

THE OBSERVER

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

3709 Spenard Road, Suite 100
Anchorage AK 99503
Phone: 907-277-7222
Toll-free: 800-478-7221

Box 3089 / 130 S. Meals, Suite 202
Valdez AK 99686
Phone: 907-834-5000
Toll-free: 877-478-7221

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The Observer is a publication of the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council

Inside:

- Council chronicles history of spill protection plans for Copper River Delta and Flats
- Patience Andersen Faulkner retires; recognized for 24 years service
- And more...



Alaska State Chamber of Commerce - Chenega - 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

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Council chronicles history of spill protection plans for Copper River Delta and Flats

A new Council report tells the story of how Cordovans, the oil industry, and government agencies came together in the late 1990s to protect the ecologically rich Copper River Delta and Flats from the effects of a spill.

The Copper River region is known for its productive fisheries, wildlife and habitat, and cultural heritage. An estimated 12 million shorebirds migrate through in spring and fall. Salmon from the Copper River, arguably the most famous of Alaska fish, are a vital part of the state's economy. Alaska Native peoples have called this area home for more than 10,000 years.

Many factors would make cleaning up an oil spill in this area difficult. It is only accessible by air or sea. Shorelines and river channels are frequently changing due to the river currents, tides, and ocean storms. High winds, surf, and varying geography could hamper cleanup efforts.

Collaboration results in detailed plan

In 1995, the spill contingency plan for oil tankers traveling through Prince William Sound went out for public comment for the first time since the Exxon Valdez oil spill. With memories of the 1989 spill

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The Copper River Delta and Flats include salmon spawning areas, seabird nesting areas, and cultural and recreation sites that need protection from oil spills. Photo by Jeremy Robida.





Board of Directors elects officers

The Council held its annual Board meeting in Valdez, Alaska, on May 5-6, 2022. Among other business, the Board elected officers who will serve from May 2022 to May 2023.

The elected executive committee is comprised of:

- President: Robert Archibald, representing the City of Homer
- Vice President: Amanda Bauer, representing the City of Valdez
- Treasurer: Wayne Donaldson, representing the City of Kodiak
- Secretary: Bob Shavelson, representing the Oil Spill Region Environmental Coalition
- Three Members-at-Large:
 - Ben Cutrell, representing Chugach Alaska Corporation
 - Robert Beedle, representing the City of Cordova
 - Angela Totemoff, representing the Community of Tatitlek

"I am honored to serve as president of the Board for another year," said Robert Archibald. "As one of two regional citizens advisory councils in the nation, it is incumbent upon our organization to hold accountable industry and regulators. It is essential that the highest safety standards are maintained in order to prevent oil spills

and make sure there is a strong response system in place should prevention measures fail in order to protect the citizens, Valdez Marine Terminal workforce, associated tanker crews, and Alaska's environment which we hold so dear."

The Council is grateful to have the support of its many volunteers from all over the Exxon Valdez oil spill region.

New members seated

The Board seated two new members. Curtis Herschleb was appointed by Cordova District Fishermen United to fill the seat held by Patience Andersen Faulkner, who retired this year (see page 6). Aimee Williams has been appointed by the Kodiak Island Borough to fill the seat previously held by Rebecca Skinner.



Aimee Williams



Curtis Herschleb

*Left to right: Donaldson, Totemoff, Bauer, Archibald, Cutrell, and Beedle.
Not pictured: Shavelson.*



Matt Cullin builds life of growth and success out of expertise in corrosion and failure analysis

At his job as the director of the University of Alaska Anchorage's BP Asset Integrity and Corrosion Lab, Matt Cullin imagines himself as a detective.

"I do a lot of failure analysis work for the oil and gas industry," he says. "Basically when stuff breaks, we do the CSI forensics to figure out why things broke and why they failed."

They get big projects and a lot of smaller failures too. "Every couple of months somebody shows up with an old piece of pipe and asks us to tell them what happened."

His goal isn't just to solve the crime, though, he wants to learn how to prevent corrosion. For all of these projects, Cullin says his next question is always "how can you keep it from failing in the first place?"

