



PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND

REGIONAL CITIZENS' ADVISORY COUNCIL

May 2025
Status Report
 As of March 18, 2025

3100 – Public Information Program

Objectives: Inform members of the general public, member entities, and agency and industry partners of PWSRCAC projects. Support legal requirements for ongoing updates to the public.

Accomplishments since last report: Staff continues to inform the general public and others about PWSRCAC's projects and mission through publications and online presence.

3200 – The Observer

The Observer: The Council's newsletter, *The Observer*, is produced three times per year in both print and email format. Individual articles are posted to the Council's website. Over 700 folks are subscribed to the email edition, approximately 2,000 print copies are mailed to subscribers, and around 250-300 copies of each edition are given out either at the Council's information booth or other events.

All editions can be found on our website: www.tinyurl.com/ObserverArchive

3300 – Annual Report

Objectives: Prepare and publish PWSRCAC's Annual Report each year to:

1. Inform the general public, member entities, and agency and industry partners of PWSRCAC projects and activities; and
2. Support legal requirements for ongoing updates to the public.

Accomplishments since last report: The latest annual report (July 2023-June 2024) was completed and released. It has been posted to our website and copies distributed to our mailing list. It has since been available at our booth events as well.

3410 – Fishing Vessel Program Community Outreach

Objectives: For bringing the realities of oil spill response tactics, equipment, and planning to life for citizens within the Exxon Valdez oil spill region communities, the fishing vessel community outreach program is a perfect venue. Each fall and spring SERVS holds its contracted fishing vessel program training in the following communities: Cordova, Valdez, Whittier, Seward, Homer, and Kodiak. The on-water portion of the training, viewed by the public during this outreach tour in partnership with Alyeska/SERVS, shows real-time capabilities of oil spill prevention and response equipment and tactics. This project contracts a local tour boat that will allow interested students, members of the public, and media to observe and learn about oil spill prevention and response.

Accomplishments since last report: Following the FY2025 tour in Whittier on September 30th, 2024, work on this project during the rest of this fiscal year involves staff, IEC, and partners working to

develop an alternative format for an event or events to deliver this information and outreach to the Kodiak community.

The IEC project team met on February 13, 2025 to brainstorm land-based options to accomplish this outreach in Kodiak. Maia consulted with Alyeska/SERVS staff about the generated ideas. The project team will meet at least two more times over the remainder of the fiscal year to continue to refine the event idea and develop plans for implementation in FY2026.

3500 – Community Outreach Program

Objectives: Increase awareness of PWSRCAC and increase communications with member organizations and communities in the Exxon Valdez oil spill region.

Accomplishments since last report:

December 18 – EVOS/PWSRCAC overview for WA Department of Ecology

- Online virtual presentation to Spill Prevention, Preparedness, and Response program staff of the Washington State Department of Ecology.
- 40 staff attended, asking some great questions, and several individuals expressed gratitude for our website, reports, and other work.

February 3-7 – Alaska Forum on the Environment

- The Council hosted an exhibitor booth with CIRCAC speaking with attendees from across the EVOS region and across the state.
- Outreach Coordinator Maia Draper-Reich, as a member of the event’s planning committee, helped facilitate the Oil Spill Track of talks, which included sessions on inland oil spills, oil spill cleanup, and tools for prevention and response.



Shaylon Cochran (CIRCAC) and Maia Draper-Reich (PWSRCAC) at the shared exhibitor booth at AFE 2025. Photo by Jaina Willahan.

February 28-March 2 – Alaska Ocean Sciences Tsunami Bowl, Seward, AK

- Board member Jim Herbert and Maia served as competition officials for the annual quiz bowl event hosting high school teams from around the state including several from the EVOS region. They also connected with ocean science professionals from around the state.

March 27 – Chugach Regional Resources Commission’s The Gathering, Anchorage AK

- The Council hosted a day-long workshop at the Gathering through SAC's social science project to connect with tribal members, partners, and community members of the EVOS region to gather input on future social science research.
- Davin Holen, Danielle Verna, Joe Lally, and Maia participated in the planning group for the event.
- Davin and Danielle will co-facilitate the workshop. Maia will run an exhibitor booth at the event.

April 14 – Community Visit to Ouzinkie

- At the time of this report, Maia is working with Board Member and Ouzinkie Mayor Elijah Jackson to set up a day trip to visit the community, ideally including a guest lesson in the school and a public reception.

April 15-17 - ComFish Alaska 2025, Kodiak, AK

- PWSRCAC will host a booth at this event to connect with the Kodiak and greater Alaska fishing community.

3530 – Youth Involvement

Objectives: Select proposals for youth activities, in collaboration with partner agencies and organizations throughout the Exxon Valdez oil spill region. Coordinate activities to facilitate hands-on learning about topics related to the Council's mission. Where appropriate and feasible, participate in mission-relevant youth activities.

Accomplishments since last report: Three contracts are currently under way for projects happening during the 2024/2025 school year:

- Alaska Marine Conservation Council/Kodiak Ocean Science Discovery Program – *Kodiak Marine Ecosystems Lessons & Collaborative Outreach*
- Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies - *Elevating Student Advocates & Educators through Afterschool Leadership*
- Kenai Mountains-Turnagain Arm National Heritage - *Expanding Access to Equitable Outdoor Education*

One school year project and six summer projects are in the contracting process, as of this report, and will take place during the spring and summer months:

- Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge - *"Tiġlaġ in the Bay" School Program*
- Alaska Marine Conservation Council - *Kodiak Marine Science and Exploration Summer Program for Youth*
- Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies - *Continued Engagement of Youth as Environmental Stewards: High School Internships & Camp Opportunities*
- Copper River Watershed Project - *Copper River Stewardship Program: Into the Future: Copper River Watershed 2025*
- Fireweed Academy - *Ecological Stewardship for Kids: A Hands-on Application of History, Ecology, and Leadership*
- Kenai Mountains - Turnagain Arm National Heritage Area - *KMTA and PWSRCAC - Expanding Access to Equitable Coastal Outdoor Education*
- Prince William Sound Science Center - *Sound Connections: Building Bridges through Birding*

A request for proposals (RFP) is currently open for Youth Involvement projects taking place during the 2025/2026 School Year.

3600 – Public Communications Program

Objectives: This program disseminates information and increases awareness through the Observer newsletter and the Council's online presence. This work helps publicize information generated from the Council's technical committee projects. Project results and information are disseminated in a format that is easily understood by the general public.

This program funds training for the Public Communications Project Manager to maintain knowledge of the latest technology and best practices for public communication. Recently attended trainings include: Nonprofit Technology Networks' course on AI, Google Analytics and Google's Looker Studio (software for creating dashboard reports on website analytics), search engine optimization, and introduction to U.S. Census' online database.

Nonprofit Technology Network conference: Project Manager Amanda Johnson recently attended the Nonprofit Technology Network Conference in Baltimore, Maryland, on April 16-18, 2025. Details about the conference: <https://www.nten.org/gather/ntc>

3610 – Web Best Available Technology

Objectives: This project helps ensure the Council's websites and web presence using the best and most up-to-date technology available by funding new features, repairs, and upgrades to the Council's websites. This includes regular maintenance and technical upgrades as well as upgrades to such aspects as user experience and branding.

