

THE OBSERVER

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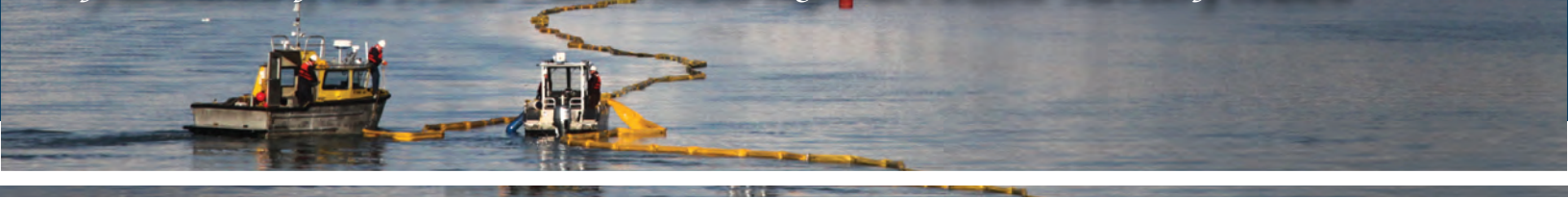
Alaska State Chamber of Commerce - Chenega Bay - Chugach Alaska Corp. - Cordova - Cordova District Fishermen United - Homer
Kenai Peninsula Borough - Kodiak - Kodiak Island Borough - Kodiak Village Mayors' Association - Oil Spill Region Environmental Coalition
Port Graham Corp. - Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corp. - Seldovia - Seward - Tatitlek - Valdez - Whittier

THE OBSERVER

SPRING 2018

VOLUME 28, NO. 2

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



New vessels and barges on their way to Alaska

Major equipment upgrades include state-of-the-art tugs, skimmers, oil-spotting technology, oil response barges

The first new Edison Chouest Offshore, or ECO, tugs to arrive in Prince William Sound are expected to be the Elrington, one of the new general purpose tugs, and the Commander, one of the new tanker escort tugs. They both launched last fall and are traveling north from the Gulf of Mexico, expected to arrive in early March. They will pick up a new, purpose-built oil spill response barge (see photo, page 5) on their way past Portland, Oregon.

ECO is bringing a total of five new escort tugs, four new general purpose tugs, one utility and anchor handling tug, and four response barges to Alaska. As vessels and barges arrive in Prince William Sound, hands-on training and demonstrations with this equipment will start.

The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation is expecting that each of the tugs, barges, and their associated crews will need to demonstrate their capabilities and adeptness before they can be approved for service. This process will start in March with arrival of the first pieces of equipment and continue as more equipment and crews arrive.

Sea trials

Well before arriving in Alaska, all of the tugs must undergo U.S. Coast Guard-required "sea trials," or a testing period. The trials test speed, maneuverability, equipment,

The contract with Edison Chouest Offshore is for a ten-year term starting July 1, 2018. This contract includes key oil spill prevention and response assets such as escort tugs, general purpose tugs, a utility vessel, oil recovery and storage barges, and associated personnel for service in Prince William Sound.

safety features, and seakeeping. "Seakeeping" is a measure of the vessel's performance in wind and waves, which is important for crew safety and comfort. These



The vessels will also carry modern spill response equipment, such as more efficient skimmers designed by Crucial, Inc., an oil spill cleanup technology manufacturer in Louisiana. The fuzzy discs in these skimmers are made of "oleophilic" materials, which attract and collect more oil and less water than the large weir skimmers currently used in Prince William Sound. Less water mixed in with recovered oil means less space for storing the oil and water mix until it can be processed. Photo by Jeremy Robida.

trials will take place in the Gulf of Mexico.

The tugs intended for escort must also meet the U.S. Coast Guard regulations and standards set by the American Bureau of Shipping. These standards include "bollard pull," which is the pulling capability of a tug. Prince William Sound tugs must be able to safely stop and steer the largest fully laden tanker in Prince William Sound in the event that

**Continued on
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Board issues position and resolution on safe crude oil tanker transit and escort vessel operation in the Sound

The Council voted unanimously on January 18, 2018, to pass a resolution stating oil tankers and escort vessels should not be permitted to transit through Prince William Sound and into the Gulf of Alaska in weather conditions which have been determined by industry to be unsafe for training.

The resolution was prompted by the upcoming change in marine service contract providers by Alyeska's Ship Escort/Response Vessel System, including crude oil tanker escort vessel services, effective this coming July.

"The oil tanker escort system in Prince William Sound is an essential oil spill prevention measure that is vital to reducing the risk of another catastrophic event, such as the 1989 Exxon Valdez spill," stated Donna Schantz, executive director for the Council.

"If it is unsafe to train personnel, it is unsafe to transport oil," said Amanda Bauer, president of the board of directors. "This position does not just apply to the incoming contractor, but sets the standard to which the Council feels all future new contractors, equipment and crews should be held. We believe strongly that these standards are needed to ensure the economic and environmental safety of the communities and groups we represent."