Volunteering for the Council

Cullin also puts his background in mechanical engineering with a specialty in corrosion, materials, and failure analysis into use for the Council as a member of the Terminal Operations and Environmental Monitoring, or

TOEM, Committee. He says working with the committee helps him better understand the pipeline and terminal. The students in his classes at UAA benefit too.

"Students have a lot of questions about the pipeline and the terminal," Cullin says. "These are engineers who might go to work for the state or Alyeska and for them to have that information before they graduate is pretty neat. It's not a given, when you get a university degree, that you'll get to study this applied information that's relevant to your local installation."

"It's a cool symbiotic relationship," he adds.

Cullin recently partnered with a fellow TOEM member, Tom Kuckertz, and staff member Austin Love to create a model to help the committee estimate how much oil could potentially leak through a secondary containment liner at the terminal, if that liner was damaged.

"Typically, when you're talking about modeling, you want to understand the physics," he explains.

They figured out the physics that governed how the fluid would flow through the materials and then Cullin says it's just a matter of programming.

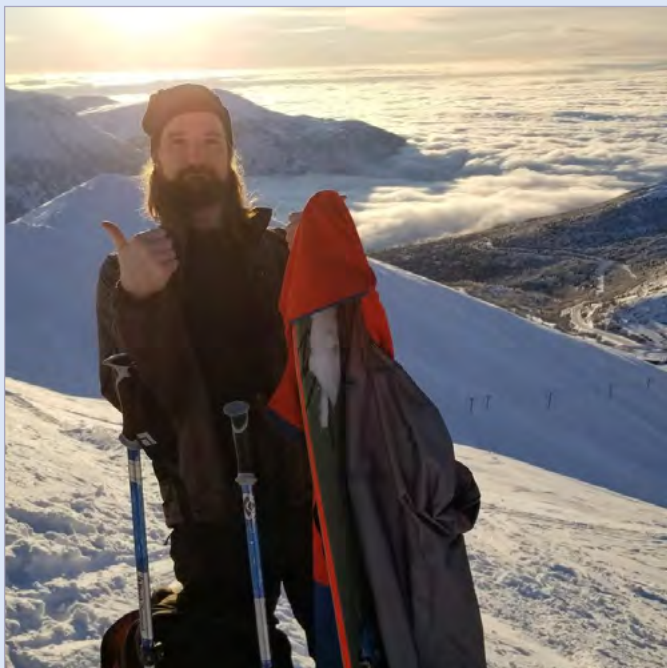
"I'm good at computer programming, so if you explain the model to me, and the equations that govern it, I can program almost anything. Once you have the equations, solving is the easy part."

Cullin says you have to be willing to keep an open mind in this line of work. It requires a lot of "let's figure this out" which he loves.

"Otherwise, it would be boring!"

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Volunteer Spotlight: Matt Cullin



Cullin is a member of the Terminal Operations and Environmental Monitoring Committee.

The report Cullin co-authored, "Utilizing Numerical Simulation to Estimate the Volume of Oil Leaked Through a Damaged Secondary Containment Liner," is available on the Council's website:

www.tinyurl.com/CullinReport



From the executive director:

The value of learning from history and experience

After the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill, many of the people impacted used lessons learned to advocate for safeguards to ensure a spill like that never happens again. Thanks to the foresight, vigilance, and tireless efforts of these elected officials, government regulators, industry, and citizens, Prince William Sound is now recognized as having a world-class oil spill prevention and response system for the Valdez Marine Terminal and associated oil tankers. The biggest successes achieved in our region have been a result of these partners working together toward the common goal of moving oil safely.

Congress found that complacency on the part of industry and government was a major contributing factor to the Exxon Valdez spill. To combat this complacency, Congress established two regional citizens advisory councils, one in Prince William Sound and another in Cook Inlet. Neither council could satisfy the provisions under this federal mandate without dedicated volunteers from throughout their respective regions. Citizen oversight brings irreplaceable local knowledge and expertise to the table, and involves those with the most to lose from oil pollution in the decisions that can put their livelihoods, resources, and communities at risk. Since our formation, our work has helped bring about some changes and advancements that would not have happened had we not been in existence.

