

The Observer

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

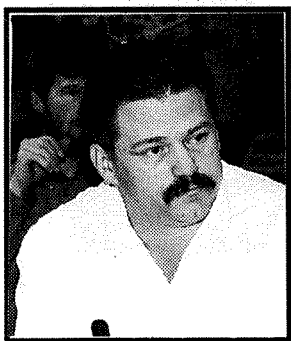
Volume 2, No. 2/April 1992

Two seats added to council; directors appointed

Two new seats have been added to the Regional Citizens' Advisory Council, one representing recreation interests; the other to represent villages of Prince William Sound impacted by the Exxon Valdez oil spill.

The Alaska Wilderness Recreation and Tourism Association (AWRTA) was selected to fill the recreation seat. AWRTA is a merger of two groups: the Alaska Wilderness Guides Association and the Alaska Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Association. AWRTA designated Stan Stephens as its board representative. Stephens, a Valdez charter boat operator, sat on the board for two years representing the Alaska State Chamber of Commerce.

The second new seat was designated for the villages of New Chenega, Tatitlek and Eyak. If the communities object to sharing one seat, however, the board will consider an additional seat. Directors Scott Sterling, Lynda Hyce and Keith Gordaoff will work with the villages on

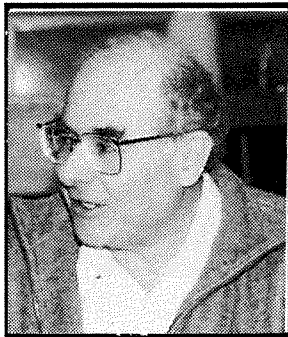


Carl Marrs

the issue.

Two new faces were formally seated on the board. Carl Marrs is the new director representing the Alaska State Chamber of Commerce. Marrs, of Anchorage, is Senior Vice President of Cook Inlet Region, Inc. Marrs was born and raised in Seldovia and attended high school in Kodiak. Marrs said he is particularly interested in tanker traffic issues, as a key to spill prevention.

Seldovia City Manager Ivan Widom was formally seated for the City of Seldovia. Widom recently returned to Alaska after spending the past four years in Colorado.



Ivan Widom

Before that, he lived in Alaska for 10 years, working primarily in rural communities. Widom equates the Exxon Valdez oil spill with the 1964 earthquake in terms of its place in Alaska history. He is interested in learning more about the spill and hopes to maximize RCAC's effectiveness. Widom was seated after the board changed the bylaws to eliminate the requirement that directors qualify for a Permanent Fund dividend.

Other board members reappointed to two-year terms were Michelle O'Leary (Cordova District Fishermen United), Bill Walker (City of Valdez), Scott Sterling (City of Cordova), Wayne Coleman (Kodiak Island Borough), Lynda Hyce (City of Whittier) and Ann Rothe (National Wildlife Federation).

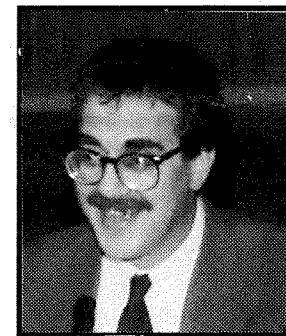
In other business, the council:

- Adopted policies on elections, selection committee procedures, open meeting and executive session, duties and responsibilities of RCAC committees, duties and responsibilities of RCAC directors.
- Rescinded a previous policy requiring each director serve on at least one committee.
- Limited committee size to 8, not including council directors. The limit takes effect after this round of committee appointments. Committees with more than eight non-council members will be reduced by attrition.
- Endorsed a recommendation by the Oil

Spill Prevention and Response (OSPR) Committee to accept ADEC's interpretation of the 300,000 barrel response planning standard. The council also recommended that ADEC conduct an unannounced test of response time and require demonstration of decanting and storage capacity.

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Sterling elected president



Scott Sterling

Cordova City Attorney Scott Sterling was elected president of the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council (RCAC) at the group's annual meeting, March 19-21, in Valdez. Sterling, an associate in

the Anchorage law firm of Jensen, Harris and Roth, represents the City of Cordova on the RCAC Board of Directors. He succeeds Chris Gates, who did not run for re-election.

Keith Gordaoff, Chugach Alaska Corporation's representative, was elected vice president. Michelle O'Leary, of Cordova District Fishermen United, was elected to another year as secretary, and Bill Walker, Valdez City Attorney, will serve another year as treasurer. Andy Mack, representing the Kenai Peninsula Borough, was named member-at-large of the Executive Committee.

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Negotiators struggle to define "maximum extent practicable" on federal vessel regulations

A negotiating committee of industry, state and public interest representatives broke through a threatened stalemate and on March 27 signed a recommendation to the U.S. Coast Guard on a package of proposed federal regulations for oil spill response requirements for vessels carrying oil in U.S. waters.

