

Regional Citizens' Advisory Council

# The Observer

VOLUME 8, No. 3/DECEMBER 1998

AK Chamber of Commerce - AK Wilderness Recreation & Tourism Assoc. - Chugach Alaska Corp. - Cordova District Fishermen United - OSREC - PWS Aquaculture Corp.

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## BP's oil spill drill tests readiness to respond quickly But issues of dispersants, Unified Command left unresolved

What's being billed as the largest oil-spill drill in Alaska history took place Sept. 18-22 in Prince William Sound and in communities to the southwest.

The goals of the exercise, staged by British Petroleum, were to test the company's ability to import and deploy spill-response equipment from outside Alaska, and its ability to organize and run an emergency-response center for a spill reaching from Prince William Sound into the Gulf of Alaska.

The drill scenario involved the grounding of a fictional tanker called the Northern Dancer on the north end of Montague Island. The result: a spill of about 13 million gallons of North Slope crude, with the slick oiling island beaches at the mouth of Prince William Sound, then heading southwest for Seward and other communities hit by the 11 million gallon Exxon Valdez spill of 1989.

Because of the size of the incident, the Coast Guard declared it a "Spill of National Significance," defined as "a rare catastrophic spill which greatly exceeds the capabilities at the local and regional level."

The deployment exercises took

*See BP drill, p. 3*



Photo: Alexander Kotlarov

Fishing vessels participated in the BP drill. Here, the Ms. Jennifer takes a small spill-response barge under tow near Chenega Bay.

## Citizens' council grapples with criticism on recertification

The citizens' council held a special board meeting Oct. 21 to deal with a barrage of criticism from the oil industry and Alaska officials of the U.S. Coast Guard.

The critical comments were submitted to Coast Guard headquarters in Washington, D.C., by Alyeska Pipeline Service Co., three major oil shipping companies and two officials of the Coast Guard in Alaska. They came in response to the council's May 1998 application to be recertified under the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 as the official oil-spill advisory group for Prince William Sound.

None of the letters formally opposed recertification, but many raised similar complaints about the track record of the citizens'

council and suggested measures for reining it in.

"Fundamental flaws continue to exist within the PWS RCAC structure that set it up as an organization for conflict, not consensus," wrote R.A. Gale, vice president of BP Oil Shipping Co. "After eight years, the PWS RCAC cannot be held as a model organization."

The council approved a package of responses to the comments, with one letter going to each of the critical commenters and an overall letter to the Coast Guard officials in Washington who are dealing with the recertification application.

"We were surprised, somewhat angry and definitely hurt by the critical comments regarding our recertification," President Stan

Stephens told his fellow board members at the Oct. 21 meeting.

Some of the main points raised in the 23 pages of industry-Coast Guard comments were:

- That poor administrative controls created several problems, such as allowing board and staff

members of the council to make inappropriate remarks about the oil industry or to use their positions to pursue their own agendas.

As one result, according to the

*See Recertification, p. 5*

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## Volunteer Profile:

# Council volunteer Linda Lee of Valdez wears two hats

When Linda Lee first came to Valdez, she planned to stay in Alaska only a couple of months, then return to California.

But Alaska hooked her and, 22 years later, she's still around.

"I like being outdoors, I usually like the snow, I like being out on the water," Lee said. "Prince William Sound is about the most beautiful place I've ever been."

Like many people in Valdez, Lee has lots of irons in the fire. She works full-time at Alyeska Pipeline Service Co., where she operates the berths that deliver North Slope crude into the holds of oil tankers. She helps her husband, David Rentel, run the Vixen, their 28-foot charter boat. In her spare time, she helps the Valdez Fire Department with a program to install smoke detectors in local homes.

And she's a volunteer for the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council, serving on the Port Operations and Vessel Traffic Systems Committee. POVTS, as it's known, advises the council on the safe loading, travel and escorting of the oil tankers calling at Valdez.

It's the combination of Alyeska and citizens' council work that makes Lee's position somewhat special, for the two organizations don't always see eye to eye.

The citizens' council and Alyeska have evolved a fairly smooth working relationship since the council was formed just after the Exxon Valdez oil spill of 1989. Still, one of the council's roles is to monitor Alyeska and the tanker companies shipping oil from Valdez, so the relationship has its ups and downs.

But Lee said her role on the POVTS committee hasn't caused many problems at work.

"My managers have been supportive," she said. "They've allowed me the time. I think most people there recognize that being straightforward is in their best interest."

Similarly, she said, being an Alyeska employee hasn't seemed to make her fellow POVTS members suspicious.

Vince Kelly, who chairs the

worker belong, because that makes it easier to get answers to Alyeska-specific questions.

"It's never really been an awkward situation," Kelly said. "It really is a function of whether the person comes to the committee as a representative of their company or as a representative of their community, and it seems that they come with

Terminal Operations and Environmental Monitoring Committee proposed banning the practice. The board rejected the proposal 13-2, and Alyeska employees continue to serve on the committees.

It was a hair-styling connection that brought Lee to Valdez in 1976. She was working at a beauty college in California when one of the students moved to Valdez to join her husband. The student said Lee should come up and get a high-paying pipeline job, and she was on her way.

That pipeline job didn't come through until 15 years and one oil spill later. By the time of the Exxon Valdez accident in 1989, Lee was involved in commercial fishing in Prince William Sound.

**I like being outdoors, I like being out on the water. -- Linda Lee of Valdez**

When the spill put a temporary end to that, she hired out to work on the response and spent 61 days in a row on the water.

That was grueling, but she thinks it helped her get through the trauma. A lot of her friends who stayed in Valdez were more upset than she.

"It was a lot easier, being out there working," she said. "To physically be doing something was a lot better than being on the sidelines."

