

THE OBSERVER

July 2010 Volume 20, No.3

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

Council responds to Gulf of Mexico disaster

In the days after the April 20 Gulf of Mexico oil rig explosion and the resulting oil leak, council offices echoed with the phrases, "It's happening again," and "Here we go again." Those who had been in Alaska on March 24, 1989, when the Exxon Valdez spilled an estimated 11 million gallons into Prince William Sound, knew what was coming.

Almost immediately, calls started pouring in to council offices from media, lawmakers and frightened communities looking for answers from the survivors of the Exxon Valdez oil spill.

Council staffer experiences déjà vu

In early May, council staffer Joe Banta and University of Alaska Fairbanks professor Torie Baker were invited to the Gulf of Mexico by the Mississippi/Alabama Sea Grant Consortium to talk about the effects of the Exxon Valdez spill.



In May, Joe Banta spoke with Gulf coast residents about the comparisons between the Exxon Valdez spill and the Gulf of Mexico spill.

In the many meetings during his five day trip, Banta said he heard the same questions over and over.

"When will we be reimbursed for lost wages?"

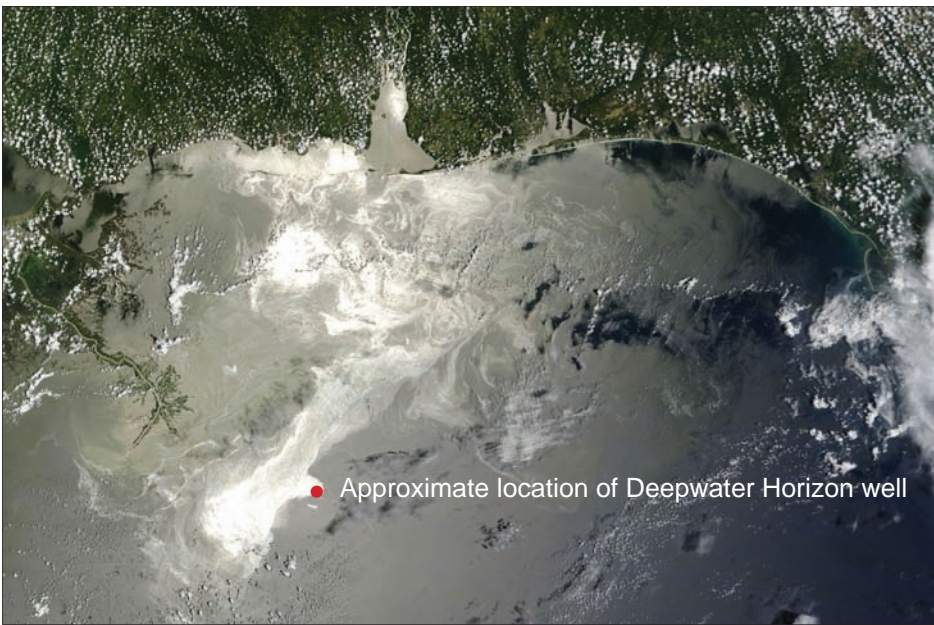
"How were fishermen reimbursed after the Exxon Valdez spill?"

"Will others besides fishermen receive any compensation?"

Banta empathized with each of these questions. Banta, who still owns a herring fishing license for Prince William Sound, no longer fishes because herring have disappeared from the Sound since the Exxon Valdez spill of 1989.

One of Banta's projects during his 20 years with the citizens' council examined the social and economic impacts on communities after a technological disaster, focusing on Cordova, one of the council's member organizations. One of the project's results is a guidebook titled "Coping with Technological Disasters."

"It provides folks with some real, useable lessons learned gained from living through the tough experiences of the Exxon Valdez oil spill," Banta said.



Natural color satellite photo showing sunglint on the Gulf of Mexico oil spill, June 25. The oil appears as interlocking curved tendrils varying in color from white to dark grey. Photo from NASA's Earth Observatory: <http://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/>

The guidebook and a peer listener training video have been sent to communities all over the Gulf of Mexico. Banta estimates there are 100-200 videos and dozens of printed copies of the guidebook circulating in the Gulf. Traffic has increased dramatically on the project's web pages where a free download of the guidebook is available to the public.

MORE FROM THE GULF:

"Don't shoot the messenger," p. 2

Connecting communities, p. 2

Alaskans counsel Gulf counterparts, p. 2

New council website highlights selected resources for Gulf spill communities, p. 6

Citizen oversight gains traction, p. 6

In the media spotlight, p. 6

June tanker drill provides opportunity to test council's own spill response plan

The 2010 Prince William Sound tanker spill drill was held June 8 and 9 in Valdez. This annual drill tests tanker oil spill contingency plans for Prince William Sound. The exercise was entirely tabletop, meaning no activities were carried out on the water. The role of the owner of the vessel that caused an incident rotates between

the shipping company partners who make up Alyeska from year to year. This year, SeaRiver Maritime, the shipping arm of ExxonMobil, played the part.