The so-called "Reg Neg Committee" was formed by the U.S. Coast Guard, which is charged with drafting many of the regulations needed to implement the Oil Pollution Act of 1990. The negotiated rulemaking process – called "reg neg" for short – brings together representatives of interested parties to hammer out some of the issues by consensus. However, even those issues on which consensus is reached go through the standard public review process.

The sticking point had been setting planning standards to serve as the interpretation of the OPA '90 mandate for spillers to respond to a worst case discharge of oil to "the maximum extent practicable" (MEP). In order to end the stalemate over the MEP standards, the group as a whole agreed to drop all numbers and simply develop a set of basic concepts. The committee is asking the Coast Guard to include these

Annual Meeting

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- Directed that the scope of the coastal community spill co-op be limited to nearshore response to TAPS trade spills in the geographic area affected by the Exxon Valdez spill. The council applied the same geographic limit on its endorsement of the nearshore strike team demonstration project.

- Appointed members to standing and special committees. Committee terms are through December.

- Formed an ad hoc committee to work on improving communications and exchange of information between RCAC and Alyeska. The committee will look at policy for exchange of information and review of technical reports, and lobbying.

- Decided to seek alternative sources of funding for reports on the history of promises and assurances made by the oil industry regarding the trans-Alaska pipeline, and oil company profits from the pipeline.

- Endorsed Executive Director's plans to develop an RCAC Contingency Plan, increase community outreach and consolidate RCAC goals and responsibilities.

- Failed, on a 7 to 7, vote to relocate RCAC headquarters from Anchorage to Valdez.

concepts in the final regulations.

The group did reach consensus on the other issues under consideration, including a definition of adverse weather, onboard response equipment, and approval of response action contractors.

RCAC's representative on the committee was former RCAC director Tim Robertson, who has been traveling back and forth between Alaska and Washington, D.C. since the Reg Neg Committee began meeting in early January.

"What it means for us is that we have to get the troops out to make sure the numbers attached to the regulations are ones we can live with."

—Ann Rothe

RCAC Director Ann Rothe, who worked with Robertson on the regneg process, said the MEP question goes to the heart of response planning.

"The term 'maximum extent practicable' modifies the stringency of the requirement," she said. "Without the qualifier, the owner of any vessel would have to respond to the worst case discharge. How you interpret what that means determines the planning standards that potential spillers must meet. Until you define MEP, and apply numbers to it, nobody knows what they have to do," Rothe said.

With no real consensus on the question, the decision on how to interpret MEP will rest with the Coast Guard.

"What it means for us is that we have to get the troops out to make sure the numbers attached to the regulations are ones we can live with," Rothe said.

Under the terms of the agreement, RCAC is not bound to support any specific values or percentages for recovery of spilled oil. In addition, if RCAC feels the final draft of the regulations differs "in substance or effect" from what was contained in the regneg agreement, RCAC is not in any way obligated to support it.

The general concepts related to "maximum extent practicable" ultimately agreed to by the committee include:

- In determining the amount of oil a spiller must recover, it will be recognized

that some percentage of the oil will be lost to the environment through evaporation and dissipation.

- In determining the amount of oil a spiller must recover, it will be recognized that spilled oil forms emulsion with water, thereby increasing the volume of substance that must be recovered.

- Except for vessels that operate in open ocean, oil spilled from vessels in all other waters will probably impact the shoreline. Therefore, response plans for these vessels must include components for on-shore recovery.

- The more immediate a response the more effective it will be. A premium will be placed on rapid response. Required equipment must be on-scene within three days.

- The limits of existing response capability nationwide will be recognized. A cap not exceeding existing capability will be placed on the upper limit of equipment requirements. Over time, this cap will be raised.

- For spills that exceed the cap, dispersants and other non-mechanical response strategies may be accepted in areas where such strategies are pre-approved by appropriate authorities.

- If the entire cargo volume of a vessel exceeds the cap, resources to respond to loss of the entire cargo must be identified. However, the resources need not be guaranteed by contract.

- The concept of high-risk ports will be incorporated into the final draft of the regulations, with shorter response times set for such areas.

- For purposes of setting minimum response standards for planning purposes, the concept of inland waters will be dropped, leaving four categories of vessel operating environments that will be incorporated into the regulations; open ocean, offshore, nearshore and riverine.

- For vessels operating in the open ocean environment, no nearshore or shoreline response strategies will be required in the response plan.

- For vessels operating on rivers and canals, the equipment requirement cap on planning standards will be lower.

- The total loss of cargo in a spill may not be instantaneous.

- The planning requirements will not be simply equipment on-scene standards, but strategies that are sustainable and work at the direction of the on-scene coordinator (OSC) until such time as the OSC determines response and recovery have been completed.

The draft regulations are expected to appear in the Federal Register in mid May.

Chevron tries new approaches in spill drill

Chevron Shipping tried some new approaches in a recent on-water spill drill in March, and by all accounts, the ideas worked. Three key differences between this and other drills were the involvement of government agencies and RCAC in planning; the addition of a formal evaluation process by the planning group; and use of real time and real weather conditions.

