

JULY 2023 - JUNE 2024

YEAR IN REVIEW





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Front/Back Cover Photo: Port Valdez looking towards the original site of the city of Valdez. The city moved to its present location after the original site was destroyed by a tsunami generated by the Great Alaska Earthquake in 1964.

Inside Cover Background: Women's Bay on Kodiak Island.

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Background: Columbia Bay, near the western face of Columbia Glacier. A small boat in the distance takes tourists for an up close and personal view.

Right: Council volunteers tour the Valdez Marine Terminal in May 2024.

Nothing can change the damage that resulted from the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill. Since our creation, the Council's goal has always been to try to ensure it never happens again, at the same time making sure we are prepared with a strong response system in case prevention measures fail. We know that the more you tackle challenging issues and prepare ahead of time, the greater the likelihood of reducing the potential damage.

Above: Council Board Executive Committee members Robert Archibald, Amanda Bauer, Mako Haggerty, and Ben Cutrell.

Our volunteers and staff put in countless hours fulfilling our mandates outlined in the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 and our contract with Alyeska Pipeline Service Company. In this report, you will find highlights from a productive year for the Council, including:

- Ensuring the adequacy of secondary containment liners for the terminal's crude oil storage tanks (page 9)
- Supporting solutions for sustainable funding for state spill prevention and response (page 11)
- An update to the Council's Peer Listener Manual (page 12)
- Monitoring oil spill drills and exercises (page 14)
- Monitoring species in our region (page 17)
- The addition of a new member entity for recreation interests on the Council's Board (page 19)
- And much more

While much work continues to be done, we are still seeing concerning trends in the loss of experienced personnel, high attrition rates, and budget and staffing cuts in industry and the associated regulatory agencies. The Council has been raising concerns about the diminishment of agency oversight at the Valdez Marine Terminal for over a decade. We hope that a review of the adequacy of the present regulatory oversight of terminal operations, currently being conducted by the federal Government Accountability Office, will highlight any deficiencies that need to be addressed. And, while we are encouraged by Alyeska's response to our 2023 report "Assessment of Risks and Safety Culture at Alyeska's Valdez Marine Terminal," we diligently continue to try to move all its recommendations forward (see page 8).

We know that a strong regulatory structure benefits development in our state. It also is

the cornerstone of protection for our people, communities, economies, and environment. After years of regulatory diminishment, we now need to see the actions necessary to not only stop the cutbacks, but also then restore these agencies to the levels put in place based on lessons learned from the 1989 oil spill.

While the Council is always ready to listen to what industry and regulators are willing to share with us, we will also continue to closely watch what they do. And that is what we are here to do: we listen, we watch, and we advise. We sometimes say that "Trust, but verify" is our unofficial motto. We want to trust that the problems we are speaking out about will be addressed, but will not stop our inquiries and our work until we can verify that they have been.

We know that industry and regulatory agencies have the same goal in mind as the Council: the safe transportation of oil through our region. Our role in that shared goal is defined by and dependent on citizen engagement. We must watch what is happening – the decisions being made, risks being assessed, safety measures implemented – and never be afraid to speak up. 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. We will continue to work hard to be that voice.

— *President Robert Archibald, City of Homer*

— *Executive Director Donna Schantz*



Robert Archibald
PRESIDENT
City of Homer



Donna Schantz
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
PWSRCAC

WHO WE ARE

The Council is a voice for citizens impacted by decisions made by the oil industry and regulators in Prince William Sound.

Formed after the Exxon Valdez oil spill, the Council's 19 member organizations are communities impacted by the spill, as well as Alaska Native, aquaculture, commercial fishing, environmental, recreation, and tourism groups.

Background: Eshamy Bay, in western Prince William Sound, was one of the sites monitored for invasive species in 2023.

THE COUNCIL'S STRUCTURE

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

1

The contract with Alyeska Pipeline Service Company. Alyeska operates the Trans Alaska Pipeline System, including the Valdez Marine Terminal. This contract guarantees the Council's independence from industry while also providing the operating funds for the organization.

2

The Oil Pollution Act of 1990. The Act requires citizen oversight councils for Prince William Sound and Cook Inlet. The councils promote partnership and cooperation among local citizens, industry, and government; build trust; and provide citizen oversight of the oil industry in their regions.



The Council gathered in Kodiak, Alaska, for an annual meeting of the Board of Directors in September 2024. The Council's Board is made up of local citizens representing communities, organizations, and stakeholder groups that were affected by the Exxon Valdez oil spill.

OUR RESPONSIBILITIES

The Council works to prevent pollution and other harm from the transportation of crude oil through Prince William Sound and the Gulf of Alaska by monitoring, reviewing, and providing advice on:

- Oil spill prevention and response plans prepared by Alyeska and shipping companies moving oil through the region
- The environmental protection capabilities of Alyeska and the tanker operators
- The environmental, social, and economic impacts of Alyeska and tanker operations
- Government policies, permits, and regulations relating to the oil terminal and tankers

The Council regularly retains experts to conduct independent research and technical analysis on issues related to oil transportation safety.

The contract with Alyeska also calls for the Council to increase public awareness of the company's oil spill response, spill prevention, and environmental protection capabilities, as well as the actual and potential environmental impacts of terminal and tanker operations.

OUR FUNDING

The Council was initially funded at \$2 million a year. The funding is renegotiated every three years; current Alyeska funding is approximately \$4.27 million a year.

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

PREVENTING AN OIL SPILL



The Council-maintained buoy monitoring weather and sea conditions near the Valdez Marine Terminal.

Preventing an oil spill is the most effective way to protect human health and the environment. The spill prevention system in Prince William Sound is among the best in the world. The Council works to keep it that way by reviewing all aspects of the system.

MONITORING WEATHER

The harsh environment in Alaska impacts safe crude oil transportation. The Council studies wind, waves, currents, and other environmental factors that can affect the ability to prevent, respond to, contain, and clean up an oil spill.

Understanding Weather and Sea Currents in Our Region

The Council supports three weather stations in Prince William Sound and the Gulf of Alaska. Information is collected via the Prince William Sound Weather Station Network, developed and maintained by the Prince William Sound Science Center, and co-funded by the Council. Data is available through the Alaska Ocean Observing System (AOOS).