Website data: Website usage for www.pwsrca.org is tracked through Google Analytics for information such as numbers of visitors, location of visitors, how visitors found the site, which pages are visited most often, how much time is spent on particular pages, whether visitors were engaged enough to visit more than one page and much more. A dashboard report with basic data is available:

- Desktop version: <https://lookerstudio.google.com/reporting/5acb0b03-619c-4b0d-ae5b-e13edeb08a50>
- New mobile-friendly dashboard: https://lookerstudio.google.com/s/l_MxdhAPly0

Please contact project manager Amanda Johnson if you have questions or need additional details.

3810 – Illustrated Prevention & Response System Outreach

Objectives: Work with artist and author Tom Crestodina to develop artwork for a book and other materials showcasing the oil spill prevention and response system in Prince William Sound. Educate stakeholders and the general public about the importance of oil spill prevention and response, why the PWS prevention/response system is one of the best in the world, and how it can be kept that way. Create new work partnerships with industry and regulators, similar to how groups collaborate during the fishing vessel training community outreach tours.

Accomplishments since last report: Staff collected input and edits from the project team and industry on the draft materials and is now working to edit the text to the appropriate reading level. Work with Crestodina is planned to start up again in the spring, after he completes other commitments. The tentative plan is to finish the book at that time and go to print by summer 2025.

3903 - Internship

Objectives: Coordinate with regional secondary and/or higher education institutions to recruit students for internships and coordinate with other committees to help support students' education goals while meeting appropriate PWSRCAC project needs.

Accomplishments since last report: A budget modification to fund the FY2025 deferred 3903 Internship project at \$4,000 was voted on and passed by the Executive Committee (XCOM) on December 18, 2024.

These funds are for a stipend, travel costs, and conference fee for an intern working with PWSRCAC's Long-Term Environmental Monitoring Program (LTEMP). The intern will participate in the spring LTEMP field work, including preparations, and complete a work project connected to LTEMP. This internship will be co-supervised by PWSRCAC (Danielle Verna, Maia Draper-Reich) and PWS College via Professor (and IEC member) Amanda Glazier. PWSC is providing funding for tuition costs and facilitating academic credit for the internship.

The designated internship was advertised in December and the Council received one application from a PWS College student. The student, Timothy Derbidge, was interviewed and accepted for the internship. Timothy has begun work getting oriented to the Council and the Long-Term Environmental Monitoring project. Danielle, with input from SAC, has provided him with a partial data set from the LTEMP data to complete a project on. Timothy will also present a poster on his internship project at the PWSC Environmental Sciences Symposium in early May.

5000 - Terminal Operations Program

Objectives: The goal of the Terminal Operations and Environmental Monitoring (TOEM) Program is to prevent hazardous liquid spills and minimize the actual and potential environmental impacts associated with the operation and maintenance of the Valdez Marine Terminal.

Accomplishments since last report:

Outstanding Requests for Information and Responses to Recommendations:

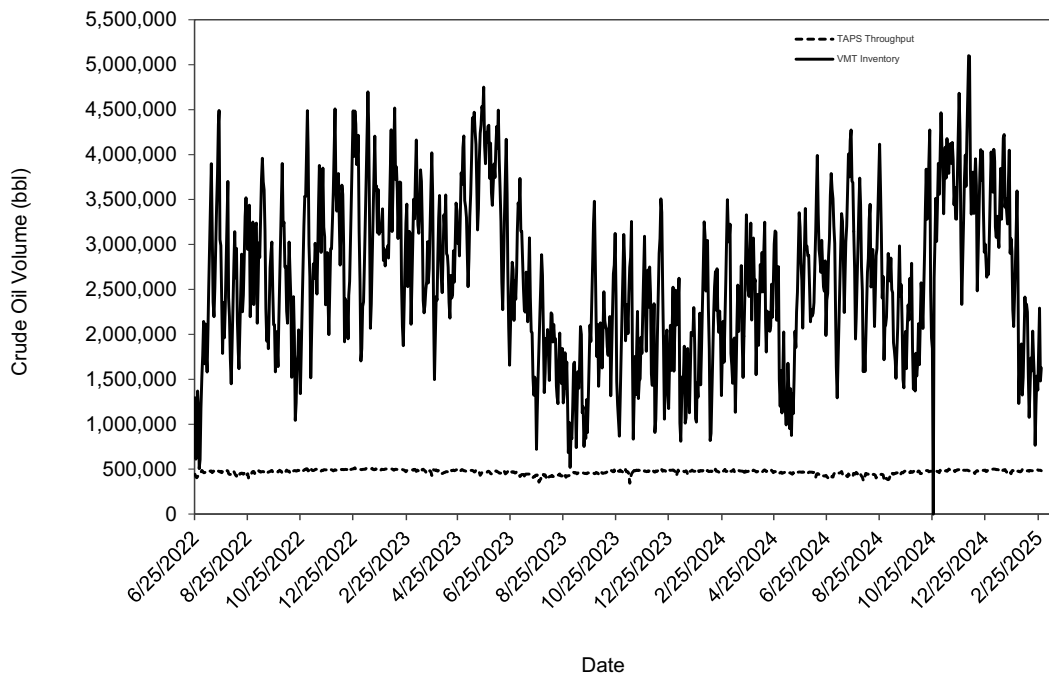
- Alyeska transmitted a number of documents related to PWSRCAC information requests on January 22, 2025. We thank Alyeska for their efforts in providing the requested documents and for their efforts to improve response times to PWSRCAC information requests.
- However, in this recent transmittal, Alyeska noted that a number of PWSRCAC information requests related to the 2023 Gantt Chart and 2023 Tank Bottom Processing Fire are "closed" as the "formal documents [requested by PWSRCAC] will not be provided."
 - PWSRCAC does not agree with Alyeska that being provided with written and verbal summary documents is an adequate substitute for the requested formal documentation. The receipt of formal documentation is necessary for PWSRCAC's work and to ensure staff and committee members have a technically informed understanding of Alyeska's verbal and written responses to PWSRCAC questions.

Tank Vent Damage Monitoring:

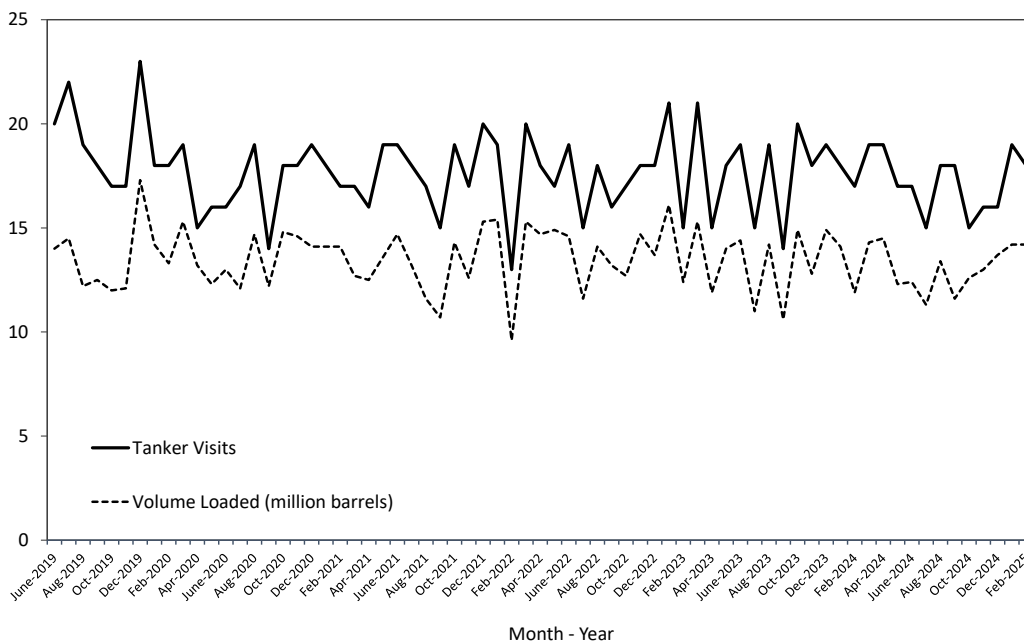
- Taku Engineering's Report "2022 Tank Pressure/Vacuum Pallet Damage: Crude Oil Storage Tank Headspace Gas Assessment" was transmitted to Alyeska on February 11, 2025, with a cover letter outlining the timeline associated with this report and asking Alyeska to provide the outstanding information requests needed to refine the report.