The drill, held March 3-4 in Valdez, was officially Chevron's "transition" drill, required by the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) to demonstrate the shipper's ability to take over spill management from Alyeska.

"Everything we're hearing is that it was an extremely positive learning experience," Alex Walker, Environmental Coordinator for Chevron Shipping, said after the drill. "Everyone involved was able to identify areas for improvement and, of course, that's what a drill is for," Walker said.

Although the drill's primary purpose was to test Chevron's ability to take over spill response, all pieces of a spill response were

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Photo courtesy Dennis Harding/Chevron Corp.

Hundreds of people from Chevron Shipping, Alyeska, state and federal agencies and RCAC work in the din of Operation Central, Valdez Civic Center, during the March 3-4 spill drill.

Alyeska toxicity testing of ballast water treatment gets high marks from independent reviewer

Studies used by Alyeska Pipeline Service Co. to test the toxicity of discharge from its ballast water treatment facility have received high marks from an independent consultant.

Northwestern Aquatic Sciences, of Newport, Oregon, was hired by the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council (RCAC) to evaluate toxicity studies performed by Alyeska on effluent from its ballast water treatment facility in Valdez.

The toxicity evaluation is one of three reviews RCAC is conducting under a \$175,000 grant from the State of Alaska. The other two are evaluating Alyeska's testing of ballast water influent and effluent.

Northwestern Aquatic Sciences addressed the following questions: whether the toxicity studies fulfill requirements under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit; whether they were of good quality and employed scientifically acceptable methodology; and whether the program can be expected to protect marine life against all potential toxins from the ballast water treatment facility. The answer, for the most part, was "yes."

"The quality of these tests has been thoroughly evaluated, and although specific comments and qualifications have been made, the reviewers feel that they represent

state of the art studies that have been carried out in a highly professional manner," the report said.

The report did recommend that more attention be paid to the presence of zinc in the ballast water treatment discharge. The report noted that even though zinc monitoring is required only quarterly, and its level in the effluent is not limited by the federal permit, it showed up in sufficient levels in Alyeska's testing to warrant closer monitoring as a potentially significant toxicant.

"While it is possible that not all of the zinc in the effluent samples is available in a toxic form to the test organisms, we think this relationship should be more fully explored," the report said.

The report supported a conclusion by the Technical Advisory Group, an independent panel of scientists set up by ADEC to review ballast water treatment issues, that more attention should be paid to polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) in the sediment. PAHs are of higher molecular weight and more persistent in sediment than BETX.

"The emphasis on controlling BETX is misplaced . . . these compounds are not the ones that are going to accumulate in the sediments . . . Alyeska should be monitoring for higher molecular weight PAHs in whole

effluent samples," the report said. It also recommended monitoring flatfish populations for tumors. Alyeska's NPDES permit does not require monitoring of PAHs.

However, the report defended Alyeska's 1990 studies against other criticisms by the Technical Advisory Group.

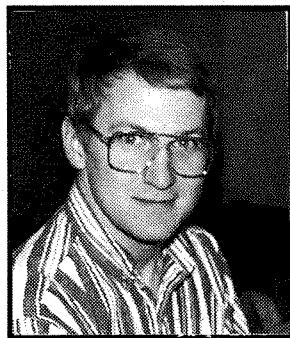
"Our impression is that these (criticisms) were not fully warranted and that the Battelle studies (for Alyeska) represented reasonable research efforts aimed at better understanding the possible toxic effects of Port Valdez sediments to marine benthic amphipoda," the report said.

Northwestern Aquatic Sciences also concluded that:

- EPA's approaches in its NPDES permitting program are scientifically valid.
- Alyeska's toxicity testing program can be expected to detect harmful effects of toxins discharged from the ballast water treatment facility.
- Alyeska is fulfilling and in many ways exceeding its NPDES permit requirements for toxicity studies.

Northwestern Aquatic Sciences full draft report is under review by RCAC's Terminal Operations and Environmental Monitoring Committee.

New staff round out Valdez office



Scott Thompson

The Valdez office is up to its full complement of staff, with the arrival this past winter of three new employees.

Scott Thompson is the new Program Coordinator for the POVTS Committee. A graduate of Cornell University with a B.S. in biology, Thompson also did graduate work toward a master's degree in science education at the University of Maine. He served in the U.S. Navy for four years in San Diego. He returned to active duty during Desert Storm, working with the military sealift command in Naples, Italy, and Antwerp, Belgium. Thompson is from western New York State, so he's used to snow.

The TOEM Committee got some much-needed help with the arrival of Project Assistant Marge Fowler. In the newly-created position, Fowler works closely with Program Coordinator Joe Bridgman. Fowler has a B.S. in physics from the University of Nevada, Reno. She did graduate work in chemistry and was employed as a chemist in hazardous waste treatment plants in Nevada. Fowler, who grew up in Fairbanks, returned to Alaska last summer.

