

Regional Citizens' Advisory Council

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

The Observer

VOLUME 5, No. 1/WINTER 1995

Inside this issue

• President's thoughts

Stan Stephens reflects on RCAC as he steps down as board president. Page 2.

• Volunteer profile

Vince Mitchell chalks up a victory with weather stations in the Sound. Page 2.

• High praise

RCAC lauds Coast Guard, Cmdr. Jones for work on tanker escorts. Page 3.

• No move

RCAC Board votes to keep current staff in Anchorage. Page 3.

• Mental health impacts

Board okays project to help people cope with an oil spill. Page 4.

• Public review of c-plans

The public will be able to review and comment on contingency plans for oil spills from tankers in Prince William Sound. Page 4.

• Research recommended

Research into prevention, response and amelioration of oil pollution has been recommended for funding from the Exxon Valdez criminal settlement money. Page 4.

• SERVS gets a top dog

Gary Richardson moves over from BP to be the first Alyeska VP for SERVS. Page 5.

Harm from ballast water not evident; monitoring still needed, experts say

After years of environmental monitoring in Port Valdez, there is no evidence that effluent from the ballast water treatment facility (BWTF) at the Valdez Marine Terminal is causing significant alterations in the port's marine ecosystem, according to scientists who attended a two-day meeting in January. Participating in the meeting were scientists and others representing Alyeska Pipeline Service Co., RCAC, the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC), and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

However, the meeting's participants noted, knowledge of the plant's potential effects on all components of the ecosystem is incomplete, and an important function of future environmental monitoring will be to prevent significant problems from developing.

These were some of the main points that emerged from the meeting, organized by RCAC to discuss the existing body of knowledge about the plant's effects on the ecosystem and to identify environmental monitoring tools that will be helpful in protecting the port from degradation in the future. Topics discussed included the environmental status of Port Valdez with respect to the BWTF, the strengths and weaknesses of Alyeska's current environmental monitoring programs, and ways in which those programs could be improved.

The group also heard presentations about the use of caged mussels for monitoring, and flatfish reactions to hydrocarbons.

RCAC was represented at the meeting by

its consultants, Peter Chapman, EVS Consultants; Wayne Landis and Janice Wieggers, of Western Washington University; and Joe Bridgman, staff to RCAC's Terminal Operations and Environmental Monitoring Committee.

Representing Alyeska were Gene Dickason and Carl Rutz; and consultants Jack Anderson, of Columbia Analytical, Howard Feder of the University of Alaska; and David Shaw, University of Alaska.

Agency representatives were Judy Kitagawa, ADEC; John Karinen, National Marine Fisheries Services (NMFS)/Auke Bay Lab; and Anne Dailey, EPA. The meeting was moderated by Walter Brown.

RCAC hopes that the continuing scientific exchange will help state and federal regulators decide what monitoring requirements to include in the next federal waste water discharge permit for the BWTF. The old permit expired in June 1994 but remains in effect until EPA issues a new permit.

Chapman, one of RCAC's consulting scientists, was to brief the RCAC Board of Directors, March 9 in Valdez, on the ongoing dialogue regarding the BWTF and environmental protection of Port Valdez.

Some Valdez residents have worried for years about the effect of the effluent from the BWTF on marine life, in part because of the sheer volume of effluent – an average of almost 16 million gallons per day – discharged from the treatment plant into Port Valdez. The ballast is sea water contami-

nated with low concentrations of petroleum hydrocarbons and other compounds.

RCAC's consultants have not ruled out the possibility of significant environmental impacts showing up in the future, but the evidence collected to date does not suggest this will occur.

Environmental monitoring around the terminal and in the port has been carried on since before construction of the Alyeska terminal. The scientists who met in January noted that, compared to other marine ecosystems, there is a relative abundance of data regarding Port Valdez. Over the years monitoring has focused on hydrocarbon levels and animal populations in the port's sediments; changes in intertidal shellfish populations; the movements and habits of salmon fry from the Solomon Gulch Hatchery; the toxicity of BWTF effluent and toxicity testing of sediments from the bottom of the port; and other areas.

Most of the work has been carried on by scientists from the University of Alaska contracted to Alyeska. Their work has been reviewed by scientists for RCAC, EPA and ADEC.

RCAC has long advocated fine tuning the monitoring programs to provide more useful analysis of ballast water effluent and the aquatic environment in the vicinity of the terminal. RCAC's Terminal Operations and Environmental Monitoring Committee has been meeting with Alyeska to discuss the issue since early 1994.

Tanker escorts will change, but to what?

As major shippers of North Slope crude prepare to bring on new escort vessels to increase assistance capabilities in Prince William Sound, manufacturers of two different types of propulsion units touted their wares in recent presentations to industry, citizens and regulators.

Representatives of AquaMaster, manufacturer of a "Z-drive" propulsion unit, gave a presentation in Valdez in December. In February, Voith Schneider gave a presentation on cycloidal propulsion tractor tugs.

The shippers – BP Oil Shipping, ARCO Marine and SeaRiver (formerly Exxon) – have already promised the U.S. Coast Guard that they will use new escort equipment to address concerns raised by the Disabled Tanker Towing Study.

Under new escort requirements implemented by the Coast Guard in November, the shippers must take additional precautions unless and until they bring on new escort vessels capable of rescuing tankers in higher wind conditions.

Tankers will be allowed to operate in high winds if they are accompanied by higher-performance escort tugs. The shippers have committed to bringing on such vessels, but a

big question is what kind of escort tug they will settle on.

RCAC has recommended the Voith Schneider 7600 HP cycloidal propulsion tractor tug because of its performance in computer simulations conducted as part of the two-year Disabled Tanker Towing Study. Representatives of the shippers have said privately that they are very interested in the Z-drive. Both the cycloidal and the Z-drive can operate in an indirect, or dynamic mode – which is more effective than conventional tugs at steering a tanker – but the propulsion systems are different.

