



# 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.

## Legislation to save Sound's escort system introduced in Congress

By **STAN JONES**

Council Director of External Affairs

The citizens' council's drive to preserve the dual-tug oil tanker escort system took a major step forward in mid-May, when Alaska Sens. Lisa Murkowski and Mark Begich introduced federal legislation to mandate its continuation.

The bill, known as S. 1041, was introduced May 14. It would amend the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 to place double-hulled tankers under the same double-escort requirement that already applies to single-hull tankers.

The key passage of the bill says, "The requirement...relating to single hulled tankers in Prince William Sound, Alaska...shall apply to double hulled tankers..."

"The current oil transport system in Prince William Sound is one of the safest in the world," Murkowski said in a prepared statement. "While I recognize that double-hulled tankers are an improvement over single hulls, they will not, by themselves, prevent oil spills. Even with double hulled tankers, we must not compromise the existing safety system which has been so successful. We must remain ever vigilant and not forget the devastation that the Exxon Valdez oil

spill caused."

"The dual escort coverage of tankers operating in Prince William Sound has helped ensure we have the best oil transportation system in the world," Begich said. "The...tugs have proved their usefulness several times when tankers needed assistance. Their continued use is inexpensive insurance to protect the environment of Prince William Sound and maintain the flow of oil."

U.S. Rep. Don Young, R-Alaska, is working with fellow members of the U.S. House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure on a House version of this provision.

While the Oil Pollution Act requires double escorts for single-hulled tankers, it is silent on the question of escorts for double-hulled tankers. The Act also requires a phase-out of single-hulled tankers by 2015.

Double-hulled tankers, which have several feet of protective space between their two hulls, can prevent or reduce some oil spills, but are not a cure-all. The Coast Guard estimated a double hull on the Exxon Valdez might have cut the oil outflow from its grounding on Bligh Reef in

See page 4, **ESCORTS**

## Begich endorses citizen oversight for Alaska's Arctic regions

Alaska Senator Mark Begich has called for the creation of an Arctic Regional Citizens' Advisory Council to ensure local voices will be heard on oil industry development in Alaska's northernmost areas.

The new council would represent communities and organizations with interests in the Beaufort and Chukchi seas, North Slope and Northwest Arctic boroughs. Citizens from St Lawrence Island, the Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission, the Alaska Beluga Whale Committee, the Alaska Eskimo Walrus Commission, the

Alaska Nanuq Commission, the Ice Seal Commission, environmental, recreation and tourism organizations, and local villages would have a voice to ensure safe resource development.

Begich's draft legislation states that the Arctic council will be modeled after the citizens' councils for Prince William Sound and Cook Inlet. According to the legislation, the existing councils have "proven effective at increasing trust and communication between citizens, the oil industry, and government." The Arctic council

See page 7, **BEGICH**



JiYeon Im, Valdez High School student, holds a sea urchin found on a class trip sponsored by the council. See story, pg 4. Photo by Jenny Heckathorn.

## May drill tested response readiness in two stages

ConocoPhillips and Alyeska Pipeline, the consortium of oil companies responsible for the oil pipeline and terminal, partnered this spring to conduct a major oil-spill drill in Prince William Sound.

The scenario involved an imaginary tanker called the Polar Intrepid colliding with an unidentified vessel near Glacier Island, spilling just over 5 million gallons of Alaska North Slope crude oil just outside the mouth of Columbia Bay.

At first, the simulated oil slick moved toward Glacier Island and Columbia Bay. Then the winds shifted and pushed the oil toward Tatitlek Narrows.

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Volunteer Profile

# Seldovia’s Lewis is committee guru for web technology


Seldovia resident Savannah Lewis is a strong believer in the council’s mission. Lewis saw the recent reformation of the council’s Information and Education Committee as an opportunity to help the organization. By using her technical expertise in web design and her knowledge of online social networking, she hopes to foster public awareness of the council and oil-spill issues.

Committee and board members have long looked for ways to attract younger participants, and Lewis believes the place to do that is online.

The Internet has undergone a transformation since its beginning. While most websites once functioned as encyclopedias or libraries, new websites are a place to hang out, converse with others, and exchange ideas. Websites such as Facebook and Twitter have millions of members and, according to Lewis, should be a basic part of any nonprofit organization’s marketing and outreach. Also popular are blogs. A blog—short for “web log”—is a website that is regularly updated, with the most recent entry at the top of the page.