Attachments: Graphs depicting a variety of data related to the operation and environmental impacts of the Valdez Marine Terminal.

Daily Oil Inventory at the Valdez Marine Terminal and Trans-Alaska Pipeline Throughput
 (Source: Alaska Department of Revenue - Tax Division, <http://tax.alaska.gov/programs/oil/production.aspx>)

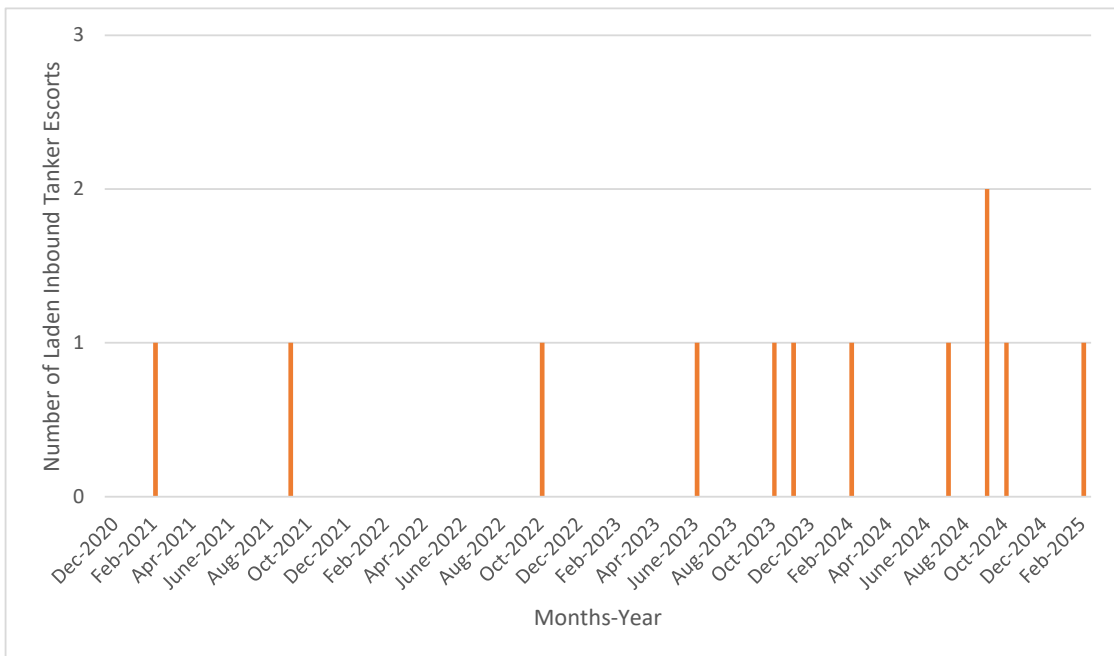


Number of tanker visits and crude oil volume loaded onto ships from VMT
 (Source: Alyeska Pipeline Service Company. Partitioned by VMT vessel arrival date.)



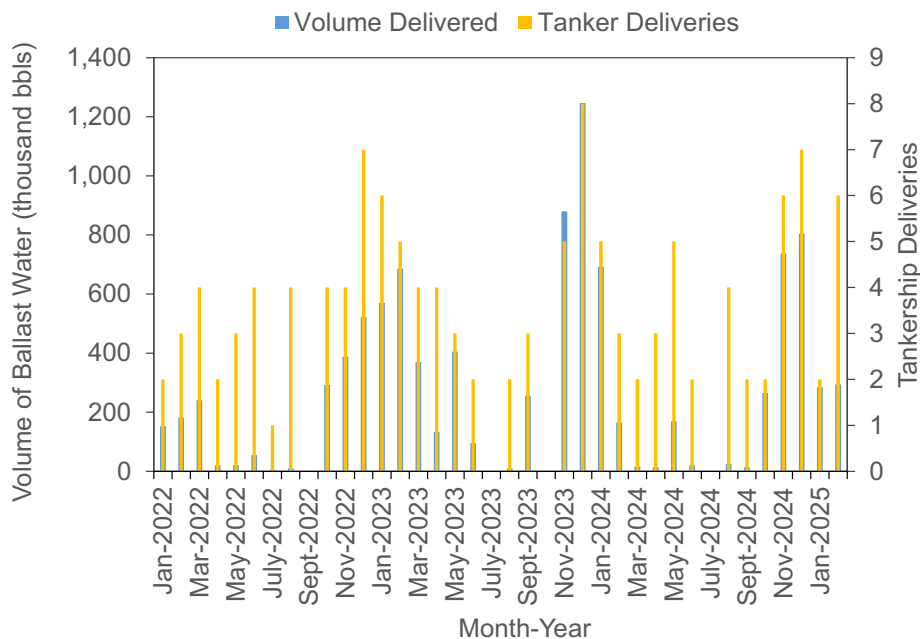
Inbound laden tanker escorts to VMT

(Source: Alyeska Pipeline Service Company. Partitioned by VMT vessel arrival date.)



Monthly ballast water deliveries to Ballast Water Treatment Facility from tanker ships

(Source: Alyeska Pipeline Service Company. Partitioned by VMT vessel arrival date.)



5051 – Water Quality Review of VMT

Objectives: This project entails a review of 2018-2023 water quality data. The goal of this project is to ensure the terms of the Valdez Marine Terminal's water quality permit minimize the environmental impact of wastewater effluent discharged from the facility.

Accomplishments since last report: Fjord & Fish Sciences, the contractor for this project, has reviewed the draft permit and is currently awaiting ADEC's release of the water quality permit for public comment.

5053 – Addressing Risks and Safety Culture at Alyeska's VMT

Objectives: This project will provide a retainer to Billie Garde to provide support to assist the Council in tracking and implementing recommendations identified in the Council-sponsored report, "Assessment of Risks and Safety Culture at Alyeska's Valdez Marine Terminal."

Accomplishments since last report: Follow up related to tracking and implementing recommendations identified in the Council-sponsored 2023 report, "Assessment of Risks and Safety Culture at Alyeska's Valdez Marine Terminal" is ongoing by Billie Garde, TOEM, and Council staff. A detailed outline of accomplishments will be provided by Billie Garde at this Board meeting.

5057 – Air Quality Review of VMT

Objectives: This project verifies that Alyeska is mitigating and reducing sources of air pollution at the VMT which may pose adverse environmental and health impacts on residents of Valdez. The goal of this project is to provide actionable, clear, and specific recommendations to advance efforts to reduce sources of air pollution at the VMT.

Accomplishments since last report: Ron Sahu, PhD, the contractor for this project, reviewed available documentation related to the 2022 tank vent damage incident to assess the feasibility of calculating emissions estimates. Dr. Sahu determined that a conservative assessment could be made, and a report has been recommended as final by the TOEM Committee.