Three factors are likely to play heavily in the debate over which type of tug is best: cost, ability to get in position quickly, and safety or redundancy. By most accounts, the Z-drive would be less costly to build. Its proponents say the Z-drive has more "bollard" (or direct) pull in open water than the cycloidal tractor tug. But proponents of the cycloidal tractor point to its redundant engines as an advantage, particularly in the event that power is lost in one unit while the tug is retarding a tanker's advance. The cycloidal tractor tug can maintain its position

Continued on Page 3

NON PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
ANCHORAGE, AK
PERMIT NO. 836

People

Thoughts, reflections of the out-going board president

by Stan Stephens, President

Looking back at the accomplishments, the difficulties, the growth and the changes that have occurred since I joined the council in September of 1990, I now believe as strongly as ever that as long as oil flows through the trans-Alaska pipeline, we should have concerned citizens involved with advice and oversight.

Understanding a problem, defining it, and seeking independent, professional help to work with the committees and council is time-consuming and costly.

We have learned to work with Alyeska, the regulators and our advisors to try to reach consensus where we can in areas of concern.

All of us have the same objectives: to safely move North Slope crude to market, protecting the environment in the process.

The oil industry approach and the citizen approach are somewhat different. Industry must make business decisions and weigh cost against risk. We, as citizens, tend to push for the best technology available to protect the water, air and land in Alaska.

Where there exist such rich waters and pristine ecosystems, and such magnificent beauty as Prince William Sound, how do we weigh all of this, which will be here forever, against a short term, highly risky oil transportation system?

We, as citizens, cannot weigh profit against risk. We, as citizens, need to demand the best technology to protect Prince William Sound in spite of cost.

Somewhere there has to be a balance, because all of the risk cannot be reduced. There will be oil spills! Some of them will be

quite large. We need to continue to work together to reduce most of the risk.

Citizens need to be involved, for these resources, land, air and water belong to them. Ultimately, the citizenry is responsible for the protection of the land, air and water. This protection costs a lot of money.

The risk is not reduced when throughput drops. As long as oil is being transported through Alaskan waters and over our lands, a potential problem is a reality.

We have made much progress in the last few years with contingency plan review, disabled tanker towing study, tanker vapor controls and other areas. We have learned to work better with the regulators, state and federal governments, the Coast Guard and all factors of the industry. We have just started. We still have a lot left to do.

We need to settle once and for all whether there is or is not a problem with the ballast water treatment plant. We need to know what is flowing into our waters.

We need to know more about tanker integrity. The tankers are aging, but the waters are not more forgiving.

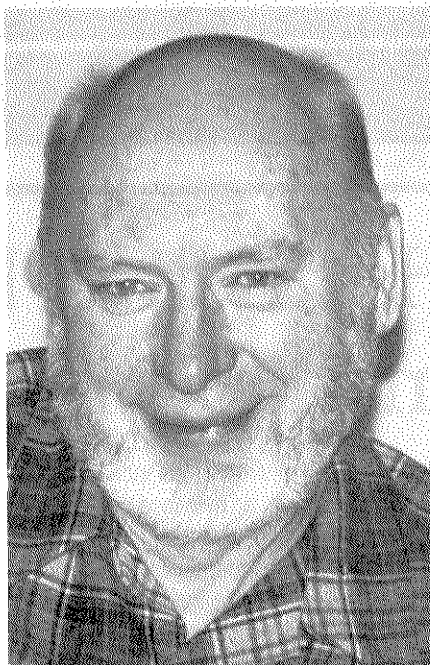
We need to settle the escort vessel issue. Has there been a reduction in risk by the action that the Coast Guard and the shippers have taken?

What are the risks from fire and explosion on tankers and at the terminal?

How are we going to handle a spill outside of the Sound? What have we done to reduce the risk to the waters from Prince William Sound to Kodiak?

We need to be working closer with the Cook Inlet RCAC.

We need to contract with a qualified,



Stan Stephens

independent engineer to advise on the terminal and its operation.

Have we really addressed the issues of the Native communities and their involvement?

When I recently visited Washington, D.C. and Juneau, I was told by members of Congress and state legislators that they thought RCACs had made oil transportation safer. They used the existence of RCACs and their successes as justification for proceeding with ANWR and lifting the export ban. I am afraid they overestimate us.

Are things better than they were in 1989? I think so. Are the RCACs contributing to safer oil transportation? Absolutely. But the RCACs are quite limited in what they can do

"We need to know more about tanker integrity. The tankers are aging, but the waters are not more forgiving."

— Stan Stephens

and people should not make the mistake of assuming a level of protection they can't possibly provide. The risks are still formidable and there is much work to do before anyone should feel complacent.

As outgoing president of the Prince William Sound RCAC, I think we need to increase our oversight by the use of contracted experts in the many areas I have mentioned.

Our responsibility to the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill region has just begun. It is the wrong time for Alyeska to reduce our funding. If anything, more needs to be spent to reduce the risks. The job of protection must go forward. As long as there is oil, there is a chance of another environmental disaster.

After two years as President, Stan Stephens is stepping down in March. He continues to represent Alaska Wilderness Tourism and Recreation Association on the Board of Directors.

