

Year in Review

2019-2020

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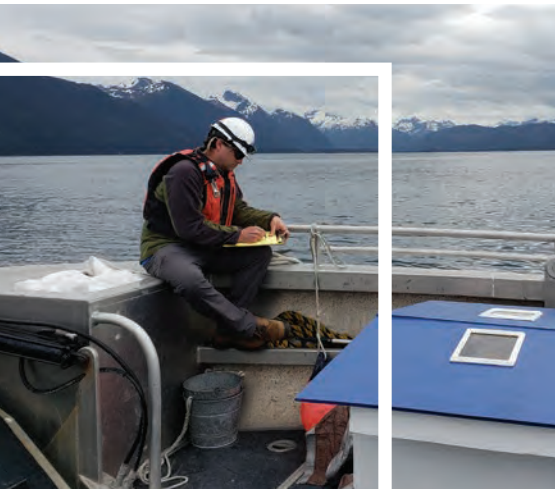
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Letter from the President and Executive Director

Maintaining Alaska's High Standards in Spill Prevention and Response

President Robert Archibald, City of Homer

Executive Director Donna Schantz

Prince William Sound is home to one of the best and most effective oil spill prevention and response systems in the world.

This system was developed over the past 30 years through a partnership between the oil industry, federal and state regulators, legislators, and citizen stakeholders. This system is possible because Alaskans were dedicated to working together to ensure a spill like the Exxon Valdez never happens again.

This year, the Council worked to further improve that system. Our volunteers donated hundreds of hours, working with staff to achieve:

- Two new weather buoys broadcasting real-time weather conditions in Port Valdez, making oil transportation safer (page 7)
- Through the Council, citizens had a voice in the updates and amendments to oil spill contingency plans for the Valdez Marine Terminal and the tankers that transit Prince William Sound (page 10)
- Volunteers and staff monitored cleanup

of a 1,400 gallon spill from the terminal (page 13)

- Mariners on escort tugs know about safer methods of deploying towlines and the best technology for their situation (page 9)
- New genetic testing technologies are improving the Council's environmental monitoring program (page 17)
- And much more you will read about in this report

Unfortunately, we have also seen a steady, on-going, and alarming deterioration of federal and state oil spill prevention, response, oversight, and enforcement capabilities in Prince William Sound.

A variety of factors contributed to this situation: state and federal regulation and enforcement rollbacks, budget and staff reductions at oversight agencies, COVID-19, the low price of oil, reduced oil consumption, and lower throughput in the Trans Alaska Pipeline System (TAPS).

Collectively, these issues could substantially increase the risk of an oil spill in Alaska.

“One way to combat this complacency is to involve local citizens in the process of preparing, adopting, and revising oil spill contingency plans” *Oil Pollution Act of 1990*

“Burdensome” State Regulations

This winter, the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation solicited input from stakeholders, the public, and industry on its laws and regulations governing oil spill prevention and response. Reportedly, this stemmed from industry comments that such regulations are too burdensome. The Council submitted extensive comments and put together resources to support other members of the public who wished to give informed input. (page 11)

The department also announced they would largely suspend oversight and enforcement activities during the current public health emergency.

In addition, funding for Alaska's Division of Spill Prevention and Response, as well as to respond to an oil spill, is currently unsustainable.

Sale of BP's Alaska Assets

Last August, BP announced a plan to sell its Alaska assets to Hilcorp and their wholly owned subsidiary Harvest Alaska LLC (page 11). This sale would transfer the largest percentage of ownership of Alyeska to Hilcorp/Harvest, a company that according to state agencies has a track record of reducing costs. This could be very problematic if those reductions lead to further diminishment of safety, prevention, and response readiness.

Reducing Budgets Increases Risk

Perhaps the most critical issue is the recent slump in oil prices. The low global demand for oil and other pandemic-related impacts, combined with the declining trend in TAPS throughput, are all added stressors to the industry's budget.

As a result, Alyeska has tightened its belt and reduced staff in recent years. This could mean reduced accountability and supervision, reduced maintenance of aging infrastructure, reduced training, and increased workloads. These and numerous other factors mean elevated risk and increased chances of an accident.

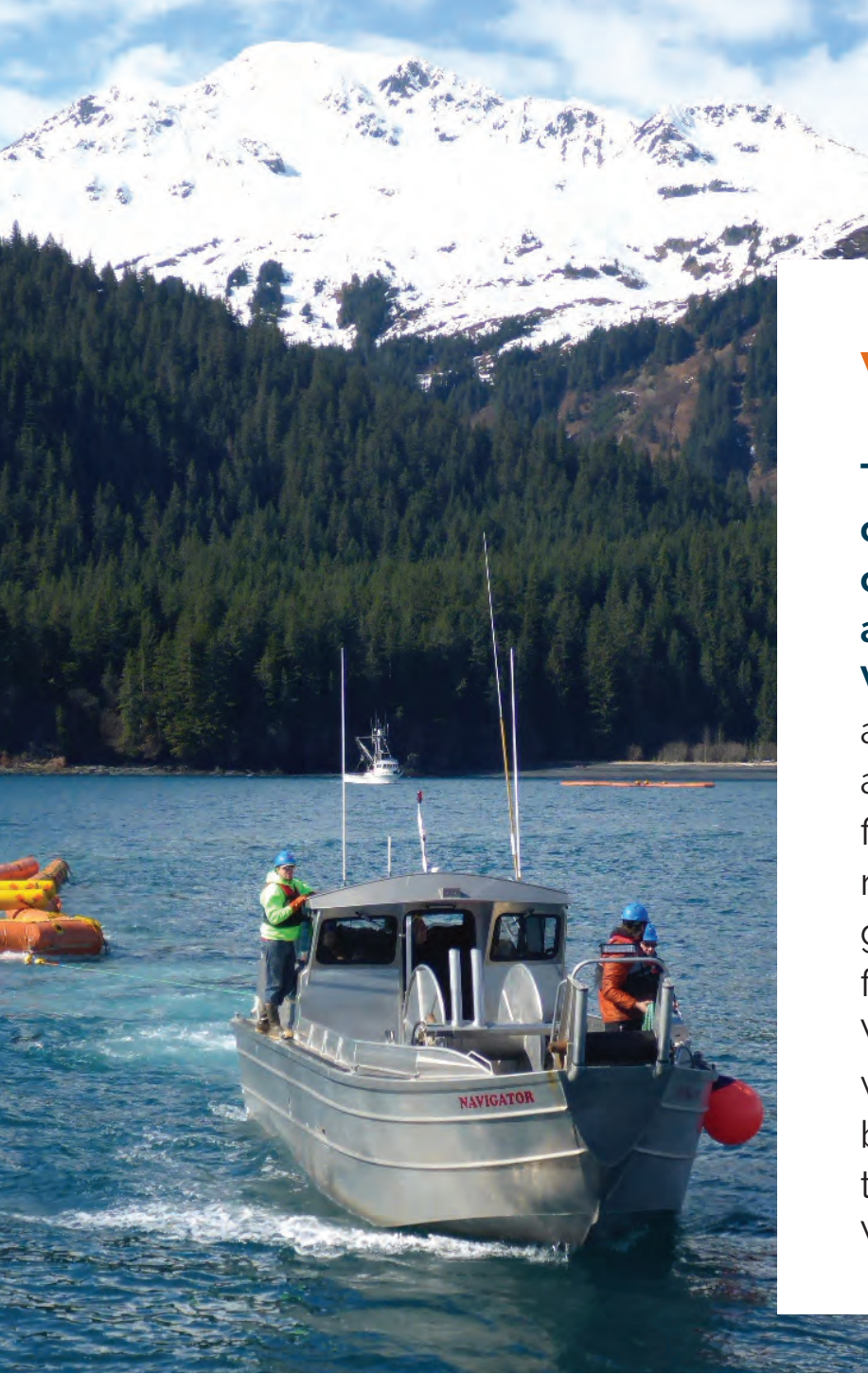
A Cautionary Tale

In 1990, the U.S. Congress specifically identified complacency as a key factor in the Exxon Valdez oil spill.