In 1991, with commercial fishing still on the skids, she finally got that pipeline job when she went to work at the Alyeska terminal. And about three years later she signed up with POVTS.

"It was a format for citizens to be able to address the concerns they had with the oil industry," she said. "It was a format for everybody to sit down together and work through the issues."



Photo: Courtesy of Linda Lee

Linda Lee with husband David Rentel, left, and 217-lb. halibut, center.

committee, said POVTS has always had at least one Alyeska employee among its members, so Lee's arrival wasn't a shock. In addition, Lee was already a known quantity when she joined POVTS about four years ago.

"She spent many years in Prince William Sound fishing before she became an Alyeska employee, so her roots in the community are real deep," Kelly said.

Kelly said POVTS has found it helpful to have an Alyeska

their community role kind of paramount."

Lee's bosses at Alyeska don't have a problem with her dual roles, according to company spokeswoman Jennifer Ruys.

"Alyeska President Bob Malone encourages employees to get involved in civic and community work of all kinds," Ruys said.

The issue of having Alyeska employees on committees came before the council Board of Directors in 1995, when the

## Central Asian group visits Valdez, tours Coast Guard, Alyeska tanker terminal

A group of environmental and oil-development officials from Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan toured Valdez in early October. They visited the Coast Guard offices, toured the Alyeska tanker terminal and were luncheon guests of the citizens' council and the City of Valdez.

According to Lynda Hyce, deputy director in the council's Valdez office, the visitors were very interested in the concept of

local involvement in environmental protection.

Some were in agencies that appeared analogous to Alaska's Department of Natural Resources, such as a representative of Turkmenistan's Ministry of Oil and Gas Industry and Mineral Resources.

Others were from their country's equivalent of the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, such as

Kazakhstan's director of National Environment Center Programs.

Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan were part of the Soviet Union before its breakup, and the visitors were used to centralized, top-down government, according to Hyce. Both nations are involved in major oil-development efforts.

"Now their society is becoming more of a democracy and they're starting from scratch trying to formulate new laws and

new ways of trying to accommodate public opinion and public input," Hyce said. "They were very interested in how we function, who we're responsible to, who we represent, and how federal and state agencies feel about us."

**Note:** Observer articles are written by public information manager Stan Jones unless otherwise noted.



## BP drill, continued from page 1

place Sept. 18-21 in Prince William Sound and Seward. The tabletop exercises were held Sept. 22 in the Valdez Civic Center and in a crisis management center set up in BP's Alaska headquarters in Anchorage.

The drill got good marks for execution from most observers but left unresolved two policy issues of crucial concern to the citizens' council: the use of dispersants and access to the Unified Command.

"I compliment them on a terribly complex and involved drill," said John Devens, executive director of the citizens' council. "It came off with relatively few glitches."

Devens noted, however, that the council was at odds with the drill managers about dispersants and Unified Command access through much of the exercise.

The Unified Command, with one member each from the oil industry, Coast Guard and Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, is in overall charge of the response to an oil spill. It is headed by the Coast Guard representative. In the case of BP's drill, that was Capt. Ron Morris of the Coast Guard's Valdez Marine Safety Office.

The council has long sought direct access to the Unified Command via a non-voting seat. So far that effort has been resisted.

At the September drill, BP and the Coast Guard both consulted Devens informally, but asked him to provide formal citizen input through an oil-industry employee.

"I turned them down," Devens said. "As much as I appreciated the opportunity, I didn't feel I could legitimately communicate through industry. We need to do that directly." (See Devens' column on this subject, page 5.)

The council was at odds with government regulators and the oil industry over dispersants before the drill began.

The drill scenario called for the use of dispersants — chemicals that dissolve spilled oil and disperse it in the surrounding sea water — early in the incident and in areas classified as Zone 3.

A Zone 3 designation means the area contains sensitive resources such as endangered or threatened species or rearing areas for animals or fish. Dispersant use is discouraged in Zone 3 and is approved on a case-by-case basis if the chemicals are considered likely to do less harm than the oil itself. The drill scenario, however, didn't include the review and approval process by government agencies that would control dispersant use in Zone 3 during a real spill.

The council objected unsuccessfully to this component of the scenario during planning meetings well before the exercise. The council's position is that dispersants should be used only after mechanical containment and cleanup methods — such as booming and skimming — have failed.

"We felt they were too quick to suggest the use of dispersants," Devens said. "However, later in the exercise they gave us the opportunity to provide input on the use of dispersants."

During the tabletop drill on Sept. 22, the citizens' council concurred in a BP request to test dispersants on the leading edge of the fictional slick. Later in the day, the Coast Guard turned down a BP request for additional dispersant use.

Devens said the council is trying to obtain funding for a major study to lay to rest some of the questions about dispersant use in Alaska waters. Those include how poisonous dispersants are to Alaska sea species, how long they last, and how effective they are at dealing with spilled North Slope crude.

The drill involved more than 600 people from 65 organizations, 12 states and four countries, according to a BP summary.

The Coast Guard and BP said they considered it a success.