Volunteer Profile: Vince Mitchell, POVTS Committee

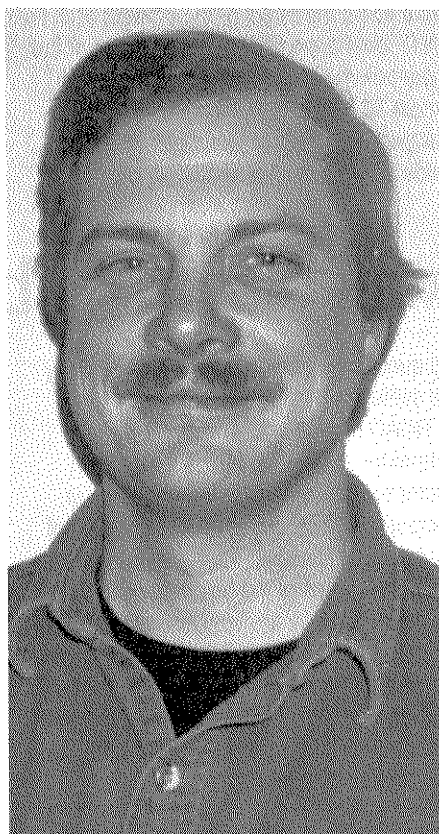
RCAC relies heavily on the energy, expertise and resources of volunteers. Those volunteers usually share some core values, such as the importance of citizen involvement and concern for environmental protection. But their interests and perspectives are wide-ranging and diverse.

Like many Alaskans, Vince Mitchell wears more than one hat. He's employed in the spill response side of the oil industry, but he operates a charter fishing boat on the side and served a stint in the U.S. Coast Guard. Mitchell's concern for preventing oil spills led him to RCAC, where he serves on the Port Operations and Vessel Traffic Systems (POVTS) Committee.

An oil spill specialist with Alyeska's Ship Escort/Vessel Response System (SERVS), Mitchell supervises the Price/Ahtna oil spill crews at the terminal. Mitchell has been with SERVS since the fall of 1989 and a Valdez resident since 1981. Originally from a small town in upstate New York, he graduated from the U.S. Coast Guard Academy in 1979 and came to Alaska with the Coast Guard, first to Kodiak, and then to Valdez. Mitchell currently holds a U.S. Coast Guard 1,600 ton (Oceans) license.

He applied to be a POVTS volunteer several years ago, with the encouragement of RCAC President Stan Stephens.

"I wanted to make a little use of my marine background. Before SERVS, I worked for BP Shipping, so I had a fairly good knowledge of the ships and the crews. I wanted to put that to work. With my charter



Vince Mitchell

fishing business, I have a very personal interest in preventing oil spills. Working with the POVTS Committee gives me the chance to have a bit of input on the prevention side," he said.

Mitchell is coming off a fairly heady success of the past year. He headed up the weather stations project, a two-year effort to

cajole the federal government into installing additional weather equipment in Prince William Sound. The new equipment is scheduled to arrive in May.

The \$500,000 appropriation to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) will pay for two weather buoys, one at Hinchinbrook Entrance near Seal Rocks, and one in the middle of Prince William Sound. Equipment will also be installed near Bligh Reef to measure wind speed and direction, barometric pressure and air temperature. Existing monitoring equipment will be upgraded at Potato Point.

"I can't think of a better thing we can do for the Sound to prevent and respond to oil spills. Right now, even with new weather restrictions, there's just no way to accurately say what conditions are at Hinchinbrook Entrance, not unless there's a ship already out there. The Coast Guard has to make these calls on whether to let a loaded tanker go or keep it in, without always knowing the actual situation. They haven't had enough information," he said.

Better weather data will also be a boost in response efforts, Mitchell said. "If there is a spill, the most important piece of information is what the heck's the weather doing. You need to know, whether for modeling oil movement, or sending out response equipment," he said.

The new equipment, and the information it generates, will be valuable on a day-to-day basis, as well, Mitchell added, since all mariners will have access to more timely and accurate weather data.

Mitchell found the project an education in government and politics.

"Here we had an idea, it was pretty simple, pretty straightforward to us. It didn't seem like it would be a big deal. Everybody liked the idea but nobody had the money to do it. But you can't just show up with a great idea and expect it to happen. It was a year and a half to two years of steady plodding, of soliciting support, gathering information, writing letters and making phone calls."

Mitchell said he thinks the turning point occurred when he and Scott Thompson, former Program Coordinator for the POVTS Committee, traveled to Washington, D.C. last spring. An earlier trip by Thompson and POVTS Committee member Vince Kelly had been followed up with letters of support from community groups, industry and local regulators. By the time Mitchell and Thompson began their rounds of the Alaskan delegation and the various agencies, the groundwork had been laid and the timing meshed with the appropriations cycle.

"We had answered all the questions and addressed the concerns. Having a volunteer show up in Washington from Alaska seemed to have an impact, especially with our Congressional delegation. It's one thing for staff to go; they seemed impressed that a committee member would take the time to come, too.

"It was definitely an education in how money gets appropriated and how the bureaucracies work," he said. "Obviously, it was well worth it."

Oil spill prevention

Aberration or pattern?

Coast Guard checking cracks

Four stress cracks on TAPS trade tankers in the space of four weeks have gotten the attention of the U.S. Coast Guard in Valdez.

"You get four in a row and it grabs your attention," Lt. Joe McGuinness, of the Marine Safety Office, explained. "Is it a statistical aberration or do we have a trend here? That's what we need to find out."

McGuinness said Cmdr. Greg Jones has ordered a review of data on all TAPS trade ships to determine whether the four cracked tankers represent a pattern or merely a fluke. The nature of the cracks was not unusual, but the concentration was. McGuinness said reports usually average 10 a year. As of mid February there had been none since the last one, Jan. 11.

"Trade wide, is there a big picture that we don't see when we look at individual hulls? We'll look for a trend that might help us anticipate and prevent problems," McGuinness said. If local Coast Guard personnel find evidence to suggest a pattern, they likely would call in marine inspectors from the Coast Guard in Washington, D.C., and marine engineers from TAPS shippers to pin down the problem and develop solutions, he said.