Thirty years later, while the entire world is distracted with COVID-19 and the resulting economic slump, the system is again threatened by complacency, compounded further by budgetary constraints and efforts to reduce costs.

The Council and our mission are more important than ever. Our vigilance is needed to prevent backsliding that could cause major oil spill. Such a disaster would be devastating for Alaskans, for our livelihoods, for fish and wildlife, and for the marine and terrestrial environment.

The Council hires expert contractors to ensure that sound technical advice is provided to regulators and industry in order to protect Prince William Sound and its downstream communities. We raise these concerns so that sensible and effective actions can be taken. Those with the most to lose from oil pollution must have a voice in the decisions that put their livelihoods and communities at risk. Through perseverance, hard work, and strengthening of partnerships between citizens, industry, and federal and state regulators, the systems put in place to prevent another major oil spill can be maintained and improved upon.



Who We Are

The Council's 18 member organizations are communities in the region affected by the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill, as well as Alaska Native, aquaculture, commercial fishing, environmental, recreation, and tourism groups. The Council was formed after the Exxon Valdez oil spill to provide a voice for citizens affected by decisions made by the oil industry in Prince William Sound.



The Council's structure and responsibilities stem from two documents:

1. Contract with Alyeska Pipeline Service Company
2. Oil Pollution Act of 1990

The Council's Structure

Consistent with its mission, the Council's structure and responsibilities stem from two documents. The first is a contract with Alyeska Pipeline Service Company, which operates the Trans Alaska Pipeline System as well as the Valdez Marine Terminal. The contract guarantees the Council's independence from industry while also providing the operating funds for the organization.

The second guiding document, passed after the Council was created, is the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (the Act), which requires two citizen oversight

councils, one for Prince William Sound and another for Cook Inlet. The purpose of the councils is to promote partnership and cooperation among local citizens, industry, and government; to build trust; and to provide citizen oversight of oil terminals and tankers.

The Act allows pre-existing organizations to fulfill the requirement for citizen oversight, which the Council has done for Prince William Sound since 1990. The Council's contract with Alyeska predates the Act, but the similarities in the powers and duties given the Council in the two documents are not coincidental. Many people who helped establish the Council also promoted federal laws that require citizen involvement.

Our Responsibilities

In accordance with the provisions of the two documents, the Council performs a variety of functions aimed at reducing pollution from crude oil transportation through Prince William Sound and the Gulf of Alaska:

- **Monitoring, reviewing, and commenting on oil spill prevention and response plans** prepared by Alyeska and shipping companies moving oil through Prince William Sound
- **Monitoring, reviewing, and commenting on the environmental protection capabilities** of Alyeska and the tanker operators, as well as on the environmental, social, and economic impacts of their activities
- **Reviewing and making recommendations** on government policies, permits, and regulations relating to the oil terminal and tankers

As part of these undertakings, the Council regularly retains experts in various fields to conduct independent research and

The Council works to reduce pollution from crude oil transportation through Prince William Sound and the Gulf of Alaska.

technical analysis on issues related to oil transportation safety.

The Alyeska contract also calls for the Council to increase public awareness of the company's oil spill response, spill prevention, and environmental protection capabilities, as well as the actual and potential environmental impacts of terminal and tanker operations. The contract states that the Council may work on other related issues not specifically identified when the contract was written.

The Council monitors, reviews, and makes recommendations on:

- Oil spill prevention and response plans prepared by Alyeska and by operators of oil tankers
- Environmental protection capabilities of Alyeska and the tanker operators, as well as on the environmental, social, and economic impacts of their activities
- Government policies, permits, and regulations relating to the oil terminal and tankers

Our Funding

The Council was initially funded at \$2 million a year. The funding is renegotiated every three years; current Alyeska funding is approximately \$3.76 million a year.

Although the Council works closely with and is funded chiefly by Alyeska, the Council is an independent advisory group. The contract is explicit: "Alyeska shall have no right...to have any degree of control over the formation or operation of the corporation."



Preventing an Oil Spill

- **Preventing an oil spill from occurring in the first place is the most effective strategy** to protect human health and the environment. The spill prevention system in Prince William Sound is among the best in the world. The Council works to keep it that way.



Alaska's tough climate is a challenge to safe crude oil transportation through Prince William Sound.

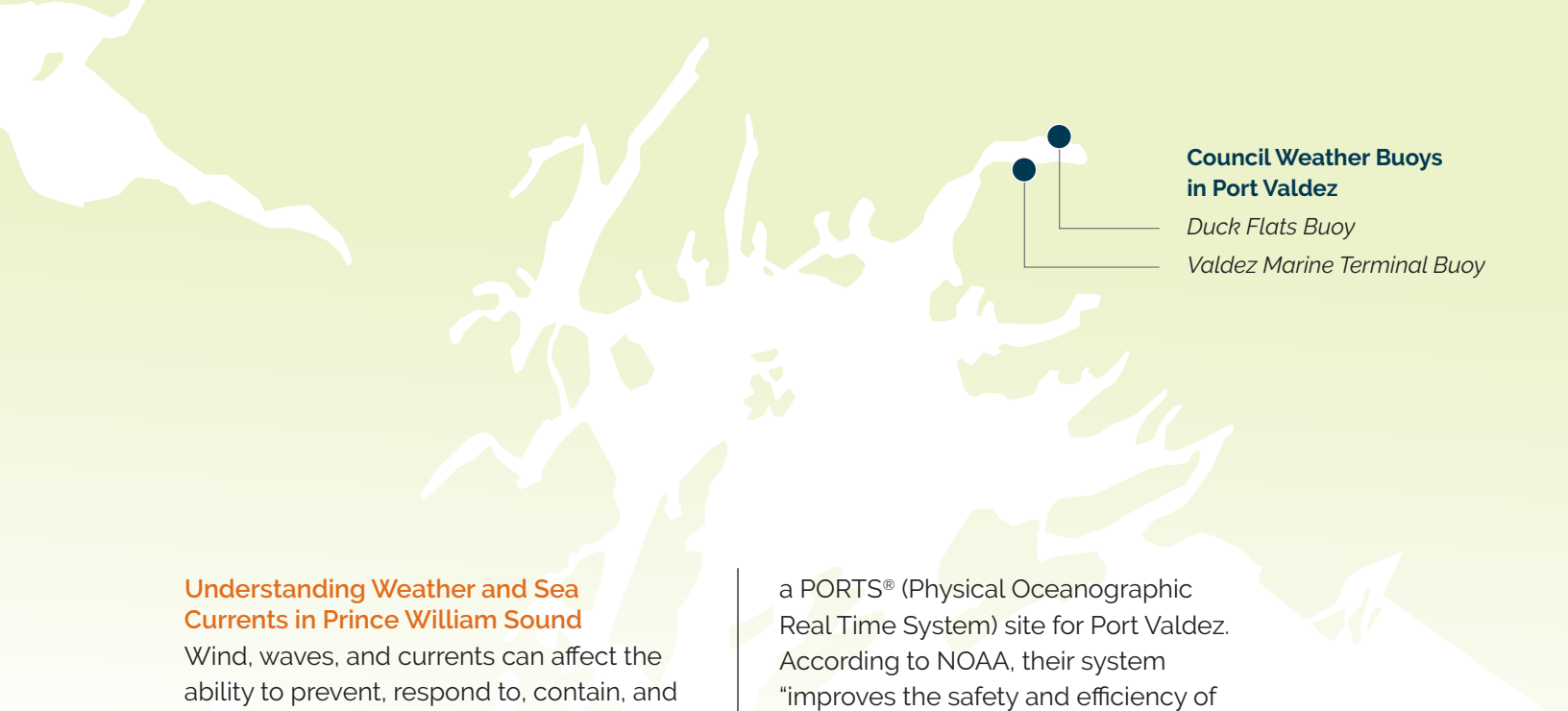
To ensure the maximum level of safety, the Council reviews all aspects of the oil transportation system in Prince William Sound including:

- Operation of oil tankers and the Valdez Marine Terminal
- Oil spills and other incidents
- Adequacy and maintenance of Federal and State requirements and oversight

Monitoring Weather

Weather is a significant factor in the management of safe crude oil transportation from the Valdez Marine Terminal through Prince William Sound. The tough Alaska environment impacts elements such as marine safety, tanker escort operations, oil spill contingency planning, containment boom design, and safe loading of oil tankers.

As required by the Oil Pollution Act of 1990, the Council studies these and other environmental factors to prevent oil disasters and ensure an effective cleanup if a spill happens.



Council Weather Buoys in Port Valdez

Duck Flats Buoy

Valdez Marine Terminal Buoy

Understanding Weather and Sea Currents in Prince William Sound

Wind, waves, and currents can affect the ability to prevent, respond to, contain, and clean up an oil spill. The Council supports two weather stations, one in Prince William Sound and the other in the Gulf of Alaska. Information is collected via the Prince William Sound Weather Station Network, developed and maintained by the Prince William Sound Science Center. The Council co-funds this network. Weather data is shared with the Alaska Ocean Observing System, making it readily available to the public.

Future projects include a weather station at Cape Hinchinbrook and a wind meter at Seal Rocks in the Hinchinbrook Entrance.

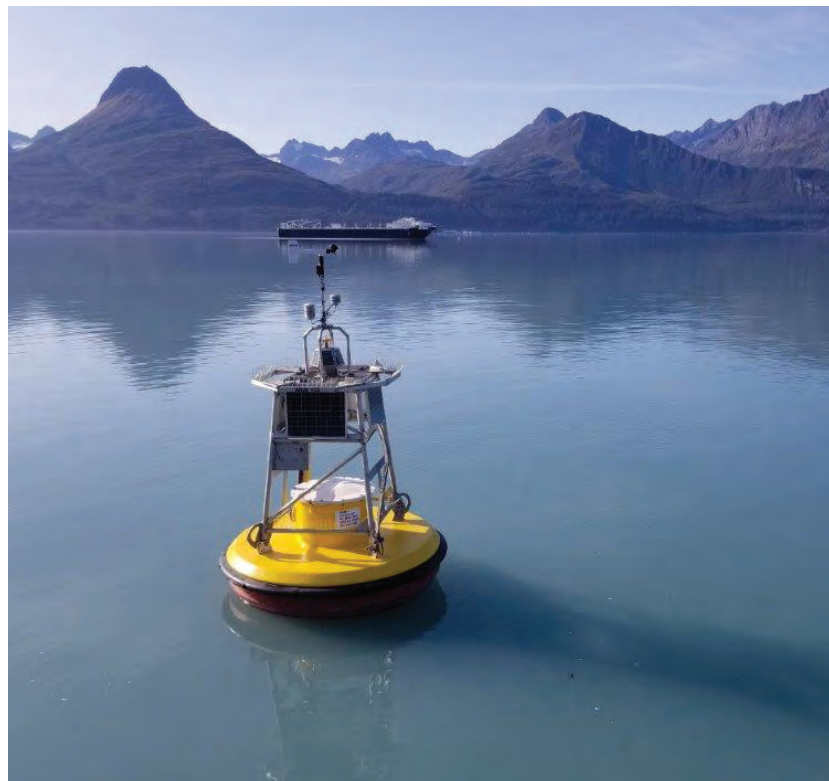
Port Valdez Weather Buoys

The Council assembled, deployed, and maintains two weather buoys in Port Valdez. These buoys measure ocean currents, waves, and other common weather parameters. The first buoy is installed near Jackson Point, offshore of the Valdez Marine Terminal. The second buoy is installed near the Valdez Duck Flats. The Council partnered with the Prince William Sound Science Center and City of Valdez for this project and works with the Alaska Ocean Observing System to share the buoy data regionally.

The Council is currently coordinating with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to establish

a PORTS® (Physical Oceanographic Real Time System) site for Port Valdez. According to NOAA, their system "improves the safety and efficiency of maritime commerce and coastal resource management." The system integrates real-time environmental observations, forecasts and other information that mariners need to navigate safely.

The NOAA PORTS® site will use the Council's buoy data along with information from their weather stations and tide gauges located in Port Valdez. The site is live and available here: www.bit.ly/PORTSinValdez



Vessel Traffic Services: Review of Technology, Training, and Protocols

Review of Technology, Training, and Protocols

The U.S. Coast Guard operates 12 Vessel Traffic Service facilities across the country. These facilities use surveillance and communications systems to reduce vessel collisions, allisions, and groundings. The Prince William Sound system was established primarily to ensure the safe transportation of crude oil from the Valdez Marine Terminal to the Gulf of Alaska.

In response to a 2016 National Transportation Safety Board report, "An Assessment of the Effectiveness of the US Coast Guard Vessel Traffic Service System," the Council commissioned a review of the system in Prince William Sound. The researchers reviewed the best available technology in the field and how that technology, as well as practices and




The Council's review recommended:

- U.S. Coast Guard conduct repairs and maintenance of radar and radio equipment
- Ensure specific on-the-job training
- Develop better, timely ways to send safety messages

procedures, compare to what is used in Prince William Sound.

The study's recommendations include suggestions for the U.S. Coast Guard to conduct repair and maintenance of radar and radio equipment used in the Sound; ensure specific on-the-job training is sufficient to allow personnel to understand unique geography and vessel activity found in the Sound; and develop better ways to send safety messages to area fishermen and other stakeholders on a timely basis.



The Council worked this past year to evaluate the best technology available for towline delivery devices and best use practices.

