

# THE OBSERVER

## 35 years after Exxon Valdez How has oil transportation changed in Prince William Sound?

In 1989, the few measures in place were inadequate to prevent the Exxon Valdez oil spill and the available response resources were insufficient to contain and clean it up. Congress found that complacency among the oil industry, and the regulatory agencies responsible for monitoring the operation of the Valdez Marine Terminal and vessel traffic in Prince William Sound, was also a contributing factor in the disaster. In the years following the spill, regulatory agencies, industry, and citizens worked together to make sure the painful memories and hard

lessons of the Exxon Valdez were not forgotten. Changes were enacted to reduce the chances of another spill and to prepare for an effective cleanup if another should occur.

Much has improved in the intervening decades, but there are lingering concerns. A summary of these changes in laws and regulations, prevention and response tactics, and equipment, and some of the Council's remaining concerns are on pages 6-7.

The Exxon Valdez oil spill taught many lessons about preparedness, including local mariners' knowledge about the waters in our region is vital to spill response.

Today, over 300 vessels and their crews are trained and on contract to Alyeska's Ship Escort Response Vessel System, or SERVS, to respond in the event of a spill. The fishing vessel program is a major improvement to the oil spill response system, which was not in place during the Exxon Valdez oil spill. In this photo, the crews of several Homer fishing vessels practice using oil spill boom and skimmers during annual contracted vessel training. Photo by Cathy Hart.



## March 2024

IN THIS EDITION OF THE OBSERVER:

Volunteer Spotlight:  
Tim Robertson, p. 2

Contingency plan for  
terminal under review,  
p. 3

Schantz: Citizen  
oversight leads to  
safer transportation  
of oil, p. 4

Alyeska: New oil  
spill response barge  
demonstrates  
ongoing investment  
in protecting Prince  
William Sound, p. 5

Then & Now: 35 years  
after Exxon Valdez,  
p. 6-7

Community Corner:  
Alaskans still learning  
from the Exxon Valdez  
spill, p. 8

New member entity  
joins Council, p. 9



## Volunteer Spotlight: Tim Robertson

# Real-life experiences improve oil spill response

Growing up in western North Carolina, over 3,000 miles away from Alaska, Tim Robertson and his brothers Roy and Andy knew all about the 49th state. His dad was obsessed.

"If there was a TV show or a movie or anything about Alaska, he drug the whole family to see it," Robertson says. All three brothers ended up moving here.

These days Tim splits his time between Alaska and Hawaii. At first glance, it might seem like the two states are very different, but Tim's values are present in both.

"I'm a small-boat guy on big water," he says. "There's the same connection with the ocean. A lot of mornings I watch the sun rise from the water. It's a big part of what I am."

Robertson spent his first few years in Alaska working in an oil-related field, first as a research biologist for Alaska Department of Fish and Game, then for an oil field service company.

He dreamt of a different career though. Robertson acquired land in Seldovia in 1985, and partnered with another family to build Harmony Point Wilderness Lodge, an ecotourism business. They had only been in business a few short years when the Exxon Valdez ran aground.

"The first time I ever heard of ICS [Incident Command System] was when we had a community meeting after the spill," says Robertson.

The Incident Command System is a standardized structure that is used to organize the response during all types of emergencies. It was first developed in the 1970s to manage wildfires.

Seldovia's fire chief taught the system to the group that showed up to that meeting.

"Which was essentially every able-bodied adult in the community," Robertson says. "At least for the

first few months, that how it all came together. We used a lot of fishermen ingenuity."

Oil spill response then wasn't well-planned out and documented like it is today. Community members had to get creative. They built thousands of feet of oil spill boom and planned out how to protect their local shores.

"I knew the coast really well, I knew the outdoors, I knew the fishermen, I knew our community, and I was learning about tourism at the time, but I didn't really know anything about picking up oil," Robertson says.