Dr. Sahu also reviewed and provided input for public comments related to Minor Permit: AQ0082MSS06 Alyeska Pipeline Service Company, VMT. These were submitted on March 24, 2025.

5081 – Ballast Water Tank 93 Maintenance Review

Objectives: This project entails performing a technical review of the maintenance of ballast water tank 93, during its out-of-service inspection and repairs in 2023.

Accomplishments since last report: Additional information for this project was received from Alyeska on January 22, 2025. Taku Engineering, the contractor for this project, is in the process of reviewing this information to draft a preliminary report.

5595 – Review of VMT Cathodic Protection System Testing Protocols

Objectives: This project seeks an independent review of current VMT CP protocols and data collection for the VMT crude oil storage tanks in order to verify that corrosion is being effectively mitigated by well-functioning cathodic protection systems.

Accomplishments since last report: Mears Group, Inc. was selected as the contractor for this project through the RFP process. A contract was drafted and signed in March 2025. Upon TOEM Committee recommendation, Taku Engineering, LLC, has been contracted as project support for institutional knowledge related to VMT CP protocols and data collection.

5591 – Crude Oil Piping Maintenance Review

Objectives: This project involves a technical review of the internal inspections of crude oil piping that occurred at the Valdez Marine Terminal (VMT) from 2016 through 2018, and a follow-on inspection of the buried crude oil relief piping that occurred in 2022. The goal of this project is to ensure that the crude oil piping at the VMT is maintained using industry best practices, such that the risks of a spill are minimized.

Accomplishments since last report: This project has been deferred to FY26.

5640 – Alaska North Slope Crude Oil Properties

Objectives: This project entails analyzing the physical and chemical properties of Alaska North Slope (ANS) crude oil and interpreting how those properties would impact the effectiveness of oil spill response measures including mechanical recovery, in-situ burning, and dispersants. A crude oil sample will be obtained then sent to a laboratory for physical and chemical analysis. That data will be reviewed by a spill response subject matter expert to interpret how the oil's chemical and physical properties would influence various spill response techniques.

Accomplishments since last report: On April 16, 2024, the Prince William Sound Response Planning Group shipped an ANS crude sample to Dr. Robert Faragher of Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) to perform an analysis of the current properties of ANS crude oil. ECCC has agreed to perform this testing free of charge to PWSRCAC. Some testing has already taken place, but the completion of the tests and resulting report is expected to be available six to nine months from the date that they received the sample. This project is still ongoing, as ECCC recently contacted us about the possible need to extend the timeframe until February 2025. We received a partial report from ECCC on February 28, 2025, indicating that some testing was still ongoing, and the report would be updated once the tests were completed. Staff is currently in the process of contracting with Merv Fingas of Spill Science to review the ECCC analysis and write a report on his findings. Once we receive the complete analysis from ECCC, we will provide it to Merv Fingas.

6000 – Oil Spill Response Program

Objectives: Through this program, PWSRCAC develops positions and recommendations on oil spill response technologies; reviews state and federal contingency plans (c-plans) and plan-related issues; promotes compliance, enforcement, and funding of existing environmental regulations; and promotes the incorporation of local knowledge of sensitive areas into contingency planning.

Accomplishments since the last report:

Alaska Regional Response Team (ARRT): General information on the ARRT can be found [HERE](#), and meeting summaries and presentations can be found [HERE](#). The ARRT met on March 5 and covered updates on the Wildlife Protection Committee, Cultural Resources Committee, Science and Technology Committee, Statewide Planning Committee, Regional Stakeholder Committee Task Force, and Tribal

Committee/Task Force. Other topics included Alaska Oil Spill Response Organizations, EPA Consequence Management Advisory Team, U.S. Forest Service Alaska Resources, and Essential Fish Habitat Training.

PWSRCAC has offered to participate in the ARRT's Cultural Resources Committee and hopes to work on updates to the "Alaska Implementation Guidelines" for the 1997 National Programmatic Agreement.

Prince William Sound Area Contingency Plan (PWS ACP): The PWS AC Admin Subcommittee recently met to discuss updating the plan to conform to the new architecture of the area contingency plans. The public review is expected around spring 2025.

Arctic and Western Alaska (also known as Sector Western Alaska and U.S. Arctic) Area Committee (AWA AC): There is a public comment period on updates to the AWA Area Contingency Plan to conform to the new architecture required by the USCG. The public comment period began on February 27, 2025, and comments are due on April 11, 2025. Job aids for the Regional Stakeholder Committee (RSC) and the RSC Liaison Officer are part of this review.

Outstanding Questions or Issues:

BP-Hilcorp Transaction: In 2020, the Regulatory Commission of Alaska (RCA) issued two orders regarding Hilcorp/Harvest Alaska's purchase of BP's assets in Alaska:

- Order No. 6, issued March 2020, allowed Hilcorp/Harvest Alaska to keep its financial information confidential; and
- Order No. 17, issued in December 2020, approved BP's and Harvest Alaska's transfer application thus transferring TAPS assets (including the Valdez Marine Terminal) from BP Pipelines to Harvest Alaska.

The City of Valdez subsequently appealed both orders to the Alaska Superior Court and ultimately to the Alaska Supreme Court.

On June 27, 2023, the Alaska Supreme Court heard arguments on the appeal from the City of Valdez, the State of Alaska (on behalf of the RCA), and attorneys for Hilcorp and affiliates and BP.

On May 3, 2024, the Alaska Supreme Court issued an opinion to:

1. Reverse the Alaska Superior Court's dismissal of Order No. 6, and
2. Affirm the appeal of Order No. 17.

This means the City of Valdez's argument that Hilcorp/Harvest Alaska's financial information should not be confidential will be remanded back to the Alaska Superior Court. This allows the City of Valdez to continue their quest to have financial information released to the public.

PWSRCAC had planned to submit an amicus curiae brief to the Alaska Superior Court in support of the City of Valdez's appeal of the RCA's March 2020 Order No. 6 back in 2021. As this issue has now been brought back to the Superior Court, PWSRCAC should have another opportunity to submit the amicus curiae brief.

6510 – Contingency Plan Review

Objectives: The purpose of this project is to monitor, review, and comment on state and federal contingency plans (c-plans) for the Valdez Marine Terminal (VMT) and the Trans Alaska Pipeline System

(TAPS) tankers that transit Prince William Sound. Reviewing c-plans is a major task for PWSRCAC as outlined in both the PWSRCAC/Alyeska contract and OPA 90.

The Prince William Sound Tanker Oil Discharge Prevention and Contingency Plan (PWS Tanker C-Plan) and associated vessel response plans for Alaska Tanker Company, Andeavor (subsidiary of Marathon Petroleum), Crowley Alaska Tankers, Hilcorp North Slope, and Polar Tankers, was renewed on January 31, 2022, and will expire in 2027. Alyeska Pipeline Service Company (Alyeska) Valdez Marine Terminal Oil Discharge Prevention and Contingency Plan (VMT C-Plan) was renewed on November 15, 2019, and will expire in 2024.

Accomplishments since the last report:

PWS Tanker C-Plan:

Oil Search, doing business as Santos, recently filed an application for a new c-plan in Prince William Sound. Their Vessel Response Plan will be part of the PWS Tanker C-Plan and will cover spot charter vessel operations in Prince William Sound. Santos will become a member of the Response Planning Group whose members make up the Prince William Sound shippers. Comments were submitted on March 19, 2025.

