

Regional Citizens' Advisory Council

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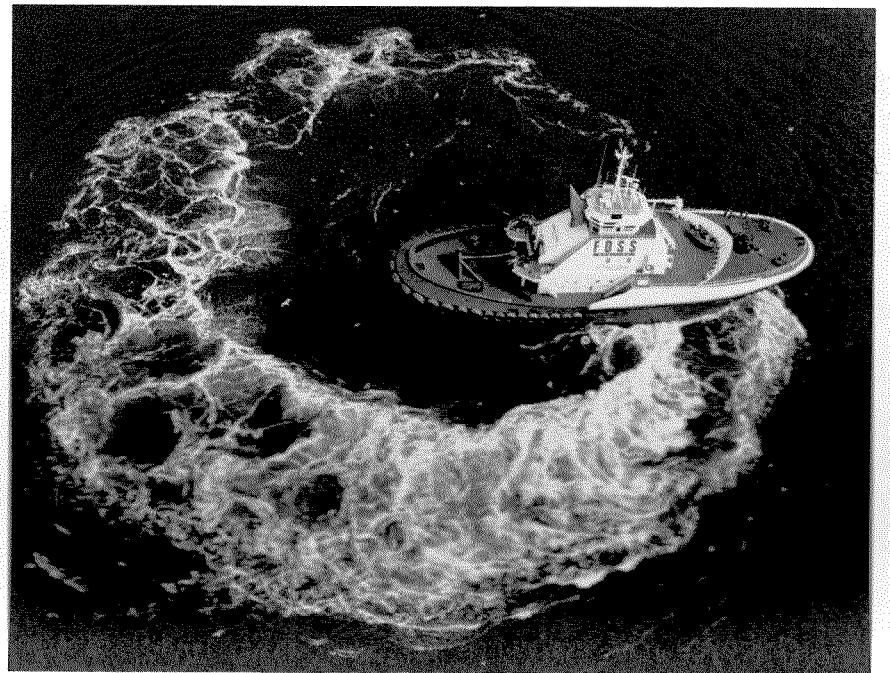
New tugs in the works for Sound

Two new tractor tugs will be built to escort laden tankers through Prince William Sound, under plans announced in March. The new tugs will be at least as capable as the Lindsey Foss and Garth Foss, which currently operate in Puget Sound, according to Simon Lisiecki, Manager of Marine Affairs Alaska, for BP Oil.

The new tugs are expected to be in service in about two years. RCAC has been lobbying for tractor tugs in Prince William Sound for several years because the propulsion system on the tractor tug makes it more maneuverable than tugs with convention propulsion systems. That maneuverability enables the tractor tug to save a disabled tanker in situations where a conventional tug cannot.

RCAC President Tex Edwards congratulated Alyeska and the shipping companies for their willingness to make a relatively safe system even safer.

"We congratulate those in industry who are taking the long view in looking at their tug investments. What's best for their long term interests is also best for



The two new tractor tugs for Prince William Sound will have performance capability equal to or better than the Garth Foss, a 7,600 HP tractor tug.

Alaska because it means a safer system. We appreciate Governor Knowles' interest in the issue. Clearly we wouldn't be here now without it," Edwards said.

Stan Stephens, a member of the RCAC board and a long time advocate of tractor tugs, said he's delighted. "When you really get

down to it, we all want the same thing – the safest possible system. The new tugs will provide a margin of safety we haven't had before. We all reap the benefits."

As of mid-March, it was not yet clear what horsepower the new tugs will have. BP's Lisiecki said they will

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When stationed at Hinchinbrook Entrance, the 11,500 HP tug Gulf Service will be able to assist any tankers that run into trouble. The Gulf Service was to arrive in Alaska around April 10.

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Air & Water

Caged mussels deployed in pilot test

More than 2,000 mussels - each housed in its own little compartment of plastic mesh - were placed into Port Valdez Feb. 26, where they will stay, suspended in the water column 15-25 feet above the sea floor for about 60 days.

The so-called "caged" mussels are the centerpiece of a pilot study funded by RCAC. The purpose of the pilot study is to determine whether the mussels would be an appropriate tool to monitor

exposure to hydrocarbons in the effluent discharged from the ballast water treatment facility at the Valdez Marine Terminal. Caged mussels routinely are used to monitor pollutants in other waterways, but not at the depths (about 200 feet) nor cold temperatures to which they are being exposed in Port Valdez.

Each mussel was identified by its position in the plastic mesh, weighed and measured before

deployment. In about 60 days, they will be retrieved and weighed and measured again to gauge their ability to survive and grow in Port Valdez. The mussels were deployed in seven locations, moving progressively west from the ballast water treatment facility diffuser.

Crews from Alyeska assisted in the positioning of the mussels to avoid interference with terminal operations.

The "cages" are not little wire boxes. Rather, a long plastic mesh sleeve is used, similar to a nylon stocking knotted at the bottom. A mussel is dropped in, and its compartment tied off with plastic cable tie. Another mussel is dropped in and tied off, and so on. Strings of mussels in their sleeve compartments are then hung across PVC plastic frames to hold them in place. The frames are suspended in the water column using a buoy and anchor.



Crew prepares to drop frames holding strings of mussels into Port Valdez. Photo by Sandra Salazar.

RCAC monitored sheen at terminal

Consistent with its emergency response plan, RCAC deployed an emergency response team to Valdez January 10, after receiving reports of the sheen incident at the Valdez Marine Terminal. Under its emergency response plan, RCAC has four primary tasks to perform during a spill: observe, verify, inform, and advise.

RCAC maintained observers in the field to report on the sheen and the clean up efforts, sent periodic updates to the RCAC Board of Directors and their member organizations, advised the incident command, and checked information relayed to the public.