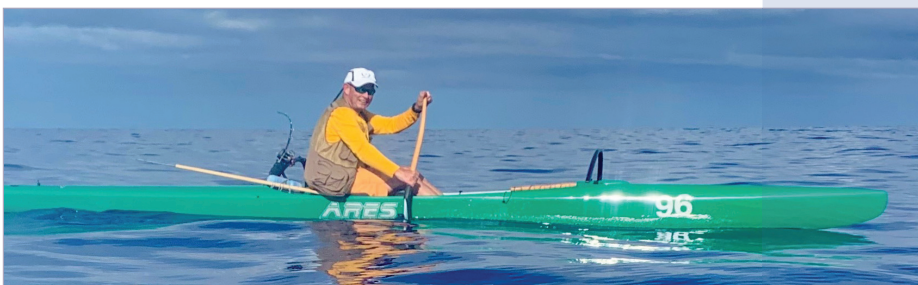
"Pulling boom is really no different than pulling a net and skimming oil off the water's not real different than sucking up fish with a trans-vac fish pump."

Later on, Seldovia's mayor asked Robertson if he would go to Anchorage and meet with a group who was forming a new kind of organization. He accepted. That organization was eventually named the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council.

Robertson was elected the Council's first vice president and first chair of the Oil Spill Prevention and Response, or OSPR, Committee. He left the Council's Board after a few years, but remained an advocate for improving oil spill prevention and response.

In the mid-1990s, Robertson traveled to Washington, D.C., to help improve the national oil spill contingency plan. He says that before the spill, most contingency plan regulations were managed by individual states. Requirements stemming from the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 led

*Continued on page 9*



Tim Robertson is a member of the Council's Oil Spill Prevention & Response Committee.

The committee works to 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.



# Contingency plan for terminal under review

The oil spill contingency plan for the Valdez Marine Terminal is undergoing its five year renewal. During a public comment period in December, the Council voiced concern over a “prevention credit” that reduces the amount of oil that the industry must be ready to clean up if a spill were to occur.

One of the Council’s primary duties is reviewing spill contingency plans for the oil industry in Prince William Sound. The Council has been reviewing these plans since 1990.

“Over 30 volunteers, staff, and contractors spent hours reviewing documents and coordinating these comments,” noted Linda Swiss, the Council’s project manager for contingency planning.

The three volumes that make up the oil spill contingency plan for the Valdez Marine Terminal contain over 1,000 pages in total.

## What’s in a contingency plan?

Oil spill contingency plans contain details about the steps to be taken before, during, and after an oil spill.

- Before: what’s being done to prevent an oil spill
- During: how the industry will respond to an oil spill, including where the equipment and personnel would come from
- After: plans are updated to reflect lessons learned from previous spills

“These plans are a good way for stakeholders to understand how their resources and livelihoods are protected,” Swiss says.

## Liners under crude oil storage tanks still of concern

One of the central issues the Council is concerned about is an asphalt liner

surrounding the large oil storage tanks.

Each tank holds approximately 23 million gallons of oil. If a tank were to leak oil, the liners act as a backup system that is supposed to contain the oil until it can be cleaned up and before it can contaminate ground water or Port Valdez. The backup or “secondary containment” system consists of a huge bowl-shaped area around the tank. The area is lined with asphalt, which is buried under several feet of gravel.

## Why does the Council care about this liner?

The Exxon Valdez oil spill taught the lesson that a certain amount of equipment and trained personnel must be on hand to respond quickly. The amount of response equipment and personnel varies according to the storage capacity. At the terminal, this is based on the maximum amount one of the oil storage tanks can hold, which is approximately 23 million gallons.

Alyeska receives a 60% “prevention credit” for various prevention measures. Most of that 60% is for having the asphalt liner around the

*Continued on page 10*

**Oil spill contingency plans** are prepared by the operators of Alyeska’s marine terminal and oil tankers and are subject to state approval.

There are separate plans for spills from the Valdez Marine Terminal and from the tankers that load crude oil at the terminal. Plans undergo an update, review, and approval process approximately every five years.

The crude oil storage tanks at the Valdez Marine Terminal are surrounded by massive asphalt-lined cells that are designed to contain oil in case of a spill from a tank. The cell walls can be seen in this photo. Photo by Linda Robinson.



From the Executive Director:

## Citizen oversight leads to safer transportation of oil

Of all the advances made in the safe transportation of oil since the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill, perhaps the most innovative and significant was the establishment of permanent, industry-funded citizen oversight for both Cook Inlet and Prince William Sound. While the citizen advisory groups established in Alaska after the spill were modeled after the advisory committee set up for the Sullom Voe Terminal in the Shetland Islands, throughout the world, most oil development still takes place without citizen involvement. In Prince William Sound, many of the safety improvements now in place are a direct result of partnerships between industry, regulators, and citizens.