Port Valdez Weather Buoys

The Council maintains two weather buoys in Port Valdez: one near the terminal, the other near the Valdez Duck Flats. These buoys measure ocean currents, wind, and waves, among other conditions. The Council works with AOOS and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) PORTS® (Physical Oceanographic Real Time System) to share the data.

As part of the PORTS® program for Port Valdez, the Council maintains a CTD (conductivity, temperature, and depth) sensor at the Kelsey Dock. The sensor was made possible through a grant from AOOS. Data from the CTD sensor is made available on the Port Valdez PORTS® site and through AOOS.

These buoys have been collecting data for five years. In 2024, Alyeska approved a two-year



During the Tsunami Hazard workshop in 2024, participants visited areas of Prince William Sound to view potential landslide hazards.



extension to the original terminal buoy agreement. The Council has been analyzing the data to identify weather trends.



The full report is available on our website at: www.tinyurl.com/PortValdezData

Tsunami Hazard Workshop

In June 2024, the Council partnered with the City of Valdez to hold a workshop to further understand the risks that tsunamis could pose to mariners and vessels, including those generated by landslides. Information collected from the workshop will be compiled into a summary report containing guidance for vessel operators on tsunamis, available later in 2024. The report will also include a list of potential future research topics.



The steep mountainsides around the fjords of Prince William Sound can pose a threat of landslide-generated tsunamis.

OPERATIONS AT THE TERMINAL

Risks and Safety Culture at the Valdez Marine Terminal

In 2023, the Council released a report titled, “Assessment of Risks and Safety Culture at Alyeska’s Valdez Marine Terminal.” This report was initiated in response to safety concerns brought to the Council by current and former Alyeska employees. The main conclusion was that there currently is an unacceptable safety risk to the terminal.

The Council has been encouraged by Alyeska’s response to this report, including their development of a Management Action Plan. Alyeska has stated that they are also working with contractors and several teams of employees to address concerns related to safety management systems, process safety management, deferred maintenance and backlogs, open work environment programs, audits, and training.

One of the recommendations in the report was for Congress to request a review by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) on the adequacy of the present regulatory oversight of terminal operations

by federal and state agencies. The GAO reviews federal programs on behalf of Congress and provides fact-based, nonpartisan information to lawmakers and federal agencies that can be used to improve government.

The Council has been raising concerns about the diminishment of agency oversight at the terminal since 2010, when the physical work place for the Joint Pipeline Office (JPO), an interagency group of state and federal regulators, was disbanded. Since then, there have been budget and staffing cuts, reorganizations and redistribution of duties, high turnover, loss of institutional knowledge, and difficulty filling positions among the agencies involved. The Council believes the cumulative impacts of these factors affect the ability of regulators to comprehensively monitor operations necessary to help prevent an oil spill or other incident.

In 2023, members of Alaska’s congressional delegation requested the GAO review, which has now begun. It is the Council’s expectation that this review and the subsequent report will highlight any deficiencies in state and federal oversight of the terminal that need to be addressed.

Alaska North Slope crude oil is loaded onto tankers at the Valdez Marine Terminal.



Above: At the end of the 800-mile trans-Alaska pipeline, crude oil is stored in massive tanks at the Valdez Marine Terminal. The containment cells surrounding the tanks include a buried liner that is intended to hold oil in the event of a spill, so it does not leak into the surrounding environment.

This and the other recommendations from the Council's report are some of the largest and most complex issues the Council has been involved in for many years. The Council stands ready to support Alyeska, and state and federal regulatory agencies, in our role as an advisor.



The report, including all recommendations, can be found on the Council's website: www.tinyurl.com/Risk-Safety-VMT

Ensuring the Adequacy of Secondary Containment Liners

The Valdez Marine Terminal's crude oil storage tanks are surrounded by a secondary containment system. In the event of a spill, this system acts as a bathtub, preventing the oil from leaking into the surrounding environment.

The containment cells that make up the system are 47 years old. They are lined with a special type of asphalt which can become brittle with age, and is susceptible to physical and chemical damage. Viewing damage is difficult as the liner is covered with five feet of gravel. Over the years, when gravel fill

has been removed to visually inspect the liner, holes or cracks have been found about 20% of the time.

According to Alyeska, removing the fill to inspect and repair the liner would be expensive, and the excavation equipment could cause further damage.

The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) grants Alyeska a 60% "prevention credit" because this secondary containment system is in place, substantially reducing the amount of response personnel and equipment Alyeska must provide to meet response planning standards.

In 2023, the Council released a report showing how electrical leak location surveys can be used to find potential damage without fully excavating the fill. In 2024, Alyeska has been conducting pilot tests using a version of this method. After the pilot tests are completed, Alyeska is required to submit their final evaluation method to ADEC by March 2025.

Oxygenated Hydrocarbons from Terminal Operations

In 2023, the Council released a report titled "Examining the Effectiveness of Ballast Water Treatment Processes: Insights into Hydrocarbon Oxidation Product Formation and Environmental Implications." This study investigated the terminal's process of removing crude oil residue from unsegregated tanker ballast water, specifically regarding oxygenated hydrocarbons and heavy metals.

Oxygenated hydrocarbons are currently not monitored or regulated because they cannot be detected with the same process as other components of crude oil, such as benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, and xylenes.

For the study, water was sampled at four different points in the ballast water treatment process. Results indicated that one of the steps in the treatment, which uses dissolved air to remove small particles of hydrocarbons from the water, may lead to the formation of oxygenated hydrocarbons that are then released in the effluent to Port Valdez. The report highlights the need for comprehensive monitoring of ballast water treatment processes.

47 -YEAR-OLD LINERS in the containment cells

**HOLES OR CRACKS
HAVE BEEN FOUND**

20% OF THE TIME

that gravel fill has been removed to visually inspect the liner



60% "PREVENTION CREDIT" GRANTED TO ALYESKA

by the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC)



The final report is available on the Council's website: www.tinyurl.com/OxygenatedHC

PLANNING & PREPARING FOR AN OIL SPILL

The Council works hard to help prevent spills. It also monitors and supports the extensive planning required to ensure an efficient and effective response if a spill occurs.