Tanker Towline Deployment Best Available Technology Review

Review of Technology for Deploying Towlines

Oil tankers operating in Prince William Sound are required to carry specially designed towing equipment when traveling through Prince William Sound. This equipment includes a towing wire, floating line and buoy, and a heavy-duty shackle, all sized to match the weight of the vessel and be able to handle the high winds and seas often encountered in Prince William Sound and the Gulf of Alaska.

The first step in setting up a tow line between a tug and a tanker in distress is passing a “messenger line” between the two vessels. The lighter weight messenger

line helps responders connect the heavier tow lines.

This process can be difficult and dangerous in poor weather conditions. Little research has been done to evaluate the best methods to make this safer and easier. The Council worked to do just that this past year. A new report evaluated delivery devices and best use practices.

Researchers reviewed commercially available devices for deploying messenger lines, then developed criteria to evaluate the equipment according to effectiveness, feasibility, transferability, compatibility, age and condition, availability, environmental impacts, and cost. Read about the researcher’s recommendations on our website: www.bit.ly/TugTowlineBAT.

Planning and Preparing for an Oil Spill

Alyeska and the companies who ship oil from the Valdez Marine Terminal are required by state and federal law to prepare **detailed oil spill contingency plans**. These plans demonstrate how they will prevent and respond to oil spills.

Alaska state regulations require these plans to be updated every five years. Any changes between those updates requires an amendment. Major amendments require a public review.

Part of the Council's role on behalf of the public is to assess and provide advice on the adequacy of these plans. The Council monitors all federal and state plans that have impacts on the oil industry in our region. Significant resources are devoted to these tasks.

In the past year, the Council reviewed an update to the oil spill contingency

plan covering the Valdez Marine Terminal as well as a major amendment to the plan covering the tankers that transit Prince William Sound.

The Valdez Marine Terminal Plan

The terminal contingency plan underwent a five-year renewal in 2019, and the Council participated in the state's public review process. Several concerns were identified, including the integrity of the secondary containment liner, adequate numbers of trained personnel to respond to a spill, and protection of environmentally sensitive areas. The integrity of the liner directly impacts the response system designed for a spill at the terminal. As the terminus of the 800-mile Trans Alaska Pipeline System, it is critical that operations are conducted to prevent a spill from occurring, and that Alyeska, as the operator, has the ability to respond.

The Tanker Plan

The contingency plan for tankers in Prince Williams Sound was amended by the shipping companies to change ice scouting measures. The Council provided input during the public review process for this change, seeking reassurance that changes in the plan do not increase the risk of oil spills.



Regional and Area Contingency Planning

The Council continues to take part in and comment on changes to regional and area oil spill contingency plans in Alaska administered by federal and state agencies.

Potential Changes to Alaska's Statutes and Regulations

The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation conducted a "public scoping" to solicit comments on existing oil spill statutes and regulations in Alaska. On behalf of the Council, a team of experts participated in the review process, pointing out that the current regulations have proven to be protective of Alaska's people and environment for decades and advocated for no diminishment of regulatory requirements.

Hilcorp and Harvest Buyout of BP Pipelines (Alaska)

BP Pipelines (Alaska) announced in 2019 that they planned to sell all of their Alaska assets to Harvest Alaska, an affiliate of Hilcorp. These assets include 49% ownership of the Valdez Marine Terminal. As the Council's oversight responsibility includes the terminal, this transaction has been closely tracked and monitored.

This sale represents a major change in the oil industry in Alaska. Several federal and state agencies have oversight roles in this transfer to ensure it is in the public's best interests. As of June 30, 2020, the mid-stream portion of the sale that includes the Prince William Sound assets had yet to be approved by regulators.

Aerial Surveys for Herring and other Forage Fish

If an oil spill were to occur, it is important to understand how it might affect marine life.

This past year, the Council partnered with the Prince William Sound Science Center,

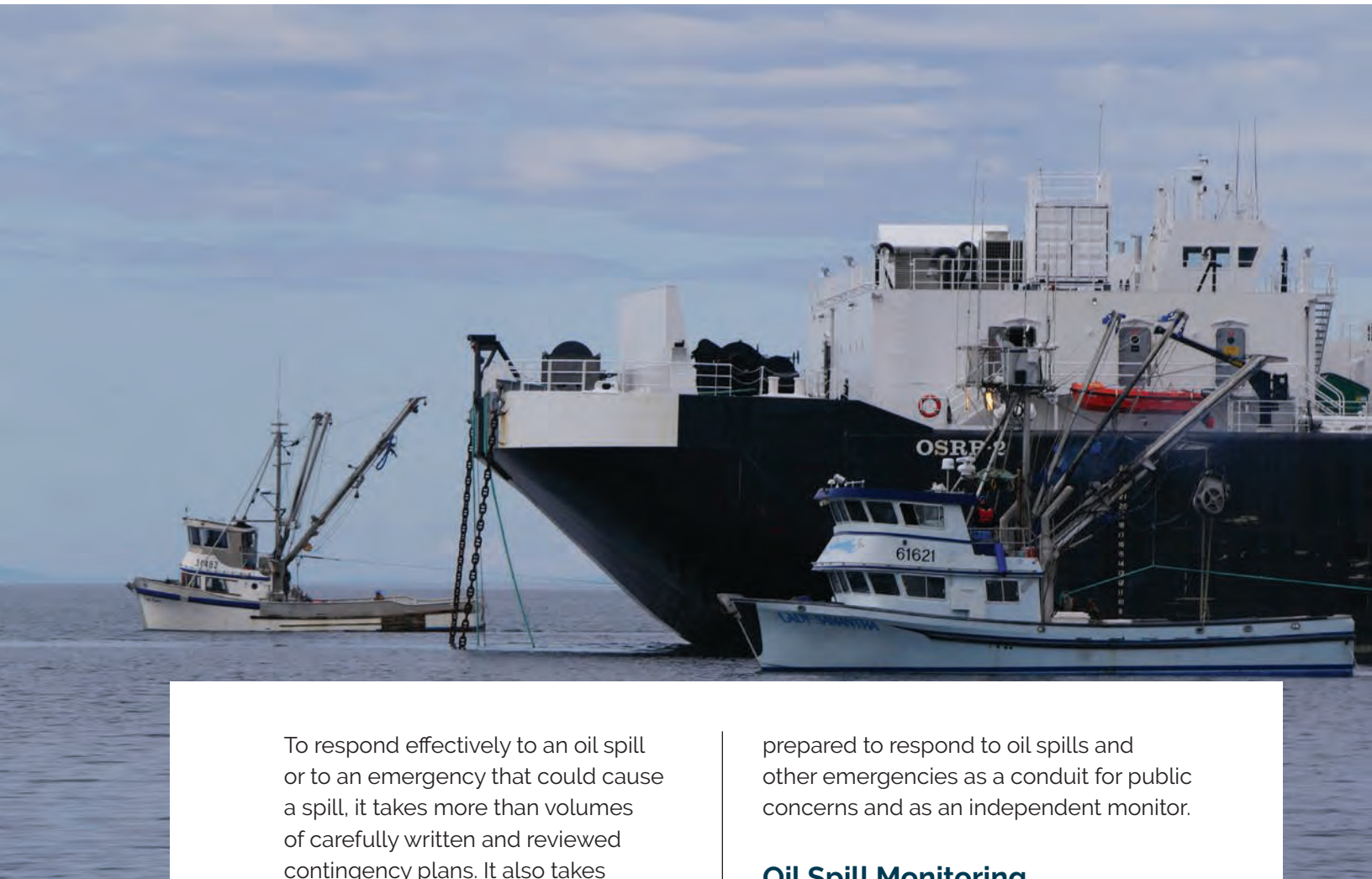
conducting aerial surveys to find out where juvenile herring and other "forage fish" congregate. These small fish have a key role in the marine ecosystem and make up an important part of the food chain. These forage fish are prey for salmon and other larger species that are important to Alaska's economy as well as local citizens who depend on these species for food. In recent years, herring populations in Prince William Sound have crashed to all-time low levels.