To demonstrate the usefulness of interactive websites, Lewis enthusiastically agreed to conduct the interview for this article via Twitter. Twitter is a micro-blogging website, where people, businesses,

and organizations share short snippets—140 characters or less, including spaces—about current activities. Along with ordinary citizens, politicians, and Hollywood celebrities, organizations such as the Alaska Volcano Observatory, the U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Envi-



Lewis’s “avatar” or online persona

ronmental Protection Agency, and most news agencies “tweet” (as the practice is known) about activities and issues.

Lewis sees such online networking as a way to connect and build relationships. A sense of community is important to her, a value that was reaffirmed during

the aftermath of the Exxon Valdez spill. Lewis and her husband Steve were sailing abroad when the spill occurred. Everywhere they went, the sailing community was concerned.

“I was living on a boat in Europe at the time, and having *Alaska* on the transom was a real attention-getter that week,” Lewis tweeted. “Because we’d sailed in PWS [Prince William Sound] before, we ended up in a lot of discussions on the (then potential) spill impact once the news broke.”

“What surprised me most was the strength of the sailing community and, hence, the effectiveness of developing community,” she tweeted.

Lewis is an active member of the community of Seldovia, where she volunteers for the public library. She recently re-cataloged the library’s entire collection using a new computer program. Lewis also developed a new website for the library in a blog format.

Lewis made sure the library’s volunteers and staff were all trained to use these new programs.

“Any updated communications mode also requires training users to feel comfortable and effective with it,” Lewis tweeted. “Adults, especially those who may be intimidated by the learning process, need demonstration AND practice to master new skills.”

Lewis believes that a full online presence for the council is vital for public awareness when considering the future of the organization.

“There are great tools available for free, for only the time put into using them, and that’s a phenomenal value per eyes reached,” Lewis



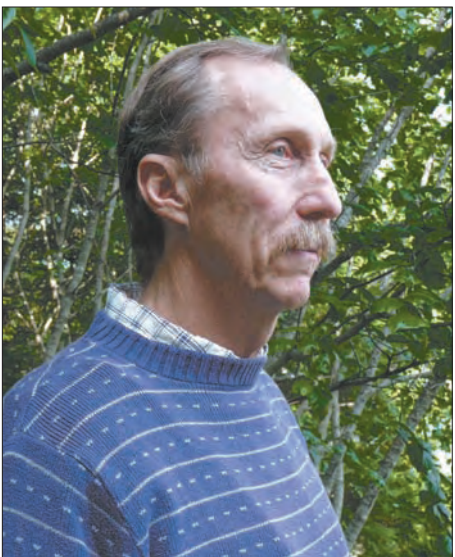
Savannah Lewis

tweeted. “The web not only reaches an entirely different part of our constituency but can engage them and bring them to a dialog with the org[anization].”

*If you have a Twitter account, you can read this interview online. Just search for #obsint at [www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com).*

## Citizens’ council board chooses new officers

At its May meeting in Valdez, the council’s board elected its seven-member executive committee for the next year.



Steve Lewis, President

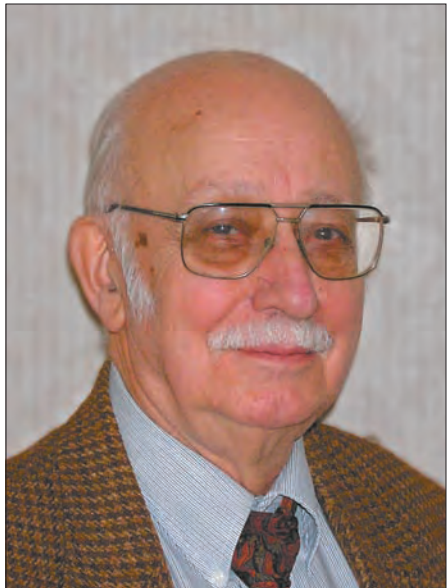
Steve Lewis of Seldovia was elected president, succeeding Patience Andersen Faulkner of Cordova, who had served in that post since 2007.

Besides Lewis, the executive committee, which will serve until the board’s May 2010 meeting, is as follows:

Walter Parker, who represents the Oil Spill Region Environmental Coalition on the board, is the new vice president.

Cathy Hart, representing the Alaska Wilderness Recreation and Tourism Association, is the new secretary. Sheri Buretta, representing Chugach Alaska Corporation, is the new treasurer.

Elected to serve as at-large members of the executive commit-



Walt Parker, Vice-President

tee were Jane Eisemann of Kodiak, Blake Johnson of Kenai, and Dorothy M. Moore of Valdez.