Shellie Day rounds out the Valdez office staff. As Clerk Secretary, Day provides support services for both TOEM and POVTS



Marge Fowler

and manages the expanded office. Day returned to Valdez last year after two years in Anchorage. She lived in Valdez for 10 years before that. She began work at RCAC in January. Originally from Washington state, Day previously worked at Natchiq Inc., a subsidiary of Arctic Slope Regional Corporation.

WFA honors Hyce, Robertson

The Wildlife Federation of Alaska (WFA) has given Conservation Awards to RCAC Director Lynda Hyce and former director Tim Robertson. Robertson, chairman of the Oil Spill Prevention and Response Committee, and Hyce, were honored for their volunteer work with RCAC. Hyce represents the City of Whittier on the RCAC Board of Directors. The awards were given at the WFA annual meeting in February. The WFA is the Alaska affiliate of the National Wildlife Federation.

Clarification

An article in the January issue of The Observer attributed an oil spill at Sulom Voe to "loss of tug propulsion after the tug caught fire; it caused a tanker to slam into a dock." The general manager of Shetland Towage Ltd., managing owner and operator of the tug in question, requested the statement be retracted because, he said, it is untrue.

"The matter is still sub judice and such statements could prejudice the outcome of any court proceedings no matter how inaccurate they are," according to a letter from Captain C.E.J. Downswell.

The Observer regrets any misunderstanding.

PWS tanker group to help fund study

The Prince William Sound Tanker Association, whose members are owners and operators of the tankers that ply the sound, has agreed to foot one-third of the bill for a tanker towing study. The RCAC will contribute \$217,000 this year. The entire project is expected to cost approximately \$500,000 over two years.

RCAC's Port Operations and Vessel Traffic Systems (POVTS) Committee has been working with the U.S. Coast Guard, Alyeska, Arco, the tanker association and the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation on the project.

"This is great news. We can do a much better study with the tanker association's help," POVTS chairman Stan Stephens said. "The fact that it will be jointly funded and managed cooperatively, bodes well for thoroughness and credibility."

The study will look at tankers traveling between the marine terminal and Hinchinbrook Entrance, with emphasis on Valdez Narrows, a particularly hazardous passage. The study will evaluate the capabilities of maneuvering a tanker that has lost power or steerage or both. Areas to be addressed include strengths and weaknesses of tractor tugs and conventional tugs; attaching lines between escort vessels and a disabled tanker; response times and other issues associated with towing disabled tankers.

Project administrator Robert Levine of ARCO Marine, is preparing the Request for Proposals. The RFP will be reviewed by a study team composed of representatives of each of the participating organizations.

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 City of Homer
 City of Kodiak
 City of Seldovia
 City of Seward
 City of Valdez (2)
 City of Whittier
 Cordova District Fishermen United
 Kenai Peninsula Borough
 Kodiak Island Borough
 Kodiak Village Mayors Association
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 Stan Stephens
 Keith Gordaoff
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 Ivan Widom
 Chris Gates
 Bill Walker, Mike Gallagher
 Lynda Hyce
 Michelle O'Leary
 Andy Mack
 Wayne Coleman
 Charles Christiansen
 Ann Rothe
 John Herschleb

Hydrocarbons report raises important questions

Despite media preoccupation with benzene levels in Valdez, the real news from a recent RCAC study of airborne hydrocarbons is questions about the effectiveness of the ballast water treatment facility's biodegradation of hydrocarbon emissions; and the reliability of data gathered from air monitoring stations in Valdez.

Dr. Yoram Cohen presented his report on "Multimedia Fate and Effects of Airborne Petroleum Hydrocarbons in the Port Valdez Region" to the RCAC Board of Directors at its annual meeting in March, in Valdez. Dr. Cohen examined emission sources; reports of atmospheric concentration of benzene, ethylbenzene, toluene and xylenes (BETX) and n-hexane; the distribution of study chemicals in the environment; accumulation of BETX and n-hexane in plants and biota; and human exposure to BETX and n-hexane. TOEM commissioned the report to identify specific air pollution issues the committee should address.

Previous studies conducted by the industry indicate the Alyeska Marine Terminal releases roughly 45 thousand tons (90 million pounds) of VOCs per year, including 450 tons of benzene. However, there has been little information about what happens to

these air pollutants, or what effect they might have on the environment.

Of particular significance in Cohen's report, commissioned by the Terminal Operations and Environmental Monitoring (TOEM) Committee, were questions that may be answered in the next few months.

The report said emissions of BETX from the ballast water treatment facility should be about 79 tons per year, accounting for 8.8% of total emissions, if biodegradation is occurring as it's supposed to. However, Dr. Cohen said he found no convincing evidence that the ballast water treatment facility's biological treatment units (BTU) are in fact operating effectively.

"If the BTU are not biodegrading BETX as claimed by Alyeska, then the volatilization of BETX from the BTU could be as high as 293 tons per year which is about 26% of the total air emissions of BETX in Port Valdez," the report said. "Clearly, if biotreatment is not as effective as it is claimed to be then the BTU facility may be a significant source of BETX emissions."