March 24, 2024, will mark 35 years since the Exxon Valdez disaster. This year will also mark 34 years since the formation and incorporation of PWSRCAC. The Council recently reconnected with several of our founding members to discuss why they think our organization is still relevant today, with quotes from those conversations featured in our most recent "Year In Review" report:

[www.tinyurl.com/AnnualReportPWSRCAC](http://www.tinyurl.com/AnnualReportPWSRCAC)

You can read more about their thoughts on how and why the Council was formed in our publication "Stories from a citizens' council," rereleased in 2023:

[www.tinyurl.com/StoriesPWSRCAC](http://www.tinyurl.com/StoriesPWSRCAC)

All of the early Council Board and committee members witnessed firsthand the devastating effects of the oil spill. Some of them are still volunteering for the Council more than a quarter of a century later. These experiences played a big part in the passion and drive of all parties to put

systems in place designed to prevent another accident, and to make sure there are adequate trained personnel, and enough equipment available, to respond immediately should prevention measures fail and another spill occurs.

Reading through the thoughts and comments from the founders reinforces the core of what the Council is and why our work matters so much.

"PWSRCAC is a powerful organization in that it really is an example of how people need to be engaged in decision making regarding development that directly impacts them."

– Ann Rothe, 2013

"The entire process of enhancing safety is greatly benefited by having the local people who know local conditions and who care about the locality where they live take part in the decision-making process."

– Scott Sterling, 2013

"Because the further we get away from the event, the more complacency builds. Stan Stephens often said, 'the biggest threat isn't another spill, it's complacency.'"

– Bill Walker, 2023

Each anniversary of the spill, we reflect on how far we have come, as well as how much there is left to do. It is also a time to recognize the efforts of those who used the lessons of the Exxon Valdez to advocate for safeguards to ensure nothing like it ever happens again. Thanks to the foresight, vigilance, and tireless efforts of elected officials, government regulators, industry, and citizens, the oil spill prevention and response system now in place in Prince William Sound is an example to the rest of the world.

A big part of the success in Prince William Sound is that all these partners work together. We all share one goal: to promote the safe transportation of oil. While every partner has played a vital role in the success in Prince William Sound, special recognition is warranted to honor past and current technical committee and Board members of the Council. Our

*Continued on page 10*

**Donna  
Schantz**

**Executive  
Director**





From Alyeska:

## New oil spill response barge demonstrates ongoing investment in protecting Prince William Sound

The shine has yet to dim on Alyeska Pipeline Service Company's newest on-water powerhouse; the OSRB-5 joined the Ship Escort Response Vessel System, or SERV, fleet in 2023 and is still impressing its crews with its modern and state-of-the-art technologies.

"This barge is another exciting advancement in an already world-class fleet," said Larry Miles, SERV marine superintendent. "She's an investment – though hopefully never needed – in keeping Prince William Sound safe for years to come."

SERV was created after the Exxon Valdez oil spill in 1989, to prevent oil spills and provide oil spill preparedness and response capabilities for Alyeska and the marine shipping companies who operate the tankers that call at the Valdez Marine Terminal. Working closely with the U.S. Coast Guard, SERV personnel monitor vessel traffic so tankers can safely travel through the Sound and coordinate a fleet of purpose-built vessels and response equipment.

The OSRB-5 replaced the Mineral Creek, a 40-year-old lightering barge, usually stationed at Naked Island in mid-Prince William Sound.

The OSRB-5 was built by Gunderson shipyard in Portland, Oregon. At 400 feet long and 96 feet wide, it shares much of the same design and equipment as other barges, with key differences

that make it unique and amplify its versatility.

As a lightering barge, its primary purpose is to remove cargo from a tanker in peril; it has large fenders to protect both vessels when alongside each other. The OSRB-5 also has state-of-the-art Crucial disk skimming capabilities for open water operations. It offloads mini barges used by fishing vessels to collect oil near shorelines. After learning from the other OSRBs for the last five years, SERV crews requested a specific paint along the deck where boom is managed. The first OSRBs had non-skid paint that impacted the boom.