As stated in the resolution, the Council believes it is unsafe to require crews to respond to a vessel emergency in Prince William Sound during adverse weather with inadequate or no training or experience in these conditions, and that new

crews must receive training and experience in the full range of operating conditions in which they are expected to perform. The Council also believes it is reasonable, prudent, and safe to limit laden tanker transits through Prince William Sound and into the Gulf of Alaska to the same range of weather conditions in which escort vessels are certified and crews trained.

"We agree with industry and regulators that crew safety is essential," said Schantz. "We believe that drills and exercises, including in adverse weather, are controlled events, as they can be stopped at any time that the risk to crews or vessels becomes unacceptably high."

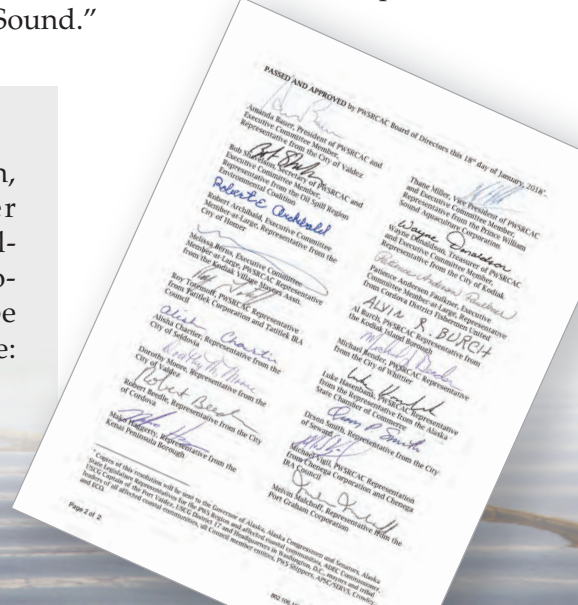
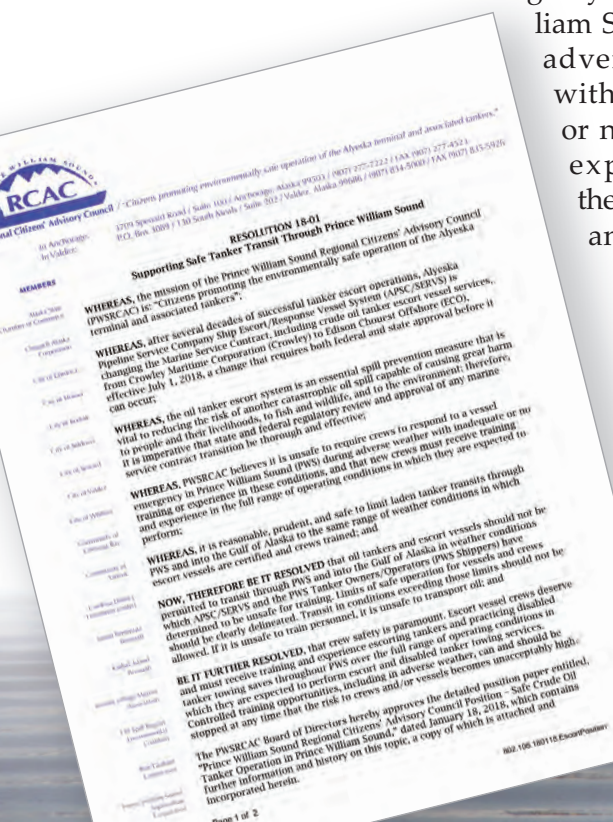
The Council acknowledges that the transition to Edison Chouest Offshore will bring many vessel and equipment improvements to the oil spill prevention and response system for Prince William Sound. However, any time a system goes through transition, in any industry, risk is introduced. This is especially true for a transition of this magnitude, happening in such a tight timeframe. While the Council is confident that Edison Chouest Offshore's personnel are well-trained, professional mariners, the Council is concerned about a large changeover in such a short amount of time. Use of unfamiliar equipment in a harsh and unfamiliar environment could be challenging.

Board position

As the resolution is based on historical research, reports, regulatory decisions, trainings and capability demonstrations, the Council also developed and approved with the resolution a detailed position paper entitled, "Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council Position – Safe Crude Oil Tanker Operation in Prince William Sound."

Read more:

The Council's resolution, "Supporting Safe Tanker Transit Through Prince William Sound," and the associated position paper can be viewed on our website here: www.bit.ly/Resolution_1801



Plan for applying dispersants to crude oil spills in Alaska waters updated

Stricter rules applicable in certain areas

The Alaska Regional Response Team, or ARRT, recently updated a list of areas that would receive extra scrutiny before dispersants are applied to a crude oil spill. The update completes the planned changes to the Dispersant Use Plan for Alaska. The plan is a guide for spill responders, and it spells out how oil spill dispersants would be used during a crude oil spill. The previous dispersant use plan had not been updated since 1989.

The first changes went into effect in 2016. Two different processes for deciding whether to use dispersants, depending on the location of the spill, were developed at that time. The application of dispersants is now considered “preauthorized” except for “avoidance” areas. In an avoidance area, a decision to use dispersants must undergo more extensive scrutiny on a case-by-case basis.