OIL SPILL CONTINGENCY PLANS

Alyeska and the companies who ship oil from the Valdez Marine Terminal are required by state and federal law to prepare detailed oil spill contingency plans for spill prevention and response. On behalf of the public, the Council monitors changes to these plans. Significant resources are devoted to help ensure the plans remain adequate.

Alaska regulations require these plans to be updated every five years. Changes between those updates require an amendment, and major amendments require a public review process.

The Oil Discharge Prevention and Contingency Plan for the Prince William Sound shippers was amended in 2023, to meet 2022 state contingency planning regulatory updates. This plan, commonly referred to as the “Tanker Plan,” went through a public review process through ADEC. The Council’s comments were submitted in October 2023, and a

decision from ADEC is expected in mid-2024.

The five-year renewal process of the oil spill contingency plan for the terminal, or Terminal Plan, began in 2023, as the plan expires in 2024. This plan contains details on how the industry prevents oil spills, and how they would respond to a spill from the terminal. The Council submitted comments during a public review in December 2023.

One of the biggest concerns highlighted by the Council involves the integrity of the secondary containment liner that surrounds each of the oil storage tanks (see page 9). The liners are intended to prevent oil from leaking into the environment in the case of a spill. The Council has been concerned about the integrity of these liners for over 20 years.



The Council’s comments can be reviewed on our website:
www.tinyurl.com/Comments-2023



Background: Contingency plans contain detailed information on prevention and response activities in the event of an oil spill. Vessels such as the Valdez Star and the new Allison Creek response barge participate in drills and exercises to demonstrate that they can perform the tasks as described in the plans.

ISSUES AFFECTING SPILL PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

In addition to providing input on contingency plans, the Council tracks other issues that could impact prevention and response.

State Funding for Spill Prevention and Response

Without legislative action, the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation's Spill Prevention and Response Division, or SPAR, will not have the funds needed in the coming years to perform their responsibilities mandated in statutes and regulations.

Following the Exxon Valdez oil spill, the Alaska Legislature established a recurring revenue stream to ensure the state would have adequate funds to promote the prevention of, and be prepared to respond to, catastrophic spills of oil and hazardous substances – through the SPAR Division. The Oil

and Hazardous Substances Release Prevention and Response Fund was designed to be self-sustaining without the need for annual General Fund appropriations.

Initially, most of the fund was generated by a fee assessed on the volume of oil flowing through the Trans Alaska Pipeline System. However, as throughput declined, additional revenue from a per gallon surcharge on refined fuels was added with the understanding that it would ensure adequate funding.

As a result of an ongoing annual shortfall in this funding mechanism and to avoid program collapse, the reduced SPAR funding now requires an annual infusion of unpredictable General Fund dollars and a drawdown from the limited SPAR fund balance. The Council remains supportive of legislative efforts to align the funding more closely with the projected estimate that was relied upon when the surcharge was established in 2015, thereby securing sustainable funding for SPAR.

Support for Sentinel-Class Cutter in Valdez

In September 2023, the Council approved a resolution urging the U.S. Coast Guard to replace the Island-class cutter the Coast Guard currently has stationed in Port Valdez with a Sentinel-class cutter. The current cutter will remain at its homeport in Valdez for now, but upon its decommissioning there are currently no plans for replacement.

In May 2024, during a legislative visit to Washington, D.C., Senator Dan Sullivan asked the Council to continue to advocate for a Sentinel-class cutter to be homeported in Valdez during a meeting with U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters. Council staff subsequently fulfilled this request. The Council will continue to closely monitor the progression of this situation.



The resolution is available on the Council's website:
www.tinyurl.com/Sentinel-Cutter-PWS

Task Force on Regional Stakeholder Committee

Since November 2022, a task force set up by the Alaska Regional Response Team has been working on a set of "job aides" to support a Regional Stakeholder Committee. Council staff have been participating on this task force. In the event of a large oil spill, local citizens directly affected by the spill would be invited to join the committee to share their local knowledge with the agency and industry representatives and decision makers that would support the oil spill response. The task force's goal was to ensure a consistent process across the state. The job aides are expected to be finalized in 2024.



More information on the task force and Council resources on this topic are available on the Council's website:
www.pwsrcac.org/rsc

COUNCIL'S PEER LISTENER MANUAL UPDATED

In September 2023, the Council released an updated Peer Listener Manual, included as an appendix in the Council's publication, "Coping with Technological Disasters – A User-Friendly Guidebook." The update was needed as the fields of peer-to-peer support and community resilience have evolved since the material was originally created in the mid-1990s after the Exxon Valdez oil spill. Similar peer listener programs were reviewed nationwide and compared to the previous version of the manual, last updated in 2004.

The new manual incorporates modern techniques for active listening, informal support, and self-care. It is a resource for communities to build resilience before a disaster by developing trust and mutual support networks. The Council's subsequent focus will be on devising a plan for promotion and dissemination.



The new version of the manual is available on the Council's website:
www.tinyurl.com/Peer-Listening



The Council's Peer Listener program stemmed from a study of the social effects of the Exxon Valdez oil spill on the community of Cordova.



ALWAYS READY TO RESPOND

The Ross Chouest works with local fishing vessels to practice oil spill response tactics.

The Council, industry, and regulators work hard to prevent oil spills, but the risk cannot be eliminated entirely. A rapid and effective response takes more than carefully written and reviewed contingency plans. It requires equipment, trained people, practice, and a management system to implement the plan.

The Council monitors the operational readiness of Alyeska's Ship Escort Response Vessel System, or SERV, and the tanker companies. The Council works hard to stay prepared as an independent monitor and as a voice for citizens that could be affected by a spill.

OIL SPILLS AND INCIDENTS

The Council monitors spills and other incidents that occur from the Valdez Marine Terminal and tanker operations. Fortunately, because spill prevention efforts in Prince William Sound are among the best in the world, significant events are rare. More common are minor spills, usually a teaspoon or less, related to normal daily operations. The Council tracks these incidents and provides advice where possible to prevent small problems from becoming larger issues.