The issue of emission source is an important one to Alyeska, because the extent to which its operations contribute to emissions is expected to be a factor in whether Alyeska



Dr. Yoram Cohen

must comply with new emission control regulations. The question of BTU effectiveness is expected to be addressed later this year in a state-funded study conducted by RCAC on Alyeska's ballast water treatment.

Another important question raised by Cohen is the reliability of air monitoring data collected by Alyeska as part of its risk assessment study. Alyeska's study is measuring the ambient levels of hydrocarbons and other pollutants, and the risk posed by human exposure to the terminal emissions. Alyeska and its consultants used sophisticated instruments and gathered a large amount of data on the air situation in Valdez, but their conclusions have not yet been presented and verified. The results may influence how pending federal regulations are applied. They also will be the primary source of information for the public in deciding whether the terminal contributes to a health hazard in Valdez. Alyeska expects to release its final study report this spring.

Data obtained from such monitoring is usually far less than 100%; EPA's minimum is 75%, according to Cohen. For the sampling period Cohen looked at (August 1990 to September 1991), data obtained from Alyeska's monitoring ranged from 52% to 60% complete. Cohen questions whether the incomplete data can be used to extrapolate an overall figure.

Part of the answer may lie in checking obtained data and missing data against tanker loading schedules. The obtained data could be skewed by over or under representation of tanker loading periods, which would increase the ambient levels. Cohen said he also found a possible discrepancy between hydrocarbon concentrations as reported from the air monitoring station, and actual emissions. Cohen said more time is needed to look at tanker logs to reconcile vapors emitted from tanker loading with concentrations reported from the monitoring stations.

Dr. Cohen confirmed and elaborated on EPA findings from several years ago, that in theory at least, people in Valdez have a higher risk of cancer, approximately 1 in 20,000, due to exposure to ambient benzene. Dr. Cohen was careful to point out that this is only an estimate, and does not represent the actual risk to Valdez residents.

The report found that human exposure to the non-carcinogenic hydrocarbons (ethylben-

"Reaching out to the public"

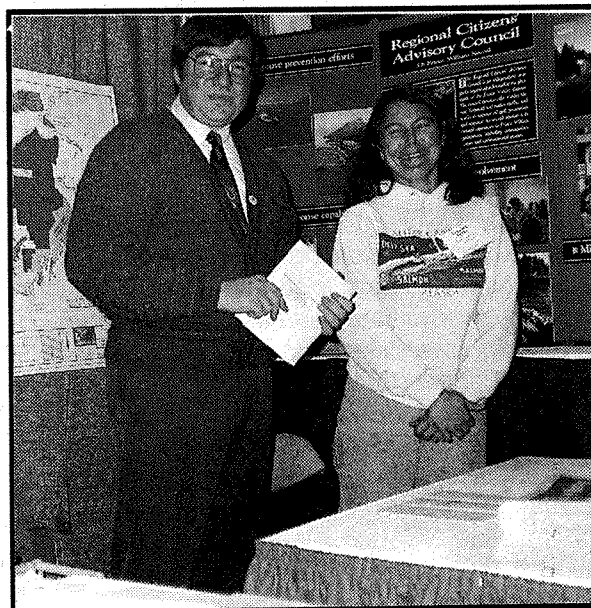
by Trisha Gartland, OSPR Committee

The Regional Citizens' Advisory Council sponsored a booth at Kodiak's annual Comfish show, March 20-22. Comfish is Alaska's largest fish trade show, with people from as far as Hawaii. This show provided the RCAC with an opportunity to share valuable information with the public, and answer local community concerns.

Mary Jacobs, of the Cook Inlet Regional Citizens' Advisory Council, and I manned the booth as we felt it is vital for the RCAC to continue to visit the oil-affected communities.

The most frequent questions asked were "Who is the RCAC?" and "Are we better prepared in Prince William Sound to deal with a large spill?"

As I write this piece on the third anniversary of the spill, I am compelled to say that the RCAC must strengthen its ties with the public. One of our top priorities should be to work towards keeping the public informed and involved. As I sat at the booth and listened to the public, I realized that the public is slipping away. One of the greatest challenges for the RCAC is to embrace the public - to keep them from sliding into a complacent rut. Our charge is to represent the local community concerns, and to accomplish this, we must continually interact with the public.



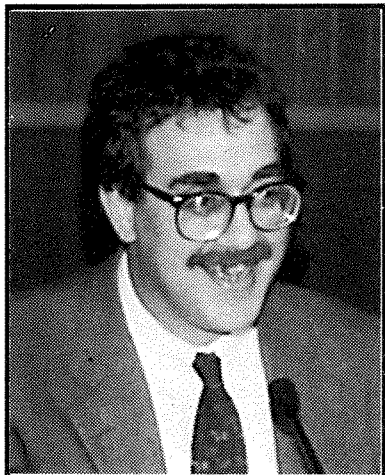
Trisha Gartland gets a visit from out-going RCAC President Chris Gates, during ComFish in Kodiak. Gartland sits on the Oil Spill Prevention and Response Committee.

