the tanker Kenai experienced steering problems in Valdez Narrows. Contrary to newspaper reports, the RCAC found insufficient information to determine whether the tug escort saved the tanker from grounding.

## ■ SOCIO-ECONOMIC STUDY

A multi-year study was begun to assess the social, cultural and economic impacts of oil spills for the purpose of developing future mitigation strategies for communities in the region.

The first phase of the study, most of which was completed in 1992, consisted of focus groups in selected representative communities to confirm impacts identified in earlier public testimony.

RCAC and its consultants will work with residents in nine communities selected from the 18 identified as impacted by the Exxon Valdez oil spill, to develop specific strategies for dealing with the impacts of a future spill.



## ■ ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING

The contract was signed for a two-year environmental monitoring program, beginning in March 1993, to establish a baseline for determining possible long-term effects of oil transportation and provide information for potential future impacts in the study area. The study will monitor hydrocarbon concentrations and characteristics in nearshore sub-tidal sediments and bioaccumulations of hydrocarbons in the tissue of mussels collected intertidally. Field surveys will be done twice a year, in late winter and summer, with samples taken at seven to nine sites in Prince William Sound and the Gulf of Alaska. Samples will be tested for the full spectrum of hydrocarbons.

## ■ OIL SPILL CONTINGENCY PLANNING

RCAC works on a continuing basis with industry and regulators to review, revise and finalize oil spill contingency plans. The so-called "c-plans" are required documents that spell out how a tanker or facility would respond to an oil spill.

Much of RCAC's work in contingency planning takes place in a steering committee organized by the State Department of Environmental Conservation to address revisions to the Prince William Sound Tanker Spill Prevention and Response Plan. The steering committee and its technical working groups, all of which operate by consensus, include industry, government and citizen representatives.

RCAC also submits its own comments and suggestions for oil spill contingency plans, outside the steering committee process.

## ■ NEARSHORE RESPONSE

Nearshore response is an element of response planning that was a primary focus of efforts in 1992. RCAC played a leading role in the cooperative development of contingency plans for responding to spilled oil that threatens shoreline. An RCAC board member chaired the inter-disciplinary technical working group that developed the major nearshore response plan for Prince William Sound.

RCAC also sponsored several studies on the concept of coastal community cooperatives using local resources and personnel to respond to the threat of oil in the nearshore environment. A demonstration project using local resources was approved by the state legislature.

RCAC identified gaps in nearshore response plans developed by industry and advocated greater response efforts, including pre-positioning of equipment, outside Prince William Sound and after the initial 72 hours.



*Fishing crew members attach boom to a buoy near the Esther Island hatchery during an exercise conducted by Alyeska.*

## ■ HATCHERY PROTECTION PROGRAM AND AREA RESPONSE CENTER MOBILIZATION PLANS

RCAC advised Alyeska during development of new chapters in its comprehensive spill response plan and praised the results. The new components address hatchery protection and mobilization of area response centers. However, RCAC urged Alyeska to protect hatcheries outside Prince William Sound, as well, and provide more specifics about the area response centers.



SEAN REID © 1992

*RCAC staffers Scott Thompson and Michelle Meckstroth practice emergency response communications during an Alyeska drill.*

## ■ DRILLS AND SIMULATIONS

Since 1990, RCAC has participated in, monitored and critiqued spill drills, deployment exercises and spill simulations conducted by industry. Staff, directors and committee volunteers participate in and observe major drills. In 1992, RCAC representatives participated in major drills conducted by Chevron and Alyeska.

At the Alyeska drill in October, RCAC first used a draft Emergency Response Plan spelling out the organization's role in the event of a major spill and procedures for operating during an incident.

RCAC also began using a contractor to monitor and evaluate drills and exercises on a consistent basis. RCAC assisted industry and regulatory agencies in drill planning and post-drill evaluations. RCAC representatives submit written critiques and comments after every drill or exercise observed.

## ■ BALLAST WATER TREATMENT

RCAC recommended specific changes and improvements to the testing and sampling programs at Alyeska's ballast water treatment plant, in order to detect and discourage dumping of unauthorized ballast, and assess the effectiveness of ballast water treatment.

The recommendations were based on three state-funded studies directed by RCAC and completed in 1992. The studies evaluated sampling and testing of influent (contaminated ballast water as it goes into the treatment plant); sampling and testing of effluent (treated ballast released into the Port of Valdez); and sampling and testing to determine toxicity of the effluent.