By pre-authorizing use of dispersants in certain areas, the ARRT can speed up the decision-making time on whether or not to use dispersants. Consultation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife and National Marine Fisheries Services is still required before dispersants would be used in a preauthorization area. For avoidance areas, additional consultation and a consensus between the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Interior, the Department of Commerce, and the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation is required prior to use.

There is a short window of time after a spill when dispersants should be applied. Dispersants work best on freshly spilled oil.

Environmental tradeoffs

To decide whether to use dispersants under the new plan, responders must weigh the consequences of two or more outcomes. The typical choice responders must make is whether damage to shorelines would be worse than damage to organisms in the water column, or the reverse.

Dispersants do not remove oil from the water. They are intended to work by breaking up floating oil slicks into tiny droplets which in theory disperse throughout the water column.

What is the ARRT?

The ARRT is a group of federal and state agencies that share responsibilities for managing oil and chemical spill responses in Alaska. The group is an advisory board to the federal on-scene coordinator, the federal agency's leader in a spill response. The ARRT provides federal, state, and local government agencies a way to participate in response to pollution incidents.

Because there is little evidence that dispersants are effective on Alaska North Slope crude oil in the temperatures and low salinity waters of Prince William Sound, the Council does not support dispersants as an oil spill response option in our region.

Citizen input influenced decisions

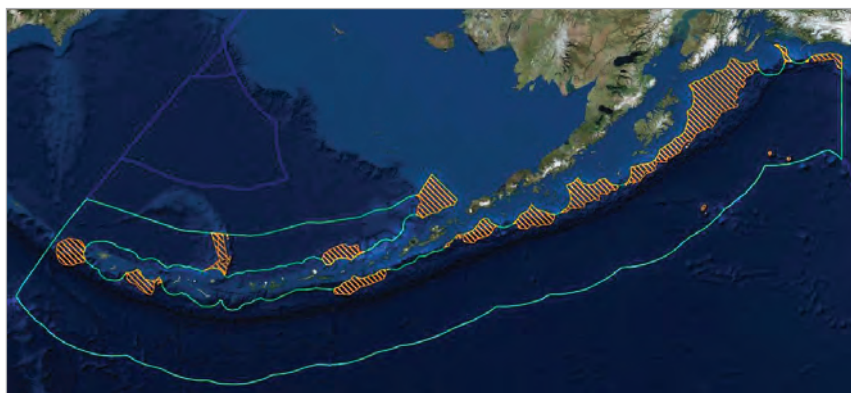
Starting in 2016, the U.S. Coast Guard began to gather public input about which areas should be designated as avoidance areas.

The Council, along with the Cook Inlet Regional Citizens Advisory Council, National Marine Fisheries Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Oil Spill Recovery Institute, submitted comments. The ARRT considered these recommendations, which included essential fish habitats and congregation areas for seabirds, whales, rockfish, and other species.

A step in the right direction

Spill responders still focus on mechanical cleanup first, as required by state and federal law. This includes equipment such as oil-collecting boom and skimmers that actually remove oil from the water. The Council agrees with this priority.

“The Council does not support the use of dispersants in our region, but with this new plan, responders are required to give more consideration before deciding to use dispersants,” said Donna Schantz, Executive Director for the Council. “Many years of research have failed to confirm dispersant effectiveness in our waters, and new research has revealed concerns about increased toxic effects of oil mixed with dispersants. Any changes that reduce the potential use of dispersants are a definite improvement.”

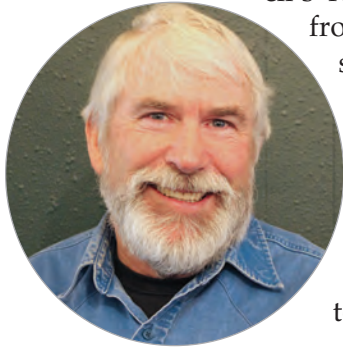


This map from the ARRT shows the “preauthorized area” between 24 and 200 nautical miles from shore (within the green boundaries). Within the preauthorized areas, some “avoidance areas” have been reclassified (striped areas) and will require the case-by-case approval.

From the Board of Directors

Safe oil transportation: Are we really so far apart?

Musings from a retired tug engineer



Robert Archibald
Board of Directors
Homer, Alaska

If you've ever owned horses, you probably know that cleaning the barn first thing in the morning is good for the soul. I use that time to think. Recently, before going out to take care of my four-legged friends, I started pondering the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council's recent resolution, the response from industry, and had a good shovel session to sift through it all.

For those who may not be aware, in January the council passed a resolution stating that oil tankers and escort vessels should not be permitted to transit through Prince William Sound and into the Gulf of Alaska in weather conditions which have been determined by industry to be unsafe for training.

Some have focused on the differing viewpoints between the council and industry. In truth, we are more in alignment than not. We both want the highest level of safety within the oil spill prevention and response system for Prince William Sound. We agree that crew safety is the first priority. Alyeska Pipeline Service Company has also committed to training new crews to demonstrate tanker escorts in a variety of weather and sea conditions in the Sound.