The board also welcomed a familiar face back to the council. Stan Stephens, who has served several previous terms on the board as a representative of the Alaska Wilderness Recreation and Tourism Association, was seated as a representative of the city of Valdez.



Cathy Hart, Secretary



Stan Stephens, back on the board



Sheri Buretta, Treasurer



From the Acting Executive Director

# Taking stock: looking back, looking ahead

Every year at about this time, we at the council pause a moment to take stock of what’s happened in the past twelve months and what we hope will happen in the next twelve.

Looking back: This year marked the 20th anniversary of the Exxon Valdez oil spill in Prince William Sound.

Looking ahead: It also marked the launch of a major council effort to preserve perhaps the most significant safety measure put in place since that spill: the world-class escort system that provides dual tug escorts for tankers carrying oil through the Sound.

Even as Alaskans in the oil spill region gathered to recognize the significance of the spill to our economies, lifestyles, and environment, important steps toward preserving the escorts were taking place, as discussed in detail elsewhere in the Observer. In March, the Alaska Legislature unanimously adopted a resolution calling for preservation of the escorts, speedily followed by a letter of support from Gov. Sarah Palin. And, in May, Alaska Sens. Lisa Murkowski and Mark Begich introduced federal legislation to save the escorts, with Rep. Don Young working

behind the scenes to get companion legislation in the U.S. House.

While the legislation is far from being signed into law, a good start has been made and we are optimistic that, a year from now, Alaskans will no longer need to wonder whether the escort tugs will still be around if another tanker should head for disaster as the Exxon Valdez did 20 years ago.

In addition to marking the Exxon Valdez anniversary and starting the escorts campaign, the council has been active on many other fronts, as well:

- We have been participating with the Prince William Sound oil shippers to test new skimmers designed to capture spilled oil better than existing systems. We will also be working with industry and regulators to evaluate containment boom that would let the new skimmers perform even better.
- We are studying various commercially available oil-simulation materials to see whether they could be used to improve the realism and utility of on-water oil-spill cleanup training in Prince William Sound.

• Because a serious fire on a tanker or at the terminal could lead to a major disaster, we conducted an assessment of firefighting capabilities at the Valdez Marine Terminal and in Port Valdez. The study showed that the firefighting systems on the tankers and tugs, and at the Valdez Marine Terminal, meet or exceed regulations and industry standards. However, the analysts who performed the study recommended additional training in coordinated response by all of the organizations that could become involved in fighting a terminal or tanker fire—Alyeska’s fire brigade, the Valdez city fire department, the state fire marshal, and tug and tanker crews. The council hopes to address this issue at one of its periodic firefighting symposiums.



Donna Schantz

See page 7, **SCHANTZ**

## Alyeska Viewpoint

# Ballast water treatment: continuous improvement

We at Alyeska Pipeline strive to foster an atmosphere of continuous improvement as operators of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System. Our business processes, work management systems, safety culture, and environmental stewardship are just a few of the areas where we strive for better results through careful planning, open communications, and technological enhancements. An example of continuous improvement put into practice can be found at the Valdez Marine Terminal’s Ballast Water Treatment Facility. By using a structured approach for creating continuous improvements this facility has benefited from numerous upgrades and process improvements over the past few years.

Driven by the need to identify and select alternative treatment technologies to address the decline in ballast flows resulting from the conversion to a segregated ballast tanker fleet, a team of representatives from engineering, operations, maintenance, and project management was formed. This team’s objective was to create a new system to identify, test and select new process technologies for the facility. A variety of concepts were identified with the most promising, selected for testing alongside the existing treatment system ensuring that specific conditions unique to the terminal would be part of the review criteria.

Worker safety and environmental stewardship have also been primary incentives to

many of the progressive steps that have been taken at the ballast water facility. In 2006 and 2007, numerous improvements were made to address safety and environmental issues. These improvements have resulted in fewer air emissions from the Dissolved Air Flotation process and from a wastewater distribution system commonly known as the splitter box. Additionally, a tank headspace inerting system was installed on a recovered crude tank to address risks inherent with the original tank design. During this period additional process control instrumentation and process control systems were completed to supplement the transitional phase of the facility renovation. In 2008, a project to install vapor controls to two of the ballast water treatment tanks was completed and the system became operational creating a safer system with substantially fewer emissions. Also during that year, one of the ballast water storage tanks was cleaned out and placed in standby thus reducing emissions without impacting operational requirements.