Through these surveys, the Council hopes to better understand where the remaining populations of forage fish spawn and congregate in order to protect them in case of an oil spill. In 2019, relatively few schools of juvenile herring and other forage fish were observed in Prince William Sound compared to previous surveys.



Responding to an Oil Spill

- The Council and our industry and regulatory counterparts devote considerable resources to preventing oil spills and reducing the likelihood of another spill, but the risk cannot be eliminated entirely. **A quick and effective response must be ready if prevention measures fail.**



To respond effectively to an oil spill or to an emergency that could cause a spill, it takes more than volumes of carefully written and reviewed contingency plans. It also takes equipment, trained people, and a management system to implement the plan.

The Council monitors the operational readiness of Alyeska's Ship Escort/Response Vessel System, or SERVS, and the tanker companies while also ensuring the Council itself is

prepared to respond to oil spills and other emergencies as a conduit for public concerns and as an independent monitor.

Oil Spill Monitoring

The Council monitors spills that occur from terminal and tanker operations. Fortunately, because spill prevention efforts in Prince William Sound are among the best in the world, significant incidents are rare. More common are minor spills, usually a teaspoon or less, related to normal daily operations and the re-fueling of

Preventing spills is the most effective way to protect the environment. However, a quick and effective response must be ready if prevention measures fail.

equipment. These spills are tracked and improvements are made where possible to prevent small problems from becoming larger issues.

From July 2019 through June 2020, a total of ten spills were reported. The majority of spills were relatively small amounts of petroleum products like hydraulic fluid and diesel, with some slightly larger spills involving fire-fighting foam or contaminated wastewater. A crude oil spill that occurred at the VMT in April 2020 was the largest volume spill by far.

April 2020 Spill from Terminal

On April 12, a sheen was reported in the vicinity of the Valdez Marine Terminal. The source of the spill was identified as a sump located uphill from Port Valdez which overflowed. Oil then seeped through the ground to an old, buried drainage pipe, which caught the oil and directed it into Port Valdez.

The primary causes of the spill have been identified: a check valve became clogged with debris, and a level indicator was not functioning. The failure of the indicator also kept an alarm from alerting an Alyeska employee that the level of liquid was too high in the sump. While the level indicator should have prevented the incident, human error also played a factor. A technician conducting rounds did not verify the sump level due to a headlamp failure. This action had the potential to prevent or reduce the volume of the spill.

April 2020 Spill from Valdez Marine Terminal

26,000

Feet of boom deployed

1,421



Estimated gallons (34 barrels)
of crude oil spilled (to land
and water)

240+



Responders

19



Contracted fishing vessels
responded



COVID-19 complicated the response. All responders were required to adhere to safety guidelines such as masks and social distancing. Many meetings were held via teleconference or webinar.

Monitoring Drills and Exercises

Both the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 and the Council's contract with Alyeska task the Council with monitoring the operational readiness of SERVS and the oil shipping companies.

The Council observes, monitors, and reports on spill response drills, exercises, and training in the Prince William Sound/northern Gulf of Alaska region to provide citizens, regulatory agencies, and oil spill responders with information about readiness as well as recommendations for improvement.

Alyeska conducts many drills and exercises of varying sizes throughout the year. Some are small, but a few are large, involving a

hundred or more personnel. These events ensure responders are ready and able to act quickly in the event of a real spill.

Major Annual Spill Exercises

Every year, large drills are conducted to test aspects of the oil spill contingency plans for the Valdez Marine Terminal and the tanker companies that ship the crude oil.

Council staff attended over 15 drills and exercises this past year. These exercises included stopping and towing a tanker in distress, recovering oil in open water and close to shore, non-mechanical, and a large tabletop exercise conducted by Alaska Tanker Company and BP.

Normal exercises and trainings changed when COVID-19 arrived in early 2020. Many larger 2020 exercises were postponed due to COVID-19. Smaller exercises such as tug towing and tether exercises were limited to just the crews already working together on these vessels. Some opportunities to observe drills and exercises were limited



The largest exercise was a two-day event in Prince William Sound conducted by Alaska Tanker Company and BP. Responders practiced communications between Unified Command stations in both Valdez and Anchorage.

in order to prevent spread of the virus. Exercises were modified to reduce physical interaction with others, including the SERVS response coordinators.

The annual training for fishing and other contracted vessels was canceled as well, but an online Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response, or HAZWOPER, course will be available to keep vessel crews current.

During the spill in April (see page 13), Alyeska activated their incident management team and deployed protection for several sensitive areas. These sensitive area protection elements were scheduled to be demonstrated during exercises this year, so credit was given for actual spill response efforts. While credit such as this is allowed, it is another example of how exercise and training activity has changed during the pandemic.

The largest exercise in the past year was the annual Prince William Sound Shipper's exercise conducted by Alaska Tanker Company and BP in October of 2019. This two-day tabletop event was conducted in both Valdez and Anchorage. The dual locations resulted in important takeaways, such as challenges that occurred with communications between both sites even with prior planning. The Regional Stakeholder Committee process was also activated and exercised during this event, and Council representatives participated in this committee in addition to the normal observation.

Exercises in varying weather: Emergency towing exercises are now being conducted on a quarterly basis to spread them throughout the year instead of just summer months, when the weather tends to be calmer. This is an excellent improvement which the Council had recommended for a number of years.

Testing new equipment: Open water recovery exercises with Edison Chouest Offshore's new oil spill response barges have continued since Alyeska's marine services transition was completed in July 2018. Vessels from Valdez, Cordova, and Whittier have had the opportunity to work with these new barges and tugs in a variety of exercises and trainings.



Protecting the Environment

The Oil Pollution Act of 1990 directs the Council to **review, monitor, and comment** on Alyeska Pipeline Service Company's environmental protection capabilities, as well as the actual and potential environmental impacts of terminal and tanker operations. The Act also calls on the Council to develop recommendations on environmental policies and permits.



The Council conducts scientific research on risks to the environment from tanker and terminal operations. Council research documents levels of pollution and biological effects and helps us better understand new technologies and the costs or benefits associated with their use.

Monitoring Operations at the Terminal

The Council monitors terminal operations and maintenance to minimize the risk of spills and reduce the facility's discharge or emissions of water and air pollution to the lowest reasonable levels.

Long-Term Environmental Monitoring

Every year the Council collects environmental samples and has them chemically analyzed for oil contamination related to the operation of the Valdez Marine Terminal. The sampling includes retrieving blue mussels, marine sediments, and special plastic strips (called passive sampling devices), then having them all chemically analyzed for oil contamination.