Our resolution is a request for industry to determine their safe limits of training, clearly define them, and then evaluate the need to limit laden tanker transits through Prince William Sound and into the Gulf of Alaska to those same weather conditions.

Crews must experience the full range of operating conditions in which they are expected to perform. If not, how can we expect them to respond to a real event in adverse conditions when their lives, as well as the economic and environmental health of our communities, may be on the line?

In 2004, I was the chief engineer on board the Crowley tug, Nanuq, during an exercise near Hinchinbrook Entrance conducted through Alyeska's Ship Escort/Response Vessel System, or SERVS. Weather conditions ranged up to 12-foot seas and 40 knots of wind. The Nanuq had been in Valdez

for four years before that exercise. By that time the crew worked efficiently as a team and had complete confidence in the captain and the vessel. At no point did I feel that we were exposed to undue risk.

That exercise, including two tugs and a fully laden oil tanker, was to demonstrate the ability of the escort tugs to arrest a disabled tanker in higher winds and rougher sea states, which we successfully accomplished. However, the other tug had a winch motor failure while recovering the towline from the tanker.

It is a heck of a lot better to discover equipment limitations during an exercise than in an actual emergency. Such lessons learned from this drill influenced Crowley escort vessel operations in rough weather, resulting in a safer escort system.

Drills and exercises in the Sound are well-planned events with many safeguards. They can and should be stopped at any time that the risk to crews or vessels becomes unacceptably high. The council recommends a tiered system of exercises, beginning in calm conditions and advancing to the level industry deems the safe limit. Classroom and simulator trainings are valuable, but they can't take the place of real-world experience on the deck of a vessel.

I was there when Crowley brought into service then-new escort vessels in 1999. Thinking back on that time as I shoveled away in the barn, some thoughts came to the forefront about the current marine services contractor transition. As in 2000, the escort system in Prince William Sound is going to be vastly improved with new vessels arriving soon, to begin service by July. They will have more horsepower, higher bollard pull, and the constant tension winch systems that have been advocated for by the council for years. Alyeska and their new contractor, Edison Chouest Offshore, have put state-of-the-art equipment into these vessels, which is to be commended.

At the same time, we need to recognize that all new vessels have a period of adjustment before they become a fine-tuned piece of equipment. Any time a system goes through transition, in any industry, risk is introduced. This is especially true for a transition of this magnitude, happening in such a tight timeframe.

I have found that an efficient crew starts with competent people - well-trained, professional mariners, learning

Continued on page 10: Archibald

From Alyeska Pipeline Service Company

Safety is a priority for Alyeska and all our contractors

I appreciate the opportunity to share with you some of Alyeska Pipeline Service Company's perspectives as we continue work to keep the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System, or TAPS, economically and technically durable for Alaska's future, able to safely transport oil that remains a foundation of Alaska's economy. One major investment we're making for the future is substantially upgrading the fleet that supports tanker movements and emergency response for Prince William Sound. As transition to our new marine services contractor continues, momentum is building – six modern tugs and barges have already launched, and two tugs completed sea trials in January. We will all see significant activity this spring as vessels and crews begin arriving in the Sound.

Alyeska and Edison Chouest Offshore, or ECO, personnel are already working with tanker and terminal operators, marine pilots, our fishing vessel responders, our regulators and Alaska stakeholders, including the Council, on our readiness to protect the environment, culture, resources and communities of Prince William Sound and Port Valdez. This transition is not simply a matter of one contractor leaving port as another replaces them. Tremendous care and vigilance are guiding transition, led by the Ship Escort/Response Vessel System, or SERVS, team that has ably protected Prince William Sound for over 20 years. Our Valdez-based staff doesn't just live and work there. Many are from families and communities that have fished and recreated in these waters for generations. This gives us a very strong sense of stewardship.

The transition adds significant operational and safety improvements to our Prince William Sound fleet and our workers. It brings newer technology, which the Council has advocated for, like constant tension winches and vastly improved fit-for-purpose barges and skimmers. The transition builds upon other risk mitigation advances already in place, such as double-hulled tankers.

ECO training and familiarization with the Sound and its residents, TAPS, Alyeska and SERVS began a year and a half ago and has steadily intensified. Incoming ECO boat captains have, on average 26 years sailing experience, 20 years with towing. Together with ECO, Alyeska is implementing a comprehensive training program for the mariners who will operate in our system. ECO captains are already working in Prince William Sound with crews from Crowley, as well as TAPS tanker operators and Southwest Alaska Marine pilots. ECO mariners are learning the specifics of their task responsibilities through classroom and simulator training and hands-on work with SERVS equipment at

ECO training facilities. The training tempo will increase as transition continues, and vessels and crews arrive in Port Valdez. The Council has been invited to observe many of these activities.

As we move forward, there are lines that we will not cross, such as training and demonstrating vessels and crews for emergency response in uncontrolled conditions. We share the Council's commitment to protecting the environment; it is our people who live that commitment on the water every day. At an appropriate distance, tankers and tugs operate safely in heavy weather. However, to purposely maneuver large vessels close to each other in challenging conditions – which any on-water towing or steering drill entails – is inconsistent with a strong safety and risk management culture and does not build or assure emergency response proficiency.