In 2009 we have seen the completion of the installation of the seven tray air strippers and the regenerative thermal oxidizers which are designed to supplement the treatment process as we move through the transition period when the biological treatment step may become less productive or efficient. The new technology will ensure contaminants are properly removed from

the wastewater and destroyed through a vapor control device. Additional projects are in the works to address structural and lifespan issues with some of the facility’s components and conceptual studies will continue in order to identify the best options for additional treatment concepts.

This commitment to continuous improvement provides the focus and direction for the ongoing work as well as the future concepts that will ultimately become reality. This approach ensures that the technology is specifically designed to address the evolving challenges associated with the wastewater needs of the Valdez Marine Terminal.

In summary, Alyeska Pipeline recognizes the value in continuous improvements and through our employees and contractors we can bring about change from concepts to reality using processes and systems that are supported by our stakeholders.

- Greg Jones is Senior Vice President, Valdez Operations and Health Safety and Environment Quality, Alyeska Pipeline Service Co.



Greg Jones

# Devens resigns as head of the citizens’ council

John Devens this spring left his long-time position as executive director of the council. His resignation was accepted by the council board May 8 as it met in Valdez.

While the board seeks a permanent replacement, Donna Schantz, the organization’s director of programs, will continue as acting executive director. She has filled that role since February, when Devens began a leave of absence

that continued until his resignation. Schantz, who has worked for the council since 1999, is a Valdez resident.

“On behalf of the council, I’d like to thank John for his service to the organization,” said board President Steve Lewis. “We wish him the very best in the future.”

Devens had been the council’s executive director since 1997 and was mayor of Valdez,

Alaska at the time of the Exxon Valdez oil spill in 1989.

“The council does a fine job in keeping Prince William Sound safe from future oil spills,” Devens said. “I wish them well in the future work they have to do.”

Over the next few months, the council will be conducting a nationwide search for a new executive director.



# Escorts: Legislation introduced in Congress

Continued from Page 1

1989 from 11 million gallons to 4.4 million gallons, which would still have been a catastrophic spill.

At present, all loaded tankers in Prince William are escorted, regardless of hull configuration, but some in the oil industry have indicated they are interested in reducing, if not eliminating, the escort system once all single-hulled tankers have left service and the requirement in the Oil Pollution Act ceases to apply.

“We’re very happy to see this legislation introduced,” said Steve Lewis, president of the citizens’ council. “We’ve made perpetuating the Prince William Sound escort system our highest priority for this year, which is the 20th anniversary of the Exxon Valdez oil spill, and this action by Alaska’s two senators is a very welcome and important step forward in that cause. All Alaskans owe these two leaders a tremendous debt of gratitude for what they’ve done.”

Editorial reaction to the escorts legislation was swift and positive. “Prevention is gospel in protecting the Sound and Alaska’s prosperity,” the Anchorage Daily News wrote on May 18. “Our senators have offered an ‘amen’ with the force of law. Their bill deserves swift passage to assure safe passage of Alaska’s oil.”

“The U.S. Senate should pass the Alaska delegation’s bill or similar language being advocated by Rep. Don Young in the House,” the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner wrote on May 26. “And it should do so before someone cuts a corner we all end up regretting.”

The council is now working to keep the leg-

islation moving in Congress.

The council has been focused on the issue since January, when its board of directors passed a draft resolution on the escort system for submission to the Alaska Legislature.

In March, both chambers of the Legislature unanimously passed the council-backed resolution calling continuation of the dual escorts.

The legislative resolution reads, in part, “double hulls are not a perfect prevention measure, and it would be imprudent to alter a proven oil spill prevention and response program based solely on improvements in oil tanker vessel engineering and design.”

*For more information on the Prince William Sound escort system, visit the council’s website at [www.tinyurl.com/PWSescorts](http://www.tinyurl.com/PWSescorts)*



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# Anchorage office sees staff changes

The council welcomed a new assistant to the Anchorage office in June. Serena Lopez is a lifelong Alaska resident who spent most of her childhood in Whittier. She recently left a position as a legal administrator working for insurance defense attorneys.

Meanwhile, Kyle von Bose, the council’s Webmaster, resigned in April to return to graduate school.

After von Bose’s departure, the council took some time to reorganize the position’s job duties to better fit the organization’s needs. The new public communications project manager position has been filled by Amanda Johnson, who joined the staff in 2008 as project manager assistant.

Johnson will produce the Observer newsletter and manage the council’s website and online outreach activities.