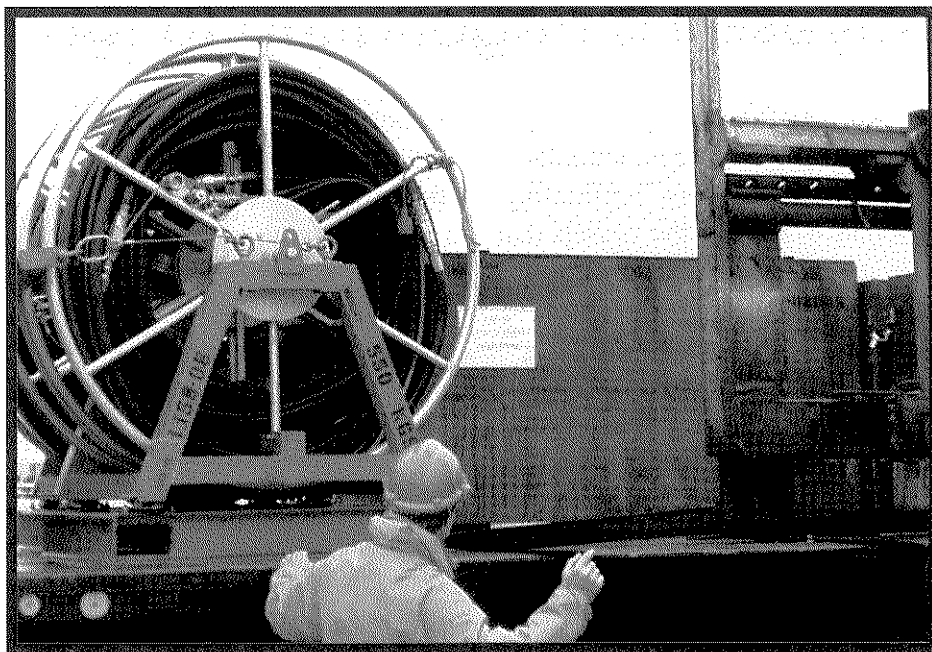
"We proved that industry, government and communities can work together as a team, not only to contain and clean up a catastrophic spill, but also to identify and address the very real human, wildlife and environmental impacts of such an incident," said Richard Campbell, head of BP's Alaska operations.

The Coast Guard's Morris said the teamwork displayed in the drill was "exemplary."

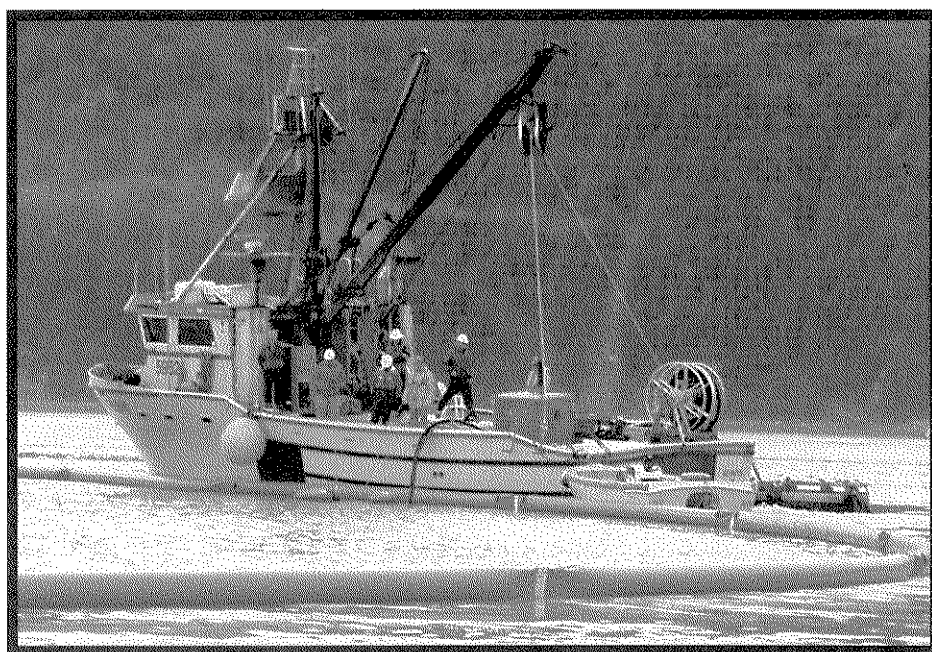
All 16 staffers of the citizen's council participated in the drill. Five were in Anchorage and 11 were in Valdez, along with some council contractors. The board of directors met regularly, as it would during a real spill.

For the council, one of the important innovations in this drill was a two-way electronic linkup between the three-member Unified Command

See *Innovations*, p. 4



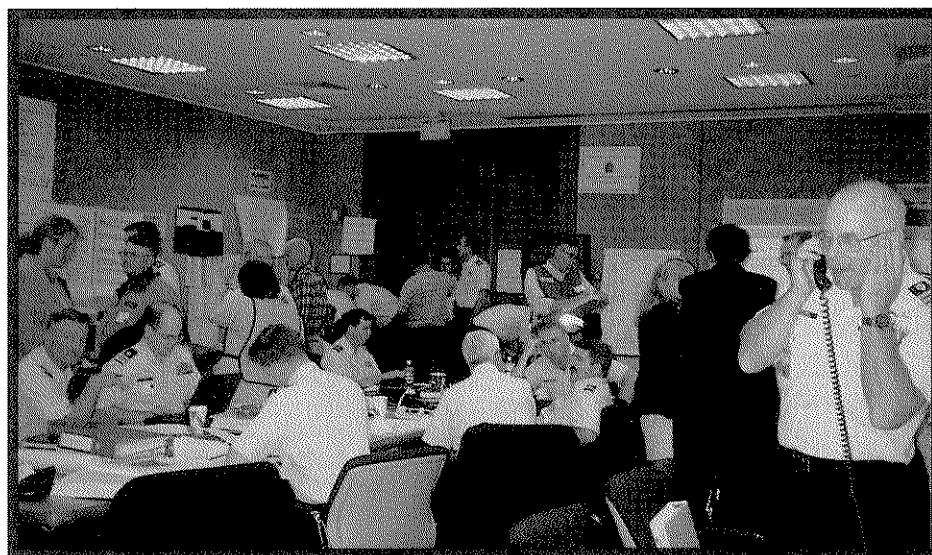
Workers near the Seward small boat harbor unload oil spill response equipment brought in from England for the BP drill. Photo: Tim Robertson



Local fishing vessels practice on Resurrection Bay with the equipment from England. Photo: Tim Robertson



The Auklet, left, was the council's chartered monitoring boat in the BP drill. Shown here with the fishing vessel Kristina. Photo: Alexander Kotlarov



Coast Guard Capt. Joseph Bridger works the phone in BP's Anchorage Crisis Center during the drill. Photo: Marilyn Leland



# Alyeska is negotiating to replace its tanker escort vessels

Alyeska Pipeline Service Co. is negotiating for the construction of three powerful new firefighting tugboats to replace the vessels that now accompany loaded oil tankers through Prince William Sound.

