

# 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.

## Council seeks better oil-spill planning for the 'downstream' areas

The citizens' council has launched a drive to help improve the plans that will guide the response if another big crude-oil spill in the Sound should threaten the "downstream" communities on the Kenai Peninsula and Kodiak Island.

While existing oil-spill response plans go into great detail about what would be done inside Prince William Sound, they provide little specific information about how to respond outside it. This is despite the fact that oil from the *Exxon Valdez* spill, which serves as the model around which response strategies are constructed, traveled almost 500 miles from Bligh Reef, reaching points as distant as the western beaches of Kodiak Island and the eastern shoreline of the Alaska Peninsula.

To start the process, the council has produced a 23-page report on the problem, coupled with a 61-page draft plan for oil-spill response in the downstream communities.

"One of the lessons of the *Exxon Valdez* is that your response can't be any better than your plan," said John Devens, executive director of the council. "We

need to be sure we have the plans in place that will guarantee a better response for our downstream communities than we had in 1989."

The recent *Selendang Ayu* spill at Unalaska highlights the need to plan for protecting areas outside Prince William Sound. While the council's draft plan is focused primarily on crude oil spills in the Sound, it could also help guide the response to spills of fuel oils, as was the case with the *Selendang Ayu*.

The council's report and plan cover such issues as the timeline when oil might reach the downstream communities, as well as the personnel and equipment that would be needed for the response.

The report reviews what equipment is already available for downstream response, and finds the picture far from bleak. For the most part, the necessary equipment is available, with one significant exception: secondary storage. This refers to the large barges used to store oil recovered during skimming operations.

See page 5, **DOWNSTREAM**

## Has the time come for citizen oversight in Puget Sound?

Marilyn Leland, deputy director of the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council, testified in favor of citizen oil-spill oversight at two Feb. 8 committee hearings in the Washington state legislature.

Lawmakers there are considering legislation to establish an "oil spill monitoring and oversight council" for their state. It would be similar in many ways, though not all, to the existing citizens' councils for Cook Inlet and

Prince William Sound. The idea of citizen oversight gained momentum in Washington after a mystery crude oil spill in Dalco Passage, near Tacoma. The Coast Guard later identified the source of the oil as the *Polar Texas*, a ConocoPhillips tanker from Valdez, though the company has said it does not believe its vessel was responsible.

In her testimony to committees of

See page 3, **TESTIMONY**

### COMMUNITY-BASED OIL-SPILL RESPONSE



Mark Janes, a board member of Seldovia's SOS oil spill response team, talks about his group's work during a January forum sponsored by the citizens' councils for Cook Inlet and Prince William Sound. The forum dealt with how local organizations can respond to small local spills, as well as help out in the response to large spills, such as the Exxon Valdez. Community representatives from Prince William Sound, Kenai Peninsula, and Kodiak Island participated in the event. A report on the proceedings will be posted soon on the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council web site, [www.pwsrca.org](http://www.pwsrca.org). Photo by Stan Jones.

## More work needed on review of oil terminal overhaul – Council

State and federal regulators at the Joint Pipeline Office are revising their assessment of Alyeska Pipeline's proposed overhaul of the tanker terminal in Valdez in response to detailed comments by the citizens' council.

The agency issued its assessment in November and found the project would have no significant environmental impact. The council hired a contractor to go over the document, and concluded the no-impact finding was premature.

"We strongly recommend the Environmental Assessment be revised to examine all the impacts, alternatives, and consider additional mitigation to reduce the environmental impacts of this proposed project," Executive Director

John Devens wrote the pipeline office in a Dec. 30 letter accompanying the council's comments.

The comments, including Devens' letter, can be downloaded from the council web site, [www.pwsrca.org](http://www.pwsrca.org).

The council comments came one day after the federal Environmental Protection Agency weighed in to the pipeline office with similar concerns. "It does not appear that the EA (Environmental Assessment) has adequately identified and addressed the potentially significant air quality impacts on public health for the proposed reconfiguration," wrote Christine Reichgott, an official in EPA's

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**Volunteer Profile**

# TOEM member's life mixes music and science

Jon Bower may well be the only volunteer in citizens' council history who has been a punk-rock recording artist.

Nowadays, he is a diligent member of the Terminal Operations and Environmental Monitoring Committee, is researching hydrocarbon contamination of snow in the Valdez area, and is working on an environmental science degree at the University of Alaska in Juneau.

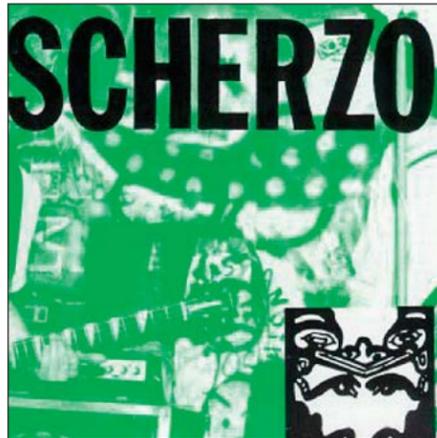
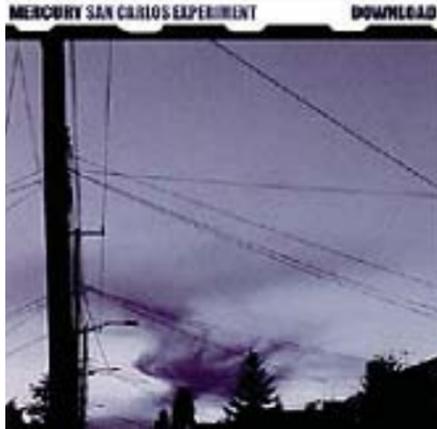
But, before he moved to Valdez in 2001, Bower was a guitarist and singer with a variety of punk-rock bands in the San Francisco Bay area, often in collaboration with his wife, Ali, and his brother, Josh.

One enthusiastic online reviewer described the work of one of Bower's bands, Mercury, as follows: "A sound track on course into the darkest corner of synth-rock stratosphere. Yet, a sound track guaranteed to provide the listener with a floating device, upon a dense, lush, and spacey atmosphere. . . . The sound is enhanced dynamically by electric guitar player and vocalist, Jon Bower, who carries enough gloom and conviction in his voice, that when combined with his cold, disenchanted lyrics it may convince everyone in the room that ground control may never find its Major Tom!"

That may suggest that Mercury's output was a bit on the bleak side, but Bower says it's not so. His music, he says, is best described as "sort of melodic punk rock, with a message of environmental concern."

Bower, who is tall and serious but doesn't seem the least bit cold and disenchanted, or gloomy, was born 32 years ago in the little town of Shawnee, Kansas. He grew up in Minnesota and Michigan, then moved to California with his family when he was in the seventh grade. His parents moved to Valdez when he was 21, but Jon stayed in the Bay area and got seriously into music.

It was after his last band broke up, in 2001, that he moved to Valdez himself, primarily to attend Prince William Sound Community College. He took



**MUSIC MAN** – Besides studying for a degree at the University of Alaska and serving on the council's TOEM committee, Jon Bower (top right) is a rock musician. Center right, Jon and his wife, Ali, play with the band Mercury during a recent visit to California. Above and lower right, art from the covers of CDs released over the years by the bands Bower has worked with.

Top right photo by Stan Jones. Others courtesy of Jon Bower

an environmental science course from Bob Benda, chairman of the Terminal Operations and Environmental Monitoring (or TOEM) Committee, and he was hooked.

"I loved it and so that's what I'm still pursuing," Bower said.

That course is also where he became interested in volunteering for the citizens' council. At first, he thought that might involve going out on research

vessels to work on the studies that are a mainstay of the council's work. That didn't turn out to be the case, but he has found the actual role of TOEM equally enlightening and interesting.

"I've learned so much about the policy side of things," he said. "That is where society and science meet, which is very important."

Bower's parents are still in Valdez. His father is a minister at the Bayside

Community Church, while his mother runs the Rose Cache restaurant.

Bower, however, moved to Juneau after a year in Valdez, so he could get a bachelor's degree in environmental science at the University of Alaska Southeast. He will finish that this spring, and plans to go next to the University of Washington for a master's degree. Eventually, he hopes to get his doctorate and return to Alaska for teaching and research.

It was Bower's work on TOEM, plus a class on snow and glaciers at the university, that led him to undertake a study of hydrocarbon contamination in the snowfields around Valdez. The study did find hydrocarbons as far up the Richardson Highway as Thompson Pass.

They were similar to hydrocarbons put out by the Alyeska tanker terminal in Valdez, though Bower's study didn't show what the actual source was, or whether the levels found in the snow could pose health risks.

In November, he presented his findings at a convention of the Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry in Portland, Ore. He has received a grant to continue the project, and will be taking more samples around Valdez and in Thompson Pass this month.

He still participates in TOEM meetings via phone from Juneau, but otherwise focuses mostly on being a student. He's in the math club and chemistry clubs, tutors chemistry students, and works with a couple of his professors on research projects around Juneau. One of them involves water quality in the Mendenhall Valley, where the university campus is located.

However, he hasn't given up his music altogether. He and Ali still record in their home studio and exchange music with friends from their California days. In fact, they still perform on occasion, such as a recent reunion show of their old band, Mercury, in Oakland, over the Christmas break.

"I think there's a common thread," he said with a laugh, "but I'm still trying to figure out exactly what it is."

## New faces join council offices in Anchorage and Valdez

Two new employees have been added to the council's staff roster.

Roy Robertson, of Olympia, Wash., was hired to serve as project manager for drill monitoring and oil-spill preparedness. He replaces a contractor who had performed the monitoring services for several years.

Robertson most recently worked for the state of Washington's Department of Ecology in the area of oil spill response. Among the spills he was involved with were last year's mystery spill in Dalco Passage, when he served as chief of the Operations Section.

Robertson also has considerable experience in Alaska, having served as consultant to both the Cook Inlet and Prince William Sound citizens' councils,



Mary Schonberger, left, and Roy Robertson, right, have joined the citizens' council staff. Shown with Robertson is his girlfriend, Lori Crews. Left photo by Stan Jones. Right photo courtesy of Roy Robertson.

as well as the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation. He supervised the community of Seldovia's response to

the Exxon Valdez spill, and later helped found the Seldovia Oil Spill Team, a community-based response organiza-

tion. In addition he worked for Alyeska Pipeline to develop fish hatchery protection programs and fishing vessel training programs.

Robertson will work out of the council's Valdez office.

In the Anchorage office, Mary Schonberger was hired to replace Bernie Cooper as administrative assistant.

She most recently worked for First National Bank of Anchorage. She lives with her husband in Chugiak, where they raise, race, and show Siberian Huskies.

**THE OBSERVER** is the quarterly newsletter of the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council. For a free subscription, contact either of the council offices listed on the back page.

**From the Executive Director**

# On Valdez anniversary, are escort tugs in peril?

Alaskans have the best tanker escort system on earth in Prince William Sound. Our waters are about as safe from a repeat of the *Exxon Valdez* spill as is reasonably possible.

But that may not last. Regulators and the oil industry are considering how to scale back the escort system and potentially reduce the margin of safety developed to protect the Sound since 1989.

Each tanker leaving Valdez with North Slope crude is accompanied by two powerful, state-of-the-art tugs. For parts of the trip out of the Sound, one tug is tethered to the tanker's stern to provide immediate assistance and prevent a disaster if the huge oil carrier should lose a rudder or engine.

Why is this outstanding fleet of escort vessels in jeopardy?

The system owes its existence in part to the Oil Pollution Act of 1990, which requires two escorts for any single-hull crude carrier in Prince William Sound. The same Act bans single-hull tankers from U.S. waters after 2015, because double-hull tankers are less likely to spill oil in groundings and collisions. In the Sound, the transition to double hulls may be complete as early 2007.

The escort system is threatened

because the Oil Pollution Act does not require escorts for double-hull tankers. Up to now, double-hulls have gotten escorts anyway, as required by state-approved contingency plans and by a directive of the Coast Guard in Valdez. But, with the end of the single-hull era in sight, the regulators are considering downsizing the escort system.

That would be a mistake. The council has always supported double escorts and will continue to do so until it can be demonstrated that another alternative would offer equal protection.

Though the new double-hull tankers – with their redundant rudders, controls, and engines – are far superior to the *Exxon Valdez* and the rest of the single-hull fleet, they are not infallible. Late last year, ConocoPhillips' new *Polar Endeavour* suffered a malfunction in one rudder that threw the vessel 12-15 degrees off-course before the problem was corrected.

And the new *Alaskan Frontier*, a double-hull tanker under charter to BP,

was detained or delayed by the Coast Guard on two of its first three voyages into Valdez because of problems with its propulsion system.

As the council board noted in a resolution adopted in December, "it is imprudent to reduce proven prevention programs based solely on improvements in vessel engineering and design."

Moreover, not all double-hull tankers operating from Valdez are new. Some are approaching 30 years of age and, under federal law, can continue to sail indefinitely. In theory, they could still be plying the Sound on the 60th anniversary of the startup of the trans-Alaska pipeline.

In addition, we must bear in mind that prevention is not the only task of the escort tugs. They are also equipped to begin the response effort if a spill should occur. The need for response vessels close at hand is one reason double-hull tankers have always been escorted through the Sound, even though the Oil Pollution Act doesn't require it.

That need will not end when the last single-hull tanker leaves service.

Finally, let's remember that two events could dramatically alter operations in Prince William Sound. One would be a big oil strike in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, which would lead to a huge increase in tanker traffic. The other would be the construction of a natural gas pipeline to Valdez, which would add a fleet of liquefied gas tankers to the traffic system.

Clearly, this is no time to let our defenses down.

What's to be done?

State and federal regulators should freeze the present escort requirements until a determination can be made as to whether and how the system can be modified without reducing safety. The bottom line is, any changes should leave us with at least as much protection as we have now.

To do otherwise would be to squander the great gains we've made, and the valuable lessons we've learned, since the *Exxon Valdez* hit Bligh Reef sixteen years ago this month.

• John Devens is executive director of the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council.



John Devens

## Council opposes burning off oil spills in most cases

It sounds like the most logical way to clean up spilled oil: Set it on fire and let it burn till it's gone.

Not so, according to a position adopted by the citizens' council in December. The position paper puts the council on record as opposing the tactic – called in-situ burning – in most cases. Instead, the council favors mechanical recovery with booms and skimmers as the primary clean-up strategy.

The logic: Usually, it's possible to burn spilled oil only if it's first contained by booming. In that case, there's no reason not to skim it up, which removes it from the environment. Burning, by contrast, merely converts it from one

form to another and leaves it in the environment.

"Oil can be removed by mechanical means under any weather conditions compatible with booming operations," the council position states. "Burning should never hinder an on-going mechanical recovery operation."

The position paper did note that some circumstances may arise in which burning makes sense. Examples include spills in pack ice, spills at extremely low temperatures, and spills in extremely remote locations.

The pros and cons of the tactic were summarized as follows:

**Pros**

- Removes 95 percent of the oil with minimal equipment and manpower.
- Reduces waste storage and disposal requirements.
- If slick is contained by natural barriers and shorelines, burning may be quicker than mobilizing and conducting mechanical recovery operations with booms and skimmers.
- Removes most of the more toxic components of crude oil.
- Reduces chronic impact on some shoreline habitats.
- Capable of removing crude oil in broken ice conditions.

**Cons**

- Not removing oil from environment; trading one form of pollution for another.
- Smoke plume is unpleasant and contains fine particulate matter and other toxic compounds known as polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, which are known to cause cancer. These can be carried into the air and transported by wind, or they can fall into the water, sink, and remain a long-term threat to bottom-dwelling organisms.
- If slick is not contained by natural barriers and shorelines, booming is required before burning. In that case, skimming would be preferable to burning, because skimming removes the oil from the environment.
- Under some conditions, spilled oil may not be burnable.
- Can be dangerous to clean-up personnel.

## TESTIMONY: A council for Puget Sound?

Continued from Page 1

the Washington House and Senate, Leland outlined the history, structure, and operations of the Prince William Sound council. Among her points:

- The council is often regarded as an environmental organization, but it is not one in the same sense as Greenpeace and the Sierra Club. Rather, it focuses on the social and economic harm from oil spills, as well as environmental damage.

- The council is most effective when it avoids confrontation and works in partnership with companies and regulators. As examples, Leland cited the tanker escort system in Prince William Sound and the iceberg-detection radar system now operating near the site of the *Exxon Valdez* grounding.

- Information is the most valuable thing the council can provide. "To make a real difference, we must produce credible technical information on why a given protective measure is needed, and why the option we favor is better than the alternatives," Leland told the Washington legislators.

- Independence is vital, and it rests on two main pillars. One is the ability of the council's member organizations to choose their own representatives to the board rather than having them appointed by state or federal officials. The other pillar is guaranteed funding adequate to pay for the research and other costly activities required to produce credible information.

- The council should be judged by its effectiveness in helping prevent another disaster like the *Exxon*

*Valdez* spill. Industry and regulators deserve much credit for this safety record, Leland noted, but so does the citizens' council. Among its contributions, according to Leland, were its work to improve oil-spill contingency plans for the Valdez trade; the introduction of Geographic Response Strategies and nearshore response plans; securing double-hull requirements in federal law; creation of the tanker escort system and the ice-detection radar; production of a guidebook for communities facing oil spills and other man-made disasters; work on the problem of invasive marine species; and the incorporation of fishing vessels in oil-spill response planning.

Leland also noted the importance of continuity in the council's work. While many company and agency personnel have moved since 1989, many citizens with firsthand experience of the *Exxon* spill are still around, and still involved with the council. "Consequently," Leland said, "it now often falls to the council to provide the institutional memory needed to make sure the lessons of the *Exxon Valdez* figure into today's decisions."

Leland reminded lawmakers that it took the *Exxon Valdez* spill to bring about citizens' councils in Alaska. "I just hope that you are luckier and wiser than we were, and that it won't take a disaster to convince you of the importance of citizen oversight," she said.

Leland appeared at the hearings by invitation of People for Puget Sound, a Seattle-based citizens' conservation group.

## Alyeska Viewpoint

# For SERVS, training is key to being prepared

Throughout the past year, Alyeska's Ship Escort Response Vessel System (SERVS) explored new approaches to training, drills and exercises to improve our readiness to respond to spills. In partnership with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), SERVS redesigned the safety and hazardous materials training for fishing vessel crew members in the SERVS Fishing Vessel Program. The updated program satisfies OSHA's training requirements and provides the equipment-specific experience required for compliance with response plans through a three day curriculum combining classroom courses, hands-on instruction, and on-water training.

The benefits of this training were put to the test in late September when the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) called an unannounced drill on the fishing vessel response fleet that had assembled in Cordova, preparing to conduct field training in nearshore response tactics. The fishing vessels and crews in Cordova were diverted from their scheduled training to respond to the unannounced drill. The weather was typical for the season and area with winds pushing the upper limit of operational capability.

The task force selected by ADEC for this drill consisted of 36 fishing vessels, Barge 500-2, and the utility vessel *Endurance*. The scenario was a tanker grounded near Smith Island in central Prince William Sound with 20,000

barrels of oil released and moving east into Orca Inlet. Weather conditions worsened throughout the day with heavy rain, fog, and winds to 40 knots. Over four thousand feet of boom, four mini-barges, two skimmers, and a Current Buster were deployed before crane operations on the deck of the Barge 500-2 were suspended due to high winds. All the drill objectives were met despite the weather conditions, there were no injuries, and praise from the evaluation team was unprecedented. One of the more notable comments from the state's lead controller was "I've never seen the nearshore operation run smoother than today."

The following month, over 100 Alyeska employees and contractors participated in an oil spill response exercise at the Valdez Marine Terminal, joined again by fishing vessel operators in the Valdez core fleet. The exercise scenario involved a major crude oil spill at the Terminal loading berths. A unique element to the management of the drill was the real-time ("symptom-driven") injects for site characterization. Vapor levels were gathered by responders in the field with gas detectors by calling drill control for the vapor levels in their area. This pushed the responders as close to reality as possible and enabled field

leadership to make difficult decisions balancing response and safety. During this drill, the deployment of the protection boom around the Solomon Gulch Hatchery and Valdez Duck Flats set an all-time record – assisted by favorable tides and weather but reflecting the commitment to training and practice over the past several years. The combined field and incident management team performance resulted in an extremely positive evaluation.

The challenge of getting people and equipment to Valdez and from Valdez to the scene of a large spill can present a logistical constraint that SERVS must be prepared to address. To probe its capabilities and to provide training

to internal and external stakeholders, SERVS developed a new tabletop exercise format involving the use of wooden models of tugs, barges, and other vessels to simulate actual vessel movements. In March of last year, nearly 100 employees, contractors, fishermen, and stakeholders spent three straight days at the Valdez Civic Center to pull this event off with an array of models scattered inside a scale drawing of Prince William Sound laid out with tape on the Civic Center ballroom floor. The tabletop exercise used the worst case scenario from the tanker plan, an 809,000 barrel oil spill at

the southern boundary of Prince William Sound. The exercise simulated the hundreds of vessel movements, decisions, and response actions that are initiated in the initial hours of a major response.

SERVS used this format developed for the full operations section mobilization later in the year to focus on the deployment and management of nearshore task forces. The wooden models of tugs, barges, fishing vessels were augmented with pieces of rope to simulate boom and shredded paper to simulate oil. This time, over 50 employees, contractors, fishermen, and stakeholders gathered at the Valdez Civic Center and were assigned to task forces to use the resources represented by the models to contain the simulated oil spill. This simulation approach has helped SERVS responders and other stakeholders understand and resolve typical logistical issues that a large scale response could present, such as fuel, food, accommodations, task force coordination, and prioritization of clean-up tasks.

SERVS' mission will continue to emphasize the prevention of oil spills. Still, we hope these examples show that training – in the classroom, in the command center, on the water, and even on a ballroom floor – remains the key to preparedness.

• Ed Morgan is manager of Alyeska's Ship Escort/Response Vessel System.



Ed Morgan

## TERMINAL: Reconfiguration plan needs improvement

Continued from Page 1

Seattle regional office.

Alyeska refers to its massive undertaking as Strategic Reconfiguration. It would see major alterations to most major components at the terminal, including the fire-fighting system, power generation, vapor control, and the huge tanks used to store crude oil until it is loaded onto tankers. However, the Alyeska proposal omits one project the council hoped would be included in Strategic Reconfiguration: overhauling the facility that cleans oil remnants out of the ballast water of arriving tankers.

The Ballast Water Treatment Facility is a major source of dangerous air pollution at the terminal, and the council has been encouraging Alyeska to fix it for years. The council repeated the call for an upgrade in its December comments on Strategic Reconfiguration. The EPA letter also noted Alyeska's failure to propose a plan for upgrading the ballast water facility.

Alyeska has indicated that the declining need for oily ballast treatment as a result of replacement of older tankers by new double-hulls – which carry very little oily ballast – will require overhaul of the facility, but the company has yet to identify a schedule or provide a plan for review.

The company, according to the EPA letter, had indicated it would reduce



Alyeska has proposed a major upgrade – called Strategic Reconfiguration – of the Valdez terminal where oil tankers load North Slope crude. Photo by Stan Jones.

emissions from the Ballast Water Treatment Facility as part of Strategic Reconfiguration, but then didn't address it in the proposal submitted to the Joint Pipeline Office. Additional information is needed, Reichgott wrote, to evaluate the project's impacts.

Among the council's concerns with Alyeska's proposal:

- Failure to upgrade Ballast Water Treatment Facility as part of Strategic Reconfiguration.

- Proposed freshwater firefighting system might not provide enough water to fight a worst-case fire in the oil storage tanks. The existing system relies on seawater pumped from Port Valdez.

- Reducing the number of crude oil storage tanks, as proposed, could mean the tanks would fill up during protracted periods of bad weather. That could result in pressure to sail tankers in risky conditions, or to delay needed inspections, repairs, or scheduled maintenance.

- Reduced staffing could increase the chance of a catastrophic accident, or impair Alyeska's ability to respond to one.

- Alyeska's plan to put internal floating roofs on the crude oil tanks is not explained in enough detail to determine how it would affect the risks of fire, explosion or spills.

- Insufficient analysis of the

social and economic impacts of reconfiguration.

- Analysis of Alyeska's plans for new power generation vapor combustion systems failed to identify an environmentally preferable alternative, or adequately address fire and explosion risks.

The council's comments grew out of a workgroup process. Participants included community members, as well as staff from the Joint Pipeline Office and Alyeska's Strategic Reconfiguration team. Alyeska and the pipeline office participated on an advisory basis and were not co-signers of the comments.

Alyeska on Jan. 13 strongly defended its Strategic Reconfiguration plans in letters to the Joint Pipeline Office. The letters suggested EPA and the council misunderstood the project, the regulatory requirements, and the regulatory approval process.

"In sum," wrote Robert Shoaf, Alyeska's liaison to the Joint Pipeline Office, "the proposed system meets appropriate design criteria and will function as intended."

The matter is now in the hands of the regulators. In late January, officials of the Joint Pipeline Office said the council's concerns were being addressed and that changes would be made in the final version of the assessment. The pipeline office also said the council would be involved in future changes to the project.

# Legislative subcommittee tracks the action in Juneau

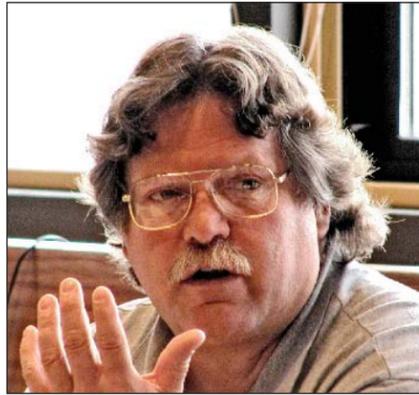
The council's Legislative Affairs Committee has been set up to monitor developments in the Alaska Legislature.

The committee, formed in November, now consists of six members of the council board: Blake Johnson, chair; Connie Stephens, vice chair; and Walter Parker, Jody McDowell, John Velsko and Al Burch.

The committee's work is supported by Juneau attorney Douglas Mertz, who serves under contract as the council's legislative monitor.

In the early part of the legislative session – which began in January – the committee has been tracking two legislative packages of council concern. One, involving a state takeover from EPA of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (or NPDES), would change how operating permits are issued for the facility that cleans oily ballast water from tankers arriving at the Valdez terminal operated by Alyeska Pipeline Service Co.

The other legislation of interest



Blake Johnson

deals with modifications to the Alaska Coastal Management Program, which gives coastal communities and interest groups some control over nearby development projects.

As the Observer went to press, the council had not taken a position on either matter, though the board was scheduled to consider taking a stand on the NPDES issue at its March meeting.

The Legislature adjourns in mid-May.

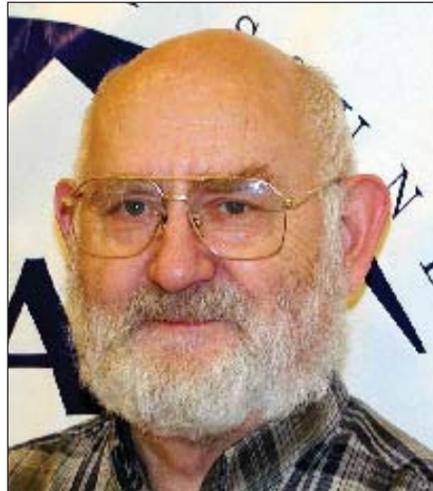
## DOWNSTREAM: Promoting better response

Continued from Page 1

During the Exxon Valdez response, the shortage of secondary storage limited how much of the spilled oil could be cleaned up.

The council hopes regulatory agencies such as the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation and the U.S. Coast Guard will incorporate the draft plan into their contingency plans for Kodiak, the Kenai Peninsula, and Cook Inlet after further development with public input.

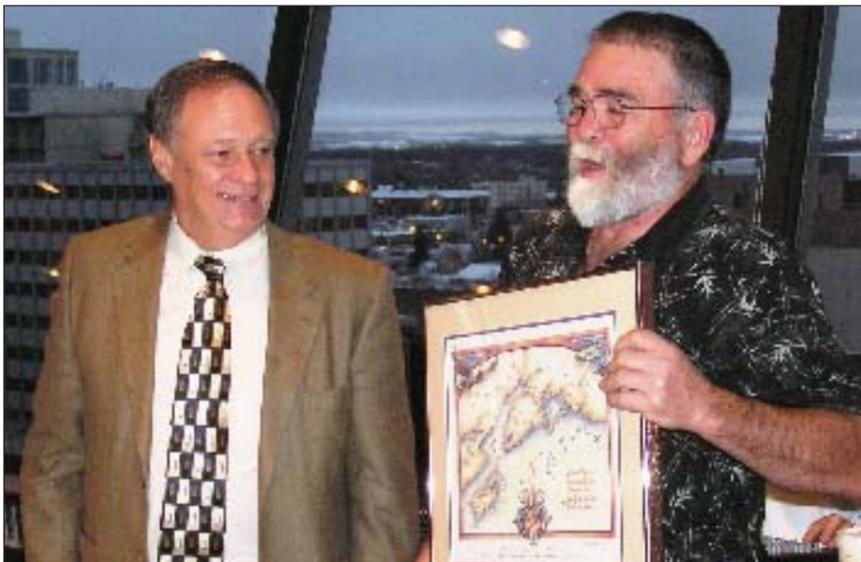
"This is a good plan from the council," said Kodiak fisherman Al Burch. Burch is executive director of the Alaska Dragers Association and a member of the citizens' council board of directors. "It should significantly increase protection for downstream communities like ours."



"a good plan for . . . downstream communities like ours" -- Al Burch, Kodiak. Photo by Stan Jones

The downstream response report and draft plan, along with contact information, are available on the council web site, [www.pwsrcc.org](http://www.pwsrcc.org).

## RECOGNITION



At the council's December board meeting in Anchorage, Executive Director John Devens, left, presented Tom Copeland with a framed map of the council region in honor of his long service to the council. Copeland was a committee member, board member, or both, from 1990 to 2004. Photo by Stan Jones.

## Council documents available to public

Single copies of most documents produced or received by the citizens' council are available free to the public. To make a request, contact either council office. Addresses appear on the back page of the Observer.

### REPORTS

- Drill Monitoring Report: Overseas Washington/Aware/Nanuq Heavy Weather Tow Exercise 2/6/04. Tim Jones, citizens' council, 2/6/2004. [752.431.040301.HvyWthrTowEx.pdf](#)
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Presentation made by Dave Musgrave, UAF, to the Board at

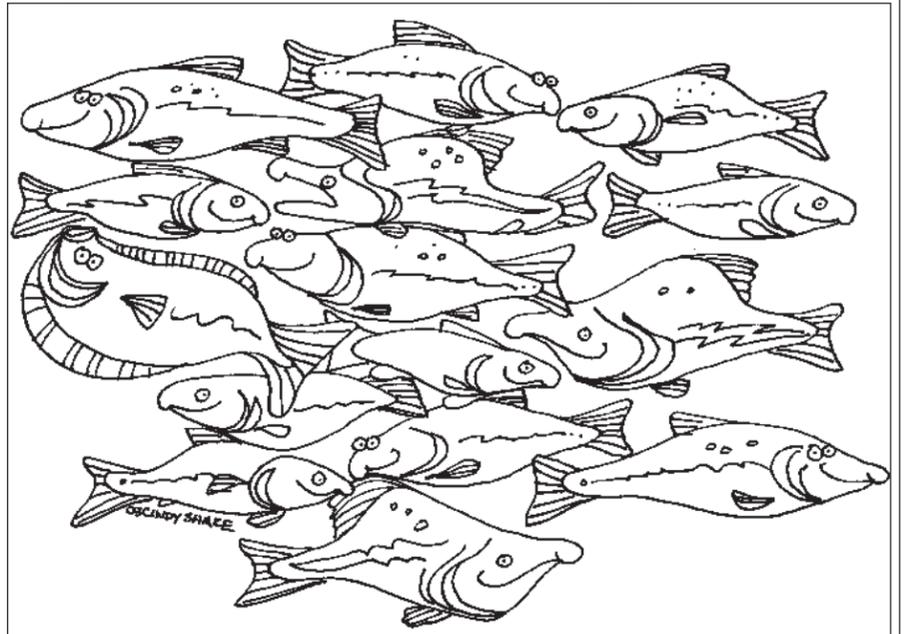
## Artists wanted for third edition of council's popular coloring book

For the past two years, the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council has solicited simple line drawings of subjects related to the safe transportation of oil, signed by the artist, for use in children's coloring books distributed at various public events.

Thanks to the generosity of artists, two editions have been printed. They have been so popular the council is doing a third and once again soliciting donations from artists.

Subjects may include vessels such as tankers, fishing, tugs, Coast Guard cutters, and kayaks; marine mammals; fish; the Alyeska tanker terminal in Valdez; and just about anything related to Prince William Sound or the council mission. Submissions should be about 8.5x11 inches in size. Each artist whose work is selected will receive two copies of the coloring book.

Submissions should be mailed to:  
Linda Robinson, PWSRCAC  
3709 Spenard Rd. #100  
Anchorage AK 99503



This drawing was donated for the coloring book by artist Cindy Shake.

Or they may be e-mailed in the jpeg digital image format to: robinson@pwsrcac.org.

Submissions must be received by April 15 in order to be considered for

inclusion.

For more information, contact Linda Robinson at 1-800-478-7221, 907-273-6235 or the email address above.

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**Community Corner****Scientific gatherings offer a wide range of subjects**

Two large environmental conferences were held recently. The Marine Science in Alaska Symposium took place January 24-26 in Anchorage. Sponsored by the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council, NOAA Alaska Fisheries Science Center, the Prince William Sound Science Center and a number of related organizations, the symposium covered topics such as Ocean Observing Systems and Climate Change; Physical and Biological Oceanography; Fisheries Oceanography; Benthic Habitat and Nearshore Ecology; Contaminants; Harmful Algal Blooms and Invasive Species; Oil Impacts; Seabirds; Marine Mammals; and Fisheries Science and Management.

The second conference was the annual Alaska Forum on the Environment, held February 6-9. The council reserved two booths and project managers created posters describing various projects the council has undertaken.

**Member community profile: Seldovia**

Seldovia, located across from Homer on the south shore of Kachemak Bay, is a member organization of the citizens' council.

It was settled by the Russians around 1844. However, Pacific Eskimos, Aleuts and the Dena'ina Indians were living there before the beginning of the Russian trade.

An 1880 census lists a population of 74, consisting of 36 Eskimos and 38 Creoles (people of mixed Russian and Native descent.) In 1884, an influenza epidemic killed nearly all children under three years of age in Seldovia, English Bay, Kenai and Ninilchik.

Accessible only by air or sea, Seldovia (formerly "Seldevoy," a Russian word meaning "herring bay") currently boasts a population of 263. It encompasses about 250 acres of land and 130 acres of water. Seldovia is a commercial fishing center, and shellfish farming also occurs. There are several oyster farms in Kachemak Bay, including one in the Jakalof Bay Area, east of Seldovia. You can find oysters for sale in Seldovia in the summer as well as off of the Jakalof dock. Most farms in Kachemak Bay belong to a co-op that sells oysters and mussels in Homer as well as around the state and country.

Immediately after the Exxon Valdez oil spill, in anticipation of oil fouling local waters, the community set up its own command post. When it learned that no boom was available they made their own from materials at hand. This event was the force behind the community's creation of the Seldovia Oil Spill Team, or SOS. Its vision is "that an effective and efficient network of community-based response teams exist along the Alaska coast to protect the sensitive resources of the coastline and to aid each other, the State, the U.S. Coast Guard and other local, regional and industry oil spill cooperatives in times of need."

The Seldovia Native Association is hoping to build a local service ferry with \$8 million in federal funds. Lockheed Martin, the nation's largest defense contractor, hopes to get the design contract for the ferry. The Native Association is planning to supervise a feasibility study.

This conference hosts a wide range of sessions on topics ranging from solid waste, infectious disease, fish and wildlife, and water quality to subsistence and economic development.

The Alaska Wilderness, Recreation and Tourism Association, which is a member of the council, hosted its 12th annual Ecotourism Conference February 23-24 in Girdwood. Topics included Spotlight on Denali, Publishing and Promotion on the Web, and Guiding Alaska Tourism.

The council will participate in Kodiak Comfish, March 17-19, and the Alaska Section of the American Water Resources Association meeting, April 4-8, in Cordova. We will sponsor a coloring contest with prizes awarded during the Kodiak Whalefest, April 22, and will set up children's tables during the Cordova and Homer Shorebird Festivals in May.



Linda Robinson



As this photo of the Seldovia small boat harbor suggests, the community's economy depends heavily on commercial fishing. Photo by Linda Robinson.

## 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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