VMT C-Plan:

VMT C-Plan Renewal: On November 6, 2024, the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) approved the renewal of the Valdez Marine Terminal Oil Discharge Prevention and Contingency Plan (VMT C-Plan) and issued its Basis of Decision on the renewal. The 5-year renewal is effective as of November 6, 2024 and expires on November 5, 2029. ADEC's approval letter and Basis of Decision document can be found [HERE](#).

ADEC's approval includes five conditions of approval ranging from secondary containment evaluation, to requiring additional details on the greatest possible discharge, providing API 653 inspection reports and supporting documentation, and providing prevention and response training documentation. ADEC also addressed 19 major topics in their Basis of Decision document.

Of particular interest to PWSRCAC is **Condition of Approval #1 East Tank Farm Secondary Containment Area Required Evaluation**. As outlined in Issue #7 in the Basis of Decision document, further analysis of the liners is required. This renewal requires Alyeska to complete the following:

- A. *Submit the final report of secondary containment liner testing method to be used to evaluate the condition of the East Tank Farm secondary containment area by March 1, 2025.*
- B. *Complete liner investigations of the East Tank Farm secondary containment area within the plan cycle (prior to plan submittal of the 2029 renewal).*

The following is a timeline of actions since the plan was approved:

Date	Action
Nov 6, 2024	ADEC issues VMT C-Plan approval
Nov 26, 2024	PWSRCAC files Request for Informal Review
Dec 3, 2024	ADEC determines PWSRCAC's request has merit
Feb 24, 2025	ADEC issues final decision on PWSRCAC's request
March 1, 2025	Deadline for Alyeska to submit final report of secondary containment liner testing method to be used in satisfaction of COA #1A
March 24, 2025	Deadline to request an adjudicatory hearing on Request for Informal Review

On November 26, 2024, the Board approved filing a Request for Informal Review on COA #1 to include the following:

- A. The COA should specify that the submissions required of Alyeska by the COA, the schedules of inspections, and corrective actions because the liner inspections will be reviewed as major amendments to the Prevention Plan with formal public review as required by 18 AAC 75.415(a)(4)-(5).
- B. The COA should establish a schedule for completing inspections of the liners by the end of 2025 for completion by 2028.
- C. The COA should include requirements for corrective action if the liner inspections fail to demonstrate that the existing liner meets the “sufficiently impermeable” standard of 18 AAC 75.075.

This informal review request was directed to ADEC’s Spill Prevention and Response (SPAR) Director Teresa Melville for resolution who determined in early December that our request had merit.

On February 24, 2025, SPAR Director Melville issued ADEC’s decision on our request for informal review available [HERE](#). Director Melville affirmed ADEC’s decision on COA #1A and 1C, and issued the following on COA 1B from ADEC’s approval:

COA No. 1 is changed to provide as follows:

- A. By April 1, 2025, APSC will submit to SPAR a timeline outlining target dates for key deliverables and project milestones, with completion of the liner evaluation by November 2028. This timeline may be included in the final selection report, which is due from APSC by March 1, 2025. The inspection work is permitted to commence upon approval or conditional approval of the method by the Division, and it must begin no later than July 31, 2026.
- B. The plan renewal application for the 2029 VMT ODPCP must be submitted to SPAR at least 365 days before the plan’s expiration date. Additionally, the renewal application should include a project summary of the inspection results, unless the plan has been previously updated through an amendment prior to the submission of the renewal application.

Meanwhile, March 1, 2025 was the deadline for Alyeska to select the testing method for evaluating the secondary containment liner evaluation. Through a public records request, on March 5, PWSRCAC received Alyeska’s report selecting a secondary containment liner testing method. Alyeska’s February 27, 2025 Memorandum Subject: VMT – East Tank Farm Secondary Containment System Final Evaluation Method Selection is available [HERE](#).

Secondary Containment: On behalf of Alyeska, WSP conducted the pilot study in the West Tank Farm using Geoelectric Leak Location (ELL) to evaluate buried portions of the liner in July.

6512 – Maintaining the Secondary Containment Systems at the VMT

Objectives: This project entails promoting methods Alyeska could use to verify the integrity of the secondary containment systems at the Valdez Marine Terminal’s (VMT) East Tank Farm, otherwise known as the catalytically blown asphalt (CBA) liner. The goal of this project is to ensure that the buried CBA liner at the VMT will hold spilled oil long enough to be cleaned up prior to ground or surface water contamination.

Accomplishments since last report: Dr. Joe Scalia and Dr. Craig Benson reviewed WSP's report on the secondary containment pilot test, titled "ELL and ERT Survey at VMT SCS: Pilot Study, West Tank Farm," and drafted a report of their comments, titled "Review of Electrical Leak Location and Electrical Resistivity Tomography Pilot Study of the Secondary Containment System at the Valdez Marine Terminal West Tank Farm Conducted July 2024." This draft report was provided to both Alyeska and ADEC in advance of the March 1, 2025 VMT C-Plan conditional of approval deadline for Alyeska to submit their proposal to test the secondary containment liner of the East Tank Farm to ADEC. PWSRCAC received Alyeska's proposal to test the secondary containment liner of the East Tank Farm via a Public Records Request to ADEC, and Dr. Joe Scalia and Dr. Craig Benson were tasked with reviewing this proposal.

6530 – Weather Data / Sea Currents Project

Objectives: This project studies wind, water current, and other environmental factors near the Valdez Marine Terminal, in Prince William Sound, and in the Gulf of Alaska. Weather conditions affect the safe navigation of vessels and aids the ability to prevent, respond to, contain, and clean up an oil spill. Accurate weather data for the region supports research and decision making in areas like oil spill response, traffic management, vessel performance specification, and contingency planning.

Accomplishments since last report: The Nuchek camera was turned off in the middle of February based on limited usage and to preserve funds for FY25. Micro-specialties was unable to provide information on how often the website hosting the images was visited. The camera can be re-activated at any time.

Staff is working on a partnership with the Marine Exchange to combine our weather station with their AIS Transmitter at Cape St. Elias. Dr. Campbell of PWSSC will begin fabricating a new weather station this Spring.

Dr. Campbell will make a site visit to the Kokinhenik weather station this Spring to troubleshoot the issues with that station, which went offline January 30. He thinks the solar panels are occluded and will move them higher up on the station superstructure.

6531 – Port Valdez Weather Buoys

Objectives: This project originally assembled and deployed, and continues to maintain, two buoys which measure ocean currents and common weather parameters in Port Valdez. The first buoy is installed near Jackson Point [61.0910°N 146.3811°W] in the vicinity of the Valdez Marine Terminal (VMT). The second buoy is installed at the Valdez Duck Flats [61.1201°N | 146.2914°W]. The Prince William Sound Science Center (PWSSC) partners with the Council to facilitate this project.

The Oil Pollution Act of 1990 requires the Council to study wind and water currents and other environmental factors in the vicinity of the terminal facilities which may affect the ability to prevent, respond to, contain, and clean up an oil spill.

The Council's Board of Directors has long advocated that robust weather monitoring systems be installed in the vicinity of the VMT. This includes proposals to install ultrasonic anemometers at the loading berths and a weather station at the VMT. On January 22, 2016, the Council's Board passed a resolution expressly requesting a weather station be employed at the terminal.

Weather is a significant factor in the management of safe crude oil transportation through Prince William Sound. Some of these concerns include marine safety, tanker escort operations, oil spill contingency planning, containment boom design, and safe loading of oil tankers.