Shippers are required to inspect all their TAPS trade tankers at least once a year. In addition, the Coast Guard instituted an inspection program several years ago to more closely monitor tankers that encounter particularly harsh conditions, such as those routinely found in the Gulf of Alaska and Prince William Sound. The Coast Guard has been collecting statistics on conditions of hulls as they go through routine inspection and it is that data that will be examined for any sign of trends.

"Maybe there's something odd here, an unusual condition, or a bad storm that all four tankers got beat up in. Maybe all of them are

"Maybe all of them are in trouble, maybe none of them are in trouble. But four in four weeks, we're going to take a closer look."

— Lt. Joe McGuinness

in trouble, maybe none of them are in trouble. But four in four weeks, we're going to take a closer look," McGuinness said.

Two of the four structural failures were Class 1; the other two were Class 2. "Structural failure" is a term of art and it does not mean that the vessel has failed. Class 1 generally refers to a crack or leak in the water tight envelope of the ship. Class 2 refers to a small, or non-critical crack in the interior of the vessel.

In December, a leaky cargo tank was reported on the Arco Independence while en route to Valdez. The Class 2 crack was repaired in Washington state. On Dec. 21, a Class 1 crack was discovered on the deck of the Arco Texas, while en route to Valdez. On Dec. 31, a Class 1 crack was discovered in the hull of the SeaRiver Benicia during oil loading at the terminal. Jan. 11, a Class 2 crack in a void tanker was reported on the Prince William Sound, chartered by BP Oil shipping.

McGuinness said all of the incidents were discovered by the crew and reported to the Coast Guard. "That's good," he said. "It tells you that the shipping companies are doing a good job of watching their own ships."



RCAC President Stan Stephens presents the framed resolution to Rear Adm. James C. Card, Chief of the Coast Guard Office of Marine Safety, Security and Environmental Protection, in Washington, D.C. in January.

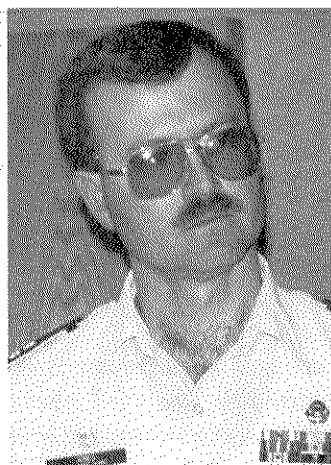
Coast Guard, Cmdr. Jones lauded for work on escorts

The U. S. Coast Guard in general, and Cmdr. Greg Jones of Valdez in particular, has received high praise from RCAC for the direction they took interpreting and applying the federal rule on escort vessels in Prince William Sound.

A resolution passed unanimously in December cited Jones for working to enforce the escort rule fairly and rationally, while fostering a cooperative environment for resolving differences among industry, regulators and the RCAC. The escort rule, which took effect in November, includes new performance standards for escorts that accompany laden, single-hull tankers through Prince William Sound.

"Through this cooperative effort, a vessel escort plan was agreed to by shippers and the Marine Safety Office in Valdez which significantly improved the safety of shipping in Prince William Sound . . . Cmdr. Jones worked diligently to effect the maximum increase in tanker safety currently practicable," the resolution said.

Framed copies of the resolution were formally presented to the Coast Guard's 17th District Headquarters in Juneau, to high-ranking officials in Washington, D.C. and to Cmdr. Jones in Valdez.



Cmdr. Greg Jones

Tanker escorts: Systems studied

Continued from Page 1
in this situation, whereas the Z-drive cannot.

It is not at all clear which type of tug is able to position itself most quickly into a rescue mode. That test may be the most important, since the Disabled Tanker Towing Study indicated that the single most important factor in a successful rescue is how quickly the assisting tug can respond.

RCAC hopes to answer some of the questions about the comparative merits of the cycloidal and the Z-drive by running computer simulations similar to those done for the Disabled Tanker Towing Study. Plans call for three sets of computer simulations, one each in Valdez Narrows, Valdez Arm and Hinchinbrook Entrance.

While shippers' interest in new escort tugs is driven by Coast Guard requirements, the state is also entering the picture. State regulations require "best available technology" in tanker escorts, but the term has never been defined. Like the Coast Guard, the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) is using the results of the Disabled Tanker Towing Study to match equipment and operational systems with performance standards and will likely define "best available technology" in terms of performance standards. The ADEC has appointed a working group composed of RCAC, the Spill Technology Review Council, the Coast Guard, Alyeska and shippers to help it determine how the standards should be applied to vessel escorts.

RCAC

Office and staff stay put

A proposal to move three staff positions, including the Oil Spill Prevention and Response Committee, from RCAC's Anchorage headquarters to Valdez, was defeated 11 to 8 at a special board meeting, Feb. 9.

It was one of the rare meetings in which all 19 members of the board attended, either in person or by teleconference. The original proposal, put forward by board member Bill Walker, who represents the City of Valdez on the board, was to move the entire Anchorage headquarters to Valdez and to base the Scientific Advisory Committee in Cordova.

Instead, he presented a compromise: keep the headquarters in Anchorage, but move the Oil Spill Prevention and Response (OSPR) Committee and the deputy director to Valdez.

RCAC's Valdez office currently houses four employees, representing two of four standing technical committees — Terminal Operations and Environmental Monitoring (TOEM), and Port Operations and Vessel Traffic Systems (POVTS). Ten employees,

including the two staff to the OSPR Committee and the one SAC staff, are based in Anchorage.

Although there were numerous arguments on both sides of the questions, the debate seemed to come down to one fundamental issue. Walker and other board members feel that an organization focusing on terminal and tanker activity in Prince William Sound should have a greater presence in Prince William Sound communities.