Emergency responders build and demonstrate proficiency at their tasks in controllable settings. Alyeska and ECO have developed a robust plan to safely train crews for Prince William Sound, just like air crews, surgeons, firefighters and mariners routinely and effectively train for emergencies without unnecessary risks. As mariners know, the Gulf of Alaska is always dynamic and never controllable.

We are committed to a safe transition, focused on 24/7 operational excellence, the safety of our people, and protecting our Alaska environment from the North Slope to Prince William Sound. We are excited to welcome ECO, and the opportunity to continue doing what we do best for every Alaskan, transporting North Slope products safely to market.

Thanks for One of the new oil spill response barges headed for your support. Prince William Sound. Photo courtesy of Alyeska.



Tom Barrett
President of Alyeska
Pipeline Service Company



How a grizzly bear hide resulted in safer tanker traffic in Alaska

Steve Lewis hails from a large family of farmers and ranchers who settled in Colorado and Nebraska in the late 1800s. When he was little, his father was in the U.S. Navy and often at sea, so Lewis spent a lot of time at his Uncle Chester's house.

"It was a typical high-plains two story farmhouse," Lewis recalls. Uncle Chester loved hunting and fishing, and Lewis has vivid memories of his uncle's trophies from a trip to Alaska.

Along the stairwell, a Kodiak brown bear pelt reached from bottom of the first floor almost to the ceiling of the second floor. Little Lewis had to run past that bear to get to his bedroom, where a moose head hung.

"I KNEW that the other half of that moose was on the other side of that wall, and he was going to come through and get me."

"So that was my introduction to Alaska."

North to Alaska

Fortunately for the Council, that imaginative kid never lost his fascination with the state.

"Sometimes I wonder about that, what might have happened," Lewis ponders as he reflects on the series of decisions that brought him here. "I don't know where you start making those decisions on your own, a critical one for me was deciding to go to Colorado School of Mines as opposed to New Mexico."



Volunteer profile

Steve Lewis of the Council's Port Operations and Vessel Traffic System Committee

That's where Lewis met Savannah, his wife of 45 years. She also had dreams of the 49th state. So in 1978, when presented with a choice between an offer to join a post-graduate naval architecture program at UC Berkeley, and a job in Alaska, the pair headed north. After working on the U.S. Geologic Survey's exploration project in the

National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska, Lewis accepted a position drilling exploratory wells in the Bering Sea.

"We drilled further offshore than ever before," Lewis recalls. The potential for profit was large. If Lewis needed something that didn't exist, he was instructed to have it built.

"That was lots of fun! I was thirty-some-years-old with big toys and big responsibility," Lewis says. "We had less than 20 people in the office and we spent \$386 million dollars over three years. It was perfect, and the job was executed flawlessly."

After that, Lewis mostly implemented oil well designs. He specialized in remote hostile environments, both onshore and offshore, primarily in high latitudes managing drilling operations, analyzing geologic data, doing environmental analyses, contracting, permitting, and finally, he says, "putting all that together, taking it to the field, and making it work."

Over the years, Lewis worked in the Continental U.S. and Alaska, the Bering Sea, the Beaufort Sea, the Gulf of Mexico, the North Sea and Norwegian Sea, the South China Sea, and the Barents Sea.

The Lewises left Alaska in 1985, but planned to return eventually. While they were away, they heard the news about the Exxon Valdez oil spill while under sail in the Caribbean, having just made a trans-Atlantic passage. Their Alaskan hailing port and flag attracted a lot of questions.

"I found myself in the somewhat strange situation of explaining to mariners, both recreational and professional, who had never seen snow, why you had to drive around an iceberg rather than simply go through it."

Joining the Council

When they moved back in 1997, they settled in Seldovia, where they found a community, and a state, still reeling from the Exxon Valdez spill.

Soon, a unique opportunity arose to use his industry and maritime experience, and Lewis was recruited to represent his new community on the Council's board of directors.

"I walked in and was introduced, and there was reference to my profession." A few members seemed a little taken aback, Lewis recalls about his first board meeting. "Tom Copeland [then-representative from the Oil Spill Region Environmental Coalition] on the other hand went 'hot damn, somebody who probably knows something about what we are talking about.'"

Since then, he has volunteered countless hours towards

See page 10: Lewis

Community Corner: Citizen scientists help the Council monitor our region

By Lisa Matlock, Outreach Coordinator

One of the Council's federal mandates involves environmental monitoring. With a small staff and vast geographic area, this monitoring takes many forms. Monitoring is often done by staff or contractors, but some monitoring takes place thanks to the Council's volunteers and interns - all citizen scientists.



Lisa Matlock

Since 2014, the Council has had high school interns in the community of Cordova who help monitor for aquatic invasive species. Three interns, Sarah Hoepfner, Cadi Moffitt, and currently Cori Pegau, have volunteered to hang sturdy plastic "settling plates" in the Cordova harbor each spring, to be picked up in the fall. The interns check the organisms that accumulate on the

plate for critters such as invasive tunicates and bryozoans.