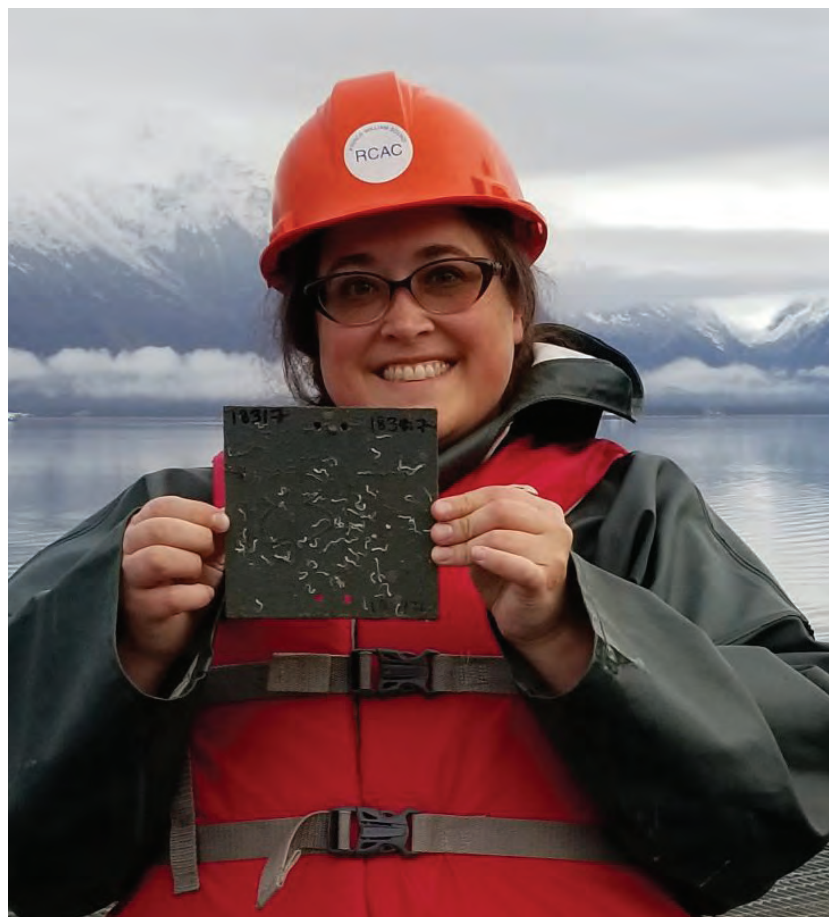
In 2019, mussels, marine sediments, and passive sampling devices were collected from around Port Valdez. The 2019 chemical analysis of the mussels showed that Port Valdez was "exceptionally clean" compared to other parts of Alaska and the United States. The passive sampling device results showed that water column concentrations of oil contamination were "well below any known toxicity thresholds for sensitive marine organisms and life stages." The marine sediment results showed relatively low levels of oil contamination in Port Valdez, but the signature of the Valdez Marine Terminal could still be detected in the sediment samples.

New Genetic Testing Method Evaluated

Recently, the Council investigated a new genetic testing method, called transcriptomics, which involves analyzing the genetic profiles of blue mussels. Certain genes in the mussels get turned on or off in response to oil contamination



TRANSCRIPTOMICS
is a testing technique being used by the Council to analyze whether blue mussels are stressed due to oil contamination



and other environmental stressors. In 2019, mussel samples from Port Valdez were analyzed with intriguing results. All Port Valdez mussels showed elevated expression of genes associated with oil contamination compared to relatively clean, remote locations in Prince William Sound.

Toxicity of Crude Oil

Starting in 2018, the Council began a three-year project with NOAA's Northwest Fisheries Science Center to measure the long-term harm oil exposure can have on Pacific herring and other North Pacific fish species. In the first year of this project, scientists ran complex experiments to determine what lasting harm the oil may cause. Last year, the researchers began analyzing data to understand how oil may

Our three-year project with NOAA's Northwest Fisheries Science Center

The research measured the long-term harm of oil exposure on Pacific herring and other North Pacific fish species.



2018

Exposed fish embryos to oil

2019

Examined how oil may have caused long-term health impacts on these species

2020

Finalizing data analysis, conclusions and writing peer-reviewed reports on research

have caused long-term health impacts. This year, the investigators are finalizing their analysis, conclusions, and writing peer-reviewed reports.

Chemical Dispersants

Chemical dispersants are substances that are intended to disperse spilled oil into the water column rather than leave it floating on the surface in a slick. For many years, the Council has been concerned that studies do not show evidence that dispersants are effective in the cold waters of our region. Another concern is the toxicity of dispersants, especially when mixed with oil. The Council currently does not support dispersant use as an oil spill response option in our region.

Periodically, the Council updates a comprehensive list of scientific research articles about chemical dispersants. In 2020, 129 articles were added, bringing the total number of articles to over 1,700 in the Council's dispersants research bibliography. The bibliography now includes articles from 1981 through 2020 and is available on request. This is an important source of information the Council will consider when making future updates to its chemical dispersants policy.

Monitoring for Marine Invasive Species

Tankers can carry invasive species in ballast water or attached to their hull. If introduced to a new environment, invasive species can become established. Invasive species can destroy local species and their habitat, including commercially important species, such as Alaska salmon. Prince William Sound oil tankers visit some ports outside of Alaska that are known to be infested with invasive species.



Citizens Help the Council Watch for Invasive Species

The Council monitors for invasive species in several of our communities. The biggest potential threats are the European green crab and invasive tunicates, also known as "sea squirts." Other potential threats include bryozoans, barnacles, and the Chinese mitten crab.

To date, neither invasive crab species has been found in either Port Valdez or Cordova. Individual invasive bryozoans, tunicates, and barnacles have been found during past years, but no new non-indigenous species were found this year.

Plankton Testing

Primarily, the Council has used plastic plates and crab traps to monitor for invasive species, but in recent years, more high-tech methods have been added.



1,700

Peer reviewed articles on
dispersants in the Council's
research database

Since 2016, the Council has partnered with the Prince William Sound Science Center in Cordova to collect plankton samples in Port Valdez and Prince William Sound. The samples are genetically analyzed to identify invasive species. That genetic analysis found one non-native clam and sea squirt in 2016, but in 2017, 2018, and 2019 no non-native or invasive marine species were detected.



Involving Citizens in Oversight

- The Council cultivates productive relationships with its 18 member entities, which include communities within the region affected by the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill as well as aquaculture, commercial fishing, environmental, Alaska Native, and tourism groups.

Community Outreach

Every year, the Council's staff and volunteers visit communities in the Council's region to host and participate in events that increase citizen engagement in the Council's work. These include informational receptions, presentations, conference exhibits, and special events.

This past year, the Council informed and engaged the region about the role of Alaska state statutes and regulations in maintaining a robust and effective spill prevention and response system. Council staff and Board members worked closely with member entities, residents, and other organizations in the region to support

public input to the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation's public scoping on regulations related to oil spill prevention and response.