By the same token, they feel that the Oil Spill Prevention and Response Committee should be based in the same town as the oil terminal and Alyeska's prevention and response arm, the Ship Escort/Response Vessel System, or SERVS. Basing OSPR in Valdez, Walker said, would give RCAC better oversight and more opportunity for input to Alyeska.

However, proponents of moving the staff were unable to convince a majority of the board, who argued that RCAC is a regional organization that represents all the spill-

Continued on Page 6

Response and planning

RCAC gives go-ahead to mental health impacts project

Strategies for reducing the mental health impacts of technological disasters such as the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill will be developed under a program funded by RCAC. The program will build on research conducted since the 1989 oil spill to develop tools usable in communities hit by an oil spill or other technological disaster.

The RCAC Board of Directors, meeting by teleconference Jan. 26, approved a sole source contract of up to \$175,000 with the University of South Alabama. The project is headed up by Dr. J. Steven Picou, professor and chair of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at USA. The university is contributing at least \$90,000 of in-kind services to the project.

Under the two-year program, Picou will identify mental health problems associated with the 1989 oil spill, identify and develop effective strategies for dealing with those

problems, conduct a demonstration project in Cordova, and produce a guidebook to enable other communities to apply the strategies.

The proposal was developed and sponsored by RCAC's Scientific Advisory Committee.

Picou has conducted research on the impacts of technological disasters on small communities since 1982. After the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill, he did a study relating stress levels to actual and potential loss of renewable natural resources in communities economically dependent on those resources. Cordova, Valdez and Petersburg were used in the study, with Petersburg as the control community untouched by the spill.

In a report for RCAC discussing the project, Picou said research by his group and other social scientists "provides strong evidence that acute community impacts occurred initially and that chronic community

impacts continue to persist in Cordova" because of its dependence on renewable natural resources.

Problems cited include social disruption, social dislocation, work disruption, psychological stress, family disruption, subsistence disruption, economic loss, depression and psychological impairment.

Through most of the program, Picou will work closely with mental health agencies in Cordova, Valdez and Petersburg. In addition to analyzing existing data, Picou will conduct workshops with high-risk groups and mental health professionals in Cordova and Petersburg. Data gathered in the research and analysis phase will be used to develop mitigation strategies to be used in the one-year demonstration program in Cordova. The demonstration program will be conducted with the cooperation of the local mental

health clinic, Sound Alternatives.

Based on the Cordova model, Picou will prepare an implementation guidebook for use by mental health professionals and community leaders in other communities affected by the 1989 oil spill. The guidebook will identify procedures for applying the mental health program in their community and the resources needed to do so, and identify groups most vulnerable in the event of another oil spill. The guidebook will also include blueprints for community planning to relieve initial and long term impacts. The guidebook is to be completed in April 1997.

Letters of support for the project came from Sound Alternatives, the Native Village of Eyak Tribal Council, Cordova District Fishermen United, Cordova Family Resource Center, the Sea Grant Marine Advisory Program and the Valdez Counseling Center.

Tanker contingency plans open to public comment

Beginning sometime in March, the public will have 30 days to review and comment on contingency plans for dealing with an oil spill from a tanker in Prince William Sound. Public hearings will be held in Cordova, Valdez and Kodiak. As of mid-February, the precise dates were uncertain.

Each tanker that carries crude oil through Prince William Sound must have a state-approved contingency plan, detailing the equipment, training, personnel and other resources prepared to respond in the event of an oil spill.

Twenty-two tanker contingency plans were initially submitted to the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) in March and April 1994. One is the so-called "core" plan, which spells out the initial spill response by Alyeska to any tanker spill in Prince William Sound. The other 21 are the plans for specific tankers. The review pro-

cess takes a long time in part because Alaska has some of the most comprehensive contingency planning requirements in the nation, and the industry has been gathering the information to comply with those requirements.

There are two phases to the review process. The first phase, which took about 10 months, was to determine whether the contingency plans were complete; i.e., do they contain all of the information required by the regulations? In this phase, planholders were asked to submit additional information before ADEC could determine that a plan was complete. ADEC notified shippers Feb. 10 that their plans were complete.

In the second phase of the review process, the contingency plans are evaluated for adequacy to meet ADEC regulations and the standards of the Alaska Coastal Management Program.

RCAC has had a team of contractors re-

viewing the contingency plans since last spring. Separate from the upcoming formal public comment period, ADEC has taken comments on the plans from RCAC, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, the Alaska Department of Natural Resources and local coastal districts. However, most of the coastal districts have not had the resources to comprehensively review the complicated and lengthy plans.

Throughout the review process, RCAC has raised numerous questions and concerns about the contingency plans, many of which have been addressed. The main outstanding concerns are:

- adequacy of lightering capabilities to store recovered oil;
- whether the amount of equipment listed for response is sufficient;
- adequacy of arrangements to obtain equipment from outside the region, in terms of where the equipment comes from and whether it can

be on-site within the time required;

- specifics in the contracts for response equipment; and
- fire-fighting capabilities for a tanker fire.

ADEC currently estimates that it will approve or disapprove the contingency plans in early May.

The 21 tanker plans are the first ones required for each tanker since passage of new planning requirements after the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill. Before 1989, planning for all tanker spills came under the Prince William Sound Tanker Spill Prevention and Response Plan, now called the core plan. In the past, Alyeska had referred to it as "its plan," but changes in the past few years transferred responsibility for the core plan to a coalition of shippers called the Response Planning Group. However, state law still requires that Alyeska conduct the initial spill response on behalf of the shippers.