Accomplishments since last report: The VMT Buoy is on-station and operating normally. It was off-line for a brief period when the voltage on the batteries dropped below their cut-off threshold.

Dr. Campbell of the Prince William Sound Science Center made an emergency site visit on February 8 to redeploy the Duck Flats buoy after it was pushed off station by ice and drifted past the SERVS dock. While attempting to lift the anchor, the line connecting the buoy to the anchor parted. The buoy was brought back to the new Small Boat Harbor in Valdez.

Global Diving and Salvage performed an underwater remotely operated vehicle (ROV) inspection of the VMT Buoy on March 3. Global delivered the inspection report to the project manager on March 18. After review, the report will be forwarded to Alyeska.

Project Manager John Guthrie and the OSPR Committee will explore the possibility of relocating the Duck Flats buoy to a position east of Naked Island in Prince William Sound.

Dr. Campbell will be in Valdez to service both buoys in April.

6536 – Port Valdez Weather Buoy Data Analysis

Objectives: In 2019, PWSRCAC was able to install two weather buoys in Port Valdez, one in the vicinity of the Valdez Marine Terminal and the other near the Valdez Duck Flats. The buoys have collected weather data for most of five years. The buoy websites provide real-time weather information as well as information for the last five days. The data from these buoys is collected and stored, but without periodically analyzing the data much of the value from the buoys will not be realized. The information provided by this analysis will aid in the understanding of the weather and currents within Port Valdez. This information will aid in oil spill contingency planning, potentially in improved oil spill trajectory models, and fill in gaps regarding the weather and currents at the buoy locations in Port Valdez. This project would have been the fourth project to take the data collected in each of the years since the buoys were deployed.

Accomplishments since last report: This project has been deferred and repropose for FY2026 since the VMT Buoy broke free of its anchor last winter and was offline for most of the year until it was redeployed in August 2024. The FY2026 project would cover calendar years 2024 and 2025.

6540 – Copper River Delta and Flats GRS Development

Objectives: The goal of this project is to create ten new GRS's in the Copper River Delta and Flats (CRDF) vicinity. The Consultant is being tasked to coordinate PWS Area Committee leadership, local stakeholders, trustee agencies, and the regulatory community via a workgroup process, to identify and build ten GIS-based GRSs, and provide these to ADEC for incorporation into the GRS database. GRS work done circa 1999 in this area was some of the first GRS work done in Alaska, and this material needs to be updated and/or new sites developed in a modern format.

Accomplishments since last report: Project Manager Jeremy Robida conducted outreach and participant invitation to a wide array of trustee agencies, Cordova-based stakeholders, and others with

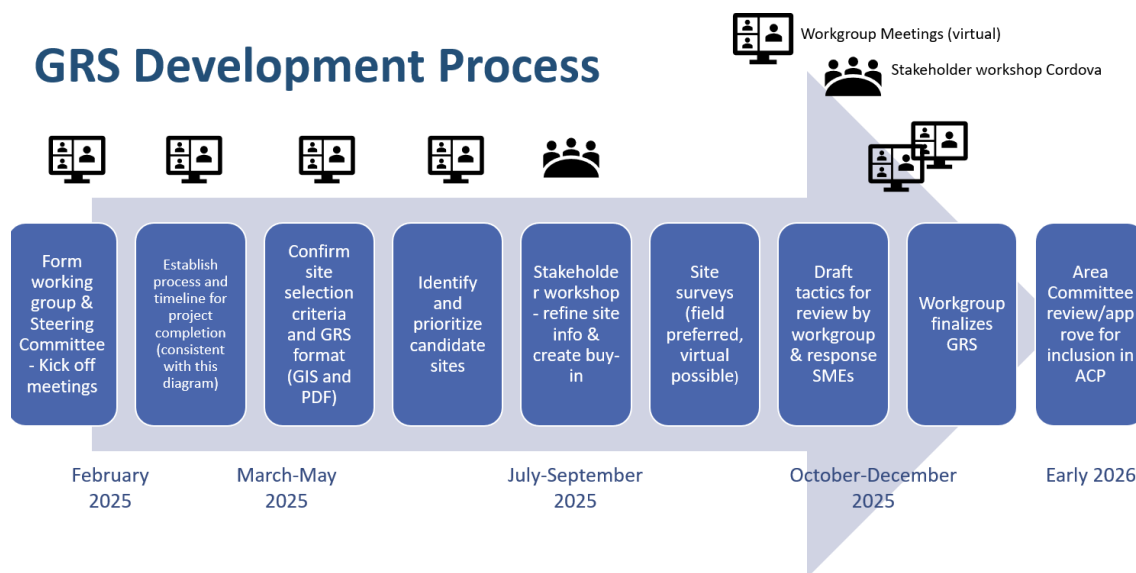
potential interest in the project. Approximately 75 entities/individuals were contacted ahead of the first workgroup meeting. Special thanks to PWSRCAC board members Dave Janka, Robert Beedle, Ben Cuttrell, Angela Totemoff, and Michael Vigil for helping identify entities/individuals.

Nuka Research and Planning Group (Nuka), Robida, and ADEC GIS staff met and spoke about how the completed Nuka-generated GRSs would be handed off and integrated into ADEC’s GRS website. This conversation included a lot of technical detail not germane to the workgroup meetings. ADEC and Nuka will continue this dialogue, but the future transmittal seems straightforward and Nuka understands the various data fields that need to be populated in the back end of the GIS program.

The project steering committee (ADEC, USCG, Nuka, PWSRCAC) have been meeting prior to the workgroup meetings. This provides a chance to discuss prior workgroup meetings, plan future meeting agendas, divide up speaking and presentation duties, and generally stay ahead of the workgroup process. Thanks to ADEC and the USCG for the time invested and interest in the project.

There have been two workgroup meetings as of this status report, on February 18 and March 18. The meetings were well attended and a total of 43 and 41 attendees representing a wide variety of agencies, Cordova-specific groups such as the Copper River Watershed Project and the Native Village of Eyak, several who commercial fish on the Flats, and of course regulators like the USCG and ADEC. There was a lot of excitement among participants about the project, though many acknowledged the dynamic nature of the area. Workgroup meetings are expected to continue monthly.

Below is a graphic showing the anticipated project timeline.



6560 – Peer Listener Training

Objectives: Update the Council’s Peer Listener program, which was created and implemented shortly after the Exxon Valdez oil spill to promote community resiliency through a peer-to-peer support network. The update will include assessing the current program, reviewing similar programs nationwide, and revising the Peer Listener Training manual and delivery methods according to contemporary best practices.

Accomplishments since last report: Agnew::Beck Consulting has developed a distribution plan and outreach materials for the Peer Listener Manual. The Project Team provided extensive feedback on

draft deliverables and the suite of outreach materials chosen for development. The final deliverables will be presented to the Scientific Advisory Committee for review and then to the Board at the May meeting.

6575 – Comparison of Windy Application and Seal Rocks Buoy Wind/Wave Data

Objectives: The National Data Buoy Center hosts a weather buoy at Seal Rocks (46061) that is used to determine closure limits for laden tankers outbound from the Valdez Marine Terminal through Hinchinbrook Entrance. Closure occurs when wind speeds exceed 45 knots (sustained) or wave heights exceed 15 feet. Buoy 46061 has failed several times in recent history and repairs typically take an inordinate amount of time to accomplish. During buoy failures, the SERVS' Hinchinbrook Tug may make weather observations in the vicinity of Seal Rocks.