The Cordova interns also set out special traps at low tide cycles throughout the summer, monitoring for the highly damaging European green crab. So far, only small local intertidal fish, sea stars, and other native species have been caught. The data gathered from these trapping events not only helps the Council track possible European green crab occurrence, but they also provide vital data showing which small creatures naturally occur along the coast and in what numbers. This information is critical for evaluating damage from an oil spill. Unfortunately, this data was not available in 1989.

The Council involved the community of Valdez in aquatic invasive species monitoring during its first Bioblitz in September of 2016. Over 30 volunteers from the local high school and other local residents spent two days learning how to identify aquatic invaders in the lab, followed by a field day focused on deploying plates, traps, and other monitoring equipment.

More recently, Council Scientific Advisory Committee volunteer, Sarah Allan, worked with staff to implement a passive hydrocarbon monitoring system near the Valdez Marine Terminal. This system will help the Council fine tune its monitoring of the amounts and types of hydrocarbons in Port Valdez.

The Council's nearly 65 volunteers assist with technical work of all kinds each year. Environmental monitoring is but one important effort through which their time and expertise directly impact the safe transportation of oil through Prince William Sound.

Lally to join Council staff in March

The Council is welcoming a familiar face to its staff this spring. Former U.S. Coast Guard Commander Joseph T. Lally will step into the position of director of programs.

Lally served as commanding officer of the Marine Safety Unit Valdez from June 2014 through July 2017. One of the duties of that position is to represent the Coast Guard as a non-voting, ex-officio member of the Council.



Joe Lally

Lally served the Coast Guard for 27 years, most recently as compliance and analysis division chief at the Coast Guard's headquarters in Washington, D.C., before retiring earlier this year. Over the years, he held a variety of assignments. Lally has an extensive background in oil spill/hazardous substance response and prevention, including federal policy writing, conducting marine inspections and investigations, and leading emergency responses as the federal on-scene coordinator. He worked with agency and industry partners, and non-governmental organizations to enhance marine safety, prevention, preparedness, and response nationwide.

Lally's experience include investigating the 2012 grounding of the Costa Concordia off the coast of Italy, and oversight of environmental responses to the 2007 Cosco Busan spill, the Haiti earthquake in 2010, and the Deepwater Horizon explosion and oil spill in 2010. He was a first responder who assisted with the evacuation of Manhattan after the 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center.

Lally earned a Bachelor of Science in marketing from Saint Joseph's University and a Master of Science in environmental and energy management from George Washington University.

Lally, along with his wife, Donna, and their three daughters, will soon be moving back to Valdez. His start date will be March 12, and he will be based out of the Council's Valdez office.

THE OBSERVER is published in February, June, and October by the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council. Except where credited to others, articles are written by Amanda Johnson, the public communications project manager for the Council.

Questions or comments about anything in The Observer? Another topic that you want to hear about? Let us know!

Contact us: newsletter@pwsrccac.org

Amendment to industry's plan for preventing and responding to oil spills approved

Council concerned that hard-fought protections would be delayed

In October, the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, or ADEC, approved an amendment to Alyeska's contingency plan for oil spills from the Valdez Marine Terminal.

New oil skimming systems

One of the major changes incorporates new oleophilic oil skimmers, which will also be on the soon-to-arrive Edison Chouest barges, into the plan. These skimmers, along with the Current Buster booming system, make up a more advanced oil recovery system. The new system allows responders to operate and collect oil for longer periods, as less water is collected requiring less storage. See page 1 for more on these skimmers.

Training programs

Detailed descriptions of training programs for responders remain in the plan. The amendment originally proposed by Alyeska in March removed some of these details. The Council, in comments submitted in April, promoted keeping such details in the plan. ADEC agreed, with updates to the descriptions.

"Contingency plans are like mini-insurance policies to protect the state's resources and the public's interests," said Donna Schantz, executive director for the Council. "It is important that sufficient detail is in the plan so that commitments do not get lost or weakened in the future."

Protections for sensitive areas

The amendment also updated "Scenario 4," a theoretical spill of 59,000 barrels, or almost 2.5 million gallons. A sensitive area protection decision matrix was replaced with a new one. The matrix is a tool that helps responders decide if oil spill boom should be immediately deployed to protect Solomon Gulch Hatchery and the Valdez Duck

Flats, two sensitive areas close to the terminal.

The hatchery releases 240 million pink and coho salmon fry and smolt annually to enhance the commercial and sport fisheries of Prince William Sound. The duck flats, a highly productive biological area, provides important habitat for water birds, fish and other estuarine and intertidal species. The hatchery and duck flats are located approximately two and three miles from the terminal, respectively.

A multi-stakeholder group developed the original matrix in 1997 after the tanker Eastern Lion spilled 8,400 gallons while loading at the terminal in 1994. Oil reached the hatchery in 18 hours and the flats in 36 hours.

The new matrix may no longer indicate that booming is immediately necessary for significant oil spills in these two sensitive areas.

In November, the Council, the City of Valdez, and Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corporation, requested an adjudicatory hearing with ADEC to reinstate the original matrix. This hearing, which has been granted, is an administrative procedure, spelled out in state regulations, to appeal a decision to ADEC's commissioner.