Starting in March 2020, impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic began to limit in-person outreach opportunities. Many planned activities were canceled or postponed, including the community outreach tour during the fishing fleet's annual oil spill response training, the Pacific Coast Congress of Harbormasters and Port Managers Conference in Valdez, and the International Oil Spill Conference. Other opportunities arose, such as the second annual Prince William Sound Natural History Symposium, which switched to an

online venue in May, allowing over 260 participants from around the region and the world to tune in.

Engaging the Next Generations to Protect Prince William Sound

Funding Youth Education Programs

The Council supports programs offered by partners in our region that teach youth about topics related to the Council's mission. Through these hands-on programs, teachers and youth of all ages learn about oil spill prevention and response, citizen oversight, response capabilities in Prince William Sound, and more. The Council also educates youth directly through classroom visits, judging youth science competitions, and career mentoring.

Interns Help Council Achieve Our Mission

The Council recruits interns to complete Council projects that incorporate career development opportunities. The longest standing internship, monitoring Cordova harbor for invasive green crab and tunicates, welcomed back Mia Siebenmorgen Cresswell from Cordova this year.

The Observer Newsletter

The Observer is a free newsletter distributed throughout Prince William Sound, the northern Gulf of Alaska, lower Cook Inlet, and the Kodiak archipelago. It covers Council activities, developments in the oil transportation industry related to our mission, and news about policy and operational issues related to marine oil transportation in Prince William Sound. The Observer is available on the Council website and as an email newsletter.

Government Relations

The Council monitors state and federal administrative and agency actions, legislation, and regulations that relate

Receive our latest news and updates via our email newsletter, The Observer, by subscribing at pwsrcc.org.

to terminal and tanker operations or to oil spill prevention and response. To help track developments and formulate legislative priorities and responses, the Council retains state and federal legislative monitors under contract.

Over the past year, the Council's Legislative Affairs Committee has focused on priorities that include reauthorization of the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund financing rate and program amendments; oil spill prevention and response regulation and enforcement rollbacks; budget and staffing reductions to agencies charged with enforcing regulations; the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation's public scoping process; and the sale of BP's Alaska assets to Hilcorp.

Recertification

The U.S. Coast Guard certifies the Council as the federally approved citizens' advisory group for Prince William Sound, pursuant to the Oil Pollution Act of 1990. The Council has been the certified group since 1991.

Under the annual recertification process, the Coast Guard assesses whether the Council fosters the general goals and purposes of the Act and is broadly representative of the communities and interests as envisioned in the Act.

As part of its recertification process, the Coast Guard considers comments received from industry, interest groups, and citizens. The Council fulfills the Act's requirement for an industry-funded citizens' advisory group, although it was established before the law was enacted.



Board and Ex-Officio Members

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Each member entity chooses one representative to our Board. The lone exception is Valdez, which has two representatives, giving our Board a total of 19 members. The Board meets three times a year. The January meeting is in Anchorage, the May meeting is in Valdez, and the September meeting rotates among other member communities in the oil spill region. Members are current as of June 30, 2020.

Officers



President
Robert Archibald
City of Homer



Vice President
Amanda Bauer
City of Valdez



Secretary
Bob Shavelson
*Oil Spill Region
Environmental
Coalition*

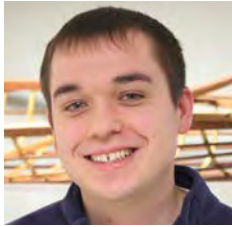


Treasurer
Wayne Donaldson
City of Kodiak

Ex-Officio Board Members (Non-Voting)

- AK Dept. of Environmental Conservation: Craig Ziolkowski
- AK Dept. of Fish & Game/Habitat Division: Lee McKinley
- AK Dept. of Natural Resources: Anthony Strupulis
- Bureau of Land Management: Greg Bjorgo
- National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration: Catherine Berg
- Oil Spill Recovery Institute: W. Scott Pegau
- Div. of Homeland Security & Emergency Management: Vacant
- U.S. Coast Guard/Marine Safety Unit Valdez: Cmdr. Patrick Drayer
- U.S. Dept. of the Interior: Phillip Johnson
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: Calvin J. Terada
- U.S. Forest Service: Steve Namitz

Members-at-Large



Ben Cutrell
Chugach Alaska Corporation



Thane Miller
Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corporation



Rebecca Skinner
Kodiak Island Borough

Board Members



Robert Beedle
City of Cordova



Mike Bender
City of Whittier



Conrad Peterson
Kodiak Village Mayors Association



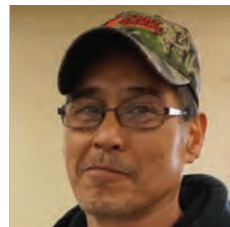
Patience Andersen
Faulkner Cordova District Fishermen United



Mako Haggerty
Kenai Peninsula Borough



Luke Hasenbank
Alaska State Chamber of Commerce



Melvin Malchoff Jr.
Port Graham Corporation



Dorothy M. Moore
City of Valdez



Rob Chadwell
City of Seward



Kirk Zinck
City of Seldovia



Roy Totemoff
Community of Tatitlek



Michael Vigil
Community of Chenega

Advisory Committees

Five standing committees advise the Board of Directors and Council staff on projects and activities. Committee volunteers also assist the staff on individual projects. The advisory committees are made up of interested citizens, technical experts, and members of the Council Board.

The Scientific Advisory Committee's intern, Mia Siebenmorgen Cresswell, monitored the Cordova region for marine invasive species.

Information and Education

Foster public awareness, responsibility, and participation through information and education

Chair

Linda Robinson, Homer

Vice-Chair

Savannah Lewis, Anchorage

Andrea Korbe, Whittier

Cathy Hart, Anchorage

Jane Eisemann, Kodiak

Kate Morse, Cordova

Patience Andersen Faulkner, Cordova*

Ruth E. Knight, Valdez

Trent Dodson, Kodiak



Oil Spill Prevention and Response

Minimize the risks and impacts associated with oil transportation through strong spill prevention and response measures, adequate contingency planning, and effective regulations

Chair

Jim Herbert, Homer

Vice-Chair

John LeClair, Anchorage

David Goldstein, Whittier

Gordon Scott, Girdwood

Jerry Brookman, Kenai

Mike Bender, Whittier*

Robert Beedle, Cordova*

Port Operations and Vessel Traffic Systems

Monitor port and tanker operations as well as the vessel escort system in Prince William Sound and recommend improvements in the vessel traffic navigation system

Chair

Steve Lewis, Anchorage

Vice-Chair

Amanda Bauer, Valdez*

Gordon Terpening, Homer

Cliff Chambers, Seward

Jeremy Talbott, Valdez

Orson Smith, Seward

Pete Heddell, Whittier

Robert Archibald, Homer*

Scientific Advisory

Promote the environmentally safe operation of the terminal and tankers through independent scientific research, environmental monitoring, and review of scientific work

Chair

Davin Holen, Anchorage

Vice-Chair

Sarah Allan, Anchorage

Jeffrey Brooks, Anchorage

Wei Cheng, Anchorage

Wayne Donaldson, Kodiak*

Roger Green, Toronto

John Kennish, Anchorage

Debasmita Misra, Fairbanks

Dorothy Moore, Valdez*

Terminal Operations and Environmental Monitoring

Identify actual and potential sources of episodic and chronic pollution at the Valdez Marine Terminal