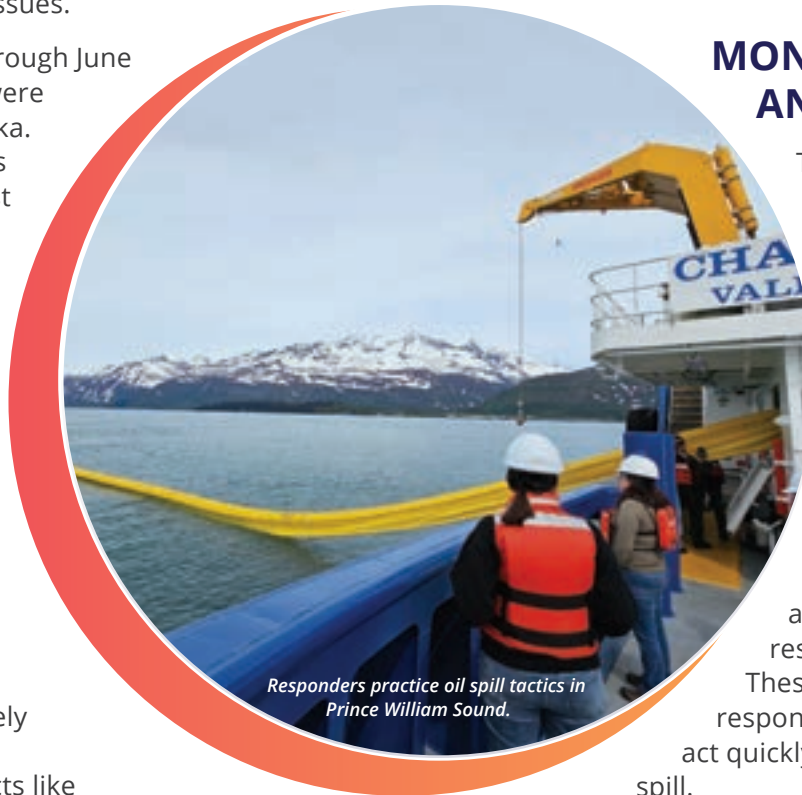
From July 2023 through June 2024, nine spills were reported by Alyeska. One of those spills occurred in August 2023, when three gallons of firefighting foam were spilled to land during a transfer of the substance into a temporary tank so the permanent tank could undergo inspection. The remainder of the spills were relatively small amounts of petroleum products like hydraulic fluid or motor oil.

In March 2024, a loader clearing snow from around a crude tank hit an inlet pipe. When inspected, a scratch approximately 6-10 inches long was discovered. There were no spills, leaks, or injuries caused by the incident. A few days later, a loader clearing snow around the same tank struck another inlet pipe, resulting in a dent smaller than a fingernail.

Fire Incident at the Terminal

On August 30, 2023, a fire occurred near one of the large crude oil storage tanks in the East Tank Farm at the terminal. Alyeska has completed their investigation and the fire appears to be due to a

malfunction of equipment used to process oily sediment removed from a crude oil storage tank during cleaning. It appears the malfunction allowed oxygen to enter a dryer that contained residual hydrocarbons at a high temperature, which caused the fire. The Council has requested a copy of the investigation report from Alyeska and the State Fire Marshal's office, but to date, have not received the report. Alyeska has stated that the findings of the investigation should result in corrective action to make sure the issue does not recur.



MONITORING DRILLS AND EXERCISES

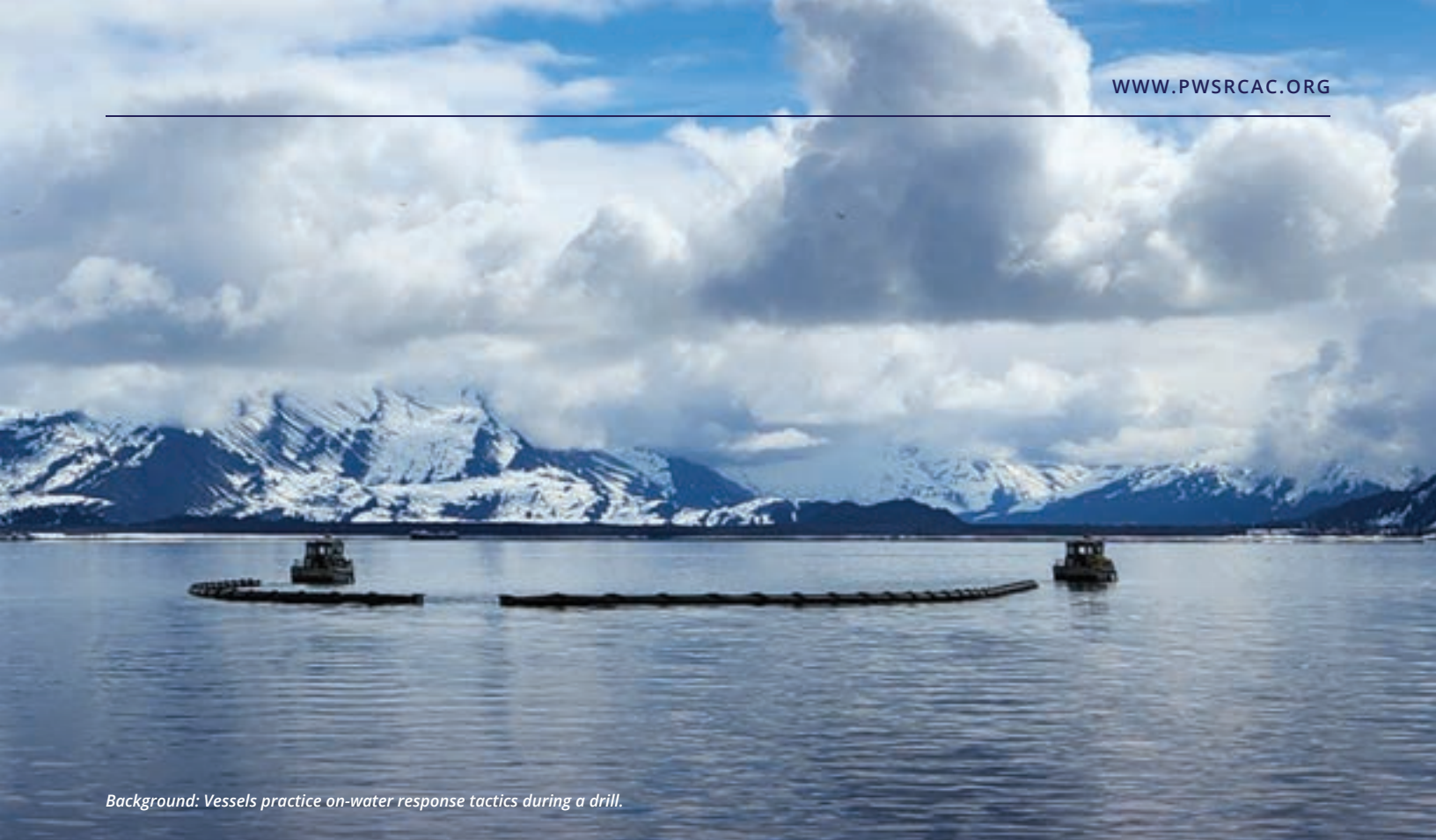
The Council observes and monitors spill response drills, exercises, and trainings that test aspects of the oil spill contingency plans for the terminal and tankers. Some are small (focusing on specific pieces of equipment or tactics), but a few are large, involving one hundred or more personnel and a large amount of response equipment.