Greg Jones, manager of Alyeska's Ship Escort/Response Vessel System (or SERVVS), made the plans known in late October when he contacted regulatory agencies and the citizens' council for concurrence with the proposal.

The council and the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation both endorsed the proposal, but were cautious

because information on the new tugs was limited, as was the opportunity to evaluate it.

"Although it is unfortunate that (the council) was given such a short time period to respond to this significant proposal," wrote council president Stan Stephens, "we appreciate its proactive nature and commend Alyeska and the owner companies for considering improvements to the Prince William Sound escort system."

The new 10,000-horsepower tugs would, unlike the current escort-response vessels, be able to fight fires, with a maximum

discharge rate of 13,500 gallons of water per minute.

For spill response, they would carry 3,000 feet of containment boom, two work boats, an oil skimmer, and storage for 43,000 gallons of recovered oil.

With their more powerful engines and greater maneuverability, said SERVVS operations advisor Gene Till, the new tugs would be better able to help a tanker that needed a tow.

Jones, the SERVVS manager, said the new tugs, along with

other new tugs already under construction, would help Alyeska meet President Bob Malone's goal of operational excellence by the year 2000.

"These tugs would substantially upgrade prevention and also improve response," Jones said. "We're all pretty excited."

At the Observer's press time, Alyeska was still negotiating for the new tugs with Crowley Marine Services. If the deal goes through, Till said, the new tugs should be in service within two years.

## Red hot repellant for alien invaders?

Could the humble chili pepper help solve the problem of alien marine species invading new waters?

Researchers at the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology think so, according to recent press reports.

The researchers claim a repellant made from the red habanero pepper — the world's hottest chili, 60 times hotter than a jalapeno — can protect fence posts from roadrunners and cable insulation from rats.

And now it's being tested in

Lake Michigan on the infamous zebra mussel, the mollusk blamed for clogging intake pipes and displacing native species in the Lower 48. "That would be really great if it works . . . a real hot item," Lt. Chris Boes of Coast Guard headquarters in Washington, D.C. told reporters this summer.

The council is studying whether Prince William Sound is being invaded by non-indigenous species arriving in the ballast water of oil tankers and other large ships.

## Innovations, continued from page 3

in Valdez and citizens of communities in the path of the imaginary spill.

The signal from the Unified Command traveled to some 230 communities over the state's Alaska Rural Community Service television system. People in four of the communities — Valdez, Chenega Bay, Kodiak and Cordova — were able to talk back by a telephone hookup, but did not appear on television because the video link was one-way only.

"It was a good first attempt," Devens said. "People in the communities responded well and appreciated the opportunity."

Devens said comments from the communities indicated the

facilitators at the community sites should have done more coordinating to make it easier for community members to get up and speak.

And, Devens said, too much of the limited time for the hookup was consumed by comments from the Unified Command members.

"They could have condensed their remarks and given the communities more chance to talk," Devens said.

BP, the Coast Guard and the Department of Environmental Conservation are preparing a joint evaluation of the drill, while the citizens' council is drafting its own independent evaluation. Both reports should be out early in 1999.

## Top-notch training keeps Alyeska crews always on edge

By GENE TILL  
SERVVS Operations Advisor

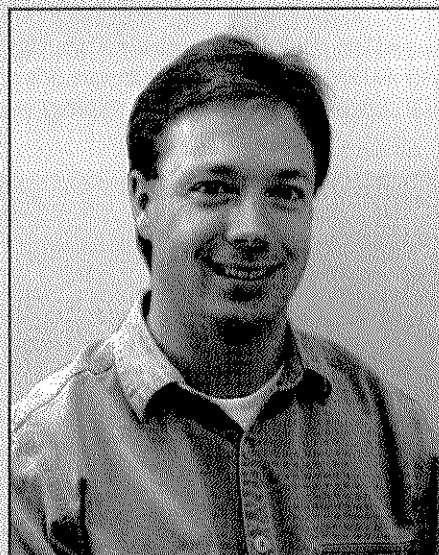
Alyeska/SERVVS continues to fine tune response capabilities with training and practice. Employees participated in Alaska's first ever Spill of National Significance Drill, held in Valdez September 18-22.

Sponsored by British Petroleum, the drill included Alyeska/SERVVS, the United States Coast Guard, Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the U.S. Navy, the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council, and ARCO Marine. Representatives from 67 companies, 12 states and four countries also participated.

Garry Willis, BP Manager for Prince William Sound Response, was pleased with the results of the drill. "I'd say things went extremely well. We had no injuries and were able to meet our objectives." Willis felt the drill was effective in testing

response capabilities, including the transporting of out-of-region equipment. "We placed a call on Friday to physically transport equipment from England and the west coast of the United States to

### Alyeska Report



Gene Till

see how realistic moving this equipment would be. The resources arrived in Anchorage on Saturday, then were trucked to Seward and deployed Sunday."

The drill also included the

deployment of several nearshore strike teams from Alyeska's Ship Escort Response Vessel System — or SERVVS — in the waters around Chenega and Seward. The field deployment offered a unique opportunity for the teams — which include fishing vessel crews and Alyeska personnel — to get acquainted with and deploy unfamiliar equipment.