Failure to keep the public informed on issues facing the RCAC will foster complacency. The less people know, the less connected they will be, and the more likely it is that RCAC will fail to achieve its mission.

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Meeting our mandate starts with the board of directors

by Scott Sterling, President



Scott Sterling

In this edition of our newsletter readers will find a wealth of information about the many people that make up the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council, our

work plans, and some of our recent accomplishments. Our volunteers, staff, advisors and contractors are very dedicated. A sample of our on-going work includes studies of pollution associated with the Valdez Marine Terminal, federal regulations governing tank vessel oil spill response plans, a cooperatively-generated nearshore response plan, a tanker towing study, and two multi-year scientific studies designed to enhance our knowledge of both the human and natural environments of our region. Obviously, much is being done.

One recent example of how RCAC is working effectively with both Alyeska and government regulators is the review and comment process on Alyeska's revisions to its Best Management Practices Plan (BMPP) for

the ballast water treatment plant.

Alyeska, the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency held discussions on how to revise and update the BMPP in light of changes in both environmental and operating conditions. Those discussions resulted in a draft revised plan.

After receiving the draft revised plan from

"...to be effective, we must provide objective, unimpeachable advice and commentary on behalf of the public to Alyeska and government bodies."

—Scott Sterling

Alyeska, the TOEM Committee conducted a substantive review, soliciting comments from knowledgeable scientists, members of the public and Alyeska. TOEM and other interested parties submitted their comments to EPA for consideration. Alyeska submitted its own response to the comments.

To its credit, the EPA catalogued all of the comments and responded in writing to each one. The EPA ultimately adopted several

changes suggested in the comments, including several from the TOEM Committee. By participating in this process, RCAC volunteers provided considered comments on an issue important to Alyeska and clearly communicated public concerns in an organized and productive fashion.

Insuring that our work fulfills our mandate to both the public and Alyeska starts with the board of directors. This year the board is resolved to put in place a long-range planning process which will, within the resources available, help us set realistic priorities for the RCAC, improve our relationship with Alyeska and enable our work to proceed as efficiently as possible. We realize that we cannot address every issue in every forum – no matter how much we might want to do so. We recognize that to be effective, we must provide objective, unimpeachable advice and commentary on behalf of the public to Alyeska and government bodies. We are committed to insuring that complacency shall never again be a contributing factor to another disaster like the Exxon Valdez.

Working every day on complicated issues which almost always involve interwoven questions of law, science and policy is not easy. Inevitably, perceived and real problems of coordination, communication and focus arise – both within and without the organization. Solving those problems requires extra effort by all concerned. I am totally convinced that the RCAC concept and mission is worth the effort.

Long range plan is a tough but necessary job

by Sheila K. Gottehrer, Executive Director



Sheila K. Gottehrer/Photo by Hal Gage

A long range plan is like a compass. It keeps you headed in the direction you set out to follow in the first place. Every long range plan has goals and objectives,

but common sense says there are three fundamental questions to sound planning. Where are we now? Where do we want to be? And how do we get there?

RCAC's Long Range Planning Committee, established at the annual meeting in March, has a formidable task ahead. The importance of its work

would be hard to overstate. A long range plan will help RCAC focus its vision, channel its energies and develop well-defined goals and objectives that are consistent with our mission. Of course, those goals and objectives also need to be consistent with our responsibilities under the contract with Alyeska and our duties under OPA 90 as the citizens advisory group for Prince William Sound.

One of the toughest aspects of long range planning will be to reconcile the sometimes-conflicting hats RCAC wears. From Alyeska's point of view, RCAC's primary job is to provide them with local and regional input on issues related to oil spill prevention and response, terminal operations and environmental impacts. Under the terms of the contract, RCAC is also charged with educating the public about Alyeska's capabilities in oil spill prevention, response planning and environmental mitigation. That constitutes RCAC's advisor hat.

But clearly, RCAC wears an "advocate" hat, as well. The whole point, RCAC directors will tell you,

is to support, present and promote local interests and concerns. The two roles of advisor and advocate frequently run parallel. In the very process of advising Alyeska, RCAC attempts to persuade them to consider and adopt recommendations supported by local interests.

As an advocate for local concerns, RCAC also talks to others. RCAC committees and board members routinely work with state and federal agencies, oil companies and industry representatives, even state legislators. With the exception of one state grant, RCAC is funded completely by Alyeska under a contract negotiated more than two years ago. Alyeska doesn't feel it should pay for those activities that it believes fall outside the scope of our contract. The contract puts a strong and specific emphasis on both the fact and the public perception of RCAC's independence from Alyeska.

How RCAC can be an effective advocate, maintain its absolute independence and provide the services that Alyeska expects is a daunting challenge. It's one we must tackle this year.