RCAC also monitored developments at the state and federal levels on water quality standards. RCAC commented on Alyeska's proposed revisions to its "Best Management Practices," a federally-authorized description of how contaminated ballast water is handled. At the state level, RCAC formally opposed plans by the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation to lower water quality standards.

## ■ AIR QUALITY IN VALDEZ

RCAC commissioned a panel of independent scientists to review the methods and conclusions of a major study of air quality in Valdez conducted by Alyeska. RCAC held several public meetings on the air quality issue in an effort to present rational and fair information to Valdez residents about the risk of benzene exposure, and strengths and weaknesses of the Alyeska study.

At issue is whether Alyeska will be required to install a vapor recovery system to control emissions from tanker

loading. The emissions contain significant amounts of benzene, a known carcinogen.

Alyeska's study concluded that vapors emitted during tanker loading account for an insignificant amount of the benzene to which Valdez residents are exposed. RCAC's panel—Valdez Air Study Review Committee—disputed aspects of Alyeska's study and concluded that sources at the marine terminal contribute a significantly higher percentage of the benzene in Valdez air than Alyeska's study found.

RCAC formally recommended that Alyeska voluntarily install a vapor recovery system. Alyeska responded that it will not install vapor controls unless and until a health risk is attributed to terminal sources or Alyeska is required to do so.

#### PUBLIC EDUCATION

RCAC published four issues of its tabloid newsletter, "The Observer," which is distributed free of charge to approximately 13,000 households in the Exxon Valdez impact area, as well as industry and government. The newsletter documents the work of RCAC and includes pieces by and about Alyeska.

A special edition of the Observer in July 1992 addressed proposed federal regulations regarding requirements under the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 for vessel response plans. The Observer is available to the public on request.

RCAC produced a 10-minute introductory video, "A Voice for Prince William Sound," on RCAC's origins, structure and purpose. The video was distributed to RCAC member organizations, government agencies, libraries and other interested groups throughout the impact area.

A series of advertisements were published in newspapers throughout the region to alert the public to issues and events. Topics addressed in the ads included studies on air quality in Valdez, public forums on spill prevention and response, Alyeska's Ship Escort/Response Vessel System and the importance of citizen attention to industry operations.

#### PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

Members of the RCAC Board of Directors, committee members and staff appeared before public groups to talk about the work of RCAC and specific issues.

In addition to routine board member reports to member organizations, presentations were given to the Alaska State Chamber of Commerce, the Resource Development Council, the Homer City Council, the Arctic Science Conference, Minerals Management Service Information Transfer Meeting, and the Kodiak Island Borough Local Emergency Planning Commission.

The Executive Director made community presentations in Cordova, Whittier, Seward, Seldovia and Kodiak, and to shareholders of Tatitlek Corporation. The Oil Spill Prevention and Response Committee also gave talks on nearshore response in Kodiak, Seward and Valdez.

#### OPA 90 IMPLEMENTATION

RCAC monitors the federal rulemaking process, in which agencies write regulations to implement the requirements of the Oil Pollution Act of 1990. RCAC reviews and comments on proposed rules that pertain to oil spill prevention and response, crude oil tankers and terminal operations, in the area impacted by the Exxon Valdez oil spill.

In 1992, RCAC commented on draft federal rules for vessel response plans, escort vessels in Prince William Sound, facility response plans, use of automatic pilot, discharge removal equipment for vessels carrying oil and policies regarding appointment and responsibilities of area committees. RCAC also represented the public on a federal negotiated rulemaking committee on vessel response plans.



## ■ STATE OF ALASKA LAWS AND REGULATIONS

RCAC monitors enactment and enforcement of state laws and regulations pertaining to oil spill prevention and response, crude oil tankers and terminal operations. In 1992, RCAC conducted a study on how the state's spill response fund is used, advised state officials on requirements for professional spill responders, called response action contractors, and advocated stricter interpretations of Alaska's oil spill law.

## ■ NEW MEMBERS ADDED

Three organizations became members of RCAC, resulting in three additional seats on the Board of Directors. The new member entities were the Alaska Wilderness Recreation and Tourism Association, the community of Tatitlek and the community of Chenega Bay.

## ■ LONG RANGE PLANNING

RCAC held a series of retreats to narrow the organization's focus and develop a long range plan.