This project proposes to do a comparison of data from the Windy mobile application (Windy), specific to wind and wave predictions, to data generated by Buoy 46061. The project would then evaluate which forecast model (i.e., ECMWF (European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts, European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts Ensemble Model), GFS (Global Forecast System) and Icosahedral Nonhydrostatic) used by Windy most closely matches historic data provided by Buoy 46061 and provide recommendations on the use and efficacy of the Windy application for this purpose.

Accomplishments since last report: The Seal Rocks Buoy is scheduled to be serviced in April. Once the wave sensor and anemometer are functional, project manager John Guthrie will make forecast comparisons as likely closure conditions occur.

Staff is still waiting for a response from NOAA about purchasing Wave Forecasts back to 1995. A decision will be made regarding project funds once historical forecast availability and price is determined by NOAA.

7000 – Oil Spill Response Operations Program

Objective: This program encompasses monitoring and reporting on the activities related to the operational readiness of the oil spill response personnel, equipment, and organization of the TAPS shipping industry. The program also encompasses monitoring actual oil spill incidents within our region and evaluation of overall response readiness.

Accomplishments since last report: SERVS contracted vessel, 4th quarter availability numbers were shared with staff. The report, also shared with ADEC, indicates there were enough vessels available to satisfy the tanker contingency plan scenario needs. In October, a total of 332 vessels were available (62 Tier I and 270 Tier II), for November it was 335 total (59 Tier I and 276 Tier II), and for December it was 338 total (61 Tier I and 277 Tier II). Based on the December count, this 338 total count, breaks out as follows across the different ports:

- 160 vessels from Cordova (28 Tier I and 132 Tier II)
- 44 total from Homer (all Tier II)
- 44 total from Kodiak (all Tier II)
- 39 vessels from Valdez (26 Tier I and 13 Tier II)
- 26 vessels from Whittier (26 Tier I and 13 Tier II)
- 25 total from Seward (all Tier II)

This breakdown by port is in line with historical norms. As a reminder, Tier I and Rapid Response vessels are expected to report availability each week, and Tier 2 vessels report to Fishing Vessel administrators on a monthly basis. Approximately 279 vessels are needed for the tanker plan scenario: specifically six rapid response tier I, 50 Tier I, and 223 Tier II.

Spring SERVS training dates are shown below. Consult with your local FV administrator for specifics. Robertson intends to cover the Homer training event and Robida will cover Valdez.

3/30 - 4/4	Fishing Vessel Training Kodiak (3/30 travel, 3/31 setup, 4/1-4/2 classroom, 4/3-4/4 on water)
2nd Quarter	
4/3	VMT Equipment Deployment Mid Period Planning Meeting
4/5 - 4/10	Fishing Vessel Training Homer (4/5 travel, 4/6 setup, 4/7-4/8 classroom, 4/9-4/10 on water)
4/11 - 4/14	Fishing Vessel Training Seward (4/11 travel, 4/12 setup, 4/13 classroom, 4/14 on water)
4/15 - 4/24	Fishing Vessel Training Cordova (4/15 travel, 4/17 setup, 4/18-4/20 classroom, 4/21-4/23 on water)
4/24	ORE Cordova
4/25 - 4/29	Fishing Vessel Training Valdez (4/25 travel and setup, 4/26-4/27 classroom, 4/28-4/29 on water)
4/30	ORE Valdez

Dates for the California OSPR Biennial Oil Spill Response Technology Workshop were announced. This year's event will take place at Marathon's facility, in Carson, CA, May 27-30. This is the eleventh conference being held, and California OSPR is partnering with long-standing partner Chevron (who has historically been the only partner), as well as Marathon, Shell, and Phillips 66 this year. The Workshop will provide both virtual and in-person options for technical presentations and attendance, as well as a field demonstration day to interact with new tools and technologies. The agenda is still being finalized. Robida and Robertson have attended the event in the past and thought it was well run and worthwhile but will not be attending in person this year. Perhaps the virtual option will allow some participation though.

RSC job aids are out for public comment under the Arctic Western AK Area plan. The plan is undergoing a format change, with content rearranging not changing, other than RSC materials being added. Job aids such as this do not normally entail public comment, but since these job aids are expected to be incorporated across the four Area plans, a public comment period will be provided. Staff have yet to draft comments but anticipate offering a thank you regarding all of the work that went into developing these job aids. Developed materials closely reflect the PWS Area plan contents, and it was a good and productive task force process to participate in. Comments are due by April 11.

Robida continues to monitor and participate in GRS work led by the Arctic and Western Area plan GRS sub-committee. All GRSs have been digitized at this point and can be viewed in [NOAA's Emergency Response Mapping Application \(ERMA\)](#). Robida is planning to attend an upcoming training led by the Arctic Western AK Area plan GRS subcommittee group, which will address a phone app that can be used to submit potential GRS edits. These edits would be reviewed by the appropriate Area plan GRS subcommittee prior to acceptance, but the fact they're submitted digitally allows for them to go live in an instant. This streamlined update process was one of the main reasons for the move to a digital system.

7520 - Preparedness Monitoring

Objectives: PWSRCAC's Drill Monitoring Program falls under a broader program called Oil Spill Response Operations. Objectives for the Drill Monitoring Program are to promote oil spill response operational readiness within the EVOS region by observing, monitoring, and reporting on oil spill

prevention and response drills, exercises, and training; to provide citizens, regulatory agencies, and responders (Alyeska and the shippers) with independent observations and recommendations to improve preparedness; and provide citizen oversight. Tasks to be completed include:

- Monitor and report on regular oil spill drills and training exercises at the VMT and throughout the Exxon Valdez oil spill region to citizens, the Board, industry, and regulatory agencies
- Provide quarterly recommendations to the PWSRCAC Board of Directors
- Keep PWSRCAC's standing committees (OSPR, TOEM, POVTS, IEC, and SAC) informed
- Produce an annual report on effectiveness and progress of the regularly monitored drills and exercises
- Continue developing and implementing staff training for drill monitoring

Recent Exercises

Crowley Tankers California Emergency Towing Exercise – March 13, 2025: The Crowley Tankers California conducted an emergency towing exercise in central Prince William Sound on May 13th with tugs Contender and Challenger.

Tug Contender U/J Deployment Exercise – March 14, 2024: SERVS conducted a U/J deployment exercise with the tug Contender in Port Valdez. These are performed with the tug and the onboard workboat using the tug's boom and skimmer.

Upcoming Drills and Exercises

Polar Tankers Annual Shipper's Exercise – May 13-15, 2025

Alyeska VMT Equipment deployment – July 23, 2025

Alyeska VMT Functional Exercise – October 8, 2025

8000 – Maritime Operations Program

Objectives: This program reviews port organization, operations, incidents, and the adequacy and maintenance of the Coast Guard Vessel Traffic System, and coordinates with the Port Operations and Vessel Traffic Systems (POVTS) Committee. Major program components include participation with the Valdez Marine Safety Committee (VMSC), monitoring changes to the tanker escort system, reviewing Best Available Technology documents for the tanker escort system and the Vessel Emergency Response Plan (VERP), participating in monthly SERVS/PWSRCAC and ADEC/PWSRCAC communication meetings, and supporting maintenance for the NOAA weather stations.

Accomplishments since last report: The Project Manager is working with Senator Dunbar's office on a resolution showing support for the maintenance of National Data Buoy Center buoys in Prince William Sound and the Northern Gulf of Alaska.

The Project Manager attended the January Valdez Marine Safety Committee meeting where it was decided for the committee to remain as currently organized rather than move to a more formal Harbor Safety Committee model.