In addition to the comprehensive laws enacted through the landmark Oil Pollution Act of 1990, the Alaska Legislature introduced a series of bills immediately following the 1989 spill that resulted in some of the most comprehensive laws in the nation for preventing and cleaning up an oil spill. The legislature understood that in order to be effective, a spill response must be immediate, with adequate resources and trained personnel available to contain, control, and clean up the oil within the shortest possible time. Industry should be commended for the extensive amounts of equipment and new technologies employed in our region, especially the relatively new Crucial oil skimmers, escort and response tugs, and purpose-built oil spill response barges. This equipment, coupled with vigorous training programs for operators and oil spill responders, represents vast improvements over the response system in place in 1989.

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It took a tragedy like the Exxon Valdez to create the robust prevention and response system in place today, but 33 years of successful prevention can inevitably lead back to complacency. It would be even more tragic if we ignored the hard-won lessons of our own history and let a focus on cost cutting diminish the protections resulting from that catastrophe. For our council, which represents the people, communities, and businesses hardest hit by the Exxon disaster, the cost of prevention and preparedness is marginal compared to the cost of another major oil spill.

The Council has been concerned for some time about budget cuts and reductions in staffing levels at key state and federal oversight agencies, as well as cost cutting within industry. The Council believes these reductions are putting at risk our region's strong oil spill prevention, response, and oversight capabilities. The loss of institutional knowledge with long-time employees retiring, coupled with high turnover rates and increased workloads, are likely to elevate risk and the chances of an accident.

For instance, staffing levels at the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, Bureau of Land Management, and Joint Pipeline Office, agencies set up to ensure regulatory compliance, have been drastically reduced. These staffing reductions include the elimination of several qualified technical and engineering positions charged with monitoring the complex systems at the Valdez Marine Terminal. Other factors that contribute to heightened risk include ageing infrastructure, and intermittent and persistent breakdowns in communication and vessel tracking infrastructure including



**Donna
Schantz**

**Executive
Director**

Continued on page 10

From Alyeska:

"A journey, never a job."

After helping build the Trans Alaska Pipeline, or TAPS, from 1974-1977, operating rock trucks, fuel trucks, boom trucks, and forklifts, including working on a Hercules aircraft team offloading critical supplies while Wein F-27s were hauling workers in and out nearby, from Galbraith Lake to Coldfoot, Jeff Streit transitioned to removing remnants of that historic construction effort. He demobilized Prospect, Oldman, and 5-Mile camps, loading piece by piece onto numerous high deck trailers to be shipped out of state. Jeff even saw one of those Hercules blow up at the Galbraith airport. After crossing the Yukon River for years on a powerful hovercraft barge, he helped load up its dismantled pieces when the bridge was complete.

Seeing the signs that this phase was finite, Jeff sought a long-term gig on the now-operating pipeline. He followed a lead from a construction buddy about technician openings at Pump Station 8.

"I put in my application, took an aptitude test, and to my surprise got an interview with the station manager," he said. "They offered me a job. I was excited and accepted, reported to PS8, and took the tour with a senior technician. He used to be a manager at a chemical plant and I thought to myself, 'I will be lucky to last a week. I don't know a darn thing about a pump station.'"

Jeff has lasted — more than 48 years on TAPS, in fact. And he knows a whole darn lot about its pump stations, history, people, and culture.

When asked what has kept him on TAPS so long, Jeff replied, "Curiosity, passion, being a student of the pipeline. It has always been a journey and never a job. And never wavering from the mission of doing my best each day to meet the core values of protecting people, the environment, and the TAPS system has kept me focused and energized. TAPS faces new challenges every day; the job is never done to continue learning and understanding the system. The system will always tell you what it needs if you are listening and watchful."

Jeff is someone who still listens and learns, noting his "knowledge base, which I continue to build on." His TAPS resume is filled with countless pipeline perspectives and illustrates endless opportunities to train, teach, and learn from

others. Jeff has worked as a technician at three pump stations; a task force supervisor; a project supervisor; a pump station operations supervisor; a pipeline technician trainer; supervisor of the North and South Districts and the OCC; a process safety advisor; and as pipeline and civil maintenance supervisor at the Glennallen Response Base/RBS, where he's been the past 14 years.

"My best memories are many, but the most powerful and influential are from the people who I have worked with since the construction days, that took a special effort to offer a helping hand to teach, coach, and mentor you through new jobs and experiences, and believed in you," he said. "Being your 'wingman' when things are tough – you don't forget those people."

Naturally, Jeff feels an obligation to pass on what he's learned, which is vast. He's a mentor and instructor to countless TAPS workers in a variety of specialties: pipeline operations and hydraulics,

1978: Jeff Streit

This profile is from a compilation of storytelling capturing 45 years of TAPS history.

Visit Alyeska's website for more of their Memories & Mileposts series:

alyeska-pipe.com

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Jeff taking a break at Coldfoot Camp in 1976 with two of his favorite TAPS construction coworkers: "Jimmy" and "Full Bore." Photo courtesy of Alyeska.



Council report chronicles history of spill protection plans for Copper River Delta and Flats

Continued from page 1

still fresh, local Cordovans questioned if a spill in Prince William Sound could migrate into the delta and flats region and how best to prepare for this possibility.

As a result of that debate, a work group formed to develop strategies to protect the area. The group included the U.S. Coast Guard, the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, the City of Cordova, and representatives from Cordova District Fishermen United. These local fishermen added knowledge of tides, currents, and other factors that could affect a spill response.

The group developed potential tactics for each zone and other logistical information.

This plan was adopted as part of the State of Alaska's oil spill contingency plans in 1999.

Changing formats

After 1999, a standard format called Geographic Response Strategies, or GRS, was developed for sites around Alaska that needed special protection. Approximately 700 GRS exist across the state. The format uses consistent symbols and information in each GRS.

Geographic Response Strategies: Special oil spill contingency plans developed for unique areas

Over the years, Alaska has developed GRS for areas that need special protection from hazardous spills. These are special instructions tailored for each area.

Responders can use these pre-planned strategies to save critical time in the early hours of a oil spill response.

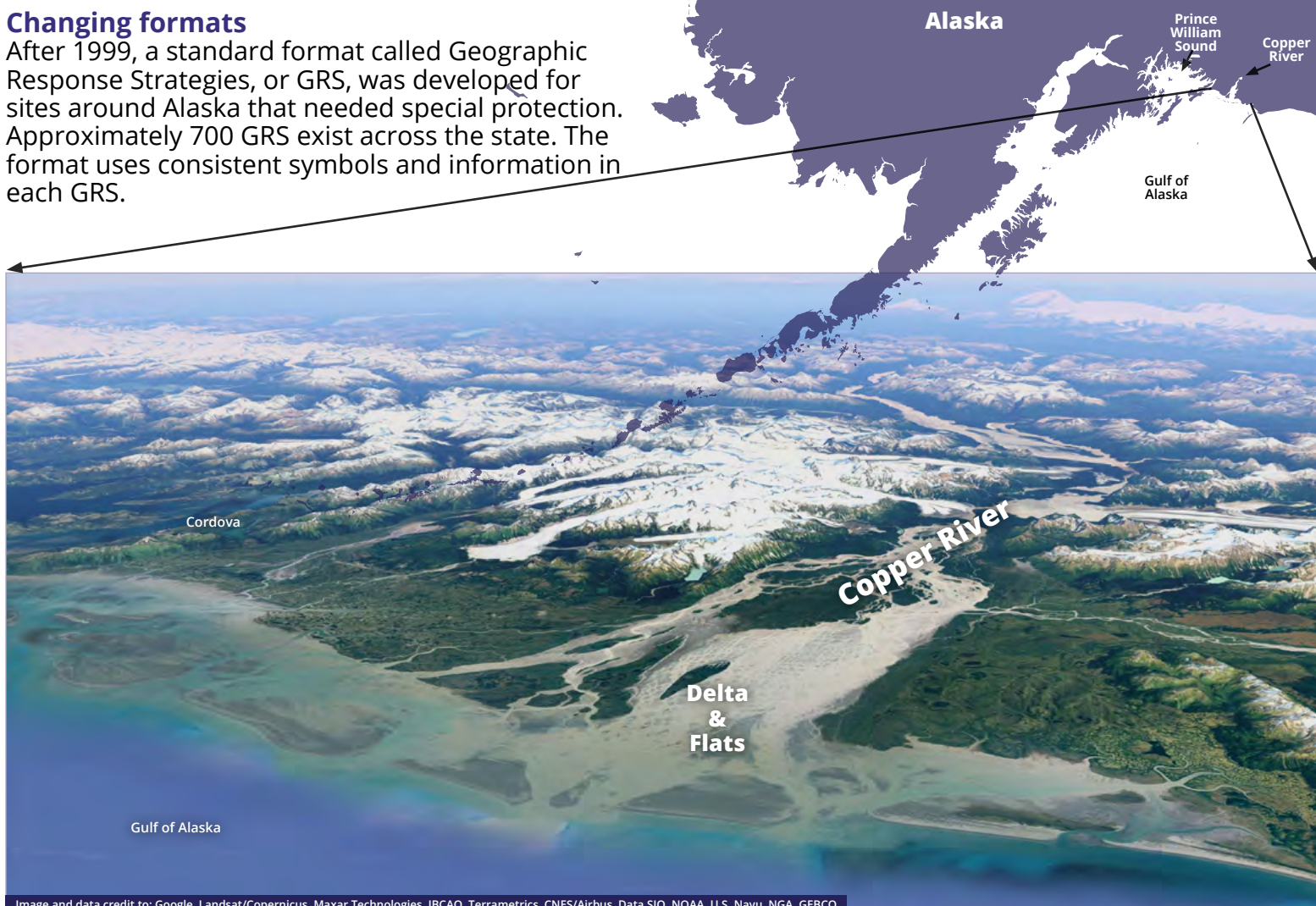


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Council recertified as official citizens' advisory group in Prince William Sound

The U.S. 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 Nathan A. Moore, Commander of the Coast Guard's District 17 in Juneau, notified the Council of recertification.

The Act requires the Council to be recertified annually 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 streamlined process was used this year. The new recertification expires February 28, 2023.

The Copper River Delta and Flats plan was developed before these protocols existed and its format is different for that reason.

In 2018, the regulator's plans changed, and the Copper River and Delta Flats protection information was not carried forward. While the document can still be found today, information in the plan is out of date and work is needed to update and modernize the format.

The State of Alaska and U.S. Coast Guard is currently in the process of updating how the statewide GRS are managed.

"The Council sees this as an opportune time to once again discuss and capture protection strategies for the Copper River Delta and Flats region," says Jeremy Robida, project manager for the Council.

Researchers recommend updates for the Copper River Delta and Flats plan

The Council started this work to better understand the historical context of the development of the Copper River Delta and Flats plan. The Council worked with Sierra Fletcher and Tim Robertson of Nuka Research and attorney Breck Tostevin to construct a general history of the plan.

The researchers documented the early debate which led to

the work group and the current status of the plan. They also made recommendations to help incorporate details from the original plan into a modern GRS format.

"Working through this project really reinforced just how unique this area is, and how it deserves discussion and pre-planning for oil spill prevention and response," Robida added.

The Council hopes this work will support future planning.

The new report, "Geographic Response Planning for the Copper River Delta and Flats," is available on our website:

www.tinyurl.com/CopperRiver-Plans

Upcoming Council meetings

The next meeting of the Council's Board of Directors will be held September 22 and 23 in beautiful Seward, Alaska.

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

Council meetings online

In-person meetings of the Council's Board of Directors are now streamed online via Zoom. Visit our website in early September for information:

www.pwsrccac.org



Scenery near Seward, Alaska.



Patience Andersen Faulkner retires; recognized for 24 years service

The Board's longest-serving member, Patience Andersen Faulkner, retired after 24 years of service to the Council's mission.

Her first-hand experience with the spill began in 1989, first working through the advocacy of Chugach Alaska Corporation as a Native representative to VECO, and later processing legal claims for many commercial fishermen who were unable to make a living afterwards. Her experience led to her becoming the longest standing Board member, representing Cordova District Fishermen United.

Faulkner worked with Dr. Steve Picou after the spill to document the profound human health and societal impacts of oil spills, which is now recommended for the list of damages that responsible parties must legally acknowledge and attempt to address in the wake of a large oil

spill. This work led to one of the Council's most successful projects, "Coping with Technological Disasters – A User Friendly Guidebook."

Faulkner has dedicated countless hours since she was seated in 1998, as she has served multiple times as president of the Board, as vice-president, treasurer, and as a member-at-large on the Executive Committee. She has also served on a number of other committees, including Finance, Board Governance, Long Range Planning, and Information and Education.

At its meeting in May, the Board passed a resolution of gratitude for Andersen Faulkner, who received a standing ovation. The full resolution lists more of Faulkner's accomplishments, which you can read on our website here:

www.tinyurl.com/Resolution22-01



Left: Andersen Faulkner speaks with Kristina Peterson, Russell Dardar, and Shirley Laska, resident of Louisiana visited Alaska after the 2010 BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill seeking advice from Alaskans who dealt firsthand with the Exxon Valdez oil spill.

Below: As a member of the Council's Legislative Affairs committee, Andersen Faulkner visited with elected officials to promote issues of concern to the Council. Left to right: Fellow Board member Dorothy Moore, U.S. Congressman Don Young, and Andersen Faulkner. Photo courtesy of the office of Congressman Young.

The Coping with Technological Disasters guidebook includes a program called "Peer Listening," which has helped communities deal with such disasters as Hurricane Katrina, the BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, and other human-caused disasters around the U.S. and the world.

Read more about the development of the peer listening program from a 2021 interview with Faulkner:

www.tinyurl.com/PatienceInterview



Community Corner:**Oliver moves on; Long-time volunteers honored**

During nearly four years at the Council as Outreach Coordinator, I have experienced a depth of volunteer commitment that I will continue to value as a model for citizen engagement.

Each committee member volunteers an estimated forty hours per year, including preparing for and attending meetings. Board members volunteer at least a hundred hours annually preparing for and attending several multi-day meetings per year. In addition, many Board members serve on committees, and many committee members contribute countless additional hours on project teams guiding specific work outcomes. In the past few years, this has meant lots of videoconference time, for which we are especially grateful.

Although my path diverges here, I cherish the relationships I've built and the accomplishments of the Council I've witnessed. The toughest accomplishment to measure is always prevention – the lack of disaster that affirms the value of time, effort, and dollars spent, often behind the scenes, to keep our system robust. Thank you to all the folks investing your valuable time and expertise. You are indeed the citizens of the citizens' advisory council.

Volunteers honored

At its Board meeting each May, the Council honors its volunteers that have reached a 5-year milestone.

The following have dedicated extraordinary time and effort to help protect Alaskans from another major oil spill:

- Gordon Scott honored for 30 years of service on the Oil Spill Prevention and Response Committee
- Jane Eisemann honored for 20 years of service, formerly as a Board member and on several committees, currently serving on the Information and Education Committee
- Dorothy Moore honored for 15 years of service as a Board member and on several committees
- Amanda Bauer honored for 10 years of service as a Board member and on several committees
- Harold Blehm honored for 10 years of service on the Terminal Operations and Environmental Monitoring Committee
- Orson Smith honored for 10 years of service, formerly as a Board member and several committees, recently retired from the Port Operations and Vessel Traffic Systems Committee
- Wei Cheng honored for 5 years of service on the Scientific Advisory Committee

**Betsi Oliver**

**Outreach
Coordinator**



Two of the volunteers were in attendance at the meeting. Above: Oliver, Blehm, and President Robert Archibald. Right: Archibald, Bauer, and Oliver.





Matt Cullin builds life of growth and success out of expertise in corrosion and failure analysis

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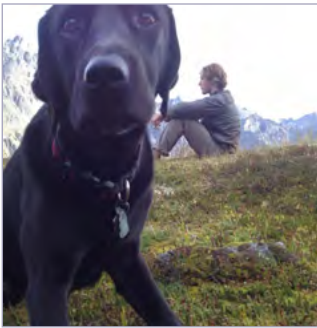
Cullin says that taking things apart and figuring out how they work is the introductory spark for a lot of engineers.

"You don't have to have that to become an engineer, but it certainly helps to have that curiosity."

"I really appreciate how it links everything together and you can describe the world in a mathematical form."

'Alaska gets its hooks in you'

Outside of work, Cullin has developed a passion for all things outdoors. He hikes, bikes, skis, packrafts, fishes, camps, and recently took up white water kayaking. He loves the variety of activities Alaska provides and just being outdoors.



Cullin's dog Eva photobombs a scenic portrait. Photo courtesy of Matt Cullin.

"That's what you've gotta do. I can't just sit inside the house, especially during shoulder season. That doesn't make me unique, though, just makes me like everybody else in Alaska."

"When I was in Pennsylvania, I was not outdoorsy," Cullin adds. "Alaska gets its hooks in you, you start doing this stuff, and then someone

says 'there's a good job opportunity down in Arizona,' and you're like 'yeah but they don't have real mountains.'"

"The people that really embrace it, you're not going to be able to leave."

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Schantz: The value of learning from history and experience

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VHF capability and the radar coverage used to monitor and protect the shipping lanes used by oil tankers. Reductions in regulatory oversight and other protections put in place to prevent another devastating oil spill must be adequately addressed with proactive solutions if these safeguards are to be maintained. The Council stands ready to advocate for solutions that prevent this type of complacency from creeping back in.

Being a citizens' council is more than just a title, it is the meaning behind our mission. It is only when citizens are involved in the process, working together with industry and government at all levels, that the safeguards designed to prepare for and prevent future oil spills can be maintained and continuously improved.

From Alyeska: "A journey, never a job."

Continued from page 5

topping units, ROW orientation, hazards of crude oil, OCC, civil supervising, cold restart system, process safety awareness. It's his way of continuing the legacy of handing down nearly 50 years of TAPS history and complexities, while also paying respect to those who did the same for him.

"We are all basically the product of thousands of others who have taught and shared knowledge, each generation building on the previous," he said. "I feel strongly that we all have a responsibility to not just pass the knowledge on, but to continue to build on it."

Jeff's TAPS experiences, and his memories of them, are rich and vivid, partly because of his impressive retention, partly because he is so thoughtful with his words, and also because he's conveniently been in the middle of some of the most significant moments in the pipeline's history, including many before the pipeline was even operating.

Read more from his time working at TAPS on the Alyeska website:

www.tinyurl.com/JeffStrait

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, nonprofit corporation formed after the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill to minimize the environmental impacts of the Trans Alaska Pipeline System's 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

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.

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 information and terminal facilities as state and federal regulatory agencies.

Board of Directors

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

Alaska State Chamber of Commerce
Community of Chenega

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 Corp.
Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corp.
Community of Tatitlek

Advisory Committees

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 committees work with staff on projects, study and deliberate current oil transportation issues, and advise the Council's Board of Directors.

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

Terminal Operations and Environmental Monitoring (TOEM): TOEM identifies actual and potential sources of episodic and chronic pollution at the Valdez Marine Terminal.

Port Operations and Vessel Traffic Systems (POVTS):

POVTS 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 Committee (SAC):

SAC 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 (OSPR):

OSPR 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 Committee (IEC):

IEC supports the Council's mission by fostering public awareness, responsibility, and participation in the Council's activities through information and education.

Graphic photo credits:

- Cover: The Council's 2022 tour of annual fishing vessel response training in Seward by Cathy Hart.
- Page 1: Sea lions in Resurrection Bay near Seward by Ryan Johnson.
- Page 11: Annual fishing vessel training in Seward by Jeremy Robida.



A voice for citizens:
www.pwsrcac.org