RCAC representatives also participated in the team organized by Alyeska to investigate the root cause of the sheen. The most probable cause was a design flaw in the air strippers of the ballast water treatment facility.

Alyeska was seriously criticized by the U.S. Coast Guard and the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation for being slow to identify the ballast water treatment facility as the source of the sheen. On the other hand, Alyeska did receive high marks for its response performance and cooperation, especially with RCAC.

Study ranks Duck Flats at highest ecological risk

Treated ballast water discharged into Port Valdez poses a relatively low risk to the environment, according to a modeling study conducted by scientists for RCAC and Alyeska Pipeline Service Co.

The study - actually a conceptual model - found that contaminated runoff, accidental spills and shoreline activity present relatively high risks. Vessel traffic, and construction and development pose relatively moderate risk. Treated discharges, seafood and fish wastes, and salmon released from the local hatchery pose relatively low risk.

The study also found that the Duck Flats/Old Valdez area is the most vulnerable to environmental damage from contamination or disruption.

RCAC is conducting an internal review of the study to understand the results and determine future uses of the model. RCAC is also asking its consultants for more information to differentiate those ecological risks that are associated with terminal and tanker operations.

The two-year study, "A Regional, Multiple Stressor Ecological Risk Assessment for Port Valdez, Alaska," looked at hundreds of actual and potential "stressors." Stressors are contaminants or activities that have or could have a negative impact on the environment. These range from chemicals - such as hydrocarbons, metals and anti-fouling paint on boats - to organic wastes such as fish processing waste and treated sewage, to human activities such as

vessel traffic, construction and development, and other shoreline activity.

The ecological risk assessment is based on the most exhaustive review to date of available information about the Port Valdez marine environment and the human - and natural - stresses on that environment. Because of the unusually large area and large number of ecological stressors and receptors under consideration.

One purpose of the study was to evaluate the risks posed by treated ballast water relative to the risks from other discharges and activities along the Port.

There has long been concern about the environmental impacts of treated ballast water discharged into Port Valdez at the Valdez Marine Terminal. Alyeska's ballast water treatment facility discharges an average of 16 million gallons of effluent a day into Port Valdez. Despite that volume, monitoring over the years has not shown treated ballast is having a significant negative effect on the Port Valdez marine environment.

The study was conducted by Dr. Wayne Landis and Janice Wiegiers of Western Washington University, and Drs. David Shaw and Howard Feder, of the University of Alaska Fairbanks. Landis and Wiegiers were retained by RCAC; Shaw and Feder are consultants to Alyeska.

Early on in the project, the consultants held a series of public meetings in Valdez to find out what the community was concerned about, in terms of

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Alyeska to investigate new monitoring system

Under an agreement with the state, Alyeska Pipeline Service Co. will research and may adopt technology to better detect hydrocarbon levels in effluent from the ballast water treatment facility (BWTF). The agreement stems from an incident January 10, in which a mysterious sheen appeared in Port Valdez near the tanker loading berths. It was two days before the BWTF was identified as the source of the sheen.

The most likely root cause of the sheen is a design flaw in the air stripper. That design flaw will be fixed, but the incident triggered questions about the adequacy of the program set up to monitor BWTF effluent.

Effluent from the BWTF contains hydrocarbons and other pollutants

and is regulated by a federal permit. The sampling and monitoring program required by the existing permit didn't pick up the hydrocarbon spikes during the January sheen incident.

Coincidentally, a new five-year permit is about to be issued. The state must sign off on the new permit and may attach additional conditions. Among the state's conditions for the new permit is that Alyeska evaluate, and implement if feasible, a sampling and monitoring program that will pick up atypical levels of hydrocarbons in the discharge.

RCAC has called for continuous monitoring of hydrocarbons from the BWTF. Alyeska's agreement with the state does not require "continuous" monitoring.

Air & Water

Workshop: Non-native aquatic species already here but many questions remain

A couple of things are pretty well certain. 1. Prince William Sound has become home to at least a half-a-dozen aquatic species not native to the region. 2. The cold waters and high latitude of Prince William Sound are no protection against invasion by aquatic nuisances. 3. Prince William Sound has attributes that put it at risk of such invasion.

But the follow up questions – what has moved in, where are these species coming from, have they established here, and what impact are they having – are a long way from being answered.

Those issues and many more were addressed at a one-day workshop in Anchorage, March 25, sponsored by RCAC and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The workshop was the first event dedicated to an Alaskan perspective of the invasion of coastal waters by non-native aquatic species. Participants included representatives of oil shipping companies, Alyeska Pipeline Service Co., RCAC, government agencies and other scientists and researchers.

The workshop featured experts in aquatic nuisances. Dr. James T. Carlton, director of the Maritime Studies Program and professor of marine sciences at Williams College in Connecticut, is at the forefront of national and international research on invasions of aquatic nuisances. Dr. Tuck Hines is a marine ecologist and assistant director of the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center in Maryland. Ms. Allegra Cangelosi is senior policy analyst for Ecosystem Projects and director of the Congressional Great Lakes Task force for the Northeast-Midwest Institute in Washington, D.C. She is co-principal investigator for the largest ballast technology demonstration project currently under way. Dr. John Chapman is an expert on introduced marine species in the eastern Pacific. He is with the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife, Hatfield Marine Science Center, Oregon State University.

Hines, Chapman and their colleague, Dr. Gayle Hansen of Oregon State University, are conducting a literature search, the first phase of a project the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center is conducting for RCAC.

Hines said that even this early in his research, they have found six or seven non-indigenous species documented in Prince William Sound. They include micro-plankton, macro-algae, bivalve mollusks and small crustaceans. Hines said other species have not

been documented, but are probably in the Sound. Still other species not yet in Prince William Sound will probably show up in the future.

A very small fraction of the organisms in ballast water become nuisance species. But the environmental damage can be extreme. Ballast water is believed to have caused the zebra mussel invasion of the Great Lakes. A tiny mussel native to Eastern Europe, the zebra mussel has spread throughout the Mississippi drainage system. It multiplies profusely, fouls water intake pipes, and out-competes native species for food in the water. Chesapeake Bay and San Francisco Bay are some of the most heavily invaded water bodies in the Lower 48. Introduced species account for an estimated 90 percent of the aquatic species now found in San Francisco Bay.

Currently, the most common method of transport for non-native species is the ballast water that vessels carry for stability when not carrying cargo. Ballast water is taken up from the waters of the unloading, or “donor” port and then discharged – along with all the plant and animal organisms in it – into the waters of the loading port.

The nature of ballast water discharged into Prince William Sound has factors that would put the Sound at high risk of invasion: huge volumes of water deballasted from oil tankers, short voyage time (3 to 6 days), pattern of repeated deliveries from the same donor locations, the lack of mid-ocean ballast exchange, and an environment compatible with donor locations.

Workshop speakers emphasized that there is no single solution to the problem of aquatic nuisances. The goal is to develop a tool box of technologies.

Under a voluntary program enacted by Congress in 1996, tankers from foreign ports are exchanging their ballast water in open ocean. Cangelosi, of the Congressional Great Lakes Task Force, said the idea of open-ocean ballast exchange is that “you’re not taking nearshore organisms to another nearshore environment. Instead, you’re taking open-ocean organisms which are less likely to survive in the nearshore environment where the ballast is discharged.”

However, open-ocean exchange can be very risky in high seas or bad weather. For that reason, ships’ masters always have the discretion to skip the exchange rather than put their ships and crews at risk. Even with an open-ocean exchange, residual ballast water and sediment

“The closer you look for non-indigenous species, the more you find.”

– Tuck Hines



From left, Dr. Tuck Hines, Allegra Cangelosi and Dr. James T. Carlton address the workshop on non-indigenous aquatic species.

remain on the tank bottoms.

Coastwise trade, including TAPS trade tankers, are exempt from conducting open-ocean ballast exchange.

“Despite the limitations, if every ship that could exchange in the open ocean, did so, we would see a dramatic reduction in invasions,” Cangelosi said.

Alternatives are being investigated. Cangelosi is involved in a major study in the Great Lakes using a filtration to keep non-native species out of ballast water during intake. A study by the National Research Council, which Carlton co-wrote, ranked filtration, heat and biocides as the top three technologies to investigate.

On other fronts . . .

In addition to the workshop, there are several other components to RCAC’s work on aquatic nuisances.

- Representatives of more than 20 industrial, environmental, regulatory and scientific entities are participating in a working group organized by RCAC to address nonindigenous species. The group, which is meeting monthly, is the only group in Alaska dealing with the issue. However, regional groups of this kind have been established in the Lower 48 and other parts of the world.

- Under a contract with RCAC, the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center is conducting a pilot study of aquatic nuisance species brought into Prince William Sound by oil tankers. The project is jointly funded by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

In addition to the literature search, the consultants will develop a list of most likely

invading species, and take samples of ballast water from tankers. The ballast water samples will be analyzed for species composition and abundance. The pilot project is expected to be completed by Sept. 30.

- RCAC is part of a group that submitted a grant proposal to the National Sea Grant College Program for funds to extend the pilot study in Prince William Sound for two years. Partners in the proposal are the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center, University of Alaska, Oregon State University, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Alyeska Pipeline Service Co.

- RCAC is participating in efforts to develop Western and Pacific coast regional panels to address research and policy needs related to aquatic nuisance species. The National Invasive Species Act of 1996 directed a national task force to develop regional panels.

Alyeska

Company president unveils reorganization

March roared in like a lion for Alyeska employees when they all gathered via the "morale radio" network on March 7 to listen to President Bob Malone unveil the new organization. Employees also received comprehensive information packets, including organization charts, explanations for the new components, and copies of Human Resources policies.

Malone began the presentation by emphasizing the five core values, developed in 1996 for a new business strategy. The goal of being recognized as operationally excellent in all five areas by the year 2000 was one of the chief drivers of the reorganization, Malone said.

"Basically we were still organized like we were during (pipeline) construction," Malone told employees. "We needed to step back and look at the organization and create a future where we could see other opportunities besides moving oil; where we could see a future for the company beyond the decline of Prudhoe Bay."

Malone also noted that over the last 20 years the company had built its core expertise by bringing in owner company employees. "There was nothing wrong with the old organization, but the new one focuses on taking more ownership of the company," he explained. Also part of the new ownership, says Malone, is the drive to have Alyeska employees assume the most senior level positions in the company.

"We designed this organization from the inside and we own it," said Malone. "It's an exciting change that will lead us to operational excellence, and I believe it will lead us to future opportunities . . . a future that's going to provide tremendous opportunity to Alyeska employees and TAPS contractors."

"... we are evolving into a new structure that will increase our safety and enhance our environmental reliability." – Bob Malone

Closing four pump stations within two years also helped focus on the need for change in the way the organization conducted its business.

"Our job is to move oil from Prudhoe Bay to the Hinchinbrook Entrance, and move it in a safe, environmentally responsible, and efficient manner," reminded Malone. "This new organization takes people and puts them on the pipeline and in the Terminal and SERVS area, closer to our core business assets."

"I think we are evolving into a new structure that will increase our safety and enhance our environmental reliability," he said. "We're also going to end up with clearer lines of communication and clearer lines of accountability."

Stewardship a significant role

Relationships and stewardship are two key features of the new organization, says Malone. "Business Units will serve as stewards for certain functions that will serve the entire company," said Malone during his talk. A steward is the single point of accountability for a defined area of responsibility.

"We hope this kind of stewardship will create horizontal and vertical relationships," noted Malone. The VBU will steward Standards/Design Criteria and a Machine Shop. Land & Permits, Compliance, Risk Management, and Service Contracts will be

stewarded by the FBU.

"One of the great things we found out talking to employees during the Business Design Team interviews, is that people believe the reason the company is so successful is because of relationships," added Malone. "We're going to key off of that, and in moving forward, our success is going to be because of the way we work together."

Malone emphasized to employees that the new VBU will also encompass the operation of the pipeline from Milepost 647, including Pump Station 12. "That's the signal there isn't any Mason-Dixon Line any longer," he said. "This is one system—the Trans Alaska Pipeline System from Prudhoe Bay to Hinchinbrook Entrance."

The way forward

"I recognize that a piece of this is very hard for all of you," acknowledged Malone. "There are a lot of personal choices that are going to have to be made, and I want you to understand you have



Bob Malone

my commitment you're going to be treated with respect and dignity as we go through this process. I respect and understand what you're going through—the fact is there are going to be less of us.

"This reorganization isn't because somebody did something wrong. This is because we need this to get us to the next level. The owners and the entire leadership of Alyeska are going to stand united in making this happen," pledged Malone. "It's probably one of the most significant changes in the history of our company, and I'm proud to be part of it."

New tugs for Sound

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likely be at least as powerful as the 7,600 HP Garth and Lindsey Foss. The design of the new tugs will be performance-based and must pass muster with the state, which requires use of best available technology. The new tugs are expected to cost about \$25 million.

In the interim, shippers and Alyeska continue to test tugs for escort service until the new ones are built. A recently built 5,500 HP tractor tug, the Protector class, continues to be reviewed in sea trials. Any new escort tug must perform as well, or better than the escorts now in service.

Different areas of the tanker route through Prince William Sound pose different conditions and challenges. While quick deployment and sharp

maneuvering are critical through Valdez Narrows and Valdez Arm, sheer power is the top priority for an assist tug operating in the more severe conditions of Hinchinbrook Entrance. Accordingly, Alyeska Pipeline Service Co. has chartered the Gulf Service, an 11,500 HP tug, to be stationed at Hinchbrook Entrance. The Gulf Service was expected to arrive in Alaska about April 10.

The commitment to build new tractor tugs for the TAPS trade – as well as the larger tug at Hinchinbrook Entrance – comes in the wake of a major study, the Prince William Sound Risk Assessment, that examined the risks of oil spills from TAPS trade tankers. The study was a joint effort of oil shipping companies, RCAC, regulatory agencies and Alyeska Pipeline Service Co.

A subcommittee headed by the U.S. Coast Guard, Marine Safety Office Valdez, has made headway on efforts to reduce some of the risks of oil transportation in Prince William Sound.

The Waterways Management Subcommittee (of the Prince William Sound Risk Assessment Steering Committee) has reported progress on several fronts. The committee has obtained verbal commitments for equipment to monitor real time wind speed and direction data from Middle Rock in Valdez Narrows. And it has formalized procedures begun in 1996 to minimize interactions between oil tankers and fishing vessels.

The Waterways Management Subcommittee is one of three such committees appointed to develop risk management plans based on an 18-month study of oil transportation in Prince William Sound. The other two subcommittees are addressing escorts and tanker operations.

Other issues on the Waterways Subcommittee plate are:

- Investigate technologies for improving ice navigation and ice monitoring procedures.
- Improved information on ocean and tidal currents at Hinchinbrook Entrance.
- Improvements to the electronic charts for the Coast Guard's Vessel Traffic Service.
- Improve the Coast Guard's ability to track vessel traffic by expanding the automated dependent surveillance system to more than just oil tankers.
- Possible changes to the traffic separation scheme (TSS), including possible removal of the dog-leg, to shorten tankers' transit time.
- Examine ways to minimize the risks of congestion associated with weather closures.

The Waterways Management Subcommittee includes representatives from RCAC, Alyeska Pipeline, shippers and the state, as well as the U.S. Coast Guard.

Prevention & response

Analysis of response equipment completed

An RCAC analysis of oil spill response equipment indicates that while a surplus of most types of equipment exists, additional steps are needed to ensure that equipment from outside the region would be ready, available and on-site as required by state-approved oil spill contingency plans.

In May 1996, RCAC contracted with two Valdez consultants, Tim Jones and Lance Gilpatrick, to document the availability and operational readiness of out-of-region equipment identified in the shippers' oil spill contingency plans for Prince William Sound.

Crude oil shippers, or Alyeska on their behalf, must demonstrate to the state that they can respond to an oil spill of 300,000 barrels

within 72 hours. For larger, catastrophic spills – 300,000 to 950,000 barrels – they must identify additional response equipment from outside the Prince William Sound region. This so-called "out-of-region" equipment – vessels, skimmers, lightering units, storage units and boom – according to contingency plan documents should arrive on scene by days 3, 6 and 11 of a response.

An industry of oil spill response organizations, or OSROs, has sprouted to meet the stricter response planning requirements that emerged after the Exxon Valdez oil spill. Jones and Gilpatrick personally surveyed OSROs listed in the Prince William Sound contingency plans as

sources of spill response equipment. The consultants' report also included strategies for ongoing periodic monitoring of out-of-region equipment.

"The industry in general is in a widespread state of flux," the report said. "As the country moves farther and farther from the memory of the Exxon Valdez oil spill, oil spill response in general gradually is falling from the forefront of concern. As a result, most of the OSROs surveyed are facing tightening budgets, lack of capital funding, frozen hiring and continued changes in memberships and contracts."

Jones and Gilpatrick identified several factors that bear heavily on the movement of out-of-region equipment:

1. Early recognition of spill size and immediate equipment request.
2. Identification of transportation from airport/staging area to dock loading facility.
3. Time constraints in moving equipment from dock to vessels and transportation to spill site.

The report found three primary deficiencies: inadequate storage capacity for recovered oil; a lack of mutual aid plans and agreements; and a need for better pre-planning to sort and organize equipment that would be needed in packages.

"The key to logistics is not so much in the availability of transportation equipment or proximity to shipping points, but in early recognition of the magnitude of a spill and moving quickly to make requests," the report said. "The results of this survey indicate

equipment exists and is accessible, however, if it is not identified, pre-selected and organized into complete packages that could be assembled in the form of strike teams, time schedules will be very difficult to meet."

The Jones-Gilpatrick report recommended the following steps to bring out-of-region equipment in more efficiently:

- Address immediately the shortfall of suitable primary and secondary storage units.
- SERVs or shippers work with individual oil spill response organizations to pre-identify packages of suitable equipment for use in Prince William Sound.
- Alaska oil spill response organizations develop mutual aid plans within the state including pre-identifying suitable equipment packages and mitigating measures for continued operations.
- Nationwide oil spill response organizations begin developing mutual aid agreements toward the establishment of a national plan for providing equipment at the scene of a catastrophic spill while maintaining adequate equipment regionally. Marine Spill Response Corp. has a plan for cascading equipment along these lines, however most of the smaller oil spill response organizations do not.
- ADEC develop a system of call in drills. As a proposed design, controllers would inform an individual shipper of a simulated spill. Shipper would contact equipment supplier and supplier would call back to controllers giving equipment it would ship; transportation schedule and ETA.

Fire symposium targets training in marine fire

Land-based fire fighters will be trained to help fight shipboard fires at a symposium, June 2-6, in Valdez. RCAC is sponsoring the symposium to address a shortfall in fire response capability that was identified last year by an RCAC study.

The symposium is designed to teach land-based fire fighters what they need to know to help fight fires on large vessels. The symposium will also provide training to marine fire fighters so that they can work effectively with land-based crews.

In addition to sponsoring the symposium, RCAC will offer scholarships to ensure that municipal and volunteer fire fighters in the spill-affected region are able to take advantage of the training.

The curriculum will satisfy certification requirements for the

National Fire Protection Association Standard 1405, "Guidelines for land-based fire fighters who respond to marine vessel fires."

Topics will include a historical perspective on marine disasters, the U.S. Coast Guard Prince William Sound Contingency Plan, water and vessel safety, marine terminology and shipboard construction, terminal operations, tug and barge operations, and marine fire fighting tactics for tankers, cruise ships and fishing vessels. Special features include shipboard and terminal tours, a tabletop exercise, and a full-day marine fire fighting exercise with a ship.

Land-based firefighters interested in attending the symposium should contact RCAC in Valdez at (907) 835-5957.

Study says Duck Flats at highest risk

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resources or attributes that people wanted to protect, and the sources of environmental risk. These ecological resources or attributes include water and sediment quality, sport and commercial fisheries, and wildlife populations of fishes, birds and mammals.

The consultants looked at port-wide risks and area-specific risks. Port Valdez was divided into 11 sub-areas. In each of the sub-areas, the study identified the habitats and sources of stressors that do or could have impacts on the habitats.

The Duck Flats/Old Valdez area emerged as the sub-area at highest risk because it has a combination of extensive and sensitive habitat, and exposure to multiple stressors. At the other end of the spectrum, the study found that sub-areas in the western end of the Port are at relatively low risk because there are fewer sensitive habitats and less exposure to stressors that would affect them. The sub-areas containing the City of Valdez and the Valdez Marine Terminal came out at moderate relative risk.

Model developed for community response team

Community-based strike teams would be trained and equipped to respond to coastal oil spills under a proposed model developed by RCAC and the Cook Inlet RCAC. Much like a volunteer fire department, the strike teams would be composed of citizens trained in oil spill response.

The proposal calls for response equipment to be paid for by the State of Alaska's Oil and Hazardous Substance Response Fund; fishing vessels would be on contract to respond directly to small spills or as part of a coordinated response to larger spills. The strike teams would be managed by non-profit organizations called local response groups or community response centers.

The strike teams would be formed through a partnership

between the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC), coastal municipalities, industry oil spill cooperatives, and local response groups.

The proposal calls for the first strike teams to be developed in lower Cook Inlet and administered by the Kenai Peninsula Borough. The model for a network of such strike teams would be established in Seldovia, which already has trained responders and vessels on call. A state-funded oil spill response barge is currently stationed in Seldovia.

RCAC is working with communities, ADEC, and industry oil spill cooperatives to work out issues that must be resolved in order to put the Seldovia model in place. Outstanding issues include funding, budgeting, insurance, contracts, and planning.

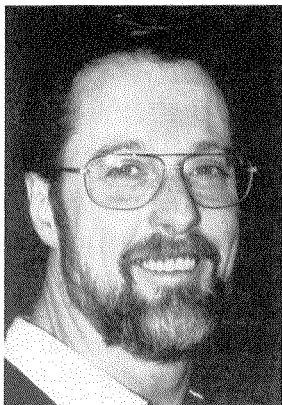
People

Board welcomes new & returning members

Jo Ann McDowell, Ph.D., President of Prince William Sound Community College, has been appointed to represent the City of Valdez on the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council (RCAC).

McDowell replaces Mike Gallagher, a labor official who served on the RCAC Board since 1991. McDowell was formally appointed to the RCAC board at the annual meeting, March 13, in Valdez. McDowell has been president of PWSCC since 1992.

Tom Jensen joined the RCAC Board in January as the representative of the Alaska State Chamber of Commerce, replacing George Wuerch. The State Chamber represents tourism



Dale Heath



Jo Ann McDowell



Tom Jensen

interests on the RCAC.

Jensen, of Anchorage, is Manager of Governmental Affairs at PTI Communications. A fourth generation Alaskan, Jensen was born in Douglas. He has also lived in Juneau and Fairbanks. Jensen

spent nearly 20 years with RCAC Alascom; he left the company in 1995 when it was purchased by AT&T and dissolved. In December 1996, he returned to PTI, which was the parent company of Alascom.

Dale Heath has joined the RCAC Board of Directors representing the City of Kodiak. Heath is Terminal Operations Manager for Lash Terminal. A 24-year resident of Kodiak, he has also fished – as deckhand and skipper – and worked previously as Marine Operations Manager at Sealand. Heath enjoys hunting and fishing. He and his wife of 20 years are animal people, although at present they have only two dogs and one cat. Heath replaces Kristin Stahl-Johnson, who resigned after six years on the RCAC Board.

Larry Evanoff has returned to the RCAC Board for the Community of Chenega Bay. Evanoff previously served on the Board from 1992 to 1996. Evanoff was born and raised in the old village of Chenega, destroyed by the 1964 earthquake.

He moved back in 1984, when the village was rebuilt.

A Vietnam veteran and former air traffic controller, he spent three years in Nome with the Alaska Army National Guard, worked as a radiographer in Prudhoe Bay and as a Village Public Safety Officer in Chenega Bay. Evanoff currently is employed by the village IRA council.

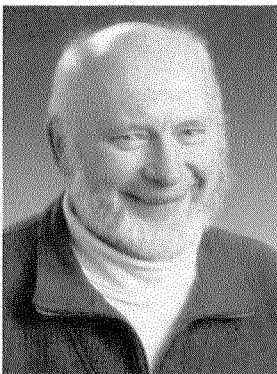
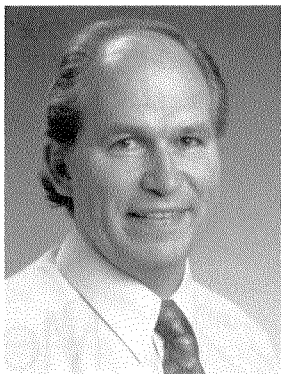
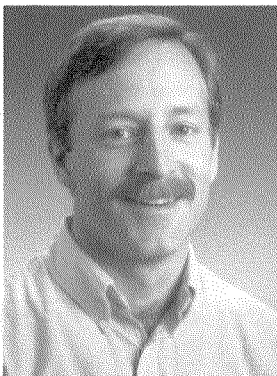
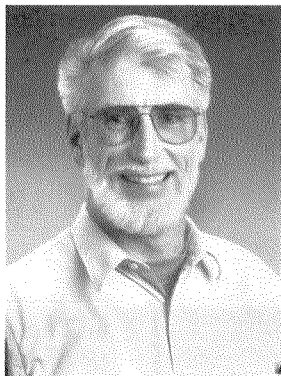
The following directors were reappointed to the Board at the annual meeting March 13: Stan Stephens, Alaska Wilderness Recreation and Tourism Association; Tex Edwards, City of Homer; Blake Johnson, Kenai Peninsula Borough; Dennis Lodge, City of Seward, Keith Gordaooff, Chugach Alaska Corp.; Charles Christiansen, Kodiak Village Mayors; Tim Volstad, City of Seldovia; and Bill Lindow, Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corp. Directors serve staggered two-year terms at the pleasure of the organization they represent. The Community of Tatitlek has not yet appointed a member.

Edwards leads board for second year

In board elections held March 14, Tex Edwards was elected to a second one-year term as President of RCAC. Edwards represents the City of Homer, where he lived for more than 20 years. He currently lives in Anchorage, where he is pursuing a degree at the University of Alaska.

Bill Lindow, of Sterling, was elected vice president. Lindow, a commercial fisherman, represents Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corp. Marilyn Heddell, of Whittier, was elected secretary. Bill Walker is treasurer and Stan Stephens is at-large member of the Executive Committee. Both Walker, of Anchorage, and Stephens, of Valdez, are past presidents.

RCAC Executive Committee (top row from left) Tex Edwards and Bill Lindow; (bottom row, from left) Marilyn Heddell, Bill Walker, and Stan Stephens.



Eight newcomers join RCAC committees

Eight new people have been appointed to RCAC's advisory committees. **Natasha Edwards**, of Girdwood, joins the Oil Spill Prevention and Response (OSPR) Committee. She is a small business owner, commercial fisher, and seasonal surveyor.

The Port Operations and Vessel Traffic Systems (POVTS) Committee has one new member. Retired Coast Guard Lt. Cmdr. **James Beckham**, of Cordova, served 15 years in the Coast Guard; the last three years as commanding officer of the buoy tender Sweetbrier.

The Scientific Advisory

Committee has two new members. **Gary Lawley**, of Anchorage, is Senior Technical Manager with Clearwater Environmental. He has a Ph.D. in water quality and expertise in chemistry. **John Williams**, of Cordova, is a research scientist with the Prince William Sound Science Center. He has a fisheries background.

The Terminal Operations and Environmental Monitoring (TOEM) has four new members. **David Kang**, of Kodiak, is Quality Assurance Manager with Alaska Pacific Seafoods. **Sean Thurston**, of Valdez, is a high school math

teacher, with a background in chemical engineering. **Joe Price**, also of Valdez, is a health and safety trainer at Prince William Sound Community College, with a master's degree in environmental health science. **David DeGrandpre**, of Anchorage, is an environmental scientist, employed as a research assistant with Radian International LLC.

The RCAC Board of Directors reappointed the following incumbent committee members: On the TOEM Committee: **David Connor** of Valdez, **Paul McCullom** of Homer, and **Sara Pearson** of Soldotna. To the POVTS

Committee: **Grady Harker**, **Vince Kelly**, **Linda Lee**, and **Tom McAlister**, of Valdez; and **Neil Schultz** of Cordova. **Bill Conley** of Valdez was reappointed to POVTS after a six-month sabbatical. To the OSPR Committee: **Gail Evanoff** of Chenega, **Joe Jabas** and **Lou Weaver** of Valdez, and **Gordon Scott** of Girdwood. To the SAC: **Gig Carrier** of King Salmon, and from Anchorage, **Bill D'Atri**, **David Hite** and **Dick Tremaine**.

The committee appointments were made at RCAC's annual meeting, March 13-14, in Valdez. Committee members serve staggered two-year terms.

People

Volunteer profile: Tom McAlister

Thirty-eight years ago in June, Tom McAlister came to Valdez for a 10-week job. He never left.

"I fell in love with the place. The scenery, the climate, the people. You couldn't find another city that's more exciting to live in. Consider what's happened to Valdez in the last 30 years. When I first moved, there were only 550 people. It was like a big family. I can't imagine living anywhere else. Except maybe New Zealand."

McAlister is a natural for RCAC's Port Operations and Vessel Traffic Systems (POVTS) Committee. A charter member of POVTS – he signed on in 1990 when it was first organized – McAlister was Valdez fire chief for 10 years, and port director for six years. He also spent four years as fire marshal/building inspector and nearly 10 years with Copper Valley Electric.

His work with RCAC has hit very close to home several times. Fire protection is a good example. Between his professional and volunteer work, McAlister has put 27 years into fire protection. So when RCAC began tackling questions about possible gaps in fire response, McAlister jumped in. Ultimately RCAC retained a



Tom McAlister

consultant to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of fire response capabilities in Prince William Sound. With McAlister's help and contacts, the consultants found easy access to the people they needed to talk to. Among other things, the study called for mutual aid agreements and training of land-based firefighters so they assist in on-water fires.

"This is all a big step in the right

"I can't imagine living anywhere else. Except maybe New Zealand."

– Tom McAlister

direction," McAlister said. "Some of what they're doing now is what I worked on in the 1970s," he said. "We had tried to get a region-wide system going back then, but there were problems then that we couldn't get around."

McAlister is also very interested in RCAC's work on the potential that non-native aquatic nuisances could invade Prince William Sound.

"In my younger days, I came real close to studying oceanography. Only Alaska beckoned and I couldn't resist the call. But I've done a lot of reading on the oceans

and different creatures around the world," McAlister said. "Working on the aquatic nuisance project allows me to indulge a long time personal interest."

McAlister retired a couple of years ago, but he and his wife, Gloria, have no plans to leave Valdez. They fish and sail and find plenty to keep busy. Two of their three grown children live in Valdez with their families, which has its down side.

"The kids think that now I'm retired, I'm full-time construction manager for all their projects."

Devens takes helm at RCAC April 15

Tax day will be "new job" day for John Devens, as he takes up his new post as Executive Director of RCAC. Devens is the founder and former president of Prince William Sound Community College in Valdez. He was Mayor of Valdez during the Exxon Valdez oil spill.

Devens returns to Alaska after a four-year absence. In 1993, after an unsuccessful bid for U.S. Congress the year before, Devens relocated to Vermont where he served as President of Sterling College.

As Executive Director of RCAC, Devens will head up a staff of 16 at offices in Anchorage and Valdez. He will be paid \$72,000 a year.

"We're pleased to welcome John. This council is committed to its mission and John will obviously be an important player in fulfilling that mission," RCAC Board President Tex Edwards said. "His prior work in Valdez and his knowledge of oil transportation issues from a citizen's perspective will be valuable assets as he works with the Council in our efforts to make terminal and tanker operations safer."

Devens is very enthusiastic about the new challenge. "I'm just absolutely excited about it, of course. It's a wonderful opportunity for me. I see RCAC as an organization that truly makes a difference."

Devens plans to work very closely with the Board and said he is pleased with the direction that RCAC has gone over the past several years. "We need to maintain communications with industry. You can't accomplish much unless you can sit down and talk," he said

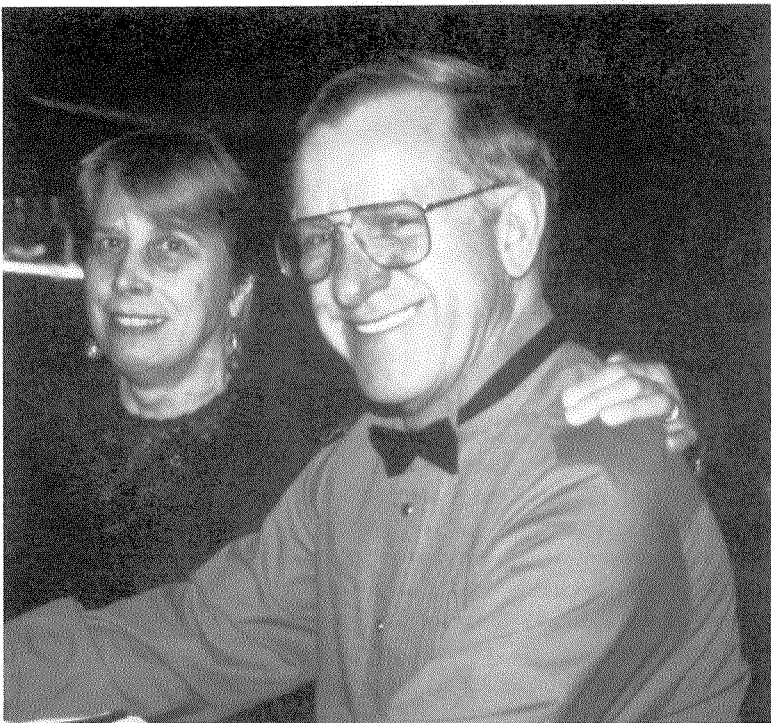


John Devens

"If I was going to emphasize anything right now, it would be to emphasize more involvement with the Native communities," he said. "It's always more difficult for the small, isolated communities to send representatives. It's something we need to work on. What we do is very critical to the folks in smaller villages."

"It's a very diverse board. It represents communities and agencies that have different outlooks. One of the challenges will be to keep communications open among entities with divergent views," he said.

Devens replaces Stan Stanley, who resigned from RCAC to retire and travel. Stanley had been with RCAC since 1990 and Executive Director since 1993.



Stan and Grace Stanley took the ribbing in good graces at the farewell dinner, March 13, in Valdez.

Roast and toast

Out-going Executive Director Stan Stanley was the target of tributes and teasing at a going away barbecue and square dance, March 13, in Valdez. Stanley had been with RCAC since 1990 and Executive Director since 1993. He left RCAC to retire and travel. Under Stanley's tenure, RCAC's relations with industry improved dramatically in large part because of his common sense approach, his knowledge of marine issues, and his steadfast focus on the RCAC mission. He will be missed.

Back page

RCAC up for recertification

RCAC's application for recertification will be available for public review in mid to late April. RCAC must be recertified every year under procedures outlined in the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (OPA 90).

RCAC pre-dates OPA 90, but the federal law established demonstration projects for citizens' oversight groups in Prince William Sound and Cook Inlet. The purpose of the advisory groups envisioned by OPA 90 is to "foster a long-term partnership among industry, government and

local communities in overseeing compliance with environmental concerns in the operation of crude oil terminal and oil tankers."

Each year, the President must 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 U.S. Coast Guard, in Washington, D.C.

The Coast Guard will also solicit comment from industry, regulators, communities and interest groups.

'96 Year in Review Available

RCAC has published a report of its work and activities in 1996. The "1996 Year in Review" is available on request, by calling RCAC at 277-7222, toll free within Alaska, 800 478-7221, or on e-mail at <pwsrcac@alaska.net>.

Heads up: Change ahead

The Observer will no longer be mailed automatically to all households in the Exxon Valdez impact area.

If you want to continue to receive the Observer, let us know. Call (907) 277-7222 or toll free in Alaska (800) 478-7221.

This issue of the Observer is the last one for RCAC's Public Information Director Patty

Ginsburg. After five and a half years with RCAC, Ginsburg is moving on to new challenges with Commonwealth North, a public policy group based in Anchorage. Ginsburg has been with RCAC since August 1991. She has been the unnamed editor of the Observer, RCAC's primary spokesperson with the media and all purpose writer and coordinator.

RCAC speaks out on bills

As it does every year, RCAC is monitoring the Alaska State Legislature and taking positions on bills that deal with its areas of interest. RCAC has taken a position – in written comments, or testimony or both – on the following bills:

- Alaska Coastal Management Program: HB 28 would eliminate the ACMP, an important vehicle for local input on projects with local impacts. RCAC, along with many others, opposed the bill and it is now apparently being reworked.

- Water quality standards: HB 51 would reduce Alaska's water quality standards to the lowest level possible under federal regulations. RCAC has written and testified against HB 51. RCAC is also watching HB 128, a second bill dealing with water quality issues.

- Environmental self-audits: SB 41 would provide incentives to

encourage regulated entities to conduct their own environmental audits. RCAC opposed the bill last year and again this year on grounds that it provides too broad a shield for polluters to hide behind self-audits.

- Tort reform: HB 58 is expected to fly this year, although some amendments are still possible. RCAC has problems with two elements of the bill. The prospect of large punitive awards can be a powerful incentive for oil shippers to continually work toward preventing oil spills. The cap on punitive awards renders the "punitive" nature meaningless to a big company. Second, the bill would require that half of any punitive damage award go to the state. This would discourage victims with a legitimate claim from filing suit. RCAC submitted comments to the House and Senate Finance Committees.

- Nearshore Barge: RCAC is working with the City of Seldovia in a continuing effort to obtain funding to keep a nearshore response barge in Seldovia.

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 commercial 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

Tom Jensen	Alaska State Chamber of Commerce
Stan Stephens	Alaska Wilderness Recreation & Tourism Assoc
Larry Evanoff	Community of Chenega Bay
Keith Gordaoff	Chugach Alaska Corporation
Margy Johnson	City of Cordova
Michelle Hahn O'Leary	Cordova District Fishermen United
Tex Edwards	City of Homer
Blake Johnson	Kenai Peninsula Borough
Dale Heath	City of Kodiak
Wayne Coleman	Kodiak Island Borough
Charles Christiansen	Kodiak Village Mayors Association
Charles K. Weaverling	Oil Spill Region Environmental Coalition
Bill Lindow	Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corp.
Tim Volstad	City of Seldovia
Dennis Lodge	City of Seward
Vacant	Community of Tatitlek
Jo Ann McDowell	City of Valdez
Bill Walker	City of Valdez
Marilynn Heddell	City of Whittier

Executive Committee

Tex Edwards - President
Bill Lindow - Vice president
Marilynn Heddell - Secretary
Bill Walker - Treasurer
Stan Stephens - Member at-large

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Marilyn Leland, Deputy Director
Linda Robinson, Financial Operations Manager
Daphne Jenkins, Information Systems Manager
Sandra Arnold, Executive Assistant/Volunteer Coordinator
Andrea Archer, Administrative Assistant
Patty Ginsburg, Public Information Director
Leann Ferry, Community Liaison
Lisa Ka'aihue, Project Manager
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