



The Observer

VOLUME 16, No. 3/JULY 2006

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

Council seeks ban on dispersant use

The board of directors of the citizens' council voted at its May meeting in Valdez to oppose any use of chemical dispersants for responding to North Slope crude oil spills in Prince William Sound and nearby waters affected by the Exxon Valdez oil spill of 1989.

Previously, the council position had been that dispersants could be used on an oil spill as a last resort if mechanical recovery efforts with booms and skimmers proved ineffective.

In theory, the chemicals disperse surface oil into the water column, thereby diluting it, preventing it from fouling shorelines, and speeding up the process by which bacterial action renders it harmless.

But, the council concluded, research has failed to bear out the claims of dispersant proponents. The new position is as follows:

"After years of observing dispersant trials, dispersant effectiveness monitoring, advising and sponsoring independent research regarding chemical dispersant use, it is the position of the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council (the Council) that dispersants should not be used on Alaska North Slope crude oil spills in the waters of our region. Until such time as chemical dispersant effectiveness is demonstrated in our

region and shown to minimize adverse effects on the environment, the Council does not support dispersant use as an oil spill response option. Mechanical recovery and containment of crude oil spilled at sea should remain the primary methodology employed in our region."

"Dispersants have been tried once in the Sound," said John Devens, executive director of the council. "That was on oil from the Exxon Valdez, and they failed so spectacularly that Exxon wasn't allowed to try them again. We've seen nothing to persuade us dispersants will work any better the next time."

The council does not expect its action to result in an immediate ban on dispersants and for now they remain approved for use on Prince William Sound oil spills. According to Devens, the intent is to foster scientifically sound research that will settle the questions about dispersants once and for all.

"If it turns out they can be proven to be an effective tool for oil-spill response, we'll happily see them restored to the toolbox," Devens said. "If not, we'll be well rid of them. Then all of us—citizens, industry, and regulators—can focus our efforts on cleanup tactics that actually work."

Prospects remain uncertain for a fix to budget problem in state's oil-spill office

Alaska's lawmakers went home from Juneau last month without addressing one of the citizens' council's top priorities: ensuring stable long-term funding for the state agency in charge of oil-spill prevention and response.

That agency—the Division of Spill Prevention and Response in the Department of Environmental Conservation—is financed primarily by a tax of three cents per barrel on crude oil produced in Alaska. But that revenue is declining

as oil production drops. As a result it no longer can fully support the spill division and the council has proposed increasing the tax.

Despite bipartisan support for the idea, the Legislature's regular session ended May 9 with no action on it. A special session started the next day, as called by Gov. Frank Murkowski. It ended June 8, also without action.

See page 5, **SPILL OFFICE**

Future Oceanographers?



These boys showed up to color crab pictures at the citizens' council booth during the Alaska Oceans Festival in Anchorage last month. Photo by Tamara Byrnes.

New umbrella organization forming to take on Alaska's invasive species

The citizens' council will participate in a new group being formed to combat the invasion of Alaska by non-indigenous species of plants and animals.

The issue has long been a council concern, because of the risk harmful species could be carried to Alaska in oil-tanker ballast water. The water is discharged into Prince William Sound so the tankers can take on North Slope crude at Valdez.

The Alaska Invasive Species Working Group is being formed by several organizations already interested in the invasive species problem. They are expected to include several state and federal agencies, the citizens' councils for Cook Inlet and Prince William

Sound, environmental groups, Alaska Native groups, and even private firms such as Alyeska Pipeline Service Co.

The Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council has been active on the issue since 1996, and currently operates a trapping program to check for the green crab, a non-indigenous species that has already invaded several West Coast ports. The council's program is managed by Lisa Ka'aihue, director of administration.

"We see this as a way to better coordinate our various research and policy efforts, as well as a venue to share information about invasive species," Ka'aihue said.

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**NON PROFIT ORG.
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Volunteer Profile

Accidental scientist is mom, canoe racer, volunteer

By **SUSAN SOMMER**
Project Manager

Leslie Morton was a pre-med major in college when she signed up for an introductory environmental biology class on a whim.

She did it just for fun, but taking that class with people who enjoyed the same things she did—camping, hiking, SCUBA diving—was such a turning point she never looked back.

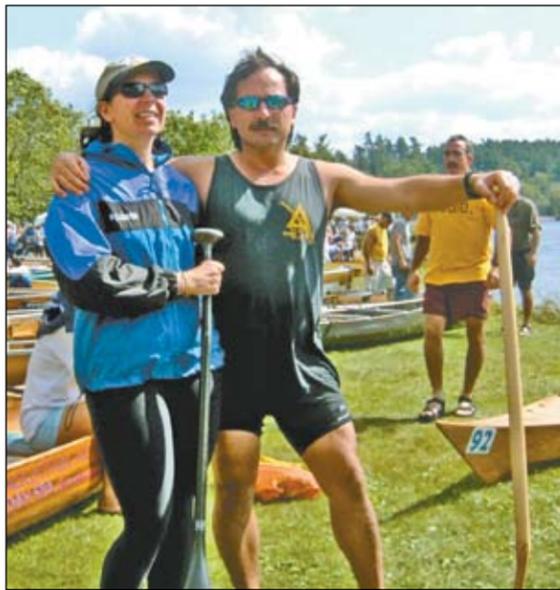
Instead of becoming a doctor, she became an environmental scientist, earning a bachelor's degree in biology from Randolph-Macon College and a master's degree in environmental sciences from George Mason University, both in Virginia. Since then, she's worked for the U.S. Senate, Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, and Navy.

Volunteering on the council's Scientific Advisory Committee, or SAC, allows the stay-at-home mother of two girls to remain current on events and trends in her career while being a full-time parent.

Another motivation for participating in SAC is to promote a healthy environment.

Says Leslie, "I feel an obligation to help keep the world a good place to live. Not just for me and my family but also for plants, animals, fungi," and other life forms.

Leslie has worked mostly in natural resource management. While with the U.S. Navy in Guam as natural resources program manager of four naval facilities in the Mariana Islands, she oversaw an annual budget of \$2.2 million. It included an impressive list of tasks: wetland restoration, reforestation, erosion control, recreational fishing,



Leslie Morton, a volunteer on the council's Scientific Advisory Committee, lives in Soldotna with her husband, John, left. Photos courtesy of Leslie Morton.

brown tree snake control, feral animal control, biota surveys, and endangered species research and enhancement. The Marianas are a string of islands north of Guam in the Pacific Ocean.

While at that position in the late 1990s, Leslie jumped at the opportunity to participate in the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture Women's Executive Leadership Program, which sent her to Southcentral Alaska for two months. Based out of Seward, she studied the social carrying capacity of Kenai Fjords National Park, considered a high-use recreational area. Her research tallied the number of people and types of activities in which they participated within the park. She also got to visit Prince William Sound.

The Navy was impressed with Leslie's work in the Marianas and in 1999 honored her with a meritorious civilian service award, highlighting her "superior resource management, unsurpassed technical competence, and superb leadership."

Also while in Guam, Leslie worked as assistant manager for a wildlife refuge. One aspect of its long-term plan was contaminant cleanup, including petroleum products and toxic chemicals used for cleaning planes and ships.

Leslie discovered SAC in 2005 after she heard about the council on one of its radio spots broadcast in the Kenai/Soldotna area. As the announcement suggested, she surfed to the organization's Web site where she found information on volunteering.

An Alaska resident for only three years at the time, Leslie saw joining SAC as a way to get in touch with the state's scientific community. At the committee's meetings, held about every two months, she has the chance to share her knowledge of ecological systems and voice her concerns for Prince William Sound. SAC sponsors independent scientific research and provides scientific assistance and advice to other council committees.

"Volunteering with SAC provides me with opportunities to continue learning," she says. "It also allows me to have adult conversations and use multi-syllable words," something she misses by being home so much with her daughters, ages four and nine. She plans to turn her attention back to her career once the girls are older; for now, she home-schools them.

The entire family enjoys all kinds of outdoor activities, but canoeing tops the list. Their home in Soldotna is close to the Swanson River canoe trail system and Hidden Lake, two of their favorite places to paddle.

Canoeing Alaska's waters is a family affair, but Leslie and her husband, John, have also canoed competitively all over the world. Since marrying in 1992, they've raced dragon boats in China, outrigger canoes in Australia and Hawaii, and flat water canoes on lakes and calm rivers in upstate New York.

They are planning an ambitious—and international—family float for the summer of 2008: the entire Yukon River.

Leslie's focus on family underscores the value she places on volunteering for local organizations that strive to keep the environment clean. In addition to participating on SAC, she is a board member of the Kenai Watershed Forum, a nonprofit organization dedicated to maintaining healthy watersheds on the Kenai Peninsula.

Before moving to Alaska, Leslie volunteered as a veterinary assistant and as a tutor for English as a Second Language. Volunteering, she says, is her way "to give back something to the community."

Board picks new officers

The citizens' council board elected its seven-member executive committee May 2 and 3 during a meeting in Valdez. The committee, which will serve until the board's May 2007 meeting, is as follows:

Stan Stephens of Valdez, Steve Lewis of Seldovia, Marilyn Heddell of Whittier, and Jane Eisemann of Kodiak were re-elected as president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer, respectively.

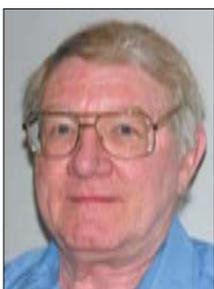
Blake Johnson of Kenai was re-elected as an at-large member of the executive committee, while Patience Andersen Faulkner of Cordova and John Velsko of Homer were newly elected as at-large members.

Chamber rep joins council

The May board meeting of the citizens' council saw the seating of Bill Schoephoester to represent the Alaska State Chamber of Commerce.

Schoephoester, who lives in Anchorage, is a consultant to the non-crude oil industry in the state, including work on oil-spill prevention and contingency plans. He replaces Tom Jensen on the board.

The state chamber is one of eighteen member organizations that make up the citizens' council. Its role is to represent the interests of the tourism industry.



Bill Schoephoester

Board member honored for work on oceans

Walter Parker this summer received the 2006 Ocean Champion Award at the Alaska Oceans Festival in Anchorage.

Parker represents the Oil Spill Region Environmental Coalition on the citizens' council board.

The Ocean Champion Award is presented annually to a key individual in the Alaska community who has worked for ocean conservation in Alaska's waters. It is sponsored by the Alaska Conservation Foundation's Alaska Oceans Program.

"Walter Parker was selected for many reasons, but largely because of the inspiration he fosters and his dedication to conservation issues in Alaska and the Arctic," the sponsors said in announcing the award.

Besides serving on the citizens' council, Parker is a member of the North Pacific Research Board; the Oil Spill Recovery Institute; the Environmental Preparation, Prevention, and Response Working Group of the Arctic Council; and the Alaska advisory board of the Ocean Foundation. In addition, he chairs the Circumpolar Infrastructure Task Force for the Arctic Council. He has held many state, federal, and local positions in government, including the chairmanship of the Alaska Oil Spill Commission after the Exxon Valdez spill of 1989.

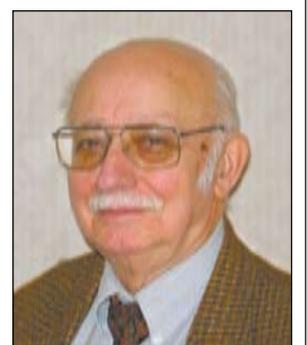
He also co-founded the Alaska Forum for Environmental Responsibility and, since the

Selendang Ayu grounding off Unalaska, has helped lead efforts to put safer shipping measures into place along the Great Circle Shipping Route.

"Several things have come together in the past three decades that will have profound effects on North Pacific ecosystems," Parker told the Observer in an email. "First and primary is rapid climate change that is already having a strong effect on ocean currents and temperatures. Next is increasing industrial development in East Asia which will contribute more and more contaminants, seaborne and airborne. Contaminants from the greatly increased shipping between East Asia and North America will add to this."

Parker said he hoped the large marine ecosystem program of the United Nations would provide information that will enable regulators to deal with these changes.

"It will take a lot of money to do this, from the U.S., Japan, Russia, China, Canada and Korea," Parker wrote. "Regional treaties and agreements are more important than ever."



Walter Parker

From the Executive Director

Shippers won't commit to protecting escort system

For over a year now, our council has been working to get the oil industry and its regulators to promise not to change the Prince William Sound tanker escort system without a definitive scientific study showing that safety would not suffer.

Much to our frustration, we haven't made much progress. We've heard verbal pledges to avoid changes that could increase the danger of another disaster like the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill, but, so far, nobody is willing to put it in writing.

At present, each loaded oil tanker leaving Prince William Sound is required by state and federal regulators to be accompanied by two powerful escort tugs. The future of this practice is in question because the federal Oil Pollution Act of 1990 imposes the double-escort requirement only on single-hull tankers. The Valdez fleet is transitioning to double-hull tankers, as also required by the Oil Pollution Act, but the Act says nothing about escort requirements for double-hull tankers.

The council position is that the escort requirement is fine as it is and that no reduction should be allowed unless a special type of study called a risk assessment shows that danger would not increase.

At our board meeting in Seward last fall, we invited the tanker companies, the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, and the U.S. Coast

Guard to give us their views on the matter.

The discussion was long and wide-ranging – the transcript runs to 42 pages – but the shippers and regulators seemed to agree with us. That was put most clearly by Tom Colby, an employee of Alaska Tanker Company who spoke on behalf of the Response Planning Group, which includes all the companies that ship oil through the Sound. Said Colby:

One thing that was agreed upon amongst the shippers was that we were not interested in going down a road that would increase risk at all.

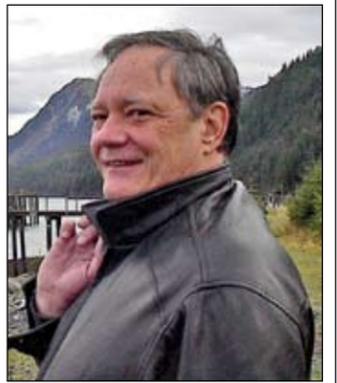
Maybe so, but getting these companies to make that official has proved to be impossible. Soon after the Seward meeting, we invited them and their regulators to sign a Memorandum of Understanding incorporating the positions we thought they had endorsed.

They refused to do so.

Then we sent them a letter summarizing what we regarded as the key points of the Seward discussion, along with a transcript of that discussion.

The Response Planning Group's answer alleged unspecified "inaccuracies" and "errors" in our letter,

then went on to lay out the position of the oil shippers on the escort system. They did say they wanted a risk assessment before any changes are made, and, generally speaking, we agree with the standards they proposed for conducting any such study.



John Devens

Much to our dismay, however, the tanker companies did not pledge to avoid changes that would increase the danger of another giant oil spill.

Consequently, we don't believe Alaskans can be confident that the oil industry and its regulators can be trusted to preserve and protect the world-class safety system put in place in Prince William Sound after 1989.

Accordingly, we will maintain extra vigilance over the coming year to guard against any effort to weaken it.

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

For now, industry drops idea of tug fleet cuts

The oil industry has ended a study of whether Alyeska Pipeline's fleet of tugs could be downsized and still meet the double-escort requirement for loaded oil tankers in Prince William Sound.

In an April letter, the industry advised state regulators that no changes to the tug fleet would be proposed "at this time."

The study, which went on for more than a year, focused on whether the fleet of escort, response, and docking tugs could be cut from ten vessels to eight without a change in the rule that two tugs must escort each loaded tanker in Prince William Sound. (See *John Devens column, above.*)

At first, the council felt excluded from the

study and cut off from the information necessary to evaluate its results. By the end of 2005, however, communication had improved dramatically and the council was included in an industry-sponsored workshop in December 2005 intended to demonstrate that a reduced fleet was practicable.

However, a follow-up analysis and report by the council showed that the industry could not meet current oil-spill response requirements with fewer than 10 tugs. In addition, the council showed that more than ten tugs would be necessary under some conditions.

The decision to abandon the idea of reducing the tug fleet came soon afterward.

Barge mishap kills crewman

A 46-year-old crewman on Alyeska Pipeline's *Tan'erliq* tractor tug was killed in April after a part failed on a response barge as the tug tied up to it.

The victim was Charles Wamser of Anchorage, according to press accounts. He was second mate on the *Tan'erliq*, owned and operated for Alyeska by Crowley Maritime Corporation.

The accident occurred when the cross piece failed on a device known as an H-bitt, which was being used to secure a line from the *Tan'erliq* to Crowley's Barge 450-3. The cross piece broke off and struck Wamser in the head. He is believed to have died instantly.

The flying cross piece also struck the *Tan'erliq*'s chief engineer with enough force to rip off the shell of his hardhat, leaving only the harness in place, according to a report on the incident by Crowley. He was not injured.

The Crowley report concluded the steel used for the cross piece was too small for the job, and had not been installed properly. Normally, the cross piece runs through holes in the vertical legs of the bitt. In this case, it had simply been welded between the legs.

In response to the accident, Crowley issued a safety directive specifying how crew members are to stay clear when mooring lines are coming under tension. In addition, Crowley ordered inspections of H-bitts on all barges in its world-wide fleet. One more barge with an improper H-bitt was found in the Valdez fleet, according to the Crowley report.

Roy Robertson, a council project manager, sat on a safety panel that reviewed the accident and contributed to the Crowley report.

"Crowley Marine and Alyeska were very open about their operations and did everything they can to make sure it doesn't happen again," Robertson said. "It was great that they allowed us to participate because they didn't have to."

One new face and two new places on council staff

Jacquelyn Olson started work in the council's Valdez office in mid-May as a project manager assistant. She replaces Dan Gilson, who held the post before moving up to the position of project manager for oil spill response operations earlier this year.

Olson, a long-time Valdez resident, had been working since 2001 for Chugach Development Corp. under contract to Alyeska Pipeline. Her duties included tracking and generating statistics on company-wide spills and preparing and giving reports on those statistics.



Mary Schonberger

Jacquelyn Olson

Linda Swiss

In the council's Anchorage office, Linda Swiss was promoted to project manager for oil spill prevention and response planning. She replaces Joe Banta, who recently became project manager for environmental monitoring. Swiss had worked as project manager assistant since joining the staff early in 2004.

And Mary Schonberger was promoted to the project manager assistant position vacated by Swiss. Schonberger had worked as administrative assistant since joining the council's Anchorage office early last year.

Council seeks artists for new version of its coloring book

The citizens' council is again looking for donations of artwork for a fourth edition of the Prince William Sound coloring book, which has been hugely successful.

Check our website, www.pwsrca.org, for details.

Or, you can send your artwork to Linda Robinson, Outreach Coordinator, Prince William Sound RCAC, 3709 Spenard Rd. #100, Anchorage AK 99503.

Council Meeting Schedule

The citizens' council board of directors meets three times annually. Here is the tentative schedule for the coming year:

Sept. 18-19, 2006: Homer

Jan. 25-26, 2007: Anchorage

May 3-4, 2007: Valdez

For more information, visit the council's Internet site, www.pwsrca.org

THE OBSERVER is the quarterly newsletter of the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council. Except where noted, Observer articles are written by Stan Jones, director of external affairs. For a free subscription to the Observer, contact a council office in Anchorage or Valdez. See back page for information.

Alyeska Viewpoint

Vessel system practices continuous improvement

Since its inception seventeen years ago, the Ship Escort/Response Vessel System has maintained a steady course toward the goal of being the best prevention and response organization possible. While establishment of an organization such as SERVS might have been revolutionary in 1989, SERVS has since settled down into a more evolutionary process of constantly seeking ways to improve. SERVS is not the same organization it was; it is significantly better.

In the beginning, the focus was on establishing the ship escort system and open-water response capabilities under the "Interim Operating Agreement." This agreement was replaced with the more robust Prince William Sound Contingency Plan later in 1989. Our equipment, organization, tactics, and plans have continued to develop into a more advanced, more effective prevention and response system. Some important examples include: on-shore response improvements in 1991, updates to the near-shore response capability and the expansion of the fishing vessel program in 1994, and improvements to wildlife response in 1995. In 1999, the prevention system was significantly enhanced with the delivery of the two Enhanced Tractor Tugs, followed in 2000 and 2001 by the delivery of the three Prevention and Response Tugs. Throughout the years, other significant improvements to our prevention and response capabilities were the introduction of ship double-hull design and construction, the Vessel Traffic System enhancements, and ice radar.

While impressive, all this technology is of little

value without talented people. As the SERVS Manager, I see attracting and retaining competent employees as two of my highest priorities. It isn't always easy; there continues to be competition for qualified emergency response personnel within the industry. Through the efforts of Alyeska; Chugach Development Corp.; Crowley; Doyon; Tattilek, Chenega and Chugach, LLC; Prince William Sound Community College; and over 350 fishing vessel captains and their crews, SERVS is able to meet its commitments with a team of dedicated professionals. One impressive indication of this commitment was the 10,000th escort milestone achieved in December 2005.

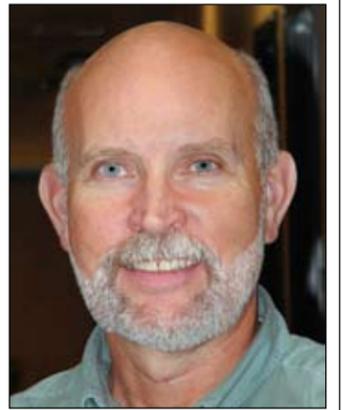
I'm very proud to have been part of the organization for about a year now and what an amazing year it's been. I learn something new every day. When asked what I've learned, I talk about the importance of the people and the equipment, as I've noted here. I also learned that we need to realign some parts of the organization to put the focus back on field operations and core competencies such as maintenance and training. We're going to spend time making sure there are clear accountabilities for each position and that everyone is well trained and response-ready. None of these changes is very dramatic; they are more mid-course corrections needed to keep us on track to meet our prevention and response commitments.

In the operations organization, we have added two response coordinator roles. This provides a 24-hour on-duty response coordinator at our two primary response locations – the Valdez Marine Terminal and the crude oil tankers. This is in addition to our

current 24-hour duty officers and vessel response coordinators. We believe this will enhance oversight and execution of day-to-day maintenance and training. In addition, within the SERVS maintenance arena, we have expanded the Alyeska planning and scheduling functions to be consistent with other Alyeska maintenance functions. With the compliance and preparedness team, we are realigning accountabilities and changing a position to focus on the tracking and analysis of our compliance records. This is a difficult and important challenge given the diversity and sheer number of activities that generate personnel, training, and contract documents. All of these changes are a work in progress and we will continue to look for opportunities to become more efficient.

SERVS is a recognized leader in preparedness and oil spill response run by dedicated and professional staff. We will continue to manage our commitments to safe, reliable transportation of Alaska North Slope Crude Oil and the protection of our people and the environment.

• Mike Meadors is general manager of Alyeska's Ship Escort/Response Vessel System.



Mike Meadors

INVADERS: Group to address the threat

Continued from Page 1

While the citizens' council focuses on marine invasive species, the new group will focus on all types of invaders, whether land- or sea-based.

The first steps to form the group were taken at an Anchorage workshop in April. At present, a Memorandum of Understanding is being developed that lays out the membership of the group and its functions, with another organizational meeting scheduled for October.

For more information, contact



A citizens' council trapping program checks for the presence in Alaska of the green crab, shown here.

Michele Hebert at the University of Alaska Fairbanks at 907-474-2423 or ffimah@uaf.edu.

Settling Into New Space



NEW DIGS – As of May 1, the citizens' council Valdez staff began working out of new offices on the second floor of the Harbor Court Building, located at 130 S. Meals Ave. As the name suggests, it's near the Valdez small boat harbor. And it's strategically positioned over an espresso shop, as shown above. Staffers, from left to right: John Devens, Jennifer Fleming, Jacquelyn Olson, Donna Schantz and Tamara Byrnes. Photo by Stan Jones.

AMOP Conference



OUT AND ABOUT

Several people from the citizens' council attended this year's Arctic Marine Oilspill Conference in Vancouver, B.C. They included committee volunteers John LeClair and Jerry Brookman, left and right in above photo, and board member John French, center.

At right, Joe Banta of the council staff delivers a presentation on community-based oil-spill response in Alaska.

Photos by Lisa Ka'aihue, council staff.



Methodology in dispersant tests is still questionable

A pair of citizens' council observers has found continuing problems in how chemical oil-spill dispersants are tested at a federal facility in New Jersey.

The council team – Dr. Merv Fingas, a Canadian dispersants expert, and Elise DeCola, an Alaska researcher – traveled to the facility to observe cold-water dispersant testing in February and March of this year.

The first of two reports on their observations indicates that dispersant tests at the facility – known as OHMSETT, for Oil and Hazardous Materials Simulated Environmental Test Tank – still suffer from many of the same problems that council observers identified in tests conducted in 2002 and 2003. OHMSETT's procedures in the earlier tests were also criticized by the National Academies of Science, and this year's test were in part an effort to address some of those criticisms.

The facility is owned by the federal Minerals Management Service and operated for the agency by a contractor, MAR, Inc. The OHMSETT tank is 667 feet long by 65 feet wide, and contains 8 feet of sea water. For dispersant tests, a traveling bridge moves along the length of the tank. Oil is sprayed onto the water from the leading edge of the bridge; a few seconds later, dispersant sprayed from the trailing edge of the bridge hits the oil.

Fingas and DeCola, in the first of their reports to the council, said OHMSETT's 2006 tests appeared to resolve some of the problems identified in the earlier tests. Those included applying dispersants to heated oil rather than oil that had been allowed to cool to ambient air temperature; the use of booms to contain the oil during the tests; and testing dispersants on artificially weathered oil rather than oil that had been allowed to weather naturally, as would occur after an actual spill.

But several other major concerns did not appear to have been addressed in the latest tests, according to the observers. Among them were:

Resurfacing of oil. This refers to the fact that oil dispersed into the water column tends to un-disperse and return to the surface in a relatively short time. According to Fingas and DeCola, an estimated 90 percent of the North Slope crude in one test resurfaced within about two hours of being sprayed with Corexit 9527, the

primary dispersant stockpiled for use on Prince William Sound spills.

Herdning with fire hoses. As the final stage of each test, fire hoses are used to 'herd' the remaining surface oil for collection and measurement. "This was observed to have the unintended consequence of temporarily re-dispersing oil," the observers noted.

Tank contamination. The OHMSETT tank is so large that it cannot feasibly be cleaned between tests. As a result, leftover oil and dispersant from one test are still present when the next test begins. "Contamination continued to be an issue," the observers wrote, "and sheening was visible throughout the test period from the prominent oil stain around the edges of the tank."

Use of oils not transported through Prince William Sound. OHMSETT gets its samples of North Slope crude from Pump Station One at the start of the trans-Alaska pipeline. However, refineries along the pipeline right-of-way take some crude out for refining, then pump the refinery remnants back into the pipeline stream. "Therefore," the Observers wrote, "the test oils vary in composition from oil that might actually be spilled in Prince William Sound. . . . In the future, test oils should be obtained from the Valdez Marine Terminal."

Uncontrollable natural forces. Because OHMSETT is an outdoor facility located on the New Jersey seashore, it is not possible to control such important variables as air temperature, sunlight, and wind speed, or to factor in their influence on dispersion rates. The council observers reported that, during their visit, air temperatures ranged from the low 30s to the low 40s, while winds varied from 10 mph to 40 mph. On two of the four days the observers were there, winds blew constantly at 15-20 mph, with occasional gusts near 40 mph.

Unrealistic time frame of dispersant application. At OHMSETT, dispersant is sprayed onto the oil a few seconds after the oil hits the water in the tank, long before a slick has time to form. In a real spill, several hours would almost certainly pass before dispersant could be applied. By then, the oil would form a slick.

Unrealistic amounts of dispersant. The usual recommendation is that dispersant be applied at a ratio of 1:20 to the oil. For example, if 100 gallons of oil were spilled, 5 gallons of



OHMSETT is a large, outdoor test tank set on a navy station in coastal New Jersey. Photo courtesy of OHMSETT.



Resurfaced oil, shown here in a corner of the OHMSETT test tank, is a serious, persistent, problem observed by the citizens' council in several years of monitoring dispersant demonstrations at the facility. Photo courtesy of Merv Fingas.

dispersant should be applied. However, at OHMSETT, dispersant-to-oil ratios appeared to range as high as 1:4.7, according to the operator logs from the facility. For a 100-gallon spill, that would work out to about 21 gallons of dispersant. At that ratio, treating an 11 million gallon spill like the Exxon Valdez would require 2.3 million gallons of dispersant.

As a result of the problems they saw at OHMSETT, wrote Fingas and DeCola, "we do not believe that accurate quantification of dispersant effectiveness is possible under the observed

experimental design."

Their report, titled "Observers' Report – MMS Cold Water Dispersant Tests," is available on the council website at www.pwsrca.org/docs/d0028000.pdf or by request to either council office. (See back page for contact information.)

The second report by Fingas and DeCola is titled "Analysis of Oil Spill Dispersant Testing at OHMSETT." It will provide a technical analysis of the experimental design and testing protocols for this year's OHMSETT tests and should be available soon.

SPILL OFFICE: No resolution of its budget problem so far

Continued from Page 1

The battle may not be over, however. As the Observer went to press in late July, the Legislature was in another special session to consider the overhaul of Alaska's oil taxes, including the one that funds the oil spill agency.

Though the spill division's long-term funding remains uncertain, its budget appears safe for the next couple of years. A political compromise during the regular legislative session will

temporarily supplement its funding with money from an account financed primarily by a levy on cruise ships.

The Legislature this year has focused on Murkowski's proposed natural gas pipeline contract with North Slope oil producers, and on his related proposal for revising the state's oil and gas taxes. Long-term funding for the spill division has been addressed in the proposed tax legislation.

The version that died with the June 8 adjournment of the special session

would have increased the per-barrel tax from three cents to four for the spill division. That was a penny less than the five cents per barrel sought by the council. The council believes a four-cent tax would be a relatively temporary fix, while the five-cent tax should stabilize the spill division for several years.

The council also called for inflation-proofing a state oil-spill response fund currently financed by a crude oil tax of two cents per barrel. That fund

is capped at \$50 million and the tax is suspended when the fund reaches that level. The council had proposed immediately raising the cap to about \$70 million to offset inflation since the fund's inception in the mid-1990s, and increasing it annually in the future to match the inflation rate. That proposal never made it into any bill before the Legislature in the 2006 sessions.

The council plans to keep pressing for these measures until stable funding is assured for the oil-spill division.

Chenega Bay celebrates opening of new buildings

By **LINDA ROBINSON**
Outreach Coordinator

Chenega Bay is an Alutiiq Village on Evans Island in Prince William Sound. It was moved there after the 1964 Good Friday earthquake and tsunami destroyed the village and killed a third of its population. Twenty-five years later, it became a center for clean-up operations after the Exxon Valdez oil spill.

The current population is approximately 70 people.

On June 1, the community celebrated the opening of three new buildings, and the upgrade of its airstrip, including new lights. Pete Kompkoff, tribal administrator and president as well as a board member of the citizens' council, hosted the event. It included such dignitaries as Lt. Governor Loren Leman, and Sheri Buretta, president of Chugach Alaska Corp. and a council board member. The ceremony opened with Native dancing performed by Chenega Bay students.

Chenega Bay's new buildings include the Nicholas Kompkoff, Sr. Community Clinic, the John M. Totemoff Museum, and the Joseph Alex Kompkoff Subsistence Building. Each building was blessed by Father Peter Chris, a Russian Orthodox priest.

The new community clinic includes examining rooms, an exercise room, and a dormitory-type room



Pete Kompkoff, right, citizens' council board member and community leader in Chenega Bay, hosted a June 1 celebration of the opening of new facilities including the Nicholas Kompkoff, Sr. Community Clinic, shown here. With Kompkoff is Patrick Anderson, executive director of Chugachmiut. Photo by Linda Robinson.

for visiting doctors. Chenega Bay is visited once a month by a doctor and once a year by a dentist. Staff at the clinic is trained to handle routine

medical problems.

The clinic is named after Nicholas Kompkoff, Sr. Father Kompkoff was a commercial fisherman who

received training at St. Michael's Orthodox Cathedral in Sitka before being ordained in the Russian Orthodox Church. He was the founder and first president of Chenega Corp., and when he and his wife moved back home to Chenega Bay he oversaw the construction of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church where he served the parish for two years.

The Chenega Bay museum is named after John F. Totemoff. "Johnny Tote," as he was known by his family and friends, was a crab fisherman. He was known locally for his ability to locate crabs, and his willingness to assist anyone in trouble. He died in 2000. The museum will be a repository for artifacts as soon as the climate control equipment has been installed. It already displays several photographs and hand-made artifacts and artwork.

The third new building to be blessed by Father Chris is the subsistence building. This building was named for Joseph Alex Kompkoff, born June 1, 1926. He was a dedicated subsistence fisherman and hunter. He was known as the "Anthony Quinn of the Aleuts."

Chenega Bay has a Russian Orthodox Church, completed in 1999, and a ferry dock built as a "whistle stop" on the Prince William Sound route. That means the ferry will stop there if someone calls for a ride.

Spring brings fishing vessel training for Kodiak crews



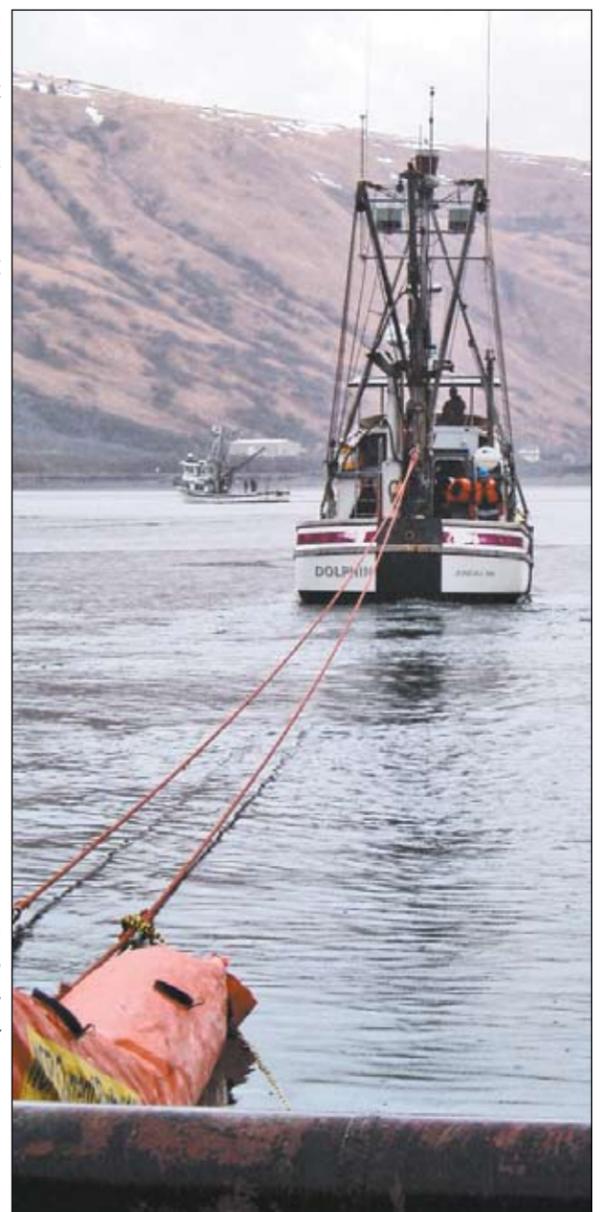
This year's Kodiak fishing vessel training exercises took place May 8-10, involving 41 boats and 152 fishermen. In the event of a major oil spill, fishing vessels will be a key part of the response, as they were in 1989 after the Exxon Valdez spill. That's why Alyeska Pipeline, which operates the program, conducts regular training exercises.

Aboard Alyeska's Endurance tug, fishermen get training in the use of various types of boom.



A CurrentBuster skimming system aboard the Endurance is inflated for deployment.

The fishing vessel Dolphin pulls the CurrentBuster off the Endurance and into the waters of Womens Bay on Kodiak Island.



Photos by Matt Pauli, Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

Council documents are available free to the 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.

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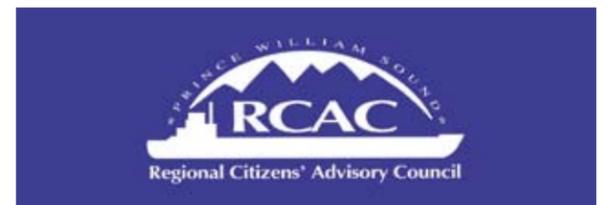
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Community Corner**French visitors tour oil-spill region**

The highlight of this past couple of months for me was a visit by our French associates from Vigipol in Brittany, Jean Baptiste Henri and Sophie Bahe. They came to tour the Exxon oil spill region and interview staff, volunteers, agencies, and industries to learn how to enhance their program. They were accompanied by Marion Fourcade, a French sociology professor from U.C. Berkeley, who had been an intern at Vigipol. Marion is working on a project to study ecological damage compensation.

Our visit started in Valdez where we visited with board members Stan Stephens, John Allen, and Sharry Miller, and industry representatives Tom Colby of Alaska

Tanker Company and Tom Blanchard of SeaRiver. Barry Roberts of SERVS escorted us on a tour of the Valdez Emergency Operations Center and its storage warehouse. We participated in an open house to present the council's new Valdez office to the community.

From there we traveled to Cordova on the new fast ferry Chenega. Board member Patience Andersen Faulkner had organized a wonderful itinerary for us. We met with community members at a Copper River red salmon dinner, and at a reception. Nancy Bird, a council board member, president of the Prince William Sound Science Center, and director of the Oil Spill Recovery Institute, and oceanographer Claude Belanger showed us the science center and provided information on its work.

We toured the town power plant, the hydroelectric power plant on Eyak Lake, and visited the new Ilanka Heritage Museum (Ilanka means "family" in Alutiiq). The museum building houses the skeleton of a beached orca whale that was reassembled by the science center, the Native Village of Eyak, and the Forest Service.

We met with former board member and scientific advisory committee member Michelle Hahn O'Leary and former board member Kristin Smith of the Copper River Watershed. Marion Fourcade met with Riki Ott, author of books on the Exxon Valdez oil spill.

From Cordova we took the ferry to Whittier, where we met with Mayor Lester Lunceford and council volunteers Marilyn and Pete Heddell.

The next couple of days were spent in Anchorage interviewing people who have been involved with the oil spill since 1989, such as plaintiff's attorney Dave Oesting, Craig Tillery, Deputy Attorney General for the Civil Division for the Department of Law and council volunteers Dick Tremaine and John French. We then traveled to the Kenai Peninsula, by way of the Cook Inlet Regional Citizens' Advisory Council and the ConocoPhillips liquefied natural gas plant in Nikiski.

Board member John Velsko and his wife Teddy hosted us for a lovely lunch in Homer (white king salmon, halibut, and tanner crab – yum!). This was after a tour of the Kachemak Bay Research Center and Alaska Islands and Ocean Center, provided by Terry Thompson and Scott Pegau, both of the research center.

After a brief respite at my home in Soldotna, we returned to Anchorage where Carrie Holba gave us a tour of Alaska Resources Library and Information Services, the repository at the University of Alaska Consortium Library for oil spill documents. We met with board member Sheri Buretta, board chair of Chugach Alaska Corp., former council

staff member Marilyn Leland, and Leslie Pearson and Betty Schorr of the state Department of Environmental Conservation. Ed Thompson, formerly of the United States Coast Guard and currently with BP, gave a presentation on the company's spill response process.

Observing all of the interviews regarding the history of the oil spill and actions taken subsequently was extremely educational and emphasized the value in public participation related to prevention, response, and recovery. A final trip before our guests departed was to witness the christening of new buildings in Chenega Bay. Our host was Pete Kompkoff, tribal president and administrator as well as the citizens' council board member representing Chenega Bay. Other visitors included Lt. Governor Loren Leman and Sheri Buretta.

Out and about

Since the departure of our French guests, the council sponsored a booth at the Arctic Marine Oilspill Program annual conference in Vancouver, BC. Staff member Joe Banta gave a presentation titled "Community-based Oil Spill Response in Alaska," and I presented the "Effectiveness of Citizens Involvement." At the same time, Tamara Byrnes from our Valdez office tended our booth at the North American Benthological Society conference, held this year in Anchorage, and at the Alaska Oceans Festival in Anchorage on the park strip.

Staff member Roy Robertson, board member Patience Andersen Faulkner, and I represented the council at the annual fundraiser for the Prince William Sound Science Center, the Copper River Nouveau. This year was the most successful fundraiser yet, bringing in about \$30,000 from the dinner, prepared by Jack Amon and Van Hale from Marx Brothers in Anchorage, and an art auction. The event was attended by Senator Lisa Murkowski and her mother, Nancy, Alaska's first lady.



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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