



The Observer

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

INSIDE

Volunteer profile: SAC's Roger Green, p. 2

New faces join council staff in Anchorage, Valdez, p. 2

Council puts on reception for Kenai assembly, p. 2

Devens: Year ahead will require vigilance, p. 3

Alyeska Viewpoint: 'Quiet competence' is goal, p. 4

Council wants realistic tanker rescue tests, p. 4

Experts wanted, p. 4

Guest opinion: Senator Lisa Murkowski, p. 5

TROG trends at tanker terminal concern council, p. 5

New sites for Geographic Response Strategies, p. 5

Council sponsors firefighter training, p. 5

Polar Discovery double-hull on way to Alaska, p. 6

Dispersants at the ready, p. 7

Community Corner, p. 8

Surprise drill demonstrates more surprise drills are needed

By Tony Parkin
Project Manager

At 5 a.m. on June 4, officials of the Coast Guard, the state of Alaska, and SeaRiver Maritime walked into the headquarters of Alyeska's Ship Escort/Response Vessel System in Valdez and informed the duty officer that a surprise drill was being called, effective immediately.

The scenario: A SeaRiver oil tanker had sprung a leak near Gold Creek and was in the process of spilling 300,000 barrels of North Slope crude into Port Valdez. The assignment: Clean it up in 72 hours.

(In fact, the 72 hours were compressed into a single work day for drill purposes.)

The callout culminated months of secret planning by the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, the Coast Guard, and the citizens' council. On the day before the drill, a SeaRiver official was informed in

See page 3, *Drill*



NEW BOAT – Valdez turned out in force to welcome its newest resident this summer when the Coast Guard cutter *Long Island* arrived in its new home port. The 110-foot vessel will be stationed full-time in Valdez. Its missions include search and rescue, homeland security, and domestic fisheries law enforcement. Mike Adams photo/Valdez Star.

Council is once again honored by U.S.-Canadian oil spill group for work in Sound

For the second time in its history, the citizens' council has received the Legacy Award bestowed annually by the Pacific States/British Columbia Oil Spill Task Force.

In conferring the 2003 Legacy Award at a July ceremony in Hawaii, the task force cited the council's work on establishing an iceberg-detection radar system in Prince William Sound. Legacy Award winners, said Jean Cameron, executive

coordinator of the task force, are "models for others in industry, government, and the public to emulate."

Legacy awards go to people or organizations that demonstrate innovation, management commitment, and improvements in oil spill prevention, preparedness, or response. Efforts to promote partnerships and involve the

See page 4, *Legacy*



Executive Director John Devens accepted the Legacy Award from Laurence Lau, Hawaii's Deputy Director for Environmental Health and chair of this summer's BC/States Task Force conference in Hawaii. Photo courtesy BC/States Task Force.

Council tracks development push as new governor and legislators take control

With the governor's mansion and the Alaska House and Senate all in the hands of pro-development Republicans, the 2003 legislative session saw numerous efforts to ease restrictions and regulations on natural-resource extraction in the state.

The effort, spearheaded by incoming Gov. Frank Murkowski, was largely

successful. Fortunately, none of the measures that saw action struck directly at the heart of the citizens' council's mission to promote environmentally safe operation of the Valdez Marine Terminal and associated tankers.

However, some measures on envi-

See page 6, *Juneau*

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Volunteer Profile

New volunteer brings strong record to work on council science committee

When Roger Green joined the Scientific Advisory Committee early this year, the citizens' council got a top gun in the field of environmental science.

Green, who holds a Ph.D. in zoology from Cornell University, has a resume' of research and publication in environmental science that goes back almost forty years. His work has taken him around the world, from Canada to Australia to Asia. He's written dozens of articles for academic journals, as well as a book -- on designing environmental studies -- that has become something of a standard reference in the field.

That book, "Sampling Design and Statistical Methods for Environmental Biologists," is still in print 24 years after its first publication. The 272-page volume is available today on Amazon.Com -- if you have the \$150 cover price!

More recently, Green helped oversee the numerous studies done on the impacts of the Exxon Valdez oil spill, and helped design a bowhead whale study on Alaska's North Slope for the federal government.

"He is a gold mine," said Lisa Ka'a'ihue, the project manager who works with the Scientific Advisory Committee. "Just about everyone in the environmental science field up here knows and respects Roger and has told me how lucky we are to have him as a volunteer. I also find him unique in that he communicates well with technical folks as well as lay folks. Many Ph.D. scientists don't have that ability."

Green was born in New York City, and moved with his parents to the Washington, D.C., area in his junior-high years. After high school, he got a bachelor of science degree in biology



In his home office, Roger Green sports a pair of Nerd Glasses, official eyewear of the Scientific Advisory Committee.

Photos by Stan Jones, citizens' council.



Green makes a point during a meeting of the committee.

from the College of William and Mary in Virginia, followed by four years of work at Cornell for the doctorate he received in 1965.

His first exposure to Prince William Sound came long before the Exxon Valdez spill. In 1960 and 1961 he was, as he describes it, "summer slave labor" in Cordova for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. One of his jobs: counting pink salmon.

After Cornell, he got a Fulbright fellowship that took him to Australia for a two-year study of Queensland's Moreton Bay. After that came a job at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution in Massachusetts.

Then, in the late 1960s came a job offer at a fresh-water research institute at the University of Manitoba in Canada. As he flew into Winnipeg, Green recalls, "Just from the plane, I

saw thousands of lakes. I said, 'Boy, there's a lot I can do here!'"

And so it was that Canada became his base for most of the next three decades. In addition to his fresh-water work, he did a major bivalve study in Hudson's Bay.

Over the years, however, he found himself doing less and less field work and more and more study design, leading to publication of his book on the subject in 1979.

Just as it came out, he took a position at the University of Western Ontario. He taught courses and took on an increasing amount of consulting work, which led him to such exotic locales as Malaysia, Singapore, and Australia.

1989 saw him involved with Prince William Sound again, in the aftermath of the Exxon Valdez spill. The state and

federal governments asked him to chair a three-member committee to oversee the design of the numerous studies of the spill's environmental impacts. At one point, he recalls, 72 studies were going on simultaneously in the area -- stretching from Prince William Sound to Kodiak Island and the Alaska Peninsula -- affected by the giant spill.

After his retirement from the University of Western Ontario in 1999, Green spent time in Asia, where, among other things, he was visiting professor at a Malaysian university.

Late last year, Green arrived back in Alaska -- this time to stay a while -- after his wife took a job as professor in the College of Education at the University of Alaska Anchorage.

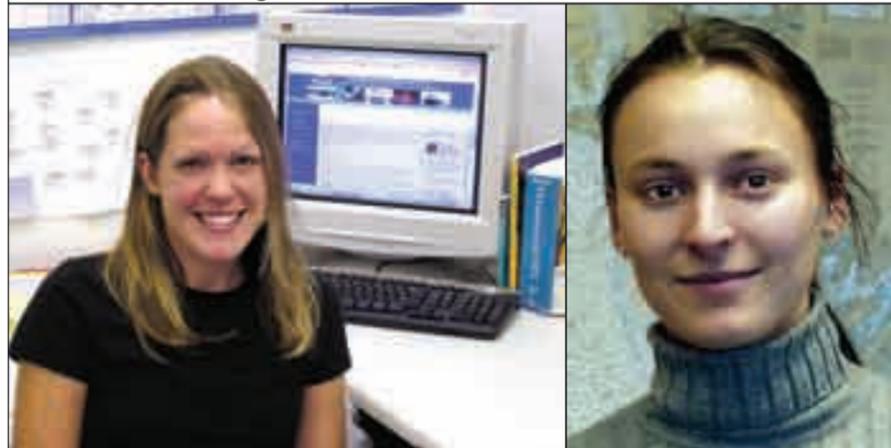
"With my whole Prince William Sound connection and history, it was very much like going back to something, which appealed to me," Green said.

Since settling into a home in southeast Anchorage early this year, Green has continued his consulting work, is writing another book, and has become a major contributor on the Scientific Advisory Committee.

It took him some time, he said, to grasp exactly what the citizens' council is and does. It's a private non-profit corporation, yet it has a government mandate and a broadly diverse board of member-entity representatives based primarily on geography.

"It's forced to be democratic," Green said. "Therefore, it's going to appear to be inefficient at times. But I'm not going to criticize it for being less efficient than some company, because it's not a company. I think it operates the way it has to operate."

New faces join the council's staff roster



Two new employees have signed on with the citizens' council in the past few months.

Tracy Leithauser, above left, became permanent in July as Information Systems Assistant, after starting as a temporary hire last December. Her largest responsibility is maintaining the council's web site, www.pwsrca.org. She works in the Anchorage office.

Leithauser has a bachelor's degree in English from Lewis and Clark College in Portland, Oregon and attends a part-time master's degree program through the University of Washington. She was raised in Anchorage and enjoys hiking, snowboarding, running, and the Chugach Mountains.

Agota Horel, above right, started

early this month as an intern in the council's Valdez office, where she will be working with staff on oil-spill preparedness and best available technology issues, conducting research and providing administrative support.

Horel arrived in Alaska last year. She grew up in western Hungary and attended Szechenyi Istvan University, Győr, where she obtained a bachelor's degree in municipal/civil engineering and completed most of the work for a degree in transportation engineering. She attends Prince William Sound Community College, where she is studying for a bachelor of science and technology degree in business, with a focus on oil spill response/safety management.

THE OBSERVER is the free quarterly newsletter of the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council. Except as noted, articles are written by Stan Jones, Public Information Manager. To subscribe, contact him at 907-273-6230 or jones@pwsrca.org. Or, contact a council office (see back page).

Council's web site gets bigger and better

The councils' new web site, launched in early June, has vastly increased the amount of information available to the public on the council's mission, history, studies, projects, and outreach efforts. The site's calendar of events is updated weekly, as are the "What's New" links on the home page. Recently added features include photo galleries and specially

commissioned digital maps of the citizens' council region.

Work is under way on a comprehensive database of the council's studies and reports, a database of comments submitted by the council to regulators and industry, and a newsroom page posting recent and past media releases.



The citizens' council web site can be found at www.pwsrca.org on the Internet.

Please pay us a visit at www.pwsrca.org.

Council throws reception for Kenai assembly

The council sponsored a June 17 reception at the borough building in Kenai. Members of the Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly attended and discussed some of the council's current projects. Representing the council were Steve Lewis, council president; Blake Johnson, council

secretary; Jerry Brookman, chair of the OSPR committee; and staffers John Devens, Marilyn Leland and Linda Robinson. Anyone interested in having a reception or presentation in their community should contact Linda Robinson, Community Liaison in the Anchorage office.

Past year saw much achievement; coming year will require much vigilance

As summer ends and we put away our fishing gear and vacation clothes, this is a good time to take stock of what the citizen's council achieved over the past year, and the challenges we confront in the coming year.

Our accomplishments included startup of the iceberg radar system in Prince William Sound, continued funding of the Long Term Environmental Monitoring Program, cooperative work with regulators and industry on contingency plan reviews, and unconditional recertification by the United States Coast Guard. We have also continued our work on non-indigenous species that come into Prince William Sound in ballast water, a problem that will only increase as the new double hull tankers come on line.

Internally, we have improved operations in several ways. We conducted a major expansion of our web site, www.pwsrca.org, and we have created an electronic management

system to keep track of the huge trove of documents accumulated since we formed 14 years ago. We are placing more emphasis on getting our highly qualified professional staff into the field for direct observation of operations by Alyeska and the oil shipping companies.

Under the heading of challenges, the most striking development was the unfolding of a new corporate and political climate that will require more vigilance by citizens than ever before.

In Valdez, Alyeska Pipeline Service Co. has undergone another corporate reorganization, resulting in several hundred fewer workers and major changes in procedures. In Juneau, our new governor and state legislature are working to increase natural-resource development by streamlining the permitting process.



John Devens

Ensuring these changes don't lead to a relaxation of environmental protections will require the council to spend more time, money, and effort on its mission of promoting the safe transportation of Alaska North Slope crude oil.

On the corporate front, we continue to monitor the effects of Alyeska's move, launched two years ago, to reduce staff and to cut costs in other ways. Our concern that complacency may set in again, as it did before the 1989 Exxon Valdez spill, led us to increase our oversight at the Valdez tanker terminal, including close attention to the ballast water treatment system, the fire protection system, air pollution, and the increase in oily wastes discharged into Prince William Sound. As part of our efforts in this regard, we conducted research and provided infor-

mation to the Environmental Protection Agency and the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation on the need for air- and water-quality regulations at the terminal.

On the political front, we found it necessary to expend more time and effort on monitoring legislative and administrative streamlining efforts that could affect the safety of oil transportation. We took a major role in providing information and advice to citizens, legislators and the executive branch on bills dealing with the Alaska Coastal Management Plan, contingency plans, and right-of-way permits for the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System. We anticipate even more effort will be needed in future years as the state continues to push ahead with its streamlining initiatives.

As we get further in time from the Exxon Valdez spill and the industry continues its drive to cut costs, ever more vigilance will be required to prevent a return to complacency.

DRILL: Next one will be less of a surprise

Continued from Page 1

confidence, as were the council staffers who were to act as observers and controllers during the drill. Otherwise, it was a surprise to the participants, as far as can be determined.

Two Transrec barges were mobilized, each capable of corralling, skimming and storing over 100,000 barrels of recovered oil. Also, the *Valdez Star* oil skimming vessel was mobilized, along with eight fishing vessels and numerous observation vessels and support staff. Alyeska's Valdez Emergency Operations Center was activated to a limited extent, as was the council office in the center.

During the drill, observers and controllers from the state, the Coast Guard, and the council were in the field evaluating the response actions of this large equipment deployment. Primary response functions being assessed in the drill were task force management, barge and skimming operations, oil recovery by the *Valdez Star*, and site control. Site control refers to setting up zones on the barges and the *Valdez Star* that suffer various degrees of oiling, and restricting movement between the zones. Decontamination and cleaning procedures of the responders and their equipment were also exercised.

This was a large drill involving many responders and three separate cleanup platforms and the results varied tremendously. Generally, the skimming operations on one barge were successful but due to problems in task force management and equipment deployment, the second barge was slower in starting

skimming operations. Some confusion over barge loading and decanting was noted and some lack of realism because of a "this is only a drill" mindset.

Overall, the drill was disappointing and did not go as well as was hoped and certainly not as well as previous drills and exercises involving deployment of the same equipment. It produced many lessons learned and showed a need for more intense and constant training for Alyeska's marine responders. As a result, the state of Alaska determined that another unannounced drill was necessary before the end of 2003.

However, the state decided to include a shipper representative and the manager of Alyeska's Ship Escort/Response Vessel System in planning this next drill. The state argued that including Alyeska and the shippers would sharpen the drill planning and make the upcoming event a more closely run and scrutinized performance by the Alyeska crews and their contractors.

The citizens' council has serious concerns about this approach.

"The state can hardly call it a surprise drill if they warn the parties in advance," said Executive Director John Devens. "We don't consider this a meaningful test of Alyeska's readiness to respond to oil spills."

As the Observer went to press, the planners had set the date and scenario of the next drill. Since the June drill, an increase has been observed in Alyeska's training activities in Port Valdez and everyone expects a far better showing in the next drill.

"The state can hardly call it a surprise drill if they warn the parties in advance. We don't consider this a meaningful test of Alyeska's readiness to respond to oil spills."
— John Devens



Scenes from a surprise drill

Top: Council Project Manager Tony Parkin uses chocolate syrup to demonstrate decontamination procedures. **Center:** Oil skimmers are deployed inside a boom enclosure during the drill. **Bottom:** An escort/response tug ties up alongside a TransRec barge. Photos by Becky Lewis and Tony Parkin.

At Alyeska, "quiet competence" is emerging goal for company workplace

By Greg Jones

Senior Vice President
Operations and Maintenance
Alyeska Pipeline Service Co.

In the ongoing conversation between Alyeska and the citizens' council about Alyeska's performance and the council's expectations for that performance, we each often single out particular projects, events or significant issues. In this Observer, I would like to take a moment to share information about some of the less visible but no less important aspects of our work by which we assess ourselves – aspects of our work that shape our emerging vision of "quiet competence."

In any business -- in our case, the transportation of oil -- if one hopes to be successful it helps to define the criteria for success. At Alyeska, we determine success (or its opposite) with reference to "performance metrics" – observable, measurable indicators that cover the important aspects of our operations. Meeting our performance metrics is achieved through day-to-day effort. A goal of "no one gets hurt," for example, is simply a slogan unless no one gets hurt today, and tomorrow, and the day after tomorrow, and so on. The path to achieving such a goal or to meeting any performance metric can appear "routine." And that is a challenge for everyone in our workforce:

how to make the performance that both Alaskans and our owners expect "routine."

Here at Alyeska's Valdez operations, we have a good story to tell. On July 23, our Ship Escort/Response Vessel System, or SERVS, reached a milestone when the 9,000th tanker since establishment of SERVS in 1989 was escorted safely through Prince William Sound. We recognize that as an achievement, and a testament to the hard work of the men and women of SERVS and our contractors, even as together we acknowledge that we're only as good as our last escort.

In May and June, the State Fire Marshal's office conducted an inspection of over 300 different Alyeska facilities, including those at the terminal. In the letter that accompanied his report, the fire marshal's office commented that it was "evident that Alyeska management and employees have been working on the company's fire prevention program." His letter recognized this joint effort as "outstanding" and, more importantly, one that "has made Alyeska a safer place to work." While there is still room for improvement, this progress reflects teamwork,

shared purpose, and day-to-day attention to detail.

Alyeska's Valdez operations are steadily improving performance against challenging metrics for spills. Thus far this year, there have been eleven spills at the terminal or SERVS, for a total of 20 gallons, 10 gallons of which involved crude oil (a spill to land from a leaking valve seal). During this same period over 220 million barrels (or over 9.3 billion gallons) of crude oil were shipped through the terminal. We're making substantial progress in the important safety arena as well. There have been

three recordable injuries year-to-date in Valdez, and, company-wide, we have a recordable rate that is a third of that from last year, and currently ranks among the best in the Alaskan oil and gas industry. The goal of "no one gets hurt" still remains to be met, but the improvement over preceding years is noteworthy. One group, the Oil Movements and Storage team, is setting the pace, by working safely without a single recordable injury over the past three years. These achievements have taken place while the terminal has moved one million barrels of oil a day, with 100 percent reliability.

Alyeska Viewpoint



Greg Jones

Henry Thoreau once wrote that "Success usually comes to those who are too busy to be looking for it." He could have been describing our employees, whose day-to-day effort begins with tailgate safety meetings and incorporates daily pursuit of efficiency, cost savings, application of lessons learned, and a renewed emphasis on sharing information across organizational lines. We ask everyone for their input, and ask ourselves, what is the right thing to do? And we are getting better results. Our maintenance team has improved their "tool time" – the time spent on the job as a proportion of total hours worked. Our terminal staff have found ways to optimize vehicle use, and have been able to reduce the size of Alyeska's vehicle fleet. The cafeteria in our new office building has become a place where technicians in coveralls can grab lunch with managers, where suggestions are shared and questions asked and answered. Our achievement of our performance metrics so far this year has been the result of every employee's effort.

We've come up with a term for this effort. We call it "quiet competence." This day-to-day effort that doesn't make the news is a key component in assuring that we meet our safety, compliance, environmental and operational objectives. But then, at Alyeska, we would rather be competent than newsworthy.

Council wants tanker rescue tests held in realistic Hinchinbrook weather conditions

The citizens' council has called on oil shipping companies and Alyeska Pipeline Service Co. to conduct towing exercises in the kind of harsh weather that oil-laden tankers often encounter at Hinchinbrook Entrance, where they pass from Prince William Sound into the Gulf of Alaska.

Loaded tankers are allowed to make the Hinchinbrook passage if seas are less than 15 feet and winds are less than 45 knots (about 52 m.p.h.). But the ability of Alyeska's escort tugs to rescue a disabled tanker has been tested only in much milder weather. The company says rescues at closure conditions are too risky to attempt except in a real emergency, but maintains that engineering analyses and the trials in mild weather demonstrate

that its tugs could successfully rescue a tanker in closure conditions.

The council's position is that it is environmentally unsafe to move oil in conditions in which it is unsafe to practice saving disabled tankers.

"How can it be expected that a rescue can be effected at closure conditions in a safe manner if crews are not experienced and practiced in operating in such conditions?" Executive Director John Devens wrote in a May 14 letter to Alyeska and other participants in the Valdez oil trade. The council board voted to seek the exercises at its quarterly meeting in Valdez earlier that month.

After the letter was sent, a working group was formed to try and bring about the heavy-weather exercises. While test-



Alyeska and the tanker companies do conduct towing exercises, but usually in good weather, as in this photo from August 2002. Photo by Stan Jones, citizens' council.

ing criteria have been developed, as of Observer press time, one exercise had been conducted in calm conditions.

"We're going to be pushing hard

for meaningful towing exercises as the winter weather sets in after the autumn equinox," said Project Manager Tony Parkin.

LEGACY: Radar project award is second one council has received

Continued from Page 1

public are favored, according to a task force news release.

The council received a double nomination for the award. One came from the US Coast Guard Marine Safety Office in Valdez, and the other from the Alaska Tanker Company, which carries oil for BP.

In his nomination letter, Commander Mark Swanson of the Valdez Coast Guard office told the task force that the council's coordination of the multi-stakeholder project "helped ensure the ice radar was built years earlier and at hundreds of thousands of dollars less than if any one organization tried to complete the project alone."

The council's "extraordinary efforts to enhance navigational safety and protect the environment of Prince William

Sound are in keeping with the highest ideals of excellence in public service and are highly deserving of wider recognition," Swanson wrote.

Captain John Lawrence of Alaska Tanker Company said in his nomination letter that the oil trade and other users of Prince William Sound are already benefiting from information provided by the ice radar system on Reef Island. "The project was exemplary in leadership, innovation and commitment to improvement of oil spill prevention," Lawrence wrote.

The citizens' council won its first Legacy Award in 2000, for developing a guidebook to aid communities facing man-made disasters such as oil spills.

"The success of our ice radar project illustrates once again what can be achieved when all the stakeholders in Prince William Sound -- citizens, regu-

lators and industry -- cooperate for the common good," said John Devens, executive director of the citizens' council. "We're greatly honored to receive this award."

Other recipients of the Legacy Award this year included Titan Maritime of Ft. Lauderdale, Florida; Sause Brothers Ocean Towing Company of Coos Bay, Oregon; and Margot Brown of Alameda, California.

The Pacific States/British Columbia Oil Spill Task Force has worked since 1989 to coordinate oil-spill prevention and response policies affecting thousands of miles of coastline from the Beaufort Sea to the Baja Peninsula and the islands of Hawaii. Its members are directors of the oil spill prevention and response agencies in Hawaii, California, Oregon, Washington, British Columbia, and Alaska.

Are you an expert?

The citizens' council routinely retains expert professionals to assist us in carrying out research, commenting on contingency plans, peer-reviewing reports, and other tasks related to our mission of promoting safe oil transportation. The council consults experts in a wide variety of fields such as oil-related environmental law, oil tanker safety, and oil- and hydrocarbon-related environmental monitoring.

If you have expertise that could benefit the citizens' council, we invite you to fill out a brief survey form.

You can download the form at our web site, www.pwsrca.org, or request one by phone or email to the council office in Anchorage or Valdez. (See back page for contact information.)

Guest Opinion

Alaska not totally free of invasive species, those pests who come to dine

By U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski

Most Alaskans consider themselves fortunate to live here. We are blessed to be a part of the largest, wildest, most beautiful and most exciting state in the Union.

And among our many blessings has been freedom from the worst kinds of exotic invasive species, such as the zebra mussels that plague other regions of the country. We can thank distance, climate and foresight.

Unfortunately, we cannot be completely free of invaders that can threaten our own indigenous plants and creatures, nor are we free of the responsibility to prevent dangerous organisms from gaining a foothold. Among the most dangerous are aquatic invasive species, because their colonies may go unnoticed until they are well-established and harder to eradicate.

Alaska has strong laws to prevent exotic species from becoming permanent residents. It's too bad such laws only work to deter people from deliberately introducing exotic species.

Even then, some species may find humans willing to help them out. The Northern pike now infesting Southcentral Alaska drainages come to mind, along with the yellow perch that someone dropped into a lake on the Kenai. Luckily, the latter was discovered and eradicated – we think. Both species

are capable of decimating native fish, including salmon.

Plants can be threats, too. Aquatic species such as Japanese knotweed, Reed Canarygrass and Foxtail barley are colonizing in some parts of Alaska. Where they thrive, they can overwhelm Alaskan species. They don't care that they were supposed to be ornamental additions to someone's garden; in the wild, they are on their own.

But the worst threat may be from species that can't read the laws and are adept at hitchhiking to new places.

A number of aquatic invasive species and at least one non-aquatic species of significant concern have found their way to Alaska already. Others are near our border, and still more appear to be headed our way.

Atlantic salmon – escapees from salmon farms in British Columbia or Washington state -- are another threat. They have been found in streams from Southeast Alaska to Prince William Sound, and in ocean waters as far north as the Bering Sea. Natural reproduction of escaped Atlantic salmon has been observed in British Columbia streams, and it is possible this species could find a foothold in Alaska that

would be disastrous for Pacific salmon using the same streams.

Several other species have not yet been observed in Alaska, but are considered imminent threats, and Prince William Sound may be where they show up first.

The European green crab is an example; it became established in California and has moved as far north as Vancouver Island. It is highly aggressive, and preys on juveniles of other crab species, as well as on clams, mussels, urchins, other fish and plants. In Alaska, all the major crab species – king, Dungeness and Tanner – could be at risk if it becomes established here.

Another is the Chinese mitten crab, which is now at home in the San Francisco area and may be moving northward. One specimen has been found near the mouth of the Columbia River. Because this creature comes into fresh water to spawn, potentially moving hundreds of miles up rivers, it is a serious threat.

Larvae of both crab species could travel in ballast water entering Alaska from Outside. Valdez harbor is especially vulnerable, as it receives the third-largest volume of ballast water of any U.S. port, due to the regular

arrival of tankers filling up on Alaska North Slope crude. Many of these arrive from ports already infested with invasive species. This is a significant and continuing threat, although to date only a small number of problems have been detected.

I strongly support efforts to develop technologies and practices to meet this challenge. Among the promising ideas is a new method of introducing ozone into ballast water when it is pumped aboard and when it is discharged; so far, it has shown excellent results in removing small biological hitchhikers. This research has been funded by BP. The oil industry's willingness to step forward on this issue should be recognized and applauded.

Another technology under development involves reducing air pressure in the ballast water tank and introducing inert gas via bubbler pipes near the bottom. This creates an oxygen-poor environment that may kill a variety of unwanted species, including some too large and hardy for ozone treatment.

These technologies, and others under development, have a long way to go. But the fact that they are being developed is positive. The problem of aquatic invasive species is not being ignored, and the government's obligation to address it will not be overlooked.



Sen. Murkowski

Council keeps wary eye on TROG trends from the Ballast Water Treatment Facility

The citizens' council is watching a worrisome uptrend in releases of oil and grease into Prince William Sound from the Ballast Water Treatment Facility at Alyeska's Valdez tanker terminal.

The hydrocarbon content of the output from the ballast water facility is called Total Recoverable Oil and Gas, or TROG. From 1994 through 2000, TROG releases dropped from about 1 barrel per day to about half a barrel.

At the start of 2001, however, the

situation turned around and TROG began increasing, according to a council analysis of records kept by Alyeska. From an average of 0.6 barrels per day in January 2001, TROG rose to an average of 0.93 barrels per day in July of this year.

That's an increase of just over 50 percent, and it came despite the fact that the amount of water being treated at the facility was declining -- from about 253,000 barrels a day in January

2001 to about 238,000 barrels a day in July 2003.

"It's something worth watching," said Tom Kuckertz, the council's project manager for terminal-related issues. "It's contrary to what you would expect."

Even with the increases, TROG levels are not close to exceeding regulatory limits. The main regulatory requirement is that TROG in output from

the ballast water facility not produce a visible sheen. At the current throughput of 238,000 barrels of ballast water per day, TROG releases would have to reach an estimated 3-4 barrels per day to produce a sheen, Kuckertz said.

The council has asked Alyeska for an explanation but has not made a major issue of the increases because TROG levels are still well below the regulatory threshold.

New Geographic Response Strategies sites selected

This summer, a work group that included the citizens' council selected an additional 22 sites in Prince William Sound and the Copper River delta for development of Geographic Response Strategies, which are oil spill response plans closely tailored to the needs and character of each site.



One of the new Geographic Response Strategy sites selected this summer is near the council member community of Tatitlek, shown above. Photo by Tim Robertson.

The sites selected were: Sawmill Bay (near Valdez), Olsen Bay, Upper Sheep Bay, Fairmont Island, Lone Island, Point Pellew, South Bay, Makaka Creek, Windy Bay, Eshamy Bay, Point Erlington, Stockdale Harbor, McCleod Harbor, Bay of Isles-South Arm, Bay of Isles-West Arm, Mouth of Copper River Haul-Out, Inside Egg Island, Mouth of Bering River,

Martin/Fox Island, Northern Wingham Island, Orca Inlet Mouth, and Boswell Bay/Snake Creek.

Geographic Response Strategies have already been developed for a total of 124 sites in Prince William Sound, the Lower Kenai Peninsula, Kodiak and Cook Inlet. A total of 52 more are under development, including those selected this summer.

Council sponsors firefighter training

Early in October, the council and several partners will make it possible for land-based firefighters from coastal Alaska to travel to Valdez for training in fighting shipboard fires.

The occasion is the third Marine Firefighting for Land-based Firefighters Symposium organized by the council. It takes place Oct. 1-3 and will result in college credit from the Prince William Sound Community College.

The curriculum is to include live exercises with hands-on training for fighting fires on small vessels, at tank farms, and on oil tankers (subject to the availability of a tanker). The training is needed because, in most small communities, the local land-based fire department will be the only one available to respond to

shipboard fires.

Marine firefighting is different from land-based firefighting in several ways. For example, marine firefighters have to have a dewatering plan for the vessel involved. Otherwise, the water used to extinguish the fire might sink the vessel.

The council's partners in the event include the Alaska Division of Emergency Services; Tatitlek Chenega Chugach, LLC; Prince William Sound Community College; City of Valdez; Alaska Tanker Company; SeaRiver Maritime; Polar Tankers; Crowley Marine; Alyeska Pipeline Service Co.; and the South West Alaska Pilots Association.

Instructors for the symposium are all firefighters from West Coast fire departments.



These men participated in the citizens' council's first firefighter training symposium in 1997. Photo by Donn Silvis.

Canadian conference draws council attendees

The annual Arctic and Marine Oilspill Program Conference sponsored by Environment Canada was held June 9-12 in Victoria B.C. Attending this year's conference were Jerry Brookman, representing the Oil Spill Prevention and Response committee; Tom Copeland, Oil Spill Region Environmental Coalition's representative on the council; and staffers Janelle Cowan and Linda Robinson.

Papers presented at this conference included Physical and Chemical Properties, and Behaviour of Spilled Oil; Biological Effects of Oil and

Hydrocarbons and Oil Biodegradation; Countermeasures for Oil Spills: a) Containment and Recovery, b) Oil Spill Treating Agents, c) In-situ burning; Shoreline Protection and Cleanup; Detection, Tracking and Remote Sensing; Spill Modeling; Activity Updates and Contingency Planning and Recent Spill Exercises.

The council's papers on dispersant use were distributed as were other publications of the council. The full proceedings (two volumes) are available at council offices in Anchorage and Valdez.

Polar Discovery to begin Alaska service

The *Polar Discovery*, ConocoPhillips' newest double-hull tanker, was delivered in early September to Polar Tankers, the oil company's shipping subsidiary. It will join its two sister ships, the *Polar Endeavour* and *Polar Resolution*, in carrying Alaska crude oil to the West Coast and Hawaii.



The *Polar Discovery* was delivered to Polar Tankers early this month. Photo courtesy ConocoPhillips.

"We are committed

to operating and maintaining the safest and most environmentally sound vessels available," said Antonio Valdes, general manager of ConocoPhillips' marine division.

The new tanker is an Endeavour Class vessel, with 10 feet of space between the inner and outer hulls, two independent engine rooms, redundant propulsion and twin steering systems, a bow thruster and state of the art navi-

gation systems. Northrop Grumman Ship Systems in Avondale, La., built the vessel.

Two additional Endeavour Class tankers are currently under construction at the Avondale shipyard and are scheduled for delivery in 2004 and 2005, according to a ConocoPhillips press release. The company says its entire U.S. flag tanker fleet will be double-hulled by 2008.

JUNEAU: Coastal management program gets a major overhaul from governor, legislators

Continued from Page 1

ronmental issues were of enough general concern that the council took action during the session. Most of our attention was focused on two of the governor's bills. The measure of greatest interest was one making extensive changes to the Alaska Coastal Management Program, greatly reducing the role of local communities in the permitting of development projects. The other measure of council interest lengthened the contingency plan renewal cycle from three years to five.

Alaska Coastal Management Program

As first introduced, this legislation would have eliminated local Coastal Resource Service Areas, the local groups that review proposed projects for consistency with local regulations, and the Coastal Policy Council, which hears appeals from consistency determinations.

After much protest by the Alaska Municipal League, the citizens' council, and others, the Murkowski administration drafted a substitute bill that retained the coastal service areas and preserved their local enforceable policies -- that is, the local rules governing projects in the coastal zone.

But the final version of the bill did eliminate much of the right of coastal

service areas to impose local enforceable policies regarding air, land, or water quality, or a host of other subjects.

Many districts felt the bill removed their ability to regulate any aspect of coastal projects to protect their local resources. During hearings, the administration claimed the core of local authority would be retained, but the wording of the bill makes it doubtful that local communities will continue to have the ability to impose meaningful local policies, according to Doug Mertz, the council's legislative monitor for the session.

Local districts were also concerned because the bill requires them to review and submit changes in current policies to conform to the new law on a tight schedule without a guarantee of state financial support.

The council was quite active on this bill, writing several letters to the administration and to the chairs of committees that held hearings on the bill. The council argued unsuccessfully that problems with the bill could best be resolved by holding it and creating a task force of stakeholders to work on it over the legislative interim.

In addition, the council organized a grass-roots campaign via email to advise coastal organizations -- including the council's member entities -- on the effects of the bill and how they could

Council opposes loosening of rules on tanker smoke

The citizens' council is opposing a proposal by the state to allow oil tankers to continue discharging ballast water and loading oil at the Valdez terminal even if they are putting out illegal amounts of smoke.

Since the early 1990s, Alyeska Pipeline Service Co. has been required to halt deballasting and loading if a tanker's smoke exceeds permitted levels.

However, Alyeska last year requested an end to the shutdown requirement, arguing, among other things, that a berthed vessel was not under its operation or control.

Though state regulators rejected other changes sought by Alyeska, they have proposed granting the company's request on the shutdown requirement.

The council has opposed the change since Alyeska first made its request. The council, Executive Director John Devens wrote in May 2002, "is very concerned that the proposed changes to Alyeska's operating permit will adversely affect the environmental quality of the Prince William Sound air shed."

Opacity of tanker smoke is evaluated visually by trained observers at the Alyeska terminal. Since 1997, 45 opacity violations have been recorded there. Several lasted more than three hours, and two lasted more than six hours.

One of the more famous opacity problems occurred in July 2001, when Phillips Petroleum, amid much fanfare, sailed its first new double-hull tanker, the *Polar Endeavour*, into Valdez for the first time. A certified smoke reader noted a series of opacity violations by the *Endeavour* and by another Phillips tanker at about the same time, and Phillips' shipping arm, Polar Tankers, eventually paid the state a fine for opacity violations.

Dropping the shutdown requirement, Devens wrote state regulators last month, "can only result in longer and more frequent opacity violation episodes."

The state is expected to make a final decision on the rule by early October of this year.

Council Meeting Schedule

The citizen's council board holds quarterly board meetings in March, May, September and December of each year. The March and December, meetings are in Anchorage, the May meeting is in Valdez, and the September meeting rotates among the council's other member communities. Here is the meeting schedule for the coming year:

December 2003: Anchorage, Dec. 4-5

March 2004: Anchorage, March 11-12

May 2004: Valdez, May 13-14

September 2004: Kenai, Sept. 23-24

December 2004: Anchorage, Dec. 2-3.

For information, contact our Anchorage or Valdez office (see back page).

contact legislators and the administration with their concerns and their proposals for fixing the problems in the bill.

After the main coastal management bill passed, the situation for local residents became worse. A House bill that initially had nothing to do with the coastal management program was amended late in the legislative session to restrict the ability of persons other than local districts and permit applicants themselves to appeal coastal management decision. The bill also declared all Cook Inlet oil and gas projects to be in compliance with coastal management laws.

Contingency Plan Renewal Cycle

Another bill of council interest increased the period for contingency plan renewals from three years to five years. The bill passed the Legislature with little opposition and was signed into law by the governor. The council contacted legislators voicing some concerns over the bill, but did not actively oppose it.

Air Quality Legislation

The council tracked a handful of other bills, but ended up not taking action for or against them. Foremost among these was a measure changing how air quality emission permits are processed.

Murkowski's transmittal letter described this measure as making air-quality permitting more "efficient" and "predictable." It was largely the product of an air quality working group of many stakeholders, including the citizens' council. Among other things, it allows the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation to incorporate some aspects of federal permitting that do away with individualized permits in favor of general permits based on best management practices.

The council retained a contractor to analyze this measure. After the contractor concluded it comported with the conclusions of the working group in which the council participated, the council elected not to oppose the bill.

State Budget

While the governor's cuts to the state budget have made headlines across Alaska all summer, none of them had a major impact on the budget for Spill Prevention and Response in the Department of Environmental Conservation, which is the state agency most active on issues of concern to the council. Most of the Spill Prevention and Response budget comes from a dedicated fund based on oil flow through the trans-Alaska pipeline, and that money cannot be used for any other purpose.

Dispersants at the ready



1. If a chemical dispersant is approved for use on an oil spill in Prince William Sound, it will come from a storage facility in Anchorage, where Corexit 9527 is kept in bulk tanks, left, and in drums, not shown.



2. At the storage facility, the dispersant would be pumped into a trailer-mounted tank, shown above, and hauled to Anchorage's Ted Stevens International Airport.



3. At the airport, the dispersant- tank would be inserted into the cargo bay of a Lynden Air Cargo Hercules aircraft.



4. At the spill, the Hercules lowers its cargo door, the spraying rig extends, and dispersant application begins. In these photos, taken during an exercise early this month, water was used instead of dispersant, and the "spill" scene was in Cook Inlet.



Unanswered questions — Even if dispersants could be delivered and applied to a North Slope crude spill, should they? The council questions both the effectiveness and toxicity of dispersants, and wants more research on both topics. The council believes dispersants should be used only when mechanical recovery methods, such as skimming, aren't working.

Photos by Stan Jones and Tony Parkin, citizens' council

Council Reports Available to the Public

Single copies of scientific and technical reports produced or received by the citizens' council are available free to the public. To make a request, contact either council office listed on the back page of the Observer.

Final report on Coherent UHF radar for ice detection. C-CORE, 7/31/2003. [855.431.030731.UHFrpCCORE.pdf](#)

Final report summarizing the development of an Non-indigenous Species Database. Susan Harvey, Environmental Solutions, 6/2/2003. [952.431.030602.NISdatabase.doc](#)

Final report summarizing the development of the Non-indigenous Species Database as requested by PWSRCAC under contract No. 952.03.1. Susan Harvey, Environmental Solutions, 4/30/2003. [952.431.030430.ESnisFNLrept.pdf](#)

A letter introducing the analytical reports for the intercomparison samples for PWS LTEMP Project from the Summer 2002 collection. The three parts to this are labeled 951.431.030428.LTEMPreportsFolder. Guy J. Denoux, Ph.D, Geochemical & Environmental Research Group, 4/28/2003. [951.431.030428.LTEMPreports.pdf](#)

Analytical Report Prince William Sound RCAC Long-Term Environmental Monitoring Project Sample Delivery Group CC741/Analytical Report No. CC741-A. Geochemical & Environmental Research Group, 4/28/2003. [951.431.030428.LTEMPcc741&a](#)

Analytical Report Prince William Sound RCAC Long-Term Environmental Monitoring Project Sample Delivery Group CC742/Analytical Report No. CC742-A. Geochemical & Environmental Research Group, 4/28/2003. [951.431.030428.LTEMPcc472&a.pdf](#)



REALITY CHECK – Council project manager Tony Parkin traveled to Norway this summer to observe oil-spill tests using real crude on the ocean. Here, a TransRec skimmer removes crude oil trapped inside a Snurpelense boom. Plans to test Alyeska's OceanBuster boom fell through because of severe weather at the test site in the Frigg oil field approximately 100 miles west of Bergen, Norway. Photo by Tony Parkin, citizens' council.

Community Corner

Tatitlek festival celebrates culture of a Prince William Sound village

For the ninth year, the village of Tatitlek hosted the Tatitlek Heritage Festival. Staffers Tamara Byrnes and I were invited to attend, and it was wonderful to observe students learning native crafts and to experience their culture. Tatitlek is 25 miles south of Valdez in Prince William Sound and has a population of 90. This year 126 students from Nanwalek, Port Graham, Valdez, Cordova, Tetlin/Tok (Northway), Anchorage and Tatitlek participated in the festivities May 5-9. Visiting students were housed in Tatitlek's mariculture building and in the school.

Sue Johnson, who has planned the event for the past three years, said that students were divided into groups of high school, middle school and primary school students, and offered native culture courses throughout the week. Courses included Native Youth Olympics with instructor Nick Randazzo; beading, Phyllis Sanford; wood carving, Jim Miller and Bob Shaw; skin sewing, Monica Riedel and Patience Andersen Faulkner (who represents Cordova District Fishermen United on our council); dance and drum, Ben Snowball; dressmaking, Lorinda Vlasoff, and basketmaking, Donna Merek. Rena Belgarde taught fish processing, including pickling, smoking and canning salmon.

For the third year, Tatitlek was the first community to pull salmon from Prince William Sound, having received a special permit from Fish and Game. Salmon was served throughout the week, and many jars of salmon canned by the students were on display with the other craft items on the final night.

Each evening focused on a special activity. Monday featured a welcome potluck. Tuesday was appreciation night, this year in honor of teacher Phyllis Sanford, who has taught in Tatitlek for nine years. Also recognized was student Theresa Totemoff.

Wednesday night was a regional forum, followed by a talent show on Thursday. Friday night was the big potlatch and auction (which raised almost \$9,000 this year, to be used to put on next year's festival.) A boat was chartered from Valdez to bring in personnel and families from the oil

industry and US Coast Guard, as well as two members of the council staff.

All of the crafts made during the week were displayed and the high school students entertained with music. The middle school students presented a fashion show of the garments they had made, and there was a Native Youth Olympics demonstration. Later in the evening, a DJ played music until the early hours.

Sue Johnson suggested that anyone interested in donating to the auction, helping out in any way, or participating in the festival should

contact her at 907-325-2255, or Gary Kompkoff at 907-325-2311.



Linda Robinson

Grab Those Crayolas!

The citizens' council coloring book has been published. Thanks to the generosity of thirteen artists, the book is full of the sights of Prince William Sound, including animals, fish, flora, artifacts and tankers. The book will be distributed at public events that the council attends, but if you'd like a copy, please give us a call.

Alaska Oceans Festivals

For the first time this year, two Alaska Oceans Festivals were held to celebrate Alaska's waters. The first was held in Anchorage under blue skies in the park strip downtown. The following weekend the Seward SeaLife Center hosted a festival called The Last Waves

of Summer. Each festival had informational booths, vendors and music. RCAC staff attended both festivals with the booth and a lot of information about the organization was distributed. During the Seward festival, three cruise ships were in town

and people visiting the booth, which included a display about invasive species, came from all over the world, many with stories about concerns they have with invasive species in their area.

Upcoming Events

We are preparing for a busy fall. We will be promoting the council and providing information to visitors at the Alaska State Chamber of Commerce Trade show in Kodiak, the annual conference of the North American Association for Environmental Education in Anchorage, the Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry in Austin, Texas, and Fish Expo in Seattle.



CULTURE — Margie Vlasoff displays a handcraft made during the Tatitlek Heritage Festival. Photo by Linda Robinson, citizens' council.

Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council

The Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council 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 Alaska Native, aquaculture, environmental, commercial fishing, recreation and tourism 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 Pipeline Service Co. The contract, which is in effect as long as oil flows through the pipeline, guarantees the council's independence, provides annual funding, and ensures the council the same access to 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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