"Alyeska is required to have enough resources available for containing, controlling and cleaning up a spill at the source and protecting multiple environmentally sensitive sites in the area," Schantz said.

"This should not be an either/or situation in terms of resources that are deployed."

What is an oil spill scenario?

A large portion of the oil spill contingency plans are organized around "scenarios," which are hypothetical spills that help illustrate how an oil spill could be cleaned up. There are six scenarios in Alyeska's plan for the terminal. They include varying amounts of oil, to both land and water. The industry must show they are prepared and capable of responding to all of the scenarios before the plans are approved and oil can be shipped.



The U.S. Coast Guard oversees the deployment of boom for the Solomon Gulch Hatchery after a spill from the terminal last September. Boom deployment can take 10-12 hours or longer, so a decision whether to use the boom must be made very early in a spill response. Photo by Jeremy Robida.

We need your feedback!

We want to make our newsletter as helpful, informative, and useful as possible for YOU, our readers! Take a quick, 5-minute survey to let us know what information you are most interested in.

Please visit www.bit.ly/ObserverFeedback to fill out the survey. Thank you for your time.

Questions or comments about anything in The Observer? Another topic that you want to hear about? Let us know! Contact us at: newsletter@pwsrca.org

New equipment: Tech and design upgrades in store for the Sound

Continued from page 1

it loses power or steering.

The Elrington and Commander have already completed these trials. Both tugs exceeded the bollard pull expectations for their design. The Council is awaiting further details from these tests.

All new vessels will be required to perform additional tests in Prince William Sound before the system can be officially implemented.

New imaging technologies

Several of the new tugs will carry thermal imaging systems and special radar processing technology to help spot spilled oil on the water. Other uses include: navigation at night, detecting ice from Columbia Glacier, or locating an overboard crew member in an emergency.

New purpose-built barges designed for oil spill recovery

Alyeska is getting new oil spill response barges intended for open-water environments. These barges represent the newest technology in spill response, with highly efficient oleophilic skimmers and Current Buster 8 boom systems that help separate water from oil. The barges serve as the platform to deploy this equipment, as well as providing storage for recovered oil. Improvements in the designs compared to the current response barges include:

- Oil cargo piping and pumps have been moved below deck to eliminate clutter and trip hazards.
- A large chute on the stern helps with equipment off-loading and recovery.
- The barges' decks are large enough to fully inflate and lay out the Current Buster 8 boom before deployment, saving time and improving safety.
- The oil recovery equipment is significantly more efficient.

Mariner training

Since last summer, trainers from Alyeska's Ship Escort/Response Vessel System, or SERV, have been working with ECO to train new crews on SERV's operations, Prince William Sound, and spill response equipment. Training is a mixture of classroom and hands-on training. Council staff members have attended blocks of this training as observers.

ECO captains have been traveling to Alaska to ride along with Crowley crews on tanker escorts, to see the

job first hand and experience winter weather conditions in Prince William Sound. This is expected to continue through April. Tug, tanker, and pilot boat captains and crew have also gathered at AVTEC – Alaska's Institute of Technology in Seward to work through simulations on AVTEC's vessel simulators.



John LeClair, Council volunteer and member of the Oil Spill Prevention and Response Committee, tries out one of ECO's ship simulators during a visit to their shipyards in Louisiana last November. Simulators like this one are commonly used to help mariners familiarize themselves with vessels and geographical features of an area in a zero-risk environment. Photo by Brooke Taylor.



LeClair, fellow committee member David Goldstein, and Port Operations and Vessel Traffic System Committee member Jeremy Talbott, along with staffers Donna Schantz and Brooke Taylor, toured the shipyard where the Commander (pictured above), one of the nine new tugs headed to Alaska, was built. Photo by Brooke Taylor.

Council recertified by Coast Guard through March 2019

The Coast Guard has recertified the Council as meeting its responsibilities under the Oil Pollution Act of 1990.

In a February 28 letter to the Council, Rear Admiral Michael McAllister, commander of the Coast Guard's District 17 in Juneau, notified the Council of the recertification.

The 1990 Act requires the Council to reapply yearly for the Coast Guard's approval as the official citizens' advisory group to the oil industry in Prince William Sound.

Guidelines established in 2002 streamlined the recertification process for two out of three years, with every third year requiring stricter procedures. The Council underwent the streamlined version this year. The comprehensive process, which includes a public comment period, will be required again in 2020.

The new recertification expires in March 1, 2019.

Volunteer profile: Steve Lewis

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the Council's mission, at first on the Board and for the Terminal Operations and Vessel Traffic System Committee, and now as chair of the Council's Port Operations and Vessel Traffic System Committee.

"I think that has been one of my primary values to the organization," Lewis says. "I know an awful lot about the internal machinations of the industry and I completely understand the pressures that are applied to individuals in the level of management position that we deal with on a regular basis."