Chair

Mikkel Foltmar, Anchorage

Vice-Chair

George Skladal, Anchorage

Matt Cullin, Anchorage

Patrick Tomco, Anchorage

Harold Blehm, Valdez

Steve Goudreau, Valdez

Tom Kuckertz, Anchorage

Amanda Bauer, Valdez*

* Member of Board of Directors

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Page 7: Rob Campbell

Pages 10, 12, 16, 17, 22, & 25: Austin Love

Pages 14, 15 & 19: Nelli Vanderburg

Page 20: Betsi Oliver

Page 24: Mia Siebenmorgen Cresswell





Staff

Executive Director

Donna Schantz

Director of Programs

Joe Lally

Director of Communications

Brooke Taylor

Director of Administration

Walt Wrede

Financial Manager

Gregory Dixon

Executive Assistant

Jennifer Fleming

Project Managers

Amanda Johnson

Austin Love

Roy Robertson

Jeremy Robida

Alan Sorum

Linda Swiss

Outreach Coordinator

Betsi Oliver

Administrative Assistants

Leigh Lubin

Natalie Novik

Project Manager Assistants

Nelli Vanderburg

Hans Odegard



Papers & Presentations

2018 Annual Drill Monitoring Report (report)
Citizens' Council. August 2019. Document
number: 752.431.190801.2018AnnualRpt

**2019 Prince William Sound Forage Fish
Observations** (report) Dr. Scott W. Pegau, Prince
William Sound Science Center. November
2019. Document number: 900.431.191104.
PegauForageRpt

**Comments and letter on Alyeska Pipeline
Service Company, Valdez Marine Terminal
Oil Discharge Prevention and Contingency
Plan** (comments and letter) Citizens' Council.
July 2019, December 2019, and March
2020. Document numbers: 651.105.190729.
VMTcmtsADEC, 651.105.190821.VMTRecReq2,
651.105.191206.ADECInormalRev, and
651.105.200319.DECcplan2020-1

**Comments and letter to the Alaska
Department of Environmental Conservation
on Notice of Public Scoping concerning
Oil Discharge Prevention and Contingency
Plan Requirements** (comments and letter)
Citizens' Council. December 2019 and March
2020. Document numbers: 600.105.191220.
ADECScopeArt4 and 600.105.200311.
ADECRegReformCmt

**Comments on the proposed changes to
Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety
Administration (PHMSA) regulations**
(comments) Citizens' Council. June 2020.
Document number: 400.105.200612.
PHSMAdocketCmts

**Comments to the Alaska Department of
Environmental Conservation on proposed
revisions to the Wildlife Protection Guidelines
for oil spill response in Alaska** (comments)
Citizens' Council. February 2020. Document
number: 651.105.200305.DECwildlifeprot

**Comments to the Regulatory Commission
of Alaska in the matter of the approval of
transfer from BP Pipelines (Alaska) Inc. to
Harvest Alaska, LLC.** (comments) Citizens'
Council. November 2020. Document number:
400.105.191115.RCAbpHarvest

**Letter of support to evaluate Alaska's
Potential Places of Refuge for oil tankers**
(letter) Citizens' Council. October 2019.
Document number: 856.105.191023.PublicPPOR

**Letter submitted jointly with the Cook Inlet
RCAC outlining the RCACs' concerns regarding
ADEC Public Scoping Notice on contingency
plans** (letter) Citizens' Council. November
2019. Document number: 600.105.191126.
ADECscoping

**Letter to all members of the Alaska State
Legislature regarding Alaska Department
of Environmental Conservation's (ADEC)
Notice of Public Scoping regarding oil spill
contingency plan statutes and regulations**
(letter) Citizens' Council. November
2020. Document number: 270.105.191120.
AKlegisPucScop

Letter to Governor Dunleavy regarding concerns over Notice of Public Scoping and transmittal of resolution 19-03 – Safeguarding Alaska's Oil Spill Prevention and Response Standards (letter) Citizens' Council. October 2019. Document number: 651.105.191031. GovDunleavyPS

Letters to DNR Commissioner Corrie Feige and the Regulatory Commission of Alaska regarding the need for updated Hilcorp financial records (letters) Citizens' Council. March 2020. Document numbers: 600.105.200327.FeigeHilcorpFncls and 600.105.200325.RCAHilcorpFncls

Letters to the Alaska Delegation highlighting a potential weakening of current oil spill contingency plan statutes and regulations by the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) (letters) Citizens' Council. December 2019. Document Numbers: 600.105.191211.SullvnRegReform, 600.105.191211.MurkRegReform, and 600.105.191211.YoungRegReform

Letter to the Alaska Delegation regarding the Regulatory Commission of Alaska (RCA) consideration of the joint application by BP and Harvest Alaska (letter) Citizens' Council. April 2020. Document number: 600.105.200414. AKDelHilcorp

Letter to the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation expressing support for the Spill Prevention and Response Division budget (letter) Citizens' Council. December 2019. Document number: 600.105.191205.ADECsparBudget

Letter to the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation Notice of Public Comment Period for proposed revision of the Arctic and Western Alaska Area Contingency Plan (letter) Citizens' Council. September 2019. Document number: 651.105.190924. ADECarcicPlan

Letter to the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation on the proposed changes to water quality regulations (letter) Citizens Council. September 2019. Document number: 500.105.190916.ADECwaterRegs

Long-Term Environmental Monitoring Program: 2018 and 2019 Sampling Results and Interpretations (reports) Dr. James R. Payne and William B. Driskell. July 2019 and March 2020. Document numbers: 951.431.190801.2018AnnualRpt and 951.431.200301.2019AnnualRpt

Metagenetic Analysis of 2017 Plankton Samples from Prince William Sound, Alaska (report) Dr. Jonathan Geller, Melinda Wheelock, and Martin Guo. August 2019. Document number: 952.431.190815.MLMetagenetic

Port Valdez Mussel Transcriptomics (report) Lizabeth Bowen, U.S. Geological Survey. November 2019. Document number: 951.431.191120.MusslTrnscriptRpt

Requests for additional information on the proposed amendment to the Prince William Sound Tanker Oil Discharge Prevention and Contingency Plan (letter) Citizens' Council. November 2020. Document number: 651.105.191101.ADECTkrCPCmts

Resolution 19-03 Safeguarding Alaska's Oil Spill Prevention and Response Standards (resolution) Citizens' Council. October 2019. Document number: 651.106.191029. PrevtnStndrds

Ship Simulation Modeling and Mariner Study of the Maritime Implications for Tank Vessels Utilizing Potential Places of Refuge, Prince William Sound, Alaska (report) Safeguard Marine, LLC. July 2019. Document number: 856.431.190715.SafeguardPPOR

Tanker Towline Deployment BAT Review (report) Glosten. May 2020. Document number: 801.431.200512.GlostenTowlineBAT

These are just a few of the many reports, papers, presentations, and other materials produced or compiled by the Council in the past year. For further information, or to obtain copies, visit the Council website or contact the Anchorage office (see back cover for contact information).

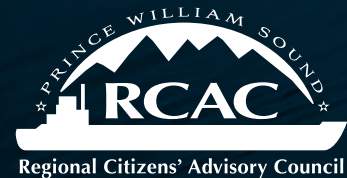


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