Telena McQuery, hired last September as Anchorage’s administrative assistant, has taken over as the project manager assistant in Anchorage.



Serena Lopez

# Drill: Testing readiness for oil spill response

Continued from Page 1

The exercise consisted of two multi-day operations, April 7-8, and May 18-20. As would happen in a real event, Alyeska initiated the cleanup activities and then passed control of response operations to the tanker company responsible for spilling the oil, in this case ConocoPhillips.

On May 18, Port Valdez saw some on-water activity with the deployment of a wildlife task force. This was the first exercise of the newly developed tactic in Prince William Sound, and was designed to assess responders’ ability to deal with oiled wildlife. Roy Robertson, citizens’ council project manager, participated as an evaluator.

“This on-water exercise was very valuable,” he said. “It included both industry representatives and agency personnel.”

The main day for ConocoPhillips drill activities was May 20. No on-water activities were involved. Instead, the action took place inside the Valdez Convention and Civic Center, where response managers practiced interacting with each other as they would during a real spill. One representative each from the Coast Guard, the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, and the oil industry formed a leadership team known as the Unified Command, which took overall charge of the response.

The citizens’ council was involved in a variety of roles during the drill, including evaluating some activities and participating directly in others. Donna Schantz, acting executive director of the council, took part as a representative on the Regional Stakeholders Committee, which serves as an information conduit between the Unified Command and the communities affected by the



Donna Schantz consults with fellow members of the Regional Stakeholders Committee during the ConocoPhillips drill in May. Photo by Stan Jones.

spill. This committee included representatives from Eyak, Tatitlek, Cordova, Whittier, the City of Valdez, and Chenega.

“I was impressed with the level of community participation,” Schantz said. “The representatives were provided a venue to convey the issues and concerns from their communities for consideration by the Unified Command.”

One of the council’s biggest concerns during this spill drill scenario was the focus on dispersant use. Dispersants are chemicals applied to the surface oil that force the oil into the water column, thereby diluting it and preventing it from fouling shorelines. The council does not support the use of dispersants as an oil spill response option since they have not been demonstrated to be effective in the cold and often low-salinity waters of Prince William Sound.



Youth Connection

# Students experience tidal zone at Kasitsna Bay

By MALAIKA KELLY and TRISTEN LARSON  
Valdez High School Students

On April 23, 18 students from Valdez High School boarded a mini-bus bound for the Kasitsna Bay Laboratory and Research Center. Once in Homer, we visited the new Islands and Oceans Visitors Center. Later that day, we boarded the *Rainbow Connection* and headed off to Kasitsna Bay. After unloading food and gear into the bunkhouse, we were given a tour of the lab by our guides from the Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies.

During low tide that evening, we had our first intertidal experience and found several anemones and unidentified invertebrate eggs. Several students helped collect plankton to use in the microscope lab we would be doing the next day.

The next morning, after a lesson on beach etiquette, we departed for Jakalof Bay. After a short hike, we reached the bay. Once there, we explored the intertidal zone at a low tide of -3.5 feet. We observed a wide variety of intertidal invertebrates including barnacles, sponges, anemones and sea stars. Some of the more impressive finds were an ochre star, a false lemon peel nudibranch, a colony of orange anemones, and a decorator crab. We also learned how to conduct a random sample transect line survey. This type of survey is done from the high tide to low tide and shows where and how many marine invertebrates live in the bay.

After documenting our findings, we returned to Kasitsna Bay Lab to participate in a series of



Valdez High's 2009 Biology II Class, aboard the Rainbow Connection. All photos by Jenny Heckathorn.

students and the supervisors.

The next morning, the biology class had to get ready to leave. Everyone had enjoyed themselves so much that we did not want to go.

At low tide, this time a -4.1 feet, the class went out on the beach in Kasitsna Bay right next to the lab for their last experiment. The intertidal variety found there was just as great as in Jakalof Bay. Today was the last day to find the one creature that all of us had been hoping to see but none had seen yet. We found Christmas anemones, brittle stars, true stars and chitons, among other things, but no one could find the one elusive invertebrate we were looking for.

Finally, just as everyone was about to go inside for lunch, one of the students found it. The octopus was white and about the size a small dinner plate. It had been simply lying on top of the seaweed on the beach looking relatively uncomfortable.