Alyeska/RCAC – Two Years Later

by Gary Bader, Citizen Group Liaison Manager Alyeska Pipeline Service Company

In February 1990, Alyeska signed a contract creating the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council (RCAC). The purpose of the organization, as indicated by its name, is to provide Alyeska with advice from the Prince William Sound region's residents and representatives: environmental, Native, fishing, recreational organizations, local businesses and communities. We hoped that this would result in a broadly based avenue of effective communication between our company and the majority of the people who could be impacted by our operations in the region.

Quite frankly, that has not happened, at least not as much as we hoped for. In the beginning, our expectations were indeed well met with the excellent contribution made by the RCAC in providing advice and suggested changes to Alyeska's Prince William Sound Oil Spill Prevention and Response Plan. This six-month effort resulted in the adoption of about 75% of the RCAC's suggested changes.

Today, Alyeska has developed large inventories of oil spill equipment, a highly trained and drilled cadre of dedicated personnel to operate it, the best technology, unsurpassed management expertise, a model crisis management system, and we helped pioneer the citizen advisory process – and all in an environment of the toughest oil spill regulations in the world! Yet, today Alyeska still

does not have an effective working relationship with the RCAC.

“... we wonder if extreme bias at times is preventing some people from even hearing what we are saying, and we have to question if the vocal minority truly represents the concerns and interests of the Prince William Sound community and the citizens' advisory process.”

– Gary Bader, Alyeska

We value the independence of the RCAC as highly as anyone does, but “independence” does not require confrontation or that the parties do not work with each other. Further, we have to question whether today the RCAC really represents the voice of the people of Prince William Sound. It appears that certain RCAC committees may be dominated by

individuals with special agendas. We don't mind honest disagreement; in fact, we expect it. But we wonder if extreme bias at times is preventing some people from even hearing what we are saying, and we have to question if the vocal minority truly represents the concerns and interests of the Prince William Sound community and the citizens' advisory process.

This is not an indictment of the RCAC but a sincere concern, and we at Alyeska hope that those who are somewhat disillusioned with Alyeska or the RCAC, both from within and without, will feel a new spirit emerging and discover how much better it is to work together to achieve common objectives that reflect the views of the region, with all its interests in balance, than to become adversaries. It's a worthwhile goal – and achievable.

Forum

The Observer offers this opportunity for others to comment on issues related to the environment and marine oil transportation. The views expressed are their own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of RCAC. We welcome rebuttals and will attempt to publish them in future issues of The Observer.

Nearshore demo project clears first legislative hurdle

A demonstration project for a “nearshore strike team” is included in the Alaska House of Representatives' budget for FY 93, but the \$900,000 proposal still has major hoops to clear.

The project was shepherded through the house by Representatives Kay Brown of Anchorage and Mike Navarre of Kenai.

The demonstration project would develop a model for nearshore response using local personnel and resources. The concept stems from the successful efforts of fishermen and local volunteers to protect hatcheries and other critical resources during the Exxon Valdez oil spill.

The pilot project would demonstrate the use of local people, training, equipment and storage, elements essential to any nearshore response. A nearshore strike team would be a fundamental building block of any nearshore response organization, regardless of its funding source and whether it is structured as a co-operative or not.

As of April 6, the nearshore strike team idea had been incorporated in budget language appropriating \$1.2 million from the

so-called 470 Fund (the oil and hazardous substance release response fund) to the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC). The funds would be used for “nearshore strike team demonstration projects along the Gulf of Alaska coast and in southeast Alaska that are developed in consultation with the division of emergency services and the regional citizens' advisory councils in the affected region,” according to the draft budget document.

Nearshore response is the effort to recover oil that has escaped initial containment efforts and threatens critical shorelines. Both state and federal law require the use of local resources in spill response. Indeed, a state law passed in 1989 (SB 264) specifically called for creation of equipment depots and volunteer response corps to respond to spills of oil and other hazardous substances. But the local depots and response corps called for in SB 264 have been slow to materialize.

Local personnel and resources would not replace or substitute for primary responders, but supplement them.

The demonstration project, as supported by RCAC, would include:

- Model nearshore strike team with equipment cache - A model nearshore strike team would be trained and organized in one community, with equipment sufficient to contain and remove up to 1,000 barrels of oil per day and place protective boom along critical shorelines. The equipment would be specifically designed for use by local vessels.
- Training program - Training would also be conducted in six other coastal communities, using the equipment cache above. Local responders would receive training in boom and skimming operations; incident command system; and 24 hours of training in hazardous materials, health and safety.
- Statewide database of vessels and responders - A continuously updated list of vessels categorized by type, capability and availability to respond to a spill.
- Model contract - Development of model contracts for use by nearshore strike teams, including contracts with local responders, the party responsible for the spill and the state.