## ■ BUDGET NEGOTIATIONS

Consistent with provisions of its contract with Alyeska, RCAC began negotiations with Alyeska to determine the funding level for the next three years. Under the contract, RCAC received \$2 million a year for the first three years, with subsequent funding levels to be renegotiated every three years.

## ■ AUDITS

Three audits were conducted in 1992. Alyeska audited RCAC's performance of services under its contract. The

U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) conducted a comprehensive audit of RCAC as the alternative advisory group meeting the requirements of federal law under the Oil Pollution Act of 1990. The GAO audit is expected to be released in the spring of 1993. RCAC's routine annual financial audit was conducted by KPMG Peat Marwick.



*USCG CDR. Ed Thompson, left, enjoys a light moment with RCAC board member Andy Mack (Kenai Peninsula Borough)*

## ■ COOPERATION WITH AGENCIES

RCAC worked cooperatively throughout the year with numerous state and federal agencies on a wide range of regulatory and environmental issues. Because of its focus on environmental and marine transportation issues, RCAC worked most closely with the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation and the U.S. Coast Guard.

In 1992, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) began discussions with RCAC to strengthen and formalize its relationship with RCAC, consistent with the requirements of Section 5002(g) of the Oil Pollution Act of 1990. RCAC will encourage other agencies to follow the EPA's lead by adopting similar memos of understanding.

Under a federal exchange program, RCAC stationed an employee in the U.S. Coast Guard's OPA 90 staff office.

# Reports & Studies COMPLETED IN 1992

## AIR QUALITY VALDEZ

"Multi-media Fate and Effects of Airborne Hydrocarbons in the Port Valdez Region"

—*Multimedia Envirosoft Corp. (March 14, 1992)*

"Interim Report, Review of the Valdez Air Health Study"

—*Valdez Air Study Review Committee (March 19, 1992)*

"Review of the Valdez Air Health Study"

—*Valdez Air Study Review Committee (August 25, 1992)*

## WATER QUALITY/BALLAST WATER TREATMENT

"Sampling and Analysis of Influent to the Alyeska Ballast Water Treatment Plant"

—*Beak Consultants, Inc. and AJBL Consultants Ltd. (April 30, 1992)*

"Design of A Sampling and Testing Plan for Ballast Water Effluent"

—*Investigative Science, Inc. (August 24, 1992)*

"Toxicity Study Review for Alyeska Marine Terminal Ballast Water Treatment Plant"

—*Richard S. Caldwell, Ph.D. and Donald R. Buhler, Ph.D., Northwestern Aquatic Sciences (Sept. 16, 1992)*

## SPILL RESPONSE PLANS

"Status of RCAC Comments on PWS Tanker Oil Spill Prevention and Response Plans,"

—*Falls Creek Environmental (January 1992)*

"Report on National and Regional Contingency Plan and Response System as it Applies to Oil"

—*BCSB (February 1992)*

"Justification for Requiring the Use of NIIMS ICS in Vessel Response Plans"

—*Incident Management Associates, Inc. (July 23, 1992)*

"Comments on Regulatory Impact Analyses for Vessel Response Plans and Section 5005 Requirements"

—*Michele Straube, Esq. and Ruth Ruttenberg, Ph.D.*

"Alaska's Oil and Hazardous Substance Release Response Fund"

—*BCSB (December 1992)*

## NEARSHORE RESPONSE

"Capital Equipment Study and Recommendations for the Alaska Coastal Communities Cooperative"

—*Keith P. Kindle and Roy W. Hann Jr. Ph.D., International Spill Technology (May 25, 1992)*

"An Analysis of Oil Spill Mechanical Recovery Operations of the Prince William Sound Nearshore Response Plan"

—*Parker Associates, Inc. and ECO, Inc. (June 9, 1992)*

"Coastal Communities Oil Spill Cooperative for Alaska: Feasibility Study"

—*International Spill Technology Corporation (June 1992)*

"White paper: Wildlife Rescue Comments"

—*Charles Kelley Weaverling (July 17, 1992)*

## OTHER COMPLETED REPORTS

"An Improved Navigation Aid System for Prince William Sound"

—*ECO Engineering, Inc. (January 8, 1992)*

—*"Annotated Bibliography" (Draft Current Research Files; Select Biological Bibliography: Kelp and Blue Mussels; Select Bibliography with Abstracts: Kelp and Blue Mussels) Prince William Sound Research (February 15, 1992)*

"Department of Environmental Conservation Overview"

—*BCSB (August 1992)*







Regional Citizens' Advisory Council