These events help to ensure responders are ready and able to act quickly in the event of an actual spill.

Annual Fishing Vessel Training

The annual training for fishing and other contracted vessels continues to be a large benchmark on the SERVS yearly calendar. Council staff attended trainings in Valdez, Cordova, and Homer this past year.

In 2024, the Council organized a meeting with contracted vessel representatives and discussed the status and overall health of the program, the hands-on training, and any-port specific issues. At least one representative from each of the six ports where vessels are on contract attended this virtual meeting. There was consensus among fleet representatives that the program is currently stable and healthy.



Background: Vessels practice on-water response tactics during a drill.

Major Annual Spill Exercises

Council staff attended 20 drills, exercises, and training events this past year, including:

3 EMERGENCY TOWING EXERCISE
in central Prince William Sound



**A SPECIALIZED SHORELINE CLEAN-UP
ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUE (SCAT) TRAINING.**

**VALDEZ MARINE TERMINAL
ON-LAND TACTICS EXERCISES**
for simulated spill at the
terminal

SEVERAL WILDLIFE-RELATED EVENTS
including a training in Kodiak and a
demonstration of the bird
stabilization facilities in Valdez



**TRAININGS AND
DEPLOYMENTS**
to protect sensitive
areas in Port Valdez



**5 OPEN-WATER
RESPONSE
EXERCISES**

**2 of Alyeska's INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM
DRILLS AND EQUIPMENT DEPLOYMENTS**

The largest exercises were the two Alyeska
**INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM
(IMT) EXERCISES**



For more details, the Annual Drill Monitoring Report for 2023 is available on our website:
www.tinyurl.com/Drill-Report-2023

PROTECTING OUR REGION

The Council collects samples from around our region to monitor the environmental effects of the oil transportation industry.

Per directives in the Oil Pollution Act of 1990, the Council monitors terminal operations and maintenance to help minimize the risk of spills and reduce the facility's discharge or emissions of water and air pollution to the lowest reasonable levels. The Council conducts scientific research on risks to the environment from tanker and terminal operations, documents levels of pollution, and explores new technologies.

LONG-TERM ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING

Every year, the Council collects environmental samples from Port Valdez and has them chemically analyzed for contamination related to the operation of the terminal and associated tankers. In 2023, additional samples were collected from six remote sites in Prince William Sound, representing locations that were oiled and unoiled during the spill. Sampling includes gathering mussels, collecting marine sediment, and deploying plastic strips called passive sampling devices.

The Council has been collecting long-term environmental monitoring data within the region impacted by the Exxon Valdez oil spill for 30 years.



Concern About Vessel-Whale Strikes in Prince William Sound

The Council has been studying the issue of vessel speed reductions to reduce whale strikes through its Scientific Advisory and Port Operations and Vessel Traffic Systems committees for over two years. In more recent discussions, the Council's Board has expressed concerns and questions about protecting whale populations from impacts of the oil industry in our region. Some considerations of the Board and committees have included current speed limits for laden oil tankers; how slower speeds could reduce air emissions and underwater noise pollution from tankers; and possible logistical constraints that could be imposed by a slowdown.

The Council sent advisory letters to appropriate regulatory agencies and the Prince William Sound oil shipping companies, conveying the Council's concerns relating to vessel-whale strikes within our region and acknowledging the known benefits of reduced vessel speeds.



The summary report can be found on the Council's website:
www.tinyurl.com/LTEMP-2023

MONITORING SPECIES IN OUR REGION

Monitoring for Marine Invasive Species

Each summer, the Council monitors for invasive species that may be introduced by tankers transiting to and from the terminal. These tankers visit ports outside of Alaska where they can inadvertently pick up invasive species in ballast water or attached to their hulls and other underwater surfaces. If these invasive species become established in our region, they can harm native species by competing for space and food and disrupting habitat.

The biggest concerns are the European green crab, a voracious predator that was detected in southeast Alaska for the first time in 2022, and tunicates that can blanket other organisms. Additional threats include bryozoans, barnacles, copepods, snails, and other marine invertebrates.

In 2023, a broadscale survey for invasive species was carried out at 11 remote sites throughout Prince William Sound. Settlement panels, small passive samplers that hang in the water from existing structures, were deployed in June and retrieved in September. During this time, organisms settled and grew on the panels. The organisms on the panels were then identified by taxonomists and samples were collected for genetic analysis.

Surveys of Marine Bird and Mammal Species

The Council continued its work monitoring sensitive species in Prince William Sound that may be impacted and could use additional protection during an oil spill response. In September 2023, the Board accepted a report titled "Marine Bird Winter Surveys in Prince William Sound." This was the third consecutive year of surveys sponsored by the Council. The surveys have identified important wintertime nearshore habitats and areas of high bird density for protection, including Hinchinbrook Entrance, the head of Port Valdez, and Tatitlek Narrows. The results of the surveys are publicly available through AOOS and NOAA's Environmental Response Management Application.



The final report is available on our website:
www.tinyurl.com/Marine-Birds-PWS

Council intern Samaya Faber monitors in Cordova for the presence of European green crab. These aggressive crab have been spotted in southeast Alaska, but fortunately none have yet been found in our region.



Right: European green crab.