Lewis has more to say on our website about citizen oversight and how sharing information can build trust, be sure to read more at: www.bit.ly/SLewisProfile

Archibald: Developing an efficient team takes time and coordination

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a new vessel as a team. Just as in any good relationship in life, getting to know a vessel does not happen overnight. It takes time.

The council's resolution is by no means an effort to delay oil shipping or put crew members in harm's way. We are simply asking for a safe path forward for Edison Chouest's crews to learn their vessels, the expected escort tasks, and the conditions in which they have to operate, during non-emergency situations.

Alaska's oil spill prevention and response system is one of the best in the world. This system was created through the hard work and dedication of industry, regulators, elected officials, and citizens working together to develop solutions and promote improvements.

We all want the same thing – to prevent oil spills, and have the best response system possible should prevention measures fail. Coordination between all parties is critical to maintain a high level of oil spill prevention and response, and to make sure an accident like the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill never happens again. I'm proud of my 22 years of service working on SERV'S vessels in Prince William Sound and look forward to Edison Chouest's crews developing that same pride in Prince William Sound in the coming years.

Robert Archibald represents the city of Homer on the Council's Board of Directors and has lived in Homer since 1984. Archibald spent 48 years as a mariner, including service in the U.S. Coast Guard and 32 years as chief engineer on Crowley Marine Service vessels in various locations, before retiring in 2014.

COUNCIL BOARD MEETINGS

The Council meets three times annually. The January meeting is held in Anchorage, May in Valdez, and the September meeting is rotated among communities affected by the Exxon Valdez oil spill.

Agendas and other meeting materials are available on our website: www.pwsrcc.org

Board meetings are open to the public, and an opportunity for public comments is provided at the beginning of each meeting

The next meetings of the Board of Directors will be held in Valdez on May 3 and 4, 2018 and in Seldovia on September 20 and 21, 2018.



Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council

Citizens promoting environmentally safe operation of the Alyeska terminal and associated tankers.

Who we are

The Council is an independent, non-profit corporation formed after the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill to minimize the environmental impacts of the Trans Alaska pipeline terminal and tanker fleet.

The Council is a voice for the people, communities, and interest groups in the region oiled by the Exxon Valdez spill.

Those with the most to lose from oil pollution must have a voice in the decisions that can put their livelihoods and communities at risk.

The Council's role

The Council is certified under the federal Oil Pollution Act of 1990 as the citizen advisory group for Prince William Sound, and operates under a contract with Alyeska Pipeline Service Co. The contract, which is in effect as long as oil flows through the pipeline:

- guarantees the Council's independence,
- provides annual funding, and
- ensures the Council the same access to terminal facilities as state and federal regulatory agencies.

We combat the complacency that led to the 1989 spill by fostering partnerships among the oil industry, government, and local communities in addressing environmental concerns.

Board of Directors

The Council's 18 members are communities and interest groups affected by the Exxon Valdez spill:

- Alaska State Chamber of Commerce
- Community of Chenega Bay
- Chugach Alaska Corporation
- City of Cordova
- City of Homer
- City of Kodiak
- City of Seldovia
- City of Seward
- City of Valdez
- City of Whittier
- Cordova District Fishermen United
- Kenai Peninsula Borough
- Kodiak Island Borough
- Kodiak Village Mayors Association
- Oil Spill Region Environmental Coalition
- Port Graham Corporation
- Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corp.
- Community of Tatitlek

Our research

The Council's advice depends on quality research and accurate science about oil transportation safety and the environmental impacts of the Valdez Marine Terminal and tankers, as well as local knowledge and expertise.

The Council regularly retains experts in various fields to conduct independent research on issues related to oil transportation safety and performs a variety of functions aimed at reducing pollution from crude-oil transportation activities in and through Prince William Sound and the Gulf of Alaska.

Advisory Committees

While the strategic direction of the Council's work is set by the Board, much of the Council's work is done through permanent volunteer committees made up of Board members, technical experts, and local citizens with an interest in making oil transportation safer in Alaska.

These standing committees work with staff on projects, study and deliberate current oil transportation issues, and formulate their own advice and recommendations to the Council's full Board of Directors.

Our committees provide an avenue for public participation in the Council's work.

Terminal Operations & Environmental Monitoring:

The Terminal Operations and Environmental Monitoring Committee identifies actual and potential sources of episodic and chronic pollution at the Valdez Marine Terminal.

Port Operations and Vessel Traffic Systems:

The Port Operations and Vessel Traffic Systems Committee monitors port and tanker operations in Prince William Sound. The committee identifies and recommends improvements in the vessel traffic navigation systems and monitors the vessel escort system.

Scientific Advisory:

The Scientific Advisory Committee sponsors independent scientific research and provides scientific assistance and advice to the other council committees on technical reports, scientific methodology, data interpretation, and position papers.

Oil Spill Prevention and Response:

The Oil Spill Prevention and Response Committee works to minimize the risks and impacts associated with oil transportation by reviewing and recommending strong spill prevention and response measures, adequate contingency planning, and effective regulations.

Information and Education:

The Information and Education Committee's mission is to support the council's mission by fostering public awareness, responsibility, and participation in the council's activities through information and education.



A voice for citizens:
www.pwsrcac.org