Hydrocarbons

Continued from Page 5

zene, toluene, xylenes and n-hexane) in Valdez, excluding occupational exposure by terminal workers, is "significantly below the EPA reference dose at which adverse health effects may occur due to chronic exposure." Cohen cautions, however, that "higher daily intake, by a factor ranging from 2 to 10, can result from occupational exposure near and at the terminal . . ."

In his recommendations, Cohen also advised:

- Careful review of Alyeska's tanker loading emission study to establish or resolve the uncertainty in the emission estimates reported by Alyeska.
- Sources of polyaromatic hydrocarbons found in the Port Valdez sediment be identified.
- Evaluation of the ecological risks to the marine environment of chronic exposure to low concentrations of hydrocarbons.

Chevron spill drill

Continued from Page 3

tested: wildlife rescue (using stuffed animals); hatchery protection; nearshore response and on-water deployment of SERVS. Approximately 33 local fishing vessels were involved in the response.

About 600 people participated in the drill and at the peak of day one, 380 people were in the Valdez Civic Center, according to Walker. Out-of-pocket cost to Alyeska and Chevron, not counting staff time, was more than \$600,000.

RCAC: What it is

The Regional Citizens' Advisory Council (RCAC) of Prince William Sound (there is also an RCAC for Cook Inlet (CIRCAC)), is an independent, non-profit organization formed in the aftermath of the Exxon Valdez disaster to ensure the safe operation of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline Terminal and the crude oil tankers served by the terminal, so that the environmental impacts associated with the terminal and tanker fleet are minimized.

The RCAC has 16 members who represent municipalities, commercial fishing groups, Alaska Native interests, and environmental and business organizations.

RCAC is certified under the federal Oil Pollution Act of 1990 as the citizen advisory organization for Prince William Sound, and operates under a contract with Alyeska. The contract, which is in effect as long as oil flows through the pipeline, guarantees RCAC's independence, provides annual funding at \$2 million, and guarantees RCAC equal access to the terminal as that enjoyed by state and federal regulatory agencies.

Committee Appointments

+ Member, Board of Directors

Oil Spill Prevention and Response (OSPR)

Wayne Coleman+	Kodiak
Tom Copeland	Cordova
Gail Evanoff	Chenega
Trisha Gartland	Kodiak
Floyd Heimbuch	Kenai
John Herschleb+	Girdwood/Cordova
Lynda Hyce+	Whittier
Charlie Lundfelt	Valdez
Skip Richards	Eagle River
Tim Robertson	Seldovia
Patti Saunders	Anchorage
Gordon Scott	Girdwood/Whittier

Engineer
Fisher
Chenega board officer
Fisher
Retired administrator
Fisher
Natural resource manager
Fire chief
Safety training officer
Independent businessman
Attorney
Fisher

Port Operations and Vessel Traffic System (POVTS)

Bill Conley	Valdez
Ted Edwards	Fritz Creek
Chris Gates+	Seward
Jeff Guard	Cordova
Tony Joslyn+	Anchor Point
Vince Kelly	Valdez
Peter Kott	Eagle River
Dennis Lodge	Seward
Vince Mitchell	Valdez
Tom McAlister	Valdez
Stan Stephens+	Valdez

SERVS
Charter operator
Port marketing director
Fisher
Marine pilot
College administrator
Teacher, retired Air Force
College instructor
SERVS
Port manager
Charter operator

Terminal Operations and Environmental Monitoring (TOEM)

Bob Benda	Valdez
Dave Dengel	Valdez
Julie Howe	Eagle River
Judy Kitigawa	Valdez
E.A. Jim Levine	Anchorage
George Skladal	Anchorage
Scott Sterling+	Anchorage
Dennis Ulvestad	Valdez
Greg Winter	Valdez

College instructor
City Planner
Environmental engineer
Environmental specialist, DEC
Engineer, US Army Corps
College instructor
Cordova City Attorney
Alyeska contract employee
DEC EVOS Response

Scientific Advisory (SAC)

Sharon Araj, Ph.D.	Anchorage
Ivan Frohne	Wasilla
James Hemming	Anchorage
Lynda Hyce+	Whittier
Gary Kompkoff	Tatitlek
John Morsell	Anchorage
A.J. Paul, Ph.D.	Seward
Chuck Smythe, Ph.D.	Anchorage
Kristin Stahl-Johnson+	Kodiak
James D. Steward	Anchorage
Carol Wilson	Chenega Bay

Professor, sociology
Retired mathematician/statistician
Biologist/environmental consultant
Natural resource manager
President, IRA Council
Biologist/environmental consultant
Professor, biological oceanography
Cultural anthropologist/consultant
Biologist
Oil spill response consultant
Vice President, Chenega Corp.

Education

Andy Mack+	Kenai
Jocelyn Barker	Anchorage
Joyce Kompkoff	Chenega
Rick Kurtz	Anchorage
John Parker	Kodiak

Fisherman
School aide, library and special education
Administrative secretary, Chenega Corp.
Adjunct faculty, UAA, political science
High school teacher

Regional Citizens' Advisory Council

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