Oil pollution research projects recommended for funding

Thirteen proposals for oil pollution research have been recommended for funding by a panel charged with reviewing spill technology. The 13 projects, totaling approximately \$1.73 million, were selected out of 38 proposals submitted to the Hazardous Substance Spill Technology Review Council.

If approved by Commissioner Gene Burden, Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC), the research projects will be funded from a 1993 appropriation from the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill criminal settlement fund to ADEC for oil pollution research and development.

The projects recommended fall into three areas: prevention, response, and amelioration or restoration of oil spills. RCAC representatives were on the evaluation teams for proposals dealing with oil spill response and human factors.

The Spill Technology Review Council recommended that another \$800,000 in

research and development funds be reserved for proposals in four areas not sufficiently addressed in the earlier round.

In a Feb. 1 letter to Commissioner Burden, Review Council Chairman Walt Parker said the review council "felt that there were significant gaps in research in the areas of human factors in the maritime industry, fate and effects of sinking oil, remote sensing technologies for use in oil spill detection and tracking, and soil decontamination."

Last year, the Prince William Sound and Cook Inlet RCACs jointly sponsored a human factors needs assessment, which was used to evaluate the human factors proposals submitted to the Technology Review Council. In his letter to Commissioner Burden, Parker said the needs assessment will also be used to develop more specific requests for proposals.

Research projects recommended for funding include:

- Proposal by Alaska Clean Seas to benchmark best practices in oil spill prevention;
 - Proposal by National Academy of Sciences for a workshop series on human performance, organizational systems and maritime safety;
 - Proposal by MAREX on enhancement of readiness training to prevent oil spills from tank vessels in Alaskan waters;
 - Proposal by EMCON to determine the effects of burning as an oil spill response tool;
 - Proposal by Alaska Clean Seas to determine the efficacy of in-situ burning of Alaskan risk oils;
 - Proposal by Alaska Clean Seas for community education on spill response decision options;
 - Proposal by Prince William Sound Science Center for Alaska Oil Spill Curriculum Project: revision, kit development and teacher training workshops;
 - Proposal by Gallagher Marine Systems, Inc. for an emergency cargo pumping system for tank vessels;
 - Proposal by PES-Alaska for remediation of oil-contaminated ice using biosurfactants;
 - Proposal by Alaska Biological Research, Inc. to use multi-spectral analysis to map releases of oil and other contaminants in Alaska;
 - Proposal by Environment Canada to assess freshwater biodegradation potential of oils commonly transported in Alaska;
 - Proposal by PES-Alaska on decontamination and restoration of oil-impacted tundra; and
 - Proposal by Denali Corp. on small vessel and harbor spills resulting from fueling operations.
- At a later date, the Technology Review Council may also recommend funding for proposals related to simulators for training for oil spill response and ship handling.

Air and water issues

Kinnetic awarded environmental monitoring contract

The RCAC Board of Directors approved a new one-year contract with Kinnetic Laboratories, Inc., for environmental monitoring. As it has the past two years, Kinnetic will collect baseline data on hydrocarbon concentrations at nine sites in Prince William Sound and the Gulf of Alaska.

The data provide a benchmark for assessing the impacts of oil transportation and future oil spills. The environmental monitoring project is sponsored by RCAC's Scientific Advisory Committee. The contract was approved at a teleconference board meeting, Jan. 26.

Intertidal mussels will be sampled in March and July for polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs). Previously, they were also monitored for aliphatic hydrocarbons. That

portion of the program is being dropped because lipids – or fats – in mussel tissue contribute to PAH levels, making lab results unreliable.

Shallow sediments will be monitored twice a year, and deep sediments once a year, for both polycyclic aromatic and aliphatic hydrocarbons. In the past two years, deep sediments were sampled twice a year. The deep sediment numbers have been stable so sampling once a year should be sufficient. Eliminating most of the winter sampling of deep sediments will also reduce costs associated with weather-induced downtime.

In addition to measuring these hydrocarbons, the monitoring program also identifies the source of any found.



Kinnetics' Lanette Thompson (photo at left), collects mussels at Olsen Bay. Right, Janet Kennedy and Paul Barter take a sediment sample at Knowles Head. Photos courtesy Kinnetic Labs, Inc.

Alyeska begins using corrosion inhibitor in pipeline

After many delays, Alyeska Pipeline Service Co. was to begin injecting corrosion inhibitor into crude oil piping at the Valdez Marine Terminal in late February. Approximately 30 days after that, testing will be conducted to determine whether the corrosion inhibitor, which contains a toxic biocide, is increasing the toxicity of the effluent discharged from the terminal's ballast water treatment facility.

Alyeska originally planned to begin using Nalco 3554 and Nalco 3564 last year to prevent corrosion in the pipeline. The products work in two ways: mechanically, by coating the pipe and biochemically, by killing

bacteria that cause corrosion.

Small amounts of the inhibitor will end up in the ballast water treatment plant, via "water draws" from the bottom of the crude oil storage tanks in the terminal's tank farms.

Prior to seeking EPA approval to use the corrosion inhibitor, Alyeska studied the impact of the products on the biotreatment tank microorganisms, part of the ballast water treatment process. The studies showed that the corrosion inhibitor, at the expected concentrations, will not harm the microorganisms.

However, there is no information available about the potentially toxic effect of the

corrosion inhibitor on marine organisms and that is where RCAC's concern lies.

In early 1994, at RCAC's request, Alyeska agreed to postpone using the corrosion inhibitor until mid-June, after salmon fry had left the nearby Solomon Gulch Hatchery. Since then, other delays have arisen, including internal leaks around pipefittings in both of the double storage tanks containing the inhibitor products. The leaks were contained in outer tanks and none of the substance entered the environment. In a separate incident, however, several gallons were reported to have leaked onto the snow and were subsequently cleaned up.