The OSRB-5 features an extra generator and hydraulic power unit to run the mini barge offloading station and the deluge pump for snow removal was upgraded to a deep well pump.

Alyeska's ongoing commitments to Prince William Sound meet the requirements and expectations of its contingency plan, to be ready and prepared to protect the Sound, its waters, and shorelines from impacts of incidents related to oil transport. It's the singular focus of the crew at SERV - a tight-knit team personally invested in the health and vibrancy of the region.

- Submitted by Alyeska Corporate Communications



Alyeska's newest oil spill response barge, the OSRB-5, alongside the Elrington, one of the escort tugs in SERV's fleet. Photo courtesy of Alyeska.

# 35 years after Exxon Valdez

Continued from page 1

## Laws and regulations

One of the most important results of the oil spill was the enactment of the federal Oil Pollution Act of 1990, or OPA 90, which addressed many deficiencies, including liability, compensation, and oversight. It also established permanent, industry-funded citizen oversight groups for

Prince William Sound and Cook Inlet.

An unlikely alliance of regulators, politicians, oil industry executives, and international spill response experts came together after the spill to reimagine oil spill preparedness and response in Prince William Sound. More: [www.tinyurl.com/LegislativeIntentPWSRCAC](http://www.tinyurl.com/LegislativeIntentPWSRCAC)

Both federal and state laws now require more comprehensive prevention measures and planning for larger spills and require more spill response equipment to be immediately available.

## Prevention: The most effective protection

No oil spill can ever be completely cleaned up. Preventing an oil spill is the most effective way to protect human health, local communities and economies, and the environment. Since 1989, improvements have drastically reduced the risk of oil spills.

### Double hulls

All tankers transporting oil through Prince William Sound are now double hulled. Double hulls, basically two steel skins separated by several feet of space, can reduce or eliminate spills that result from groundings or collisions.

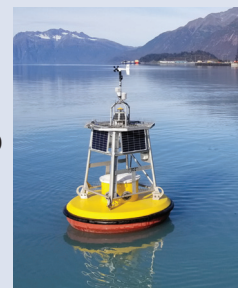
### Alyeska's Ship Escort Response Vessel System

The Ship Escort Response Vessel System, known as SERVS, was developed after the Exxon Valdez spill. SERVS' mission is to prevent oil spills by helping tankers navigate safely through Prince William Sound and to begin an immediate response if there is a spill.

### Improved tanker escorts

A major component of SERVS are the powerful tugs that escort tankers safely through our

Modern technology means weather buoys can stream real-time weather conditions to help make better operational decisions. Photo by Rob Campbell.



waters. Two tugs accompany each laden tanker out of Prince William Sound. These tugs can assist should the tanker experience a malfunction and begin immediate spill response if needed. SERVS also keeps trained response crews on duty around the clock and has spill response equipment ready.

## Cleaning up a spill: Must be quick and effective

While prevention measures are the best way to avoid damage from oil spills, even the best



In 2018, Alyeska began work with their new spill prevention and response contractor, Edison Chouest Offshore. These services include operation of escort tugs, oil recovery storage barges, and associated personnel. These resources are key oil spill prevention and response assets for Prince William Sound.

To fulfill their contract, Edison Chouest built new purpose-built tugs, such as the Elrington above; and spill response barges, such as the OSRB-5 (see page 5). These vessels represented a significant improvement for the oil spill prevention and response system. In some cases, new general-purpose tugs replaced conventional tugs that were over 40 years old. Photo by Jeremy Robida.



system cannot remove all risks. Alyeska’s SERVS has implemented many improvements since 1989, creating the world-class oil spill prevention and response system in place today.

Contingency plans

Contingency plans, extensive documents which contain details on preventing and cleaning up oil spills, are required by state and federal law.

Some changes in the contingency plans since 1989 include:

- Local fishing vessels and crews are an integral part of response plans. The vessels - located in the ports of Valdez, Cordova, Whittier, Homer, Seward, and Kodiak - are contracted by Alyeska to respond in the event of a spill and trained every year in spill cleanup methods.
- More emphasis on open-water and nearshore response systems, and wildlife protection.
- Special strategies have been developed to protect specific areas that have been identified as a sensitive area or a critical resource, such as salmon streams or hatcheries.

Spill drills

Before 1989, few oil spill drills were conducted in Prince William Sound. Today, three major exercises take place per year, along with several smaller drills. The drills provide opportunities for response personnel to work with equipment and practice procedures.

Concerns remain

Although there have been many improvements,

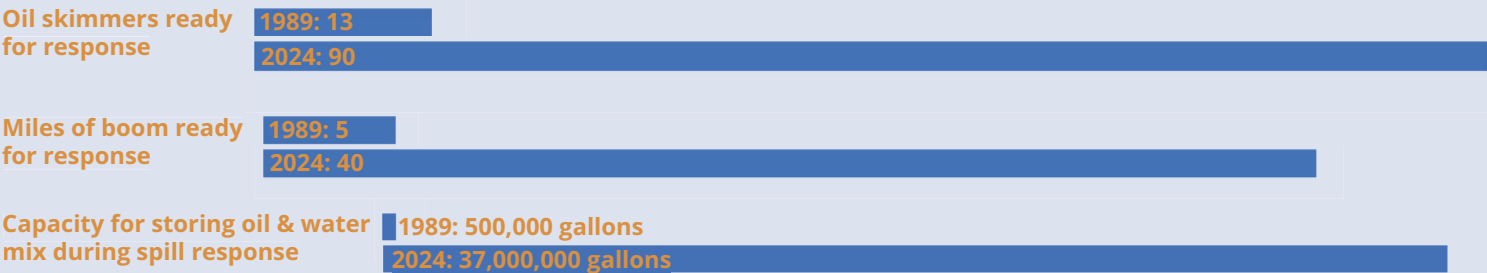
there are still many areas of concern, meriting the continued attention and sustained efforts from the Council. A few of these include:

- **Risks and safety culture at the terminal:** In 2023, the Council released an assessment of risks and safety culture at the Valdez Marine Terminal, concluding that there is currently an unacceptable safety risk present, although Alyeska has been working to address the concerns outlined in the report.
- **Response gap:** Studies by the Council have shown that it is not possible to effectively clean up an oil spill during the most extreme winds and waves in which tankers are allowed to transport oil.
- **Aging infrastructure:** The terminal is over 40 years old and still moving large volumes of crude oil. Constant vigilance of this aging infrastructure is needed to ensure that the necessary inspection and maintenance is performed to assure continued safe operations. A recent example the Council has been focusing on is the potential degradation and/or damage to the secondary containment liner system at the terminal.
- **Complacency:** As the years pass, many of those who experienced the spill and worked to improve the system have retired or passed away. Details about why protections were put in place can be lost. At the same time, state and federal environmental protections are being rolled back or weakened.

**More details:** More about improvements and remaining concerns in “Then & Now: 35 Years After the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill” at [www.tinyurl.com/ThenNowPWSRCAC](http://www.tinyurl.com/ThenNowPWSRCAC)

1989 vs 2024: Spill response equipment

In 1989, there were only 13 oil-skimming systems in Alyeska’s response inventory; today, 90 are available. Only 5 miles of oil spill boom were available in 1989; today, around 40 miles are on hand. Alyeska had only one 500,000-gallon barge at that time to store recovered oil and the water that comes with; today, storage capacity is now 37 million gallons.



## Community Corner:

# Alaskans still learning from the Exxon Valdez spill

**By Maia Draper-Reich, Outreach Coordinator**

In February, the Council participated in the Alaska Forum on the Environment, a week-long conference that draws attendance by professionals, researchers, students, and others working in environmental fields related to Alaska. Community members and Alaska Native elders are also invited to speak on environmental issues and concerns. It was clear from sharing and connecting with the Forum's attendees that the Exxon Valdez oil spill remains important for many Alaskans.

The Council hosts an exhibitor booth where we connect with participants about our mission and work. This year, the Council shared a booth with Cook Inlet Regional Citizens Advisory Council, or CIRCAC, which allowed us to engage with attendees about the two sister organizations, our shared history, and our specific regions of oversight.

As the Outreach Coordinator, I am a member of the Forum's planning committee and help organize the oil spill track of sessions each year. This year, I presented on behalf of the Council on a session titled "35 Years Since the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill: Community Projects and Engagement." The other presenters for the session were Shiway Wang, executive director of the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council, and Shaylon Cochran, director of communications and public outreach at CIRCAC.

Wang spoke about impacts of the Exxon Valdez oil spill and the Trustee Council's restoration projects and science. Then, Cochran and I presented jointly sharing about our respective regions and origins, including the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 and the associated responsibilities. Cochran and I each took a turn highlighting each Council's past and current work. It was an excellent venue to emphasize the lessons learned from the spill about the importance of local community engagement. This was exemplified by the accomplishments by all three organizations. The session was well attended with approximately 70 people in the room and 60 online participants. Questions

from the audience centered on continued impacts from the spill on wildlife and prevention gaps.

I was encouraged by my conversations at the booth and after our session about the importance of citizen oversight and the value of the work we continue to accomplish in the region.



Cochran (left) and Council staff member Jaina Willahan (right) staff the shared booth at the 2024 Alaska Forum on the Environment. Photo by Maia Draper-Reich.

## Upcoming Council meetings

The next meetings of the Council's Board of Directors will be held:

- May 2-3, 2024, in Valdez
- September 21-22, 2024, in Kodiak

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

Meetings of the Council's Board of Directors are streamed online and available to the public: [www.pwsrcac.org](http://www.pwsrcac.org)



Photo by David Janka.



## New member entity joins Council

Area recreation enthusiasts now have permanent, dedicated representation on the Council's Board of Directors.

The newly-formed Oil Spill Region Recreational Coalition was added to the Council's roster of member entities at the January meeting. Jim Herbert was chosen by the coalition as its representative.

Herbert had been serving as a temporary recreation representative for the past year while the council solicited interest from recreational organizations to potentially fill the seat. Herbert previously represented the City of Seward from 2013 to 2015. He is also the current chair of the Council's Oil Spill Prevention and Response Committee.

The new coalition's mission is to promote the enhancement, preservation, and protection of the recreational resources of Prince William Sound and areas affected by the Exxon Valdez oil spill.

The three founding members of the coalition

are the Prince William Sound Stewardship Foundation, the Valdez Adventure Alliance, and the Friends of Kachemak Bay State Park. The group welcomes other organizations who promote recreation in the Exxon Valdez oil spill region.

The Prince William Sound Stewardship Foundation is a nonprofit organization dedicated to keeping Prince William Sound healthy, clean and wild, for all to enjoy.

[www.princewilliamsound.org](http://www.princewilliamsound.org)

The Valdez Adventure Alliance seeks to improve quality of life through equitable access to outdoor recreation resources, education, and events.

[www.valdezadventurealliance.com](http://www.valdezadventurealliance.com)

The Friends of Kachemak Bay State Park promotes the enhancement, preservation and protection of the natural recreational, scientific and historical resources of Kachemak Bay State Park.

[www.friendsofkachemakbay.org](http://www.friendsofkachemakbay.org)

## Real-Life Experiences Improve Oil Spill Response

*Continued from page 2*

to many changes and Robertson was right in the middle of it, representing others who were affected by oil spills.

"I was pretty passionate about it because I had worked in the oil industry, and I felt somewhat responsible for producing the oil that ended up on the beaches that I loved and impacting my friends and community."

Robertson stayed involved with the Council over the years as a contractor. He co-founded Nuka Research and Planning Group, an environmental consulting firm that has supported many of the Council's projects.

Robertson retired in 2023. He now volunteers for the Cook Inlet Regional Citizens Advisory Council and recently re-joined the Prince William Sound Council's OSPR Committee.

"It's really cool to come full circle back to the Council and contribute as a volunteer. It's been a

big part of my life."

Robertson and his fellow Seldovians' plans to protect their shores later evolved into an official part of Alaska's oil spill response plans. Geographic Response Strategies, or GRS, are plans that are developed for specific, unique areas that are particularly sensitive to contamination. Responders practice these from time to time.

"It's almost impossible to deploy one and not learn something," Robertson says. OSPR works to get such lessons incorporated into spill contingency plans.

He says that it's important for citizens to have a say in decisions that will directly affect them.

"Continual pressure tends to swing regulation toward the industry's favor," he says. "We talk about risk makers and risk takers. The industry are the risk makers and people along the coast of Alaska are the risk takers."

"That's what RCAC does so great," he adds.

"Because they put people at the table that are reasonable and understand the policies, technologies, and science."

Read more about some of the projects Robertson worked on:

[www.tinyurl.com/VolunteerTimRobertson](http://www.tinyurl.com/VolunteerTimRobertson)

# Contingency plan under review

*Continued from page 3*

tanks. This means they plan for a spill of 40% of the total volume of one tank, which is 8.5 million gallons. If more than 8.5 million gallons is spilled, they would still be responsible for cleaning it up, however, more equipment would be needed than is currently listed in the plan.

## Is the liner still intact?

This liner was installed when the terminal was built and is approaching 50 years old. From time to time, sections of the gravel layer over the liner have been removed when work is done for other projects. When this is done, cracks and holes are often found in the liner.

"There are crude oil storage tanks holding half a million barrels of oil sitting on a steep slope above Port Valdez within a secondary containment system with known integrity issues," the Council noted in their comments.

## Testing the liner

Because the liner is buried under gravel, it is expensive and time-consuming to dig it up for a visual examination. Excavation could also damage the liner. In 2022, the Council conducted a study of methods to evaluate the liner without removing the gravel. Alyeska is planning to conduct a pilot test this summer using an approach similar to the method recommended in that report.

## Additional issues

The Council noted several issues aside from the liner, including:

- The length of time between internal inspections of the storage tanks.
- A lack of detail about the training to prevent oil spills.
- Documents containing plan information that were not made available as part of the public review.

## More information

The Council's comments can be read in full online: [www.tinyurl.com/PWSRCACcommentsVMT](http://www.tinyurl.com/PWSRCACcommentsVMT)

## What is a prevention credit?

Spilled oil can never be completely recovered, so regulations are designed to encourage companies to prevent spills from happening in the first place. One way to do this is to give "credit" for prioritizing spill prevention.

In Alaska, the amount of equipment and personnel that an oil company must keep on hand to respond to a spill depends on the potential size of a spill.

If a company takes actions to prevent or reduce the risks of a spill, they can qualify for such a credit. This allows the company to keep less equipment and personnel on hand to respond, because a spill is less likely.

# Schantz: Citizen oversight leads to safer transportation of oil

*Continued from page 4*

volunteers have put in countless unpaid hours dedicated to the mission of our organization, and our organization serves as a voice for Prince William Sound through our Board, committee volunteers, and staff.

Everyone involved should be proud of what has been accomplished, but we also should never become so satisfied with the current services or processes that we become complacent. Constant vigilance is needed to prevent a return to the complacency that allowed that disaster to happen. 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 hope that the long-term partnerships the Council has worked diligently to establish and maintain will help prevent backsliding, identify and mitigate risks, and promote continuous improvements designed to prevent another accident.

## Photo credits:

Cover: Rocky coast in Prince William Sound. Photo by Danielle Verna.  
Page 1: Mountains near Whittier. Photo by Danielle Verna.  
Page 11: Kachemak Bay from Bishop's Beach in Homer. Photo by Amanda Johnson.



# PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND

## REGIONAL CITIZENS' ADVISORY COUNCIL



### Citizens promoting the 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.

**A voice for citizens:** 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.

#### What we do

**Combatting complacency:** Investigations into the Exxon Valdez oil spill found that complacency on the part of industry and the government contributed to the accident. The Oil Pollution Act of 1990 mandated independent, nonprofit, citizen oversight councils for Prince William Sound and Cook Inlet.

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.

More about the Council and its history at:  
[www.pwsrcac.org/about](http://www.pwsrcac.org/about)

#### Board of Directors

The Council's 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 • Community of Tatitlek  
Cordova District Fishermen United  
Kenai Peninsula Borough • Kodiak Island Borough  
Kodiak Village Mayors Association  
Oil Spill Region Environmental Coalition  
Oil Spill Region Recreational Coalition  
Port Graham Corp. • Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corp.

#### 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.

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 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.

**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.

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## Inside:

- 35 years after Exxon Valdez: How has oil transportation changed?, p. 1
- Contingency plan for terminal under-review, p. 3
- New member entity joins Council, p. 9
- 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  
Oil Spill Region Recreational Coalition - Port Graham Corp - Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corp  
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