The Project Manager works with the OSPR Committee on weather-related projects.

8250 – Assessing Non-Indigenous Species Biofouling on Vessel Arrivals

Objectives: Two main mechanisms of non-indigenous species (NIS) introduction via commercial ship traffic are the intake and release of ballast water and biofouling on a vessel's submerged surface areas.

This project will characterize the risk from NIS biofouling on vessel arrivals using vessel gross tonnage (GT) as a function of wetted surface area (WSA). Gross tonnage is a nonlinear measure of a ship's overall internal volume. Wetted area is the area of the watercraft's hull which is immersed in water. Each arrival within this temporal and spatial analysis will be analyzed for a vessel arrival profile to consider additional variables that affect the potential likelihood of NIS introduction for a given arrival. Additionally, this project proposal builds from the Master of Science in Environmental Science thesis project for a graduate student at Alaska Pacific University (APU) under the supervision of the Fisheries, Aquatic Sciences, and Technology (FAST) Lab, and advised by Dr. Danielle Verna, PWSRCAC's Environmental Monitoring Project Manager.

Accomplishments since last report: Contractor Natalie Kiley-Bergen presented her work at the POVTS meeting on February 4, 2025. She delivered the final draft report titled "Assessing the likelihood of non-indigenous species biofouling on vessel arrivals within the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Region" to POVTS for consideration on February 25, 2025. POVTS recommended Board acceptance of the final report via e-mail poll on March 17, 2025.

Kiley-Bergen will make a presentation to the full board at the May board meeting in Valdez and seek Board acceptance of the final report.

8520 - Miscommunication in Maritime Contexts

Objectives: Seeking to identify and address various causes of miscommunication, the proposed project will provide a comprehensive perspective by collecting information on the linguistic, cultural, and pragmatic needs and practices of native and non-native English-speaking mariners in Prince William Sound. The proposed project would entail the first two of four phases.

Accomplishments since last report: The Phase 1, Phase 2, and final synthesis reports were all accepted by the Executive Committee at the XCOM meeting on January 15. A contract for Phase 3 was approved at the XCOM meeting on January 15. A draft contract for Phase 3 was drawn up and delivered to the contractor.

Outreach to TAPS shippers and other stakeholders about their involvement in Phase 3 has begun.

9000 - Environmental Monitoring Program

Objectives: Coordinate projects developed and overseen by the Scientific Advisory Committee and obtain scientific knowledge and technical information about issues related to the actual and potential environmental impacts of the Valdez Marine Terminal and associated crude oil tankers. The notable tasks to be accomplished under this program are as follows:

- Project manager to attend at least one technical scientific conference
- Plan and complete budgeted environmental monitoring and scientific research projects
- Conduct PWSRCAC Science Night

Accomplishments since last report: Projects managed under this program continue to be planned and executed successfully.

9110 – Monitoring Spatial Variability of Marine Birds During Winter in PWS Tanker Escort Zone

Objectives: Provide up to date information on winter marine bird density and distribution throughout the Prince William Sound tanker transit zone, including under-surveyed areas such as the open waters and adjacent bays in and around Port Valdez, Valdez Arm, Tatitlek Narrows, Port Fidalgo, and Port Etches.

Accomplishments since last report: Contractors from the Prince William Sound Science Center conducted marine bird surveys in Prince William Sound in and around the tanker lanes in September and November 2024. The Scientific Advisory Committee has reviewed and commented on the draft report. The final report will be presented to the Board at the May meeting. Data from the surveys has been uploaded to the Alaska Ocean Observing System and NOAA’s Environmental Response Management Application.

9510 – Long-Term Environmental Monitoring Project

Objectives: Monitor the actual and potential environmental impacts of the Valdez Marine Terminal and associated crude oil tankers and provide the Council with information about the presence and effects of hydrocarbons generated by the terminal facility and tankers. This includes monitoring hydrocarbons in Prince William Sound and the Gulf of Alaska through marine sediments, mussel tissue, and passive sampling devices.

Accomplishments since last report: Dr. Morgan Bender of Fjord & Fish Sciences presented the final report from LTEMP sampling in 2024 to the Board in January. Planning began for LTEMP sampling in 2025. Passive sampling devices will be deployed on April 26. Passive sampling device retrieval and collection of blue mussels and sediments will take place May 27-29. The Scientific Advisory Committee supports contracting Pace Analytical Services to analyze the mussel and sediment samples and Oregon State University to analyze passive sampling devices once collected. In addition, mussels will be collected at four sites in Port Valdez and dissected for possible future transcriptomics analysis; for now, the samples will be placed in frozen storage with USGS.

In addition, an internship program for LTEMP was initiated in coordination with the Information and Education Committee. The intern, Tim, is meeting weekly with the SAC project manager to gain familiarity with LTEMP, analyzing historical hydrocarbon data collected in Port Valdez, and will participate in field work this spring. Tim will present a poster on his internship at the Prince William Sound College science symposium in May.

9520 – Marine Invasive Species

Objectives: Understand and minimize the environmental impacts of invasive species potentially arriving in the PWSRCAC region from tanker ballast water and hull fouling. Here are the notable tasks to be accomplished under this project:

- Obtain plankton samples in Port Valdez at three sites: the small boat harbor, Valdez Container Terminal, and Valdez Marine Terminal
- Perform metagenetic analysis on plankton samples to identify variability in the plankton community between locations and through time, and identify any nonindigenous species
- Interpret and report results of plankton metagenetic analysis
- Conduct monitoring of invasive crab and tunicate species in Valdez, Cordova, and Kodiak

Accomplishments since last report: This project ended in September 2024.

9521 – Marine Invasive Species Internship

Objectives: Support local students to monitor for invasive species potentially arriving in the PWSRCAC region from tanker ballast water and biofouling. Target species include European green crab and tunicates in the communities of Valdez, Cordova, and Kodiak.

Accomplishments since last report: Student interns completed monitoring for invasive green crab in the communities of Cordova, Valdez, and Kodiak in summer 2024. No green crab were detected. The project manager submitted the data to various databases. Students are now preparing to give presentations about their internship within their communities or schools and will receive their final stipend checks this spring. The project manager will be traveling to Kodiak in April to participate in field work with the current intern, John Paul, who intends to do the internship again in 2025. Advertising for 2025 interns in Cordova and Valdez will begin soon.

9700 – Social Science Workshop

Objectives: The goal of this project is to host a workshop with community members from our region to identify social science data needs and projects that fit within the PWSRCAC mission and could be supported by SAC. The workshop will be a 1–2 day event held in a spill-affected community. Representatives from spill-affected communities will gather for a facilitated event to share ideas, needs, and desires related to social science questions that affect the region and identify clear project ideas that are forward looking and benefit the region.

Accomplishments since last report: This workshop will take place at the annual Subsistence Memorial Gathering hosted by the Chugach Regional Resources Commission (CRRC) in Anchorage on March 27, 2025, from 9am – 4pm. Board, SAC, and IEC members were invited to participate. The agenda has been finalized and distributed. SAC member Davin Holen with Alaska Sea Grant and project manager Danielle Verna will co-facilitate the workshop at the Gathering along with CRRC staff. The workshop will include two panels of speakers briefly presenting on current environmental monitoring programs in the region that could affect or involve communities. The panels will be followed by small group roundtable discussions, storytelling, and brainstorming of social science questions and needs in the region. Additional Council staff members will attend to participate in the workshop and assist with notetaking.