In mid-January, the RCAC made several recommendations to Alyeska regarding the use of the corrosion inhibitors and the effluent toxicity testing associated with their use. Among other things, RCAC asked Alyeska to delay use of the chemicals until the exact reason for the leaks in the storage tanks could be determined; recommended testing to determine the possibility of corrosion inhibitor "spikes" in the BWTF effluent; and reiterated its request that corrosion inhibitor injection be suspended from April 15 to June 15 of each year to protect out-migrating young salmon from the Solomon Gulch Hatchery.

Alyeska

Richardson Alyeska's first vice president for SERVVS

Gary Richardson has been appointed to the newly created position of Vice President for the Ship Escort Response Vessel System (SERVVS), Alyeska's oil spill prevention and response organization for Prince William Sound.

Richardson is the only Alyeska vice president based outside Anchorage. With Alyeska's reorganization, business units in field locations have more autonomy. The new position reflects the elevation of SERVVS to a full division within Alyeska. Previously, SERVVS was a department under the Quality, Environment and Safety Division.

Born in Belfast, Northern Ireland, Richardson was most recently stationed in Aberdeen, Scotland, where he was manager of BP Shipping's Offshore Operations. He is a licensed Chartered Engineer in the United Kingdom and a fellow of the Institute of Marine Engineers.

He began his career with BP as a cadet and spent 15 years sailing around the world on both steam-driven and oil-powered vessels. With such experience behind him, Richardson carved out a career with BP that included acting as an international marine consultant and being a Ship Team Leader, which entailed overseeing operations of a tanker fleet and construction of three new tankers.



Gary Richardson

Richardson began his new assignment August 1, 1994. Among his duties, Richardson works directly with the 22 planholders – shippers and tanker operators – who have contracts with SERVVS to provide initial response in the event of an oil spill.

"I will discuss and review new developments at SERVVS with them and will draw on their marine expertise to benefit the whole

Alyeska operation," Richardson said.

In the event of a spill, Richardson would act as corporate crisis manager, while SERVVS Manager Jim McHale would remain operations chief for a response action. Richardson would communicate directly with the shippers, owners and upper level management at Alyeska.

McHale, who continues to supervise SERVVS operations on a daily basis, welcomed Richardson and said his appointment is another sign of SERVVS' maturation.

Rick Abel, Vice President of Quality, Environment and Safety, was previously

responsible for SERVVS and also welcomes Richardson's arrival.

"I believe appointing someone with Richardson's extensive background in marine operations demonstrates an increasing commitment by TAPS owners, shippers and Alyeska to world-class quality in spill prevention and response in Prince William Sound," Abel said.

Richardson and his wife, Linda, have built a house in Valdez. They have two daughters, Karen, 21, a law student in London, and Jenny, 19, a nursing student in Aberdeen.

New SERVVS base completed

There's no place like home, at last, for Alyeska's Ship Escort Response Vessel System (SERVVS). After years of being spread out in three different facilities, SERVVS has moved into the 26,000 square foot Escort Response Base on the south side of the small boat harbor in Valdez.

For the first time, SERVVS personnel and equipment are under one roof, although the Loop Road Annex is still used to house replacement equipment. An open house was to be held March 9.

On the first floor is the Valdez Emergency

Operations Center, the headquarters for drills, exercises and response actions. The VEOC has space for the U.S. Coast Guard and the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation for use during drills and response actions. Training will also be conducted in the VEOC. The first floor also houses the Duty Office and a shop for equipment maintenance and repairs.

Administrative offices are upstairs. Adjacent to the building is a 60-by-200 foot concrete floating dock with 200 feet of mooring space for vessels.



RCAC up for recertification

RCAC's efforts to promote partnerships with industry and shippers are expected to get particular attention by the U.S. Coast Guard when it considers RCAC's application for recertification later this spring. Under the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (OPA 90) RCAC must be recertified every year.

RCAC pre-dates OPA 90, but the federal law established demonstration projects for citizens' oversight groups in Prince William Sound and Cook Inlet.

Each year, the President is supposed to

determine whether RCAC meets the goals and intent of OPA 90, and thus satisfies the requirement for a citizens' group. The job of evaluating the two RCACs has been delegated to the Marine Environmental Protection Division of the U.S. Coast Guard, in Washington, D.C.

RCAC's application for recertification is due April 28. Copies will be available for public review from RCAC. The Coast Guard will also solicit comment from industry, regulators, communities and interest groups.

Staff news: Sweeney promoted

Tom Sweeney has been promoted to Program Coordinator for the Port Operations and Vessel Traffic Systems (POVTS) Committee. Sweeney had been Project Assistant with the POVTS Committee since September 1993.

He fills the position vacated the end of December by Scott Thompson, who left RCAC to take a position with the Prince

William Sound Community College.

Sweeney spent 10 years sailing as a mate with Sauce Brothers Ocean Towing out of Coos Bay, Oregon. Before moving to Valdez, he studied migration and habitat of Coho salmon at NOAA in Juneau. Sweeney is a graduate of the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy.

He was born and raised in New York.

Office, staff stay in Anchorage

Continued from Page 3
impacted areas, not just Prince William Sound.

"For me, the heart of this issue is that oil spill prevention and response is for the entire region," Homer representative Tex Edwards said. "I got a lot more oil on my boots in Homer than I did in Valdez. We are a regional organization. Anchorage is the commercial and transportation hub of our region."

He and others said that precisely because of SERVS, Valdez is well-protected in the event of a spill, much more so than the downstream communities. They said the OSPR Committee can best serve the entire region by remaining in Anchorage.

Under the motion ultimately passed by the board, the RCAC headquarters and its current staff are to remain in Anchorage for 10 years. The 10-year provision is not enforceable, however, since a board member can bring up the issue again at any time. Three years ago, an effort to move the

headquarters to Valdez failed on a tie vote.