Marine Invasive Species:

EUROPEAN
GREEN CRAB



SNAILS

BRYOZOANS

COPEPODS

BARNACLES



& OTHER MARINE
INVERTEBRATES

INVOLVING CITIZENS IN OVERSIGHT



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

Background: The waters of our region host a variety of activities, including fishing, transportation, tourism, and recreation.

NEW MEMBER ENTITY: RECREATION

In January 2024, the Council unanimously approved adding the Oil Spill Region Recreational Coalition to its roster of Class 1 (voting) member entities. The three groups that make up the coalition are the Prince William Sound Stewardship Foundation, the Valdez Adventure Alliance, and the Friends of Kachemak Bay State Park. The coalition's mission is to assist the Council in promoting the environmentally safe operation of the Alyeska terminal and associated tankers in a manner that will protect the natural recreational resources of Prince William Sound and other areas affected by the Exxon Valdez oil spill.

Director Jim Herbert was seated as the coalition's representative. Herbert served as the representative of the City of Seward from 2013-2015, and is currently the chair of the Council's Oil Spill Prevention and Response Committee.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Throughout the year, staff and volunteers visit communities in the Council's region to host receptions, deliver presentations, and participate in events that increase citizen engagement in our work.



Current and former staff and volunteers reunite in Cordova during the Prince William Sound Science Center's fundraiser Copper River Nouveau.

Jim Herbert (right), who represents the new Oil Spill Region Recreational Coalition on the Council's Board, works with a student to take a water sample for analysis during a community outreach event.



Community Outreach:

The Council's outreach efforts included participation at in-person and virtual events, such as:



HOSTING IN-PERSON BOOTHS AT:

- SalmonFest in Ninilchik
- Pacific Marine Expo in Seattle
- Forum on the Environment in Anchorage
- ComFish in Kodiak
- International Oil Spill Conference in New Orleans, Louisiana

SPONSORING & PARTICIPATING AS OFFICIALS

for the Alaska Tsunami
Ocean Sciences Bowl
in Seward.



ORGANIZING & PRESENTING
A HYBRID SESSION AT AFE ON
35 YEARS
SINCE THE EXXON VALDEZ OIL SPILL



SPONSORING THE
PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND
NATURAL HISTORY SYMPOSIUM
in Whittier, presenting at the event, and
assisting in its hybrid facilitation.

Right: Committee volunteer Max Mitchell (left) and Board President Robert Archibald (right) host the Council's booth at SalmonFest in Ninilchik, AK.



THE OBSERVER NEWSLETTER

Our regional newsletter covers Council activities, developments in the oil transportation industry, and news about policy and operational issues related to marine oil transportation in Prince William Sound.



Subscribe by email at:
www.tinyurl.com/TheObserverPWS

ENGAGING THE NEXT GENERATIONS TO PROTECT PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND

Funding Youth Education Programs

The Council supports our partners' youth programs on topics related to the Council's mission. These hands-on programs teach all ages about oil spill prevention and response, citizen oversight, response capabilities in Prince William Sound, and more.

Interns Help Council Achieve Our Mission

The Council recruits interns to complete projects that incorporate career development opportunities. Interns across the communities in the Council's region monitor nearshore areas for invasive green crab and tunicates. Noah Schrof in Kodiak and Joshua Duong in Valdez each implemented invasive species monitoring protocols during the 2023 summer season and their 2023-2024 school year. Each intern also gave an outreach presentation to an audience in their community.

Lesson Plans Available for Educators



The Council maintains the Alaska Oil Spill Lesson Bank available online:
www.pwsrcac.org/lessons

This is a free resource for teachers and other educators to source environmental and oil spill-related lessons for a variety of age groups.

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

The Council monitors state and federal administrative and agency actions, legislation, and regulations that relate to terminal and tanker operations, or to oil spill prevention and response. To help track developments and formulate legislative priorities and responses, the Council retains state and federal legislative monitors under contract.

During the past year, the Council's Legislative Affairs Committee focused on:

- Senate and House bills that would maintain an adequately funded prevention program for the state and its ability to respond to major oil spills (see page 11)
- Support for the "Assessment of Risks and Safety Culture at Alyeska's Valdez Marine Terminal" report and its recommendations (see page 8)
- A permanent regulatory or legislative remedy to the potential application of Coast Guard vessel inspection regulations to the Alyeska/SERVS fleet of more than 350 uninspected vessels that form the backbone of a response to an oil spill from a TAPS tanker or the Valdez Marine Terminal in Prince William Sound
- Concerns about contamination from perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances, or PFAS, stored at the terminal
- Support for the Governor of Alaska to establish an Invasive Species Council to help manage invasive species across agencies and jurisdictional boundaries

RECERTIFICATION

The U.S. Coast Guard certifies the Council as the federally approved citizens advisory group for Prince William Sound, pursuant to the Oil Pollution Act of 1990. Under the annual recertification process, the Coast Guard assesses whether the Council fosters the general goals and purposes of the Act and is broadly representative of the communities and interests as envisioned in the Act.

The Council has been the certified group since 1991.

BOARD &

EX OFFICIO MEMBERS

Each member entity chooses one representative to our Board. The lone exception is Valdez, which has two representatives. The Board meets three times a year. The January meeting is in Anchorage, the May meeting is in Valdez, and the September meeting rotates among other member communities in the oil spill region. Members are current as of June 30, 2024.

BOARD OFFICERS:



Robert Archibald
PRESIDENT
City of Homer



Amanda Bauer
VICE PRESIDENT
City of Valdez



Bob Shavelson
SECRETARY
*Oil Spill Region
Environmental Coalition*



Mako Haggerty
TREASURER
*Kenai Peninsula
Borough*



Ben Cutrell
MEMBER-AT-LARGE
*Chugach Alaska
Corporation*



David Janka
MEMBER-AT-LARGE
City of Cordova



Angela Totemoff
MEMBER-AT-LARGE
*Tatitlek Corporation &
Tatitlek IRA Council*

EX OFFICIOS:

AK Dept. of Environmental
Conservation:

Ytamar Rodriguez

AK Dept. of Fish & Game/
Habitat Division:

Jonathan Kirsch

AK Dept. of Natural
Resources:

Anthony Strupulis

Bureau of Land
Management:

Greg Bjorgo

National Oceanic
& Atmospheric
Administration:

Liza Sanden

Oil Spill Recovery Institute:
W. Scott Pegau

Div. of Homeland
Security & Emergency
Management, Alaska
Department of Military
and Veterans Affairs:
Vacant

U.S. Coast Guard/Marine
Safety Unit Valdez:
CDR Sarah Rousseau

U.S. Dept. of the Interior:
Lisa Fox

U.S. Environmental
Protection Agency:
Torri Huelskoetter

U.S. Forest Service:
Steve Namitz

BOARD MEMBERS:



Robert Beedle
*Cordova District
Fishermen United*



Mike Bender
City of Whittier



Mike Brittain
City of Seward



Nicholas Crump
*Prince William
Sound Aquaculture
Corporation*



**Wayne
Donaldson**
City of Kodiak



Luke Hasenbank
*Alaska State Chamber
of Commerce*



Jim Herbert
*Oil Spill Region
Recreational Coalition*



Elijah Jackson
*Kodiak Village
Mayors Association*



Melvin Malchoff
*Port Graham
Corporation*



**Dorothy M.
Moore**
City of Valdez



Michael Vigil
*Chenega Corporation
& Chenega IRA Council*



Aimee Williams
*Kodiak Island
Borough*



Dr. Kirk Zinck
City of Seldovia

ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Five standing committees advise the Board of Directors and Council staff, and assist on individual projects. These committees are made up of interested citizens, technical experts, and members of the Council's Board. As of June 30, 2024 | * *Member of Board of Directors*

INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

Mission: Support the Council's mission by fostering public awareness, responsibility, and participation through information and education

- **Chair:** Trent Dodson, *Kenai*
- **Vice Chair:** Cathy Hart, *Anchorage*
- Jane Eisemann, *Winthrop*
- Ruth E. Knight, *Valdez*
- Andrea Korbe, *Whittier*
- Savannah Lewis, *Anchorage*
- Kate Morse, *Cordova*
- Aimee Williams, *Kodiak**

OIL SPILL PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

Mission: Minimize the risk and impacts associated with oil transportation through research, advice, and recommendations for strong and effective spill prevention and response measures, contingency planning, and regulations

- **Chair:** Jim Herbert, *Homer**
- **Vice Chair:** Matt Melton, *Anchorage*
- Robert Beedle, *Cordova**
- Mike Bender, *Whittier**
- David Goldstein, *Whittier*
- Tim Robertson, *Seldovia*
- Gordon Scott, *Girdwood*

PORT OPERATIONS AND VESSEL TRAFFIC SYSTEMS

Mission: Monitor port and tanker operations, identify and recommend improvements in the vessel traffic navigation systems, and monitor the vessel escort system in Prince William Sound

- **Chair:** Steve Lewis, *Anchorage*
- **Vice Chair:** Amanda Bauer, *Valdez**
- Robert Archibald, *Homer**
- Max Mitchell, *Homer*
- Gordon Terpening, *Homer*

SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY

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

- **Chair:** Sarah Allan, *Homer*
- **Vice Chair:** Wei Cheng, *Anchorage*
- Wayne Donaldson, *Kodiak**
- Roger Green, *Ontario*
- Davin Holen, *Anchorage*
- John Kennish, *Anchorage*
- Dorothy Moore, *Valdez**

TERMINAL OPERATIONS AND ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING

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

- **Chair:** Amanda Bauer, *Valdez**
- **Vice Chair:** Mikkel Foltmar, *Anchorage*
- Harold Blehm, *Valdez*
- Matt Cullin, *Anchorage*
- Steve Goudreau, *Valdez*
- Tom Kuckertz, *Anchorage*
- George Skladal, *Anchorage*

Right: Committee volunteers Max Mitchell and Matt Melton helped with outreach at the Council's information booth during Pacific Marine Expo in 2023.



The Council's staff and volunteers toured the Valdez Marine Terminal in May 2024.

Background: Columbia Glacier in Prince William Sound.

Staff members Linda Swiss and Jeremy Robida joined the tour of the Valdez Marine Terminal in May 2024.



Staff members Nelli Vanderburg and Sadie Blancaflor participated in the Tsunami workshop in June 2024.



STAFF

Executive Director

- Donna Schantz

Executive Assistant

- Jennifer Fleming

Project Manager Assistants

- Nelli Vanderburg
- Jaina Willahan

Project Managers

- Mercedes "Sadie" Blancaflor
- John Guthrie
- Amanda Johnson
- Roy Robertson
- Jeremy Robida
- Alan Sorum
- Linda Swiss
- Danielle Verna

Outreach Coordinator

- Maia Draper-Reich

Director of Administration

- Hans Odegard

Director of Communications

- Brooke Taylor

Director of Finance

- Ashlee Hamilton

Director of Programs

- Joe Lally

PHOTO CREDITS: (t) top, (b) bottom, (c) center, (r) right, (bg) background

Cover: Nelli Vanderburg
P1: Danielle Verna
P2: (bg) Nelli Vanderburg;
(c & b) Amanda Johnson
P4: Danielle Verna
P5: Amanda Johnson
P6: Amanda Johnson

P7: Nelli Vanderburg
P8: Amanda Johnson
P10-11: Cathy Hart
P12: Danielle Verna
P13: Amanda Johnson
P14: Jeremy Robida
P15: Nelli Vanderburg

P16: (t) Danielle Verna,
(b) Nelli Vanderburg
P17: (t) Danielle Verna, (b)
CSIRO Marine Research
P18: Amanda Johnson
P19: (t) Courtesy of
Brooke Taylor, (c)
Cathy Hart

P20: Maia Draper-Reich
P21: (t) Danielle Verna
P23: (t) Courtesy of
Maia Draper-Reich, (b)
Courtesy of Amanda
Johnson

P24: (bg) Nelli
Vanderburg, (t) Courtesy
of Jeremy Robida, (c)
Nelli Vanderburg
P25: Danielle Verna

PAPERS & REPORTS

Annual Drill Monitoring Report 2023 (report). Citizens' Council. January 2024. Document number: 752.431.240101. DrillMon2023

Clarification on Alyeska's Response to PHMSA Request for Information (letter). Citizens' Council. July 2023. Document number: 500.105.230727.PHMSArfi

Comments on Article 2 Financial Responsibility Dollar Amount Update (letter). Citizens' Council. July 2023. Document number: 651.105.230705.DECarticle2FR