Bill Newbold, Alyeska Senior Vice President, and Greg Jones, Manager of SERVVS, said many people contributed in making this a professional and successful drill. "It gives us a great deal of comfort knowing that we are well prepared to handle any crisis situation," they wrote in a memo to employees. "We can certainly say this is the way a world class organization prepares for and handles an emergency."

In addition to the marine efforts to prepare for emergencies, the Valdez Marine Fire Fighting Team once again participated in the Alaska State Fire Fighters Conference held in Skagway in October. The conference provides a host of

training opportunities for fire fighters as well as a competition to test their skills. Over the past seven years Alyeska's team has taken first place five times. The past two years they have captured the number two spot, narrowly beaten out by a team from the Red Dog Mine.

Steve Newcomer, Alyeska's Valdez Operations Advisor, attended the conference in support of Alyeska and said this team has raised the standards for fire fighters in Alaska. "After watching this crew in action I have a whole new appreciation for what they do for a living."

Other training efforts included the annual Fishing Vessel Training Program which, in partnership with the Prince William Sound Community College, provides fishermen opportunities to learn about wildlife capture and hazing, hazardous material handling and other oil spill response related skills. This year more than 1,330 fishermen and 490 vessels participated from Cordova to Whittier and Seward to Kodiak.



## Recertification, continued from page 1

letters, the process of renewing the oil shipping companies' 1995 contingency plans was needlessly prolonged.

- That the citizens' council was out of bounds when it reviewed the contingency plan for those parts of the trans-Alaska pipeline that could spill oil into rivers that drain into Prince William Sound.

- That the citizens' council should receive "increased oversight" from the Alaska Coast Guard (suggested by SeaRiver Maritime, Exxon Corp.'s oil shipping subsidiary).

- That the citizens' council should be terminated in its present form and reconstituted as adviser to a government-industry association that would bring "more discipline to the council" and "provide needed oversight and direction" (suggested by Alaska officials of the U.S. Coast Guard).

Other suggestions included limiting council membership to representatives of local governments, which would

eliminate Native groups, environmentalists, commercial fishermen, and two business organizations from the current roster.

The council admitted the need for improvement in some areas of its operation. But it said the criticisms were inaccurate in some places, such as the claim that loose administrative and management practices had delayed the 1995 contingency plan approval process. And it said its analysis of the contingency plan did not go beyond its contract with Alyeska or the oil pollution act.

Also, the council wrote, the restructuring proposals could require Congressional action or formal rulemaking proceedings, or could force the council out of compliance with its Alyeska contract and federal law.

As the centerpiece of its response, the council invited the oil shipping companies and the Coast Guard's Alaska-based District 17 to join it in creating communication protocols to

guide its relationships with them. The protocols would be modeled on the council's protocol with Alyeska, which the council regards as having improved its relationship with that company.

The council told Coast Guard headquarters that such protocols would be a better process than recertification for resolving the kind of day-to-day problems and complaints reflected in the comments.

"While the recertification process is an opportunity for the oil industry and District 17 to express their concerns about RCAC activities and behavior," the council wrote, "there exists no reciprocal process for RCAC to communicate our concerns to the industry or District 17, or for resolution of outstanding issues."

Some of the comments appeared aimed not at the specific question of whether the citizens' council should be recertified, but at the larger question of whether similar councils should be set up in other areas of the country. The council said such comments were not relevant to its recertification and should be disregarded by the

Coast Guard.

The critical letters were outnumbered by letters of support from the council's member entities, Gov. Tony Knowles, Sen. Georgianna Lincoln (D-Rampart), and government agencies other than the Coast Guard.

As the Observer went to press, Coast Guard action on the recertification application was expected by the end of November.

## Committee changes

Anchorage resident **David DeGrandpre** is leaving the Terminal Operations and Environmental Monitoring Committee. DeGrandpre, an environmental engineer with an Anchorage firm, has taken a job in Montana. He had served on the committee since March 1997.

**Michelle Hahn O'Leary**, who is resigning her board seat representing the Cordova District Fishermen United, has asked to join the Scientific Advisory Committee. And **JoAnn McDowell**, board member for Valdez, is leaving the Scientific Advisory Committee.

## Voice of the citizens must be heard during oil-spill response

By **JOHN S. DEVENS, Ph.D.**  
Executive Director

A major lesson of the Exxon Valdez tragedy is in danger of being ignored: Citizen involvement is critical in responding to a major oil spill.

For months now, we at the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council have urged industry and government to guarantee us a non-voting advisory seat on the Unified Command, which is formed after an oil spill to manage the response. As executive director, I would normally fill that seat on the council's behalf.

But the members of the Unified Command — one person each from the U.S. Coast Guard, the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, and the oil industry — appear to be concerned that citizens may not understand their deliberations, and that we might engage in disruptive debates during high-stress decision-making sessions. The Coast Guard, whose decision it is to make, has so far turned us down.

To answer the citizens' need to provide and receive information at the Unified Command level, it has been suggested we use a member of the oil industry as a liaison or that we

catch members of the Unified Command during breaks.

We don't consider either approach workable. We feel direct citizen input to the Unified Command is critical for its deliberations and a protocol can be developed for appropriate input by citizens.

We feel strongly that citizens have a right to know how decisions are made, and a right to respond to decisions affecting their lives. The people, as Alaska's open meetings law says, "do not give their public servants the right to decide what is good for the people to know and what is not good for them to know."

Our reasons for wanting a seat go back to 1989, when the Exxon Valdez poured 11 million gallons of North Slope crude into Prince William Sound. Mayors and other community officials found it difficult to get into the information and decision-making loop.

This engendered mistrust by citizens, because they didn't know how the decisions were being made that so deeply affected their lives and livelihoods.

It also deprived Exxon Corp. and government agencies of information they could have used to combat the spill. With better citizen input, perhaps more oil

could have been contained, lessening the damage to shorelines, fisheries, wildlife, countless careers and Exxon's bottom line.