Joining Edwards in voting to keep the headquarters and staff positions in Anchorage were: Charles Christiansen, Kodiak Village Mayors' Association; Elizabeth Renz, City of Seldovia; Kristin Stahl-Johnson, City of Kodiak; Wayne Coleman, Kodiak Island Borough; Stan Stephens, Alaska Wilderness Recreation and Tourism Association; Charles K. Weaverling, Oil Spill Region Environmental Coalition; Tom Copeland, Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corp.; Carol Till, City of Whittier; Michelle Hahn O'Leary, Cordova District Fishermen United; and Dennis Lodge, City of Seward.

Voting with Walker to move the positions to Valdez were Mike Gallagher, City of Valdez; Margy Johnson, City of Cordova; Blake Johnson, Kenai Peninsula Borough; Keith Gordaoff, Chugach Alaska Corp.; Gary Kompkoff, Community of Tatitlek; Larry Evanoff, Community of Chenega Bay; and Jim Cloud, Alaska State Chamber of Commerce.

Publications, reports available

Copies of most documents are available to the public free of charge. A handling fee will be charged for unusually large documents and for requests of more than 10 documents. The following are new publications and reports, since November 1994.

Publications & Consultants' Reports

- 1994 RCAC "Year in Review," an overview of work and activities. (Ref. #5.9.511.94)
- "Annual Monitoring Report - 1994," Long Term Environmental Monitoring Program. Author: Kinnetic Laboratories, Inc. Feb. 95. (Ref. #4.5.4009G).

Advice & Comments

- Request to Alyeska to suspend use of corrosion inhibitors in the pipeline pending determination of the cause of a tank leak and comments on toxicity testing. Jan. 16, '95. (Ref. A/C #1.21028)
- Comments to ADEC on the Prince

William Sound Tanker Oil Discharge and Response Plan, regarding availability of spill response equipment from outside the region. Jan. 13, '95. (Ref. A/C #2.2.2544)

- Comments to ADEC on timeline for review of the Prince William Sound Tanker Oil Discharge and Response Plan. Dec. 20, '94. (Ref. A/C #2.2.2542)
- Comments to ADEC requesting additional information on the core plan and individual tanker oil spill contingency plans. Nov. 17, '94 (Ref. A/C #2.2.2539)

- Recommendations and comments to the USCG on escort vessel operations. Nov. 3, '94. (Ref. A/C #10.2.2025) Also sent to ADEC, Alyeska and Prince William Sound Tanker Association.

Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council

The Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council (RCAC) is an independent, non-profit organization formed after the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill to minimize the environmental impacts associated with the terminal and tanker fleet.

The RCAC has 18 member organizations, including communities impacted by the Exxon Valdez oil spill, a Native regional corporation and groups representing fishing, aquaculture, environmental, tourism and recreation interests in the impact area.

RCAC 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. The contract, which is in effect as long as oil flows through the pipeline, guarantees RCAC's independence, provides annual funding, and ensures RCAC the same access to terminal facilities as state and federal regulatory agencies.

The mission of RCAC is citizens promoting environmentally safe operation of the Alyeska terminal and associated tankers.

Board of Directors

Jim Cloud	Alaska State Chamber of Commerce
Stan Stephens	AK Wilderness Recreation & Tourism Assoc.
Larry Evanoff	Community of Chenega Bay
Keith Gordaoff	Chugach Alaska Corporation
Margy Johnson	City of Cordova
Michelle O'Leary	Cordova District Fishermen United
Tex Edwards	City of Homer
Blake Johnson	Kenai Peninsula Borough
Kristin Stahl-Johnson	City of Kodiak
Wayne Coleman	Kodiak Island Borough
Charles Christiansen	Kodiak Village Mayors Association
C. Kelley Weaverling	Oil Spill Region Environmental Coalition
Tom Copeland	Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corp.
Elizabeth Renz	City of Seldovia
Dennis Lodge	City of Seward
Gary Kompkoff	Community of Tatitlek
Mike Gallagher	City of Valdez
Bill Walker	City of Valdez
Carol Till	City of Whittier

Executive Committee

Stan Stephens - President
Michelle O'Leary - Vice president
Kelley Weaverling - Secretary
Bill Walker - Treasurer
Wayne Coleman - Member at-large

Staff

Anchorage

Stan Stanley, Executive Director
Marilyn Leland, Deputy Director
Linda Robinson, Financial Operations Manager
Daphne Jenkins, Information Systems Manager
Michelle Meckstroth, Executive Assistant/Volunteer Coordinator
Andrea Archer, Administrative Assistant
Patty Ginsburg, Communications/Information Specialist
Joe Banta, Program Coordinator, Oil Spill Prevention & Response Comm.
Lisa Tomrdle, Project Assistant, Oil Spill Prevention & Response Comm.
Marjorie Fowler, Program Coordinator, Scientific Advisory Committee

Valdez

Joe Bridgman, Program Coord., Terminal Ops & Environmental Monitoring Comm.
Leann Ferry, Project Assistant, Terminal Ops & Environmental Monitoring Comm.
Tom Sweeney, Program Coord., Port Ops & Vessel Traffic Systems Comm.
Rica Salvador, Administrative Clerical Assistant

Headquarters
750 W. 2nd Ave. Suite 100
Anchorage, Alaska 99501-2168
Phone: 907/277-7222
FAX: 907/277-4523

TOEM & POVTS Committees:
Royal Center, 310 Egan St., Rm. 210
P.O. Box 3089
Valdez, Alaska 99686
Phone: 907/835-5957 FAX: 907/835-5926

Toll free in Alaska: 800 478-7221