Comments on Potential Decommissioning and Removal of NDBC Port Wells Buoy 46081 in Western Prince William Sound (letter). Citizens' Council. August 2023. Document number: 653.105.230822. NWSBuoy46081

Comments on Vessel Incidental Discharge National Standards of Performance, Supplemental Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (letter). Citizens' Council. December 2023. Document number: 952.105.231215.EPAVidaCmts

Comments for Request Information on the USCG Implementation of a Western Alaska Oil Spill Planning Criteria Program (letter). Citizens' Council. March 2024. Document number: 600.105.240304.WestAKPlanCmt

Coping with Technological Disasters – Peer Listener Training Manual (manual). Citizens' Council. September 2023. Document number: 656.431.230921.CopeTechDstrs

Crude Oil Storage Tank Vent Snow Damage Report and Air Quality Letters (report and letters). Taku Engineering and Citizens' Council. June, August, October, and November 2023. Document numbers: 500.431.230601. TankVentSnowDmg, 557.105.230822. DECepaTitleV, 500.105.231012.APSCtakuRpt, 500.105.231103.APSCtakufollowup, 557.105.231102.EPAAirReporting, and 557.105.240208.ADECepaInfoReq

Examining the Effectiveness of Ballast Water Treatment Processes: Insights into Hydrocarbon Oxidation Product Formation and Environmental Implications (report). Pontchartrain Institute for Environmental Sciences, University of New Orleans. September 2023. Document number: 951.431.230921.NOLAOxyHydro

Long-Term Environmental Monitoring Program 2022-2023 Summary Report and Technical Supplement (report). Owl Ridge Natural Resource Consultants. December 2023. Document numbers: 951.431.231201. OwlRidgeSummary and 951.431.231201.OwlRidgeTech

Marine Bird Winter Surveys in Prince William Sound (report). Prince William Sound Science Center. June 2023. Document number: 900.431.230626.WinterBirdSurv

Port Valdez Weather Buoy Data Analysis 2019-2022 (report). Prince William Sound Science Center. September 2023. Document number: 653.431.230901.PtVdWxBuoyData

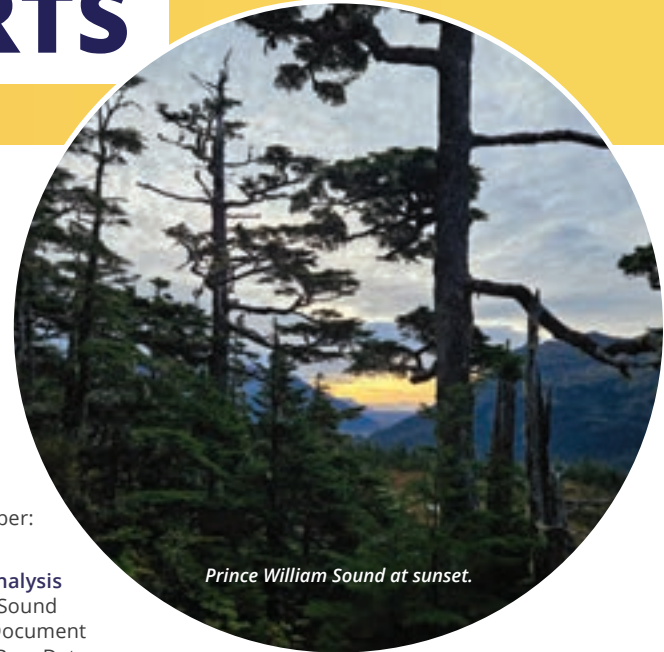
Public review and comments on Alyeska's Valdez Marine Terminal Oil Discharge Prevention and Contingency Plan Renewal, Plan No. 18-CP-4057 (letters). Citizens' Council. November and December 2023. Documents numbers: 651.105.231103. ADECExtReq and 651.105.231215. VMTplanRenewal

Request for clarification on implications of CVC-WI-032(I) on fishing vessels and vessels of opportunity for an oil spill response or exercise (letter). Citizens' Council. May 2024. Document number: 700.105.240517. USCG46CFR

Requests related to Council concerns and questions around the risk of tanker-whale strikes in Prince William Sound (letters). Citizens' Council. July 2024. Document numbers: 900.105.240719.NOAAwhalespeed.pdf and 900.105.240719.RPGwhalespeed.pdf

Requests related to NOAA's NDBC Seal Rocks Weather Buoy (46061) and the Cape Cleare Weather Buoy (46076) (letters). Citizens' Council. October 2023 and February 2024. Document numbers: 653.105.231024. NOAAbuoy46061.pdf and 653.105.240213. AKDeINBDCbuoys

Request to extend the 5-year period for PWSRCAC's weather buoy located near the Valdez Marine Terminal (letter). Citizens' Council. February 2024. Document number: 653.105.240207.APSCvmtBuoy



Prince William Sound at sunset.

Resolution Urging the USCG to Homeport a Sentinel-Class Cutter in Port Valdez and Transmittal (resolution and letter). Citizens' Council. September and October 2023. Document numbers: 210.106.230921. USCGcutter and 440.105.231011.CutterRes

Sustainable Shipping: Regulatory Mandate Review (report). Nuka Research & Planning Group, LLC. June 2023. Document number: 800.431.230601.NukaSustainShip

Transmittals on tank bottom processing and the August 2023 fire investigation at Alyeska's Valdez Marine Terminal (letter and records request). Citizens' Council. February, May, and July 2024. Document numbers: 500.105.240229.InfoRequest, 500.105.240507.FireMarshalPRReq, and 500.105.240703.JPOTankprocess

Transmittals on the Prince William Sound Tanker Oil Discharge Prevention and Contingency Plan Major Amendment and associated Vessel Response Plans (letters). Citizens' Council. October 2023 and April 2024. Document numbers: 651.105.231020. DECmajorAmend and 651.105.240417. DEC23RFAlres

Valdez Marine Terminal Secondary Containment System Liner Evaluation Methods Selection - Condition of Approval 2A (letter). Citizens' Council. November 2023. Document number: 651.105.231120. APSCadecVMTcoa2a

This is a sample of the reports, papers, and other materials produced or compiled by the Council in the past year. Please contact the Council for additional information and/or copies of materials.



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