With our network of member organizations and communities stretching from Prince William

Sound to Kodiak to Lower Cook Inlet, we are ideally equipped to serve as the citizen voice on oil-spill issues. That is why we were formed after the Exxon Valdez spill.

In the event of a spill, we would activate our own Emergency Response Plan and could instantly become a region-wide high-speed link between affected citizens and response

managers.

But at present, our role is so unclear under the state-federal oil spill response plan for Prince William Sound that it has become an ongoing subject of dispute between us and the Unified Command during drills and exercises.

The plan calls on us to serve as an information conduit, but is vague about how. It provides only that the council is "a resource for the Unified Command and participates in the regional MAC (Multi-Agency Coordinating Committee) when it is established and functioning for a spill response."

The plan fails to explain the council's exact role in a MAC and fails to provide for a council role if — as has been the case so far in drills and incidents — no MAC is established.

We want the plan modified to specify that the council is the MAC for spills in Prince William Sound and the Gulf of Alaska, and to guarantee us direct access to the Unified Command.

Only then will the citizens of our region be safe from the consequences of one of the oldest laws of human experience: Those who ignore history are doomed to repeat it.



John Devens

# Board OKs committee mission statements, seats at council table

The citizens' council's four standing committees have new mission statements and a new role in council decisions, as a result of board action during the September quarterly meeting in Seward.

The board approved mission statements drafted by the committees, and agreed that committee chairs should sit at the council table to give advice at future meetings.

"I'm pleased that happened," said Kenai resident Jerry Brookman, who as chair of the Oil Spill Prevention and Response Committee will be one of those sitting at the council table. "But I think the more important thing is the fact that the committees are getting revitalized and better utilized. There was some feeling on the part of a lot of people that the committees were not being utilized as well as they ought to be."

The measures are the latest developments in a long-running effort to forge the most productive relationship between the council and its volunteer committees as the organization's 10th birthday approaches.

The council has four standing technical committees: Port Operations and Vessel Traffic Systems; Scientific Advisory; Terminal Operations and Environmental Monitoring, and Oil Spill Prevention and Response. Committees are required by the Oil Pollution Act of 1990, which says the council will create them "as necessary" to carry out its duties.

The new mission

statements were developed after a 1996 restructuring that reduced the autonomy the committees had enjoyed in the early days of the citizens' council. Until the restructuring, the committees sponsored and managed projects and each had its own

The Observer reported at the time that the changes were intended to provide better accountability, establish a clearer role for committees as advisers to the board, clarify the overall structure of the council, and give the council's top managers authority over

The committees' problems with restructuring led to a series of meetings, reports and whitepapers over the past couple of years, culminating in the action at September's board meeting.

"It put the council on notice," said Bill Lindow, the board member who moved to accept the new mission statements. "It remains to be seen whether the committees are going to be happy with this, but I'm quite sure it's a step in the right direction."

The new mission statements lay out the committees' duties to oversee their areas of responsibility, but do not give them project management authority.

In other action at its Seward meeting, the board:

- Seated Paul McCollum to represent the City of Homer.
- Set up a committee, headed by board member Tom Jensen, to work on the council's policy manual.
- Established a policy that the council will pay board-member expenses for traveling to and from board meetings only for that part of the travel occurring within the state of Alaska.
- Postponed the question of changing the council's name.
- Appointed Executive Director John Devens and board members Stan Stephens and Bill Walker to a team to negotiate a new funding agreement with Alyeska.
- Commended ARCO for its decision to use the Millennium-class double-hull tankers in Prince William Sound.

## Committee Mission Statements

**Scientific Advisory Committee:** Ensure that council-sponsored research, monitoring, and testing projects are based on the best available scientific information, serve the best interests of the public, and are carried out in accordance with the policies and priorities established by the council and mandated by its contract with Alyeska and the Oil Pollution Act of 1990.

**Oil Spill Prevention and Response Committee:** Promote strong oil spill prevention and response capability in the Exxon Valdez oil spill region by advising the council's Board of Directors.

**Terminal Operations and Environmental Monitoring Committee:** Detect and monitor all existing and potential environmental impacts of the Valdez Marine Terminal and associated tankers, and advise the council of the committee's findings.

**Port Operations and Vessel Traffic Systems:** Advise the council concerning the safe loading, transit and escort of North Slope crude oil tankers in Prince William Sound and the Gulf of Alaska.

assigned staffer for support.

Afterward, project management was assigned to staffers, not committees. Committees can still advise and comment to the board, but project teams — consisting of staffers, committee members and personnel from government and industry — carry out much of the work formerly done by the committees.

all staffers and work products.

The downside, according to a statement last spring from the Terminal Operations and Environmental Monitoring Committee, was that committees felt they had no direct action or involvement in council projects.

"This has led to confusion, frustration and an increasing sense of apathy," the TOEM committee wrote.

## Ten years later, symposiums will mark the Valdez oil spill of March 1989

Valdez and Anchorage will be the sites of symposiums to mark the 10th anniversary of the Exxon Valdez oil spill.

The Valdez symposium, scheduled for March 21-22, 1999, will focus primarily on improvements in oil-spill prevention. The Anchorage event, March 23-27, will focus primarily on efforts to repair the damage to the Prince William Sound environment from the March 24, 1989 spill.

The Valdez proceedings, called "Partners in Prevention — A Decade of Progress in Prince William Sound," will feature as keynote speakers Gov. Tony

Knowles, U.S. Sen. Ted Stevens, and Bob Malone, president of Alyeska Pipeline Service Co.

The symposium is sponsored jointly by the City of Valdez, Prince William Sound Community College, Alaska Dept. of Environmental Conservation, the citizens' council, and Alyeska. Except for tours and demonstrations, it will take place at the Valdez Civic Center.