With the help of a guide, some of the girls picked up the octopus. At first, the octopus was relatively unresponsive, but it suddenly started trying to get away. The students were able to hold on. After a while, the group decided it was time to put the octopus back into the water. When



Tristen Larson holds the elusive octopus.

experiments. We were able to observe an algae identification lab, a microscope lab, and an observation of collected invertebrates in the wet lab.

Later that evening, our guides led the students in a game. Divided into teams, the students were given different objects to use to make up an imaginary invertebrate. Objects included a fly swatter, sheet, duster, construction helmet, siphon, and colander. One person in each group dressed up as the invented invertebrate. Each team decided how their invertebrate lived, including where they live, how and what they eat, and how they reproduce. Afterwards, the invertebrate creature was presented to the other groups. It was definitely a lot of laughs for the



Bailey Christensen holds one of many sea stars.



Tristen Larson, Sarah Gussert, Brittney Pickard, Josie Halverson, and Kayla Hood hold sea stars during their visit to Kasistna Bay lab.

Annie was trying to place it back in the water, it would not let go of her hands. As she pried it off, the students finally got to see it change color and ink! The tentacles turned red. We left the octopus alone and headed back to the bunkhouse.

Soon after, we were picked up by the *Rainbow Connection*, and headed back to Homer. We loaded all the gear and started the long drive home, first to Anchorage and then to Valdez. It was a long trip, but everyone had a lot of fun and learned a lot.

This trip was partially sponsored by the council. For more information on our student sponsorship program, contact the council's outreach coordinator, Linda Robinson: [robinson@pwsrccac.org](mailto:robinson@pwsrccac.org)



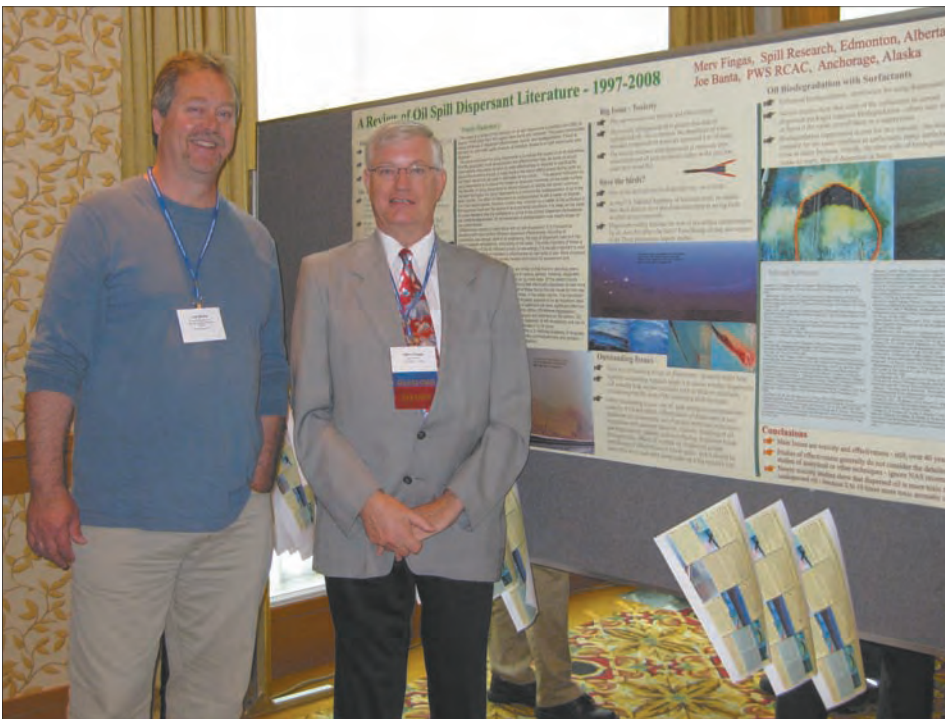
## Citizens' council: In the community



Council board and committee members toured the Valdez Marine Terminal as part of the May board meeting. Front row, left to right: Stan Stephens, Debasmitta Misra, Bob Jaynes, Dorothy Moore, Iver Malutin, Walt Parker, Shawna Thoma (Sen. Mark Begich's office). Back row, left to right: John French, Steve Bushong, Bill Conley, Blake Johnson, Stan Jones, Cathy Hart, Amanda Johnson. Photo courtesy of Amanda Johnson.



Board members Stan Stephens and Iver Malutin observe an oil skimming system during a tour of the SERVS warehouse. Photo by Stan Jones.



Staff member Joe Banta and council science contractor Merv Fingas attended a conference on Arctic marine oil spills. Fingas had a poster accepted for display at the conference, which had been sponsored by the council. Photo by Linda Robinson.