In addition to monitoring drill activities, the citizens' council's staff and volunteers grabbed

See page 6, **JUNE TANKER DRILL**

AK Chamber of Commerce - AK Wilderness Recreation & Tourism Assoc. - Chenega Bay - Chugach Alaska Corp. - Cordova - CDFU - Homer - Kenai Peninsula Borough - Kodiak - Kodiak Island Borough - Kodiak Village Mayors - OSREC - Port Graham Corp. - PWS Aquaculture Corp. - Seldovia - Seward - Tatitlek - Valdez - Whittier

INSIDE THE OBSERVER

More from the Gulf, p. 2

Swanson: Gulf of Mexico spill, local issues mean busy summer for the citizens' council, p. 3

Council board chooses new officers, p. 3

Council staffer leaves job to sid on the Gulf of Mexico, p. 3

New legislative committee will continue to push to preserve tanker escorts and pass invasive species bill, p.7

Chenega Bay remembers a tragic history, p.7

Community Corner: Council studied by others as a model for citizen oversight, p. 8



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

Council responds to Gulf of Mexico disaster

Don't shoot the messenger

Patience Andersen Faulkner, council board member representing Cordova District Fishermen United, visited Louisiana in late May. She spent eight days participating in a marathon of meetings full of people anxious about their future.

Shirley Laska, sociology professor, and Kristina Peterson, ecology professor, both of the University of New Orleans coordinated the trip, which included three other Alaskans, Stanley and Elizabeth Tom from the village of Newtok, a community that is currently being moved due to melting permafrost, and Faith Gemmill, the director of Resisting Environmental Destruction On Indigenous Lands, a grassroots environmental protection group.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, Laska and Peterson had been working on a "community collaborative" project to encourage communication between the communities along the Louisiana bayous, providing a readymade network for communication between the residents when BP's Deepwater Horizon starting spewing oil into the Gulf.

Peterson started looking at resources after the leak began. Steve Picou, a good friend of Laska's, referred her to Faulkner.

"People didn't know what kind of message I was going to bring," Faulkner said. "I introduced myself at every meeting by telling the people who had come, 'Don't shoot the messenger, please.' Because I had to bring the truth, which was: they were in for a long haul."

"I told about no herring in Prince William Sound, and that shrimping had just started back after 17 years. Folks had been hearing that their fisheries were going to be disrupted for just a little bit, no problem."

After Faulkner relayed her message, she looked for some sign that her audience had heard her.

"But it was shock. And silence."

As the week progressed, Faulkner noticed the mood darken.

"People were starting to realize how serious this was going to be."

Faulkner also told about the socioeconomic effects the Alaska spill had had on the residents of Cordova. Depression, alcoholism, spousal abuse, and suicides increased in the small, close-knit town in the years after the Exxon spill.

"I worked very hard to always emphasize that they needed to take fifteen minutes a day to



Faulkner (standing, right) speaks to a packed room in Louisiana. Photo courtesy of Shirley Laska

spend time with their families. It was important — to reconnect, to keep it hallowed," Faulkner said of her advice to Gulf residents.

Connecting communities

At home, Faulkner creates a variety of Native Alaskan crafts. Prior to her visit to the Gulf coast, she made a traditional drum. She attached ribbons with the names of the citizens' council, the city of Cordova, and other organizations.

Faulkner took the drum to Louisiana to play at each meeting. Ribbons were given to attendees to attach to the drum. The reaction it received was unexpected.

"It became a ceremony," Faulkner said. People were silent as they wrote their names, stood in line, and attached their ribbons. It became a symbol of the connectedness of all of the communities along the coast who were affected by the spill.

"There were so many ribbons I could barely play the drum by the end of the week."

Alaskans counsel Gulf counterparts

Prior to her trip, Faulkner, working with Laska, Peterson, and council staff, had already begun facilitating communications between Gulf residents and Alaskans able to offer advice.

In early May, the council hosted a teleconference meeting between local elected officials in the Gulf and their counterparts from the Exxon Valdez spill days.

In 1989, soon after the Exxon Valdez spill, a group of elected officials from the affected communities banded together to call attention to the crisis. Calling themselves the "Oiled Mayors," they held press conferences in Anchorage every Thursday.

"We were media darlings," said John Devens, mayor of Valdez at the time of the Exxon spill.

During the May teleconference, Devens and several other Oiled Mayors offered advice to their Louisiana counterparts, the parish presidents.

"The connection with the mayors was exceedingly powerful," Peterson said



Faith Gemmill plays the traditional healing drum created by Faulkner. Photo courtesy of Shirley Laska

of the meeting, "It affirmed some of the things that they were thinking; it helped give them the strength and the validation to go forward, and do the things that needed to happen."

The council also participated in a teleconference on long-term emotional and spiritual care for spill-affected communities. Faulkner was a panelist along with Dr. Steven Picou, author of the council's *Coping with Technological Disasters* guidebook and peer listener training program, and Bert McQueen, a chaplain during the Exxon Valdez spill. The meeting was coordinated by Suzanne Yack, of the Alaska Voluntary Agencies Active in Disaster.

According to Peterson, the information shared during that meeting was painful for the folks recounting it.

"I'm now hearing how that [information] is being communicated and networked throughout the region," Peterson said. "All of these things have been so very very positive."

"We were all just stunned and overwhelmed

See page 6, **COUNCIL RESPONDS**

Two regular features, the *Volunteer Profile* and *Alyeska Viewpoint* will return in September's issue of *The Observer*.



Torie Baker (left), with the University of Alaska Fairbanks's Marine Advisory Program, was Banta's speaking partner during his trip in early May.

Gulf of Mexico oil spill plus local issues mean a busy summer for the citizens' council

By MARK SWANSON
Executive Director

Welcome to our summer Observer. We're intensely busy at the council these days as we help however we can with the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico while tending to business here at home.

The BP spill

Many of our staffers and volunteers lived through the Exxon Valdez oil spill and have been especially touched by the horrifying stories, photos, and videos from BP's Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill in the Gulf of Mexico. So we were eager to help when citizens in the Gulf asked us what was coming, how to prepare, how bad it might be, how to defend themselves, how to recover, and how to prevent such disasters in the future.

In response, board and staff experts like Patience Andersen Faulkner and Joe Banta traveled to the Gulf to meet with communities and answer questions in person. We created a special website with information likely to be useful to those dealing with the Gulf spill. And we joined in numerous teleconferences and other conversations on the Gulf spill with mayors, community leaders, scientific experts, spill response operations experts, religious leaders, academics, and social scientists.

Adding expertise to the mix. Spill response techniques developed through the Alyeska fishing vessel response program in Alaska are finding their way to the Gulf. Board members John Allen and John Velsko and former council staffer Joel Kennedy have left their Alaska jobs to add their considerable talents and expertise to the Gulf response. We wish them every success.

Facilitating a better response. The council has offered advice and information to improve

transparency and public trust in how the Gulf response is being managed by BP and government agencies. We offered the Coast Guard our help in facilitating better communications with stakeholders affected by the Gulf spill, and we have urged public dissemination of the response managers' daily incident action plans as is done here in Alaska. While our offers and suggestions have for the most part not been adopted yet, we continue to hope the self-evident benefits of these Alaskan practices will lead to their eventual incorporation into the response.

Expanding citizen oversight. The Gulf spill has triggered a search for ways to prevent oil-pollution disasters and we've been busy explaining how citizen oversight helps. We've worked with people in the Gulf and with congressional staffers on legislation to improve existing laws and establish citizens' councils in the Gulf and other regions where citizen oversight of regulators and the oil industry could help improve prevention and response. We have also provided information to University of Alaska Anchorage Chancellor Fran Ulmer for use in her new role as a member of the presidential commission investigating the BP oil spill.

An important balance: The council is monitoring the flow of workers and spill equipment from Alaska to assist with the Gulf response. We are working with state and federal regulators to ensure that helping our fellow citizens in the Gulf doesn't leave us under-prepared to respond in Prince William Sound.

Minding the store at home

In late April, longstanding unresolved concerns of fishermen in Alyeska's fishing vessel oil spill response program led to a showdown that threatened the survival of the program.

Fishermen demanded that Alyeska's Ship Escort/Response Vessel System, or SERVS, which manages the program, either solve the problems or face the prospect that most participants would drop out.

The council avoided choosing sides, opting instead to facilitate communications between SERVS and the fishermen while highlighting for the public and the news media the great value of having a large fleet of fishing vessels on hand and ready to respond in the first hours after a spill. Happily, the two sides reached agreement and the program seems to be healthy again, with more and more fishermen joining the program as the summer progresses.

Revolving door? Over the spring and summer, we have become increasingly concerned about high personnel turnover at SERVS. During a June oil spill exercise in Valdez, the personnel shortfall at SERVS required many key response positions to be filled with experts from other locations who, in case of a real spill, would likely take longer to arrive. Industry and state regulators appear to be working diligently to address the problem, and we at the council will stay vigilant on this issue, as on all issues relating to preventing and responding to oil spills in Prince William Sound.



Mark Swanson

Council board chooses new officers

The council elected new officers at its May 6 and 7 board meeting in Valdez.

Walter Parker, who represents the Oil Spill Region Environmental Coalition on the board, was elected president. He succeeds Steve Lewis of Seldovia in the post.

Besides Parker, the new officers, who will serve until the board's May 2011 meeting, are as follows:

Dorothy Moore of Valdez is the new vice president; Sheri Buretta of Chugach Alaska Corp. is treasurer; and Thane Miller of the Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corp. is secretary. The members at large are Blake Johnson of the Kenai Peninsula Borough, Pat Duffy of the Alaska State Chamber of Commerce, and Cathy Hart of the Alaska Wilderness Recreation and Tourism Association.



Walter Parker, council president for 2010-11, represents the Oil Spill Region Environmental Coalition.

Two new board members join the council in May

The council also seated two new board members at the Valdez meeting. Rochelle van den Broek, executive director of the Cordova District Fishermen United, replaces Nancy Bird to represent the city of Cordova and Paul "Timmy" Selanoff will represent the community of Chenega Bay.



Rochelle van den Broek



Paul "Timmy" Selanoff

Council staffer leaves job to aid in Gulf of Mexico spill response

Joel Kennedy, the council Maritime Operations project manager has taken a position in Louisiana to help manage the Gulf spill response. He will be teaching oil spill response tactics.

Kennedy retired from the Coast Guard after 21 years and joined the council in November of 2008. During his time with the council, Kennedy worked to ensure the dual escort system remained in place for double-hull tankers in the Sound and that the ice radar detection system was fully operational.

He worked alongside the council's Port Operations and Vessel Traffic System Committee to monitor last December's tug Pathfinder grounding on Prince William Sound's Bligh Reef.

The council is currently looking for a replacement for Kennedy.



Joel Kennedy



Subscribe to the Observer!

Keep up with the news about oil tankers, oil spill prevention and response, activities of the citizens' council, and other issues related to oil transportation in Alaska waters.

The Observer is published four times a year and is free to anyone interested. To get on our mailing list, send an email to anch@pwsrcac.org with your name and full mailing address. Or you can call us at 1-800-478-7221.

Citizens' council timeline

This third installment of our retrospective of the council's work on behalf of citizens in the region affected by the Exxon Valdez oil spill covers the years 2001 through 2006. During this period, reforms and improvements included:

- Council studies showing dispersants do not work well in colder Prince William Sound waters
- Protecting the Sound from changes in air pollution limits
- Award for the council-sponsored ice radar system
- Efforts begin to ensure the dual tug escort requirement continues with the change from single to double hull tankers
- Studies of the role of human error in oil spills begins



2001: Community members attended peer listener training in March 2001. Seated: Becky Andersen (left) and board member Patience Andersen Faulkner (right). Standing: Joe and Belen Cook.



2002: Bob Benda (left) of the council's Terminal Operations and Environmental Monitoring Committee and Jerry Brookman (right) of the Oil Spill Prevention and Response Committee hold their Volunteer of the Year awards.

February 2002

Industry proposes scaled back contingency plans that assume that no spill inside Prince William Sound will escape into the Gulf of Alaska.

2001

July 2001

The Polar Endeavor, the first double hull tanker built under the Oil Pollution Act of 1990, begins service in Prince William Sound.

August 2001

A council study shows that chemical dispersants would not work well in Prince William Sound waters.

2002

May 2002

Council study shows that exposure to sunlight increases the toxicity of oil to marine organisms.

September 2002

Council objects to Environmental Protection Agency's proposal to exempt Valdez tanker terminal from air pollution limits.

December 2002

- Council proposes ambitious research project to test safety of dispersant use in Prince William Sound.
- Oil tanker safety in Prince William Sound takes a major step forward in December when an iceberg-detecting radar system on Reef Island begins transmitting to Valdez.

2003

June 2003

Officials from the Coast Guard, state of Alaska, and SeaRiver Maritime surprise Alyeska's Ship Escort/Response Vessel System with an unannounced drill. The drill demonstrates the need for more unannounced drills.

July 2003

Council receives 2003 Legacy Award Pacific States/British Columbia Oil Spill Task Force for the council's work on establishing the iceberg-detection radar system installed to monitor ice flowing from Columbia Glacier into Prince William Sound tanker traffic lanes.



2001: Steve Lewis, board representative from Seldovia; Bill Conley of the Port Operations and Vessel Traffic System Committee (middle); and Tom Copeland of the Oil Spill Prevention and Response Committee hold their Volunteer of the Year awards.



2003: J. Valdez d and exe cil, holds Award. A others in the publi

The co prestigio Coping w Guidebo program



2001: Council contractor Jim Payne and crew aboard the Lady Sandra hoisting an array of caged mussels and plastic strips after snagging the array with the improvised dragline. The arrays were heavy and required the use of a winch and manual labor to prevent damage or loss when brought aboard.



2005: Sylvia "Sturgeon General" Earle, oceanographer, explorer, author, lecturer and former chief scientist of NOAA was a guest lecturer at a council's volunteer meeting in December 2005.

May 2004

- Environmental Protection Agency reconsiders regulatory exemption for ballast water vapors from the Valdez terminal.
- Alyeska releases preliminary information about upcoming changes to the Valdez terminal to adapt to lower volume of oil produced on the North Slope.

March 2005

Council launches planning for "downstream" oil spill response; that is, outside of Prince William Sound.

May 2005

- With double-hull tankers replacing single-hull tankers, the council begins efforts to ensure dual tug escorts continue for double hull tankers.
- Alyeska given the go-ahead by federal regulators to overhaul the tanker terminal.

January 2006

- Installation of Automated Identification System in the Valdez office allows council to track ship movements in real time.
- Alyeska's Ship Escort/Response Vessel System escorts 10,000th loaded tanker through Prince William Sound.

2004

August 2004

Council looks into several broken tether lines on the rescue tugs that escort oil-laden tankers out of Prince William Sound.

December 2004

Studies show ballast water exchange helps combat invasive species.

2005

July 2005

Council and Alyeska enter into a lawsuit over a report funded by the council. Report stated that the oil industry had been highly profitable during a time when the industry was claiming they needed to reduce environmental protections because of financial considerations. Alyeska claimed that council funds cannot be used for such an investigation.

September 2005

Prince William Soundkeeper is formed to oversee non-crude oil issues affecting the Sound's environment.

2006

May 2006

- Council votes to oppose any use of chemical dispersants for responding to North Slope crude oil spills in Prince William Sound and nearby waters.
- Council joins Alaska Invasive Species Working Group.

September 2006

Council issues report on the role of human error in oil spills. The study finds that up to 80 percent of oil spills and other marine accidents can be attributed to human factors, either individual error or organization failure.



2003: Council board meeting in Cordova.

Council responds: A Gulf of Mexico disaster resource

Continued from page 2

at the step-to-it-ness of the people from Alaska to just pour their hearts out,” Peterson added of Faulkner and others involved in the council, “and from then on, it’s been a marvelous relationship.”

New council website highlights selected resources for Gulf spill communities

Over the years, the council has amassed a wealth of information about oil spill prevention and response, and on the effects of oil spills. As a result of some of the teleconferences with Gulf coast residents, the council realized how difficult it could be for someone who was unfamiliar with oil spill issues to find the really relevant information among the many reports and papers available on the council website.

So, soon after the spill, the council created a new website devoted to topics relevant to the Gulf spill, such as community impacts, dispersants, oil spill prevention and response



While visiting the Gulf, Faulkner had the opportunity to get out on the water to witness oil in the marshes. Photo courtesy of Shirley Laska.

measures, environmental monitoring, and the Unified Command oil spill response system.

Website tracking shows nearly 1500 visits from 34 countries since the site was created.

Citizen oversight gains attention across the country

Interest in Alaska’s citizen coun-

cils has increased since the Gulf spill. Topics of concern include effectiveness of the council and how the industry funds the council without having a say in how the council does business.

The council has been working with federal officials such as Sens. Bill Nelson of Florida, Maria Cantwell of Washington state,

Mark Begich and Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, and other officials across the country on potential legislation to create citizens’ councils in the Gulf of Mexico.

In the media spotlight

The council has received dozens of inquiries from media organizations, ranging from the Anchorage Daily News to CNN to Al Jazeera to MSNBC’s Rachel Maddow Show to television station WVUE in New Orleans. Council staff and board members have been interviewed for numerous news stories.

The council responded with much of the same information sent to Gulf residents and communities. Visit the council Newsroom on the web for a listing of news articles related to the council.

On the web:

- Council resources for the Gulf spill: www.pwsrccac.info
- Gulf communities on the web: www.communitiesonthehorizon.org
- Council Newsroom: www.bit.ly/CouncilNews

June tanker drill: Council’s response plan tested

Continued from page 1

the chance to put into action a new plan that provides clear direction to staff in the case of a real spill.

The drill scenario stated that at 6 a.m. on June 8, an outbound tanker, the TT Carrier, collided with an inbound barge, the M/V Fridge. Three cargo tanks on the left side of the Carrier were breached, resulting in an estimated spill of 153,000 barrels of North Slope crude into Prince William Sound. Oil continued to leak throughout the first day reaching a total spill of 167,984 barrels.

The council applauded efforts to focus on “mechanical recovery,” or corralling and removing oil using skimmers and boom, during this drill.

“The amount of oil simulated as recovered through mechanical means was optimistic at almost 105,000 barrels,” said Roy Robertson, drill monitor for the council, “but it was good to see the emphasis shift from a focus on dispersants.”

Just as would happen after a real spill, Alyeska’s Ship Escort/Response Vessel System, or SERVS, began managing the response to the spill. By the end of the first day, the SeaRiver team “arrived” and began to take over.

One of the main goals of the exercise was to practice this transition of management as well as relocation of the command post from SERVS’ Valdez Emergency Operations Center to the bigger Valdez Civic Center. The transition of command posts was fairly

smooth but much of the work had been performed ahead of the exercise.

“This transition could have benefited by a longer period of time for the local and out-of-town teams to work together before the SERVS team relinquished control,” Robertson said.

Key objectives of this exercise included working through the process to obtain permits from the Alaska Regional Response Team, or ARRT, which approves the use of dispersants and locations where a tanker experiencing trouble can anchor temporarily. Additionally, drill exercises concentrated on protecting wildlife and areas especially sensitive to crude oil, and the establishment of the Regional Stakeholders Committee.

This committee, made up of representatives from the affected areas, had daily meetings with the Unified Command, a standard management structure developed for response to emergencies such as oil spills. This was an opportunity for stakeholders to voice local residents’ concerns. The meetings during this drill were valuable for both the committee participants and those in command.

The liaison to the stakeholder’s committee, Stu McRobbie, president of SeaRiver, sought the committee’s advice on some questions. During closing comments after the drill, McRobbie noted that the company had previously questioned the value of the liaison’s role with the stakeholders committee. He said that it was valuable and that

SeaRiver has committed itself to the process after being involved with the committee during this drill.

Throughout the exercise, a major focus was the attention to wildlife and sensitive area protection issues and Robertson said that industry and agency personnel appeared to work well together in these areas. He suggested one area that could be improved was the list of resources at risk near the Tatitlek Narrows, which could have been more comprehensive.

The council was encouraged by staff and volunteer participation in the drill, and several lessons were learned.

The importance of the council’s seat on the Regional Stakeholders Committee was demonstrated during this drill. After a real spill, many people in the communities who participate in drills would be busy with the response and unavailable to attend meetings. The council could end up being the only steady public presence with access to the command center.

Part of the council’s drill response plan includes meetings

with board and committee members and community members. This part was played out as a series of teleconferences during the drill. The amount of participation from member entities was encouraging and input was thoughtful. These meetings gave executive director Mark Swanson, the council’s representative on the stakeholder’s committee, good information to pass on to those directing the response.

Council staff also attempted to estimate expenses for a real spill. Costs such as teleconferences, hotel rooms, boat rentals, and contractors to monitor dispersant use were tracked and compiled, and expenses for the first four weeks after a large spill were calculated at approximately \$236,000.

On a specially created website, council staff posted drill documents and information within a few hours of receiving them. The council used a similar site for disseminating information during December’s Pathfinder spill.

On the web:

- pwsrccac2010drill.wordpress.com

Correction from May Observer

A photograph on Page 1 of the May Observer was miscaptioned. The photograph with the correct caption appears below.

Council representatives visited with Rep. Paul Seaton in Juneau to promote HB12. Left to right: Staffer Joe Banta, board members John French and John Velsko, Seaton, and staffer Stan Jones. Photo courtesy of Stan Jones.



New legislative committee will continue to push to preserve tanker escorts and pass invasive species bill

The citizens’ council board at its May meeting in Valdez created its 2010-11 Legislative Affairs Committee.

The members are John French of Seward, Iver Malutin of the Kodiak Village Mayors Association, John Velsko of Homer, Blake Johnson of the Kenai Peninsula Borough, Al Burch of the Kodiak Island Borough, Patience Andersen Faulkner of Cordova District Fishermen United, Pat Duffy of the Alaska State Chamber of Commerce, and Steve Lewis of Seldovia.

The committee’s job is to monitor legislative action in Juneau and in Washington, D.C., and to develop and present council positions to Congress and the Alaska Legislature.

So far, the two main issues on the committee’s plate are the same ones it has pushed in recent sessions of Congress and the state legislature.

In Washington, D.C., the council is backing federal legislation to preserve the requirement for dual escort tugs for loaded oil tankers in Prince William Sound. Through the council’s efforts and the work of the Alaska delegation in Congress, provisions to do so now appear in Coast Guard authorization bills passed by the U.S. House in October of last year and the U.S. Senate in May of this year.

As the two bills are not identical, the House and Senate must go through a process called ‘reconciliation’ to come up with a single version acceptable to both chambers. Though passage of a final version of the Coast Guard bill is considered likely, when that may happen is unclear because Congress is now dealing with related issues arising from BP’s Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico.

In Juneau, the citizens’ council will continue its push for legislation to create a state invasive-species council. A measure to do so died without action when the legislature adjourned in April, meaning new legislation will need to be introduced when the legislature reconvenes in January. The invasive species council, as envisioned in the bill that died, would coordinate efforts by state and federal agencies and non-governmental organizations to deal with invasions of Alaska’s lands and waters by non-indigenous species of plants, animals, and fish.

The issue of invasive species has long been of concern to the citizens’ council because of the risk that non-indigenous organisms arriving in oil tanker ballast water could establish themselves in Prince William Sound and harm indigenous populations, including commercial fish species.

Chenega Bay remembers tragic history of Good Friday quake

On June 11, residents of Chenega Bay and people with ties to the community traveled to Chenega Island for a memorial service in honor of those who died when the original village was devastated by the Good Friday earthquake and tsunami wave of March 27, 1964. Of the village’s approximately 80 residents at the time, 26 died in the disaster. The memorial service has been held every year since 1976.

The community—originally known as Chenega—was reestablished at its present site on Evans Island in 1982. Today, Chenega Bay is one of the 19 member entities of the citizens’ council. It is represented on the council board by Paul “Timmy” Selanoff, who attended this year’s memorial service sponsored by the Native Village of Chenega and the Chenega IRA Council. Board member Dorothy Moore and staffer Stan Jones attended on behalf of the citizens’ council.



The village’s hilltop school was one of the few structures in Chenega to survive the devastation of the Good Friday disaster of 1964. Here, its crumbling remains overlook the memorial service 46 years later. Photo by Dorothy Moore.




A cake baked for the memorial lists the names of those who died in the Good Friday disaster. Photo by Stan Jones.



After the memorial service, flowers are thrown into the sea in memory of those who died in the Good Friday earthquake and tsunami waves of 1964. Photo by Stan Jones.

Join us in scenic Seldovia...



The council’s next board meeting will be held in Seldovia, pictured above. Seldovia is located on the Kenai Peninsula across from Homer on the south shore of Kachemak Bay. Photo by Savannah Lewis.

THE OBSERVER is a quarterly newsletter published by the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens’ Advisory Council. Except where credited to others, articles are written by council staffers Stan Jones and Amanda Johnson.

Council Meeting Schedule

The citizens’ council board of directors meets three times annually. Here is the tentative schedule for the coming year:

September 16-17, 2010: Seldovia
January 20-21, 2011: Anchorage
May 5-6, 2011: Valdez

Board meetings are open to public. Agendas and meeting-related materials are available online: www.pwsrccac.org/about/boardintro.html.

Community Corner

Council studied by others as a model for citizen oversight

This month, council will be hosting visitors from Kazakhstan interested in studying citizen oversight in Alaska as a model for their own efforts. Citizens have been successful at initiating a citizens council in the district of Aktau (an oil rich region of western Kazakhstan), and are hoping to initiate other councils in the region as well.

Joining us are two members of the Aktau council, two members of non-governmental organizations from the western Kazakhstan and Atyrau regions, two representatives from Russian oil companies who are involved in social projects and transparency issues, and Askar Kushkunbayev, a representative of the Soros Foundation's Public Finance Transparency Program in Kazakhstan.

They will visit council offices in Anchorage and Valdez, and take the ferry from Valdez to Whittier.

The Kenai Peninsula hosted its 25th annual Sport, Rec and Trade Show April 29 to Sunday, May 2. The council was represented at the show by myself and board members Iver Malutin and Al Burch of Kodiak. There were several informational booths on the region and its environment. People expressed interest to me about our information on invasive species and asked how they could help pass the legislation that would form an Alaska Invasive Species Council. Unfortunately, the legislation died in committee during the legislative session of this year. The council will be supporting efforts to reintroduce the bill and is looking forward to better results this next year.

The council's May board meeting in Valdez began with a reception at the city museum to welcome our new executive director, Mark Swanson. We had a good turnout and the event presented a good opportunity for board members and staff to visit informally with local residents.

Board member John French and committee volunteers Roger Green and Bob Benda joined me at the Arctic Marine Oilspill Program Technical Seminar which was held in Halifax, Nova Scotia in June. Presentation topics included physical and chemical properties of oil and behavior of oil spills; shoreline response; remediation,

restoration and rehabilitation of resources damaged by hazardous materials spills; oil spill contingency planning; oil spill modeling; and the detection, tracking, and remote sensing of oil spills.

John French gave a presentation titled "Important Considerations Regarding Ocean and Ecosystem Dynamics in Assessing Environmental Risks from Various Oil Spill Countermeasures."

A copy of the proceedings is available in the council's library in the Anchorage office, and French, Green and Benda each have a copy.

Mark Swanson and his family, along with board members John French and Walt Parker, attended the annual Tatitlek Heritage Festival in May. Board member Sheri Buretta taught classes during the week. The festival's potlatch culminates a week of teaching native arts and crafts to students from around Prince William Sound and other communities. Students learn skin sewing, beading, woodwork, salmon preparation, and other native crafts, then display their work at the potlatch. The potlatch also includes an auction that raises money for future festivals.

Patience Andersen Faulkner and Rochelle van den Broek, both board members from Cordova, joined Mark Swanson and Donna Schantz at the annual Copper River Nouveau in Cordova. This is an annual fund raising event for the Prince William Sound Science Center. Along with a fabulous Copper River salmon dinner prepared by celebrity chefs (this year from Kinley's restaurant in Anchorage), there were silent and live auctions that raised approximately \$23,000 for the center.

The council has been extensively involved with the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. Patience Andersen Faulkner and Joe Banta both visited the area to discuss the effects on residents (See "Council responds to Gulf of Mexico disaster" on page 1). Several other Alaskans have visited the area to help as well.

The council has also created a new website for Gulf residents with lots of information and lessons learned from the Valdez spill at: www.pwsrcac.info.

Have a great summer!



Linda Robinson

PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND
REGIONAL CITIZENS' ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council is an independent, non-profit corporation formed after the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill to minimize the environmental impacts of the trans-Alaska pipeline terminal and tanker fleet.

The council has 19 member organizations, including communities affected by the Exxon Valdez oil spill and groups representing Alaska Native, aquaculture, environmental, commercial fishing, recreation and tourism interests in the spill region.

The council is certified under the federal Oil Pollution Act of 1990 as the citizen advisory group for Prince William Sound, and operates under a contract with Alyeska Pipeline Service Co. The contract, which is in effect as long as oil flows through the pipeline, guarantees the council's independence, provides annual funding, and ensures the council the same access to terminal facilities as state and federal regulatory agencies.

The council's mission: Citizens promoting environmentally safe operation of the Alyeska terminal and associated tankers.

Board of Directors

Pres.: Walter Parker - Oil Spill Region Environmental Coalition
Vice Pres.: Dorothy Moore - City of Valdez
Secretary: Thane Miller - Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corp.
Treasurer: Sherri Buretta - Chugach Alaska Corporation

John Allen - Community of Tatitlek
Rochelle van den Broek - City of Cordova
Al Burch - Kodiak Island Borough
Pat Duffy - Alaska State Chamber of Commerce
Jane Eisemann - City of Kodiak
Patience Andersen Faulkner - Cordova District Fishermen United
John S. French - City of Seward
Marilynn Heddell - City of Whittier
Blake Johnson - Kenai Peninsula Borough
Iver Malutin - Kodiak Village Mayors Association
Thane Miller - Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corporation
Dorothy M. Moore - City of Valdez
Diane Selanoff - Port Graham Corporation
Paul "Timmy" Selanoff - Community of Chenega Bay
Stan Stephens - City of Valdez
John Velsko - City of Homer

Staff

Mark Swanson, Executive Director

Anchorage

Joe Banta, Project Manager
Gregory Dixon, Financial Manager
Amanda Johnson, Project Manager
Stan Jones, Director of Administration and External Affairs
Serena Lopez, Project Manager Assistant
Barbara Penrose, Administrative Assistant
Linda Robinson, Outreach Coordinator
Linda Swiss, Project Manager

Valdez

Jean Cobb, Administrative Assistant
Jennifer Fleming, Executive Assistant
Dan Gilson, Project Manager
Tom Kuckertz, Project Manager
Jacquelyn Olson, Project Manager Assistant
Roy Robertson, Project Manager
Donna Schantz, Director of Programs

3709 Spenard Road, Suite 100 Anchorage AK 99503 Phone: 907-277-7222 Toll-free: 800-478-7221 Fax: 907-277-4523	Box 3089 / 130 S. Meals, Suite 202 Valdez AK 99686 Phone: 907-834-5000 Toll-free: 877-478-7221 Fax: 907-835-5926
---	--

On the web: www.pwsrcac.org
Follow us on Twitter: @PWSRCAC
Find us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/PWSRCAC
Email: anch@pwsrcac.org