The schedule for Sunday, March 21, includes tours of the Coast Guard Vessel Traffic Center and Alyeska's Ship Escort/Response Vessel System, panel discussions, and a banquet with Stevens speaking on the Oil

Pollution Act of 1990.

Monday's events include the main panel of the symposium. Topics include tanker integrity and double hulls, human factors, ice detection and avoidance, tanker escorts, and other measures to reduce the risk of another oil spill. It will also include a question-and-answer session, and questions are being collected in writing between now and the symposium. To submit a question, fax it to 907-835-5926, email it to rcac@pobox.alaska.net, or mail it to the council's Valdez office.

After lunch, Alyeska will stage on-water demonstrations.

For information, contact the

Prince William Sound Community College at 907-834-1640 or write PO Box 97, Valdez 99686.

The Anchorage symposium, titled "Legacy of an Oil Spill — 10 Years After Exxon Valdez," is sponsored by the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council. The first four days will consist of proceedings at the Egan Civic and Convention Center. The final day will see a field trip to Seward for a visit to the Alaska SeaLife Center and a gray whale tour.

For information, contact the Trustee Council's Tami Yockey at 907-278-8012 or write 645 G Street, Suite 401, Anchorage 99501-3451.



## Publications, reports are available from council office

Copies of most documents are available to the public free of charge. A handling fee will be charged for large documents and for requests of more than 10 documents. Contact the council's Anchorage office to order.

### Reports

FINAL REPORT: LTEMP Data Analysis of Hydrocarbons in Intertidal Mussels and Marine Sediments, 1993-1996. 3/16/98.  
C\611.98.1\LTEMP Data Analysis  
NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY: LTEMP Data Analysis of Hydrocarbons in Intertidal Mussels and Marine Sediments, 1993-1996. 3/16/98. C\611.98.1\Sum\LTEMP Data Analysis  
Drill Monitoring 1997 Annual Report. 5/14/98.  
C\605.98.1\1997Annual  
Safety Review of the Valdez Marine Terminal Vapor Control System: Preliminary Report. 6/27/98. C\629.98.1\Vapor Review  
1997-1998 In Review, Annual Report of Citizens' Council. 6/30/98. 1997-98 In Review  
Site-Specific Response Plans for Sensitive Areas: A Review of Other States' Methods with Recommendations for Alaska. 9/2/98.  
C\402.98.1\GRPs  
Eleventh Survey Report - LTEMP. 9/10/98. C\608.98.11th\LTEMP

### Advice and Comment

Consolidated Response to comments made about RCAC's 1998 recertification. 10/22/98. recert\consol.response\9810\103  
Letter to Admiral Cross regarding RCAC's recertification. 10/22/98. USCG\Cross\recert\9810.103  
Letter to Alyeska regarding RCAC's recertification. 10/22/98. Alyeska\recert.response\9810.103  
Letter to ARCO regarding RCAC's recertification. 10/22/98. ARCO\recert.response\9810.103  
Letter to BP regarding RCAC's recertification. 10/22/98. BP\recert.response\9810.103  
Letter to City of Valdez regarding RCAC's recertification. 10/22/98. Valdez\recert.response\9810.103  
Letter to MSO-Valdez responding to comments made about RCAC's recertification. 10/22/98. MSO-Valdez\recert.response\9810.103  
Letter to SeaRiver regarding RCAC's recertification. 10/22/98. SeaRiver\recert.response\9810.103  
Letter to the USCG-DC responding to comments made about RCAC's recertification. 10/22/98. USCG-DC\recert.response\9810.103  
Comments sent to USCG on proposed mandatory dispersant requirements. 9/10/98. USCG\disp.cap.cmts\9809.402\jba  
Cover letter to USCG for comments on dispersant requirements. 9/10/98. USCG.cvr\disp.cmts\9809.402\sa

Letter to Pat Carney of BP regarding concerns over RCAC comments on the c-plan review process. 9/4/98.  
BP\Carney\cplan.review\9809.402\lh

Letter to region citizens regarding their input on USCG proposed dispersant requirements. 9/4/98. Citizens\disperse.input\9809.402

Letter to the City of Valdez regarding leasing office space at the Valdez airport. 9/2/98. Valdez\airport.lease\9809.200\sa

Letter to ADEC regarding inclusion of the Port Valdez watershed in category 1 watersheds. 8/25/98. ADEC\port.watershed\9808.406\jk

Letter to JPO with comments on the pipeline contingency plan. 8/15/98. JPO\pipeline.plan\9808.615\lh

Letter to the RPG with final informal comments on the PWS tanker plan. 8/14/98. RPG\cplan.infl.cmmt\9808.615\jbr

Letter to Alyeska regarding the fenwal valves on the vapor control system. 8/13/98. Alyeska\fenwal.valve\9808.629\jbr

Recertification letter to RCAC member organizations. 8/12/98. Members\recertification\9808.103\sjaa

Letter to ADEC regarding testing of the vapor control system at the VMT. 8/8/98. ADEC\vapor.test\9808.629\jbr

Comments to ADEC and EPA on the performance test of the VMT vapor control system. 8/5/98. ADEC-EPA\vapor.test\9808.629\jbr

Comments to Alyeska regarding operation of the Fenwal valve in the vapor control system. 8/5/98. Alyeska\fenwal\9808.629\jbr

Letter to the City of Cordova recommending that Shari Vaughn be appointed to Copper River working group. 7/20/98.

Cdv\CRWGrep\9807.615.99\jba

Letter to ADEC, DGC, Dept. of Law and DNR regarding HB264 (negotiated rulemaking), and requesting that RCAC be notified of rulemaking developments. 7/17/98. ADEC-DGC\HB264\9807.650\sj

Comments to EPA and ADEC on Alyeska's assessment report of the ballast water treatment facility. 7/15/98. EPA-ADEC\bwtf.assess\9807.406\jk

## ARCO orders third double-hull tanker

ARCO Marine Inc. has ordered its third double-hull tanker for use in Prince William Sound. Like its sisters, the ship will be built by Avondale Industries in New Orleans, ARCO announced. The first of the three double-hull tankers, which ARCO refers to as its Millennium Class,

is due for in February 2000.

ARCO has also announced it will name the three 125,000-ton vessels after the ships used by English explorer James Cook, for whom Cook Inlet is named. The tankers will be called the ARCO Endeavour, the ARCO Resolution and the ARCO Discovery.

## Winter board meeting is in Anchorage

The citizens' council board of directors will hold its quarterly meeting at Anchorage's Hilton Hotel on Dec. 3 and 4.

The agenda includes:

- A staff-proposed recommendation to the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation that the agency request additional information before approving the 1998 oil tanker contingency plans filed by shippers of North Slope crude.
- A recommendation from the Terminal Operations and Environmental Monitoring Committee for an environmental monitoring program in Port Valdez.
- Proposed rewrite of the council's policy manual.
- Seating a replacement for

Michelle Hahn O'Leary, who has resigned as representative of the Cordova District Fishermen United.

- Choosing a new Legislative Affairs Committee.
- Staff reports on the council's non-indigenous species project, the long-term environmental monitoring project, community impacts planning, the incident monitoring program, and single-hull tanker phaseout requirements.
- Picking dates for the March meeting in Homer.

The council's annual volunteer appreciation party is the evening of Dec. 3 at the Hilton.



## 1999 Volunteer Recruitment

RCAC is seeking volunteers to serve on its advisory committees:

Scientific Advisory Committee  
Oil Spill Prevention and Response  
Port Operations and Vessel Traffic Systems  
Terminal Operations and Environmental Monitoring

Citizens living in the area affected by the Exxon Valdez oil spill and with the motivation to volunteer their time are encouraged to apply. RCAC is founded on the belief that those with the most to lose from oil pollution should be involved in decisions involving oil tanker traffic and operation of the Valdez Marine Terminal.

For more information or to obtain an application, please call (907) 277-7222, (800) 478-7221, email [pwsrcac@alaska.net](mailto:pwsrcac@alaska.net), or visit us at [www.alaska.net/~pwsrcac](http://www.alaska.net/~pwsrcac). Application deadline: January 29, 1999.

## Citizens' council works to improve communication with communities

By Leann Ferry  
Community Liaison

### Oil Spill Drills and Citizen Involvement

On September 22-23, staff, volunteers and contractors of the citizens' council participated in a Spill Of National Significance drill with British Petroleum.

During the drill we worked with the oil industry and government both on the water and in the emergency operations center in Valdez. We reported back to our member groups and communities with regular fax

updates about events as they unfolded during the drill. We also advised the Unified Command on environmental decisions including the use of oil spill dispersant chemicals.

We tested two-way communications with our communities and took calls on the council's oil spill information hotline. Thanks to all of you who called in or emailed us with questions and concerns about the drill and about oil spill chemical dispersants. We logged all calls and emails, reported what we were hearing from you back to the emergency operations center and will be using that feedback in comments to oil industry and government decision-makers.

If you have advice on how we could improve communications with your community in the event of an oil spill, please let us know.

### Alaska Municipal League

In November, we took the council's information booth to the 1998 Alaska Municipal League's Local Government Conference Week in Fairbanks. We like the AML conference because it allows us to visit with local leaders from many communities we serve in Prince William Sound, Kodiak, and Lower Cook Inlet areas. We talked with nearly a hundred people about the work of the citizen's council and signed on a dozen new names to our newsletter mailing list.

### Email Announcement List

For those of you on email, we will soon begin an email announcement list. We expect to send brief email messages once a week to keep subscribers updated on council-related issues and events and on the new information we post on our Website. Send email to [ferry@pobox.alaska.net](mailto:ferry@pobox.alaska.net) if you would like to subscribe, and request your name be added to the subscriber list. You will be able to cancel your subscription at any time.

### Council's Internet Website

The council's Website is up and running. You'll find information about upcoming council-related events and issues, as well as agendas, volunteer application packets, and

project information. You will also find links to other related organizations. If you have access to the Internet either at home or at your local library or school, visit our Website at [www.alaska.net/~pwsrca/](http://www.alaska.net/~pwsrca/).

### Volunteer Recruitment

The council is recruiting for its four volunteer advisory committees. Technical expertise is not mandatory for most committees. Individuals with an interest in promoting safe oil transportation are encouraged to apply. We will be running advertisements with local newspapers and radio stations throughout the month of January. If you would like an application or more information about this volunteer opportunity check our Website or contact our Anchorage office at 1-800-478-7221.

### We'd Like To Hear From You

Call our toll free number any time with questions about our work. If you know of an organization or audience interested in a presentation about the citizens' council or if you can provide feedback from your community, please let Community Corner know. You may contact me by phone at (800) 478-7221 (direct at 907-264-6235), or by email at [ferry@pobox.alaska.net](mailto:ferry@pobox.alaska.net).

### Community Corner



LEANN FERRY

## Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council

The Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council (RCAC) is an independent, non-profit corporation formed after the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill to minimize the environmental impacts of the trans-Alaska pipeline terminal and tanker fleet.

The council has 18 member organizations, including communities affected by the Exxon Valdez oil spill and groups representing commercial fishing, aquaculture, recreation, tourism, Alaska Native and environmental interests in the spill region.

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. The contract, which is in effect as long as oil flows through the pipeline, guarantees the council's independence, provides annual funding, and ensures the council the same access to terminal facilities as state and federal regulatory agencies.

*The council's mission: Citizens promoting environmentally safe operation of the Alyeska terminal and associated tankers.*

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