## Coming up in the September 2009 Observer...



Joe Banta, council project manager, helped install a weather station on Kayak Island to help predict barrier jets. Photo by Rob Campbell.

The council recently partnered with the Prince William Sound Science Center, Cape Saint Elias Lightkeepers Association, and the US Coast Guard to install a new wind observation station on Kayak Island on the Gulf Coast, just outside Prince William Sound.

The station will remotely monitor conditions that could create "barrier jets," very high

winds that occur when air pressure builds up against coastal mountain ranges.

Barrier jets can produce waves large enough to endanger passing tankers.

Data is available online at: <http://denali.micro-specialties.com/CapeStElias/>

See the September 2009 issue of the Observer for more on this new weather station.

**THE OBSERVER** is a quarterly newsletter published by the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council. Except where credited to others, articles are written by Amanda Johnson, council project manager.

### Council Meeting Schedule

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

September 17-18, 2009: Whittier

January 21-22, 2010: Anchorage

May 6-7, 2010: Valdez

Board meetings are open to public. Agendas and other meeting-related materials are available on the council web site at [www.pwsrca.org/about/boardintro.html](http://www.pwsrca.org/about/boardintro.html).

Or, contact either council office: Anchorage, 907-277-7222, or Valdez, 907-834-5000.



## Schantz: Looking back, looking ahead

Continued from Page 2

- We brought out a comprehensive oral history of the Exxon Valdez oil spill titled “The Spill: Personal Stories of the Exxon Valdez Disaster.” The book features interviews with over 60 people directly involved with the spill, ranging from Alaska citizens to government agency personnel to elected officials to oil industry personnel.
- We sponsored a peer-listening training session in Cordova as part of our Coping with Technological Disasters program. New video was recorded to update the program and DVD with new coping tools and information.
- We continue to monitor Alyeska Pipeline’s renovation activities at the Ballast Water Treatment Facility. These renovations will, when complete, significantly reduce hazardous air pollution from the facility that cleans oily residue from tanker ballast water.
- We reviewed the readiness of fishing vessels on contract to Alyeska Pipeline Service Company to determine how fast they can respond to a major oil spill. This study showed that the existing fleet is very experienced and that there appear to be enough vessels in the program. But the ability of vessel captains and crews to respond within the tight timeframes required by contract—as little as six hours, for vessels subject to the fastest callout—needs more review.
- We initiated development of 21 additional geographic response strategies, or mini-response plans, for environmentally sensitive sites in Prince William Sound. Site surveys for these sites have been completed and detailed written plans will be developed during the coming year, as we continue working with industry and regulators to test the 65 sites in the Sound that already have geographic response strategies.
- In an ongoing effort to understand the long-term marine effects of oil and dispersed oil, we started a hydrocarbon toxicity research project to identify the components of oil that are most involved in long-term toxicity, and to evaluate and document the impacts.

In brief, we at the citizens’ council are doing what we’ve always done since our founding in 1989: Making sure that people with the most to lose from oil spills have a clear and effective voice in decisions about oil transportation safety in Prince William Sound.

Some of our efforts are a little more visible, exciting, and easily understood than others, but they’re all important because they all bear on the same end: reducing the chance of another catastrophic oil spill in our waters as close as possible to absolute zero.

- Donna Schantz is acting executive director of the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens’ Advisory Council.

## Begich: Endorses citizens’ council for Arctic

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would be funded by the oil industry. In an editorial on June 27, the Anchorage Daily News voiced support for Begich’s plan. “His idea is modeled on the successful citizens’ advisory council set up in the early 1990s for Prince William Sound after the Exxon Valdez oil spill. That council is a well-funded watchdog, keeping an eye on the oil pipeline and tanker operations to help avoid a repeat disaster,” the paper said. Begich has tried to ease industry concerns about the Arctic council, “This is not a roadblock to development,” he said in a June speech in Annapolis, Md. In fact, Begich said, the advisory council “should be a proactive way to ensure that development occurs in a responsible manner.” But Dave Harbour, former member of the Regulatory Commission of Alaska and previous chairman of the Anchorage Chamber of Commerce disagreed in a guest editorial in the June 29 Anchorage Daily News. Harbour is concerned that a council would “worsen the existing regulatory structure and increase costs to consumers and taxpayers,” and that multiple review processes would “add further complexity through endless legal action.” Steve Lewis, Prince William Sound’s council president, argued just the opposite in his own guest editorial submitted to the paper. “The reality is that a citizens’ council would be a boon rather than a burden to everyone concerned

with Arctic oil development,” Lewis wrote. Communication between the industry, state agencies and the council can “take place within the existing regulatory structure, without the creation of another layer of bureaucracy,” Lewis said, “A careful reading of the Oil Pollution Act and the legislation proposed by Senator Begich will show that a citizens’ council, contrary to the fears expressed by some, will be a benefit to all concerned rather than a burden to be borne by one group.” “We agree with Sen. Begich that the citizens’ council concept has proved itself in Cook Inlet and Prince William Sound, and we hope citizens of the state’s far north will soon have the same outlet for their voices on oil-development issues,” Lewis said. “If asked, we’ll be happy to provide information and expertise to help the new council get on its feet,” Lewis added on July 8.

The proposal for the new council is one of five proposals that Begich hopes will be a part of a new national strategy to contend with the changing climate. President Obama recently called for a task force to develop a new national oceans policy. Besides the Arctic council, Begich would like to see the U.S. ratify several international arctic treaties, create a new Arctic ambassador, increase funding for science programs to better understand the Arctic environment, and invest in infrastructure enhancements such as ice breakers and submarines.

## Invasive Species: Green Crab Monitoring

By **DAN GILSON**  
Council Project Manager

Council staffer Dan Gilson recently traveled to Seward for several days to assist in setting up a green crab monitoring program for the Seward area. Colleagues from the Seward Sealife Center, Resurrection Bay Conservation Alliance, and the Seward High School helped with the project. The late May temperatures in the mid-40’s and fresh snow on the mountains didn’t stop the monitors from deploying 24 traps at three different intertidal areas and collecting the traps the following day. No green crabs were found in the survey. Seward is one of twelve coastal communities in Alaska that are monitoring for the presence of the invasive European green crab. *For more information on the green crab and other invasive species threatening Alaskan waters, visit: [www.pwsrccac.org](http://www.pwsrccac.org)*



Above: Todd Rennie, Americorps Volunteer, anchors a green crab trap. Rennie is working with the Alaska Sealife Center this summer on invasive species monitoring and education. Photo by Dan Gilson. Right: European green crab.



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Community Corner

Changes are ahead for the council website

At its most recent meeting, the Information and Education Committee established a new web project team. This team, consisting of volunteers and staff, will oversee a re-design of the council website. The new site will be user-friendly and will include an enhanced search feature to make it easier to obtain information and reports. The team will also be discussing an online presence for the council through social media websites such as Twitter and Facebook. Watch for changes!

The committee is scheduling an in-person meeting for the summer. Agenda items will include finalizing the process for students and teachers to apply for grants for educational projects, discussing outreach for projects such as invasive species and community impacts planning, and devising outreach activities to replace the radio campaign which was eliminated from this year's budget.

Staff is working to update the volunteer handbook. Copies will be sent to all volunteers and staff. To reduce waste in the future, new handbooks will be distributed in a three ring binder so that individual pages can be removed and replaced as updates are made. The revised handbooks will be out sometime this summer.

The annual Alaska Oceans Festival was held on June 6 in Anchorage, focusing this year on Exxon Valdez spill-related issues. Under blue skies, visitors listened to music and speeches, visited vendor and information booths, and participated in such activities as rock climbing and kayaking. The council booth participated in the treasure hunt. Players had to comb through our informational material to find the answer to the question: Which crab is not native to Alaska? The answer is the European green crab, an invasive species not yet found in Alaska, but which has the potential to ravage Alaskan waters.

The annual Arctic Marine Oilspill Program seminar was held in Vancouver, B.C., June 9-11. Committee volunteer Bob Flint and staff members Joe Banta, Linda Swiss, Amanda Johnson, and I participated. The booth was set up with informa-

tion for attendees. Joe Banta and Merv Fingas authored a poster "A Review of Oil Spill Dispersants Literature, 1997-2008," which was well received.



Linda Robinson

One interesting visitor to the booth was Richard Glenn of the Arctic Slope Corporation, based in Barrow. Richard, along with two others, attended as a guest of Shell Exploration. Richard is hoping to see two citizens' groups formed to oversee oil industry activities in the Beaufort and Chukchi Sea areas. They are seeking a "bridging" organization that can provide recommendations and advice on formulating these groups.

Patience Andersen Faulkner, Roy Robertson, Donna Schantz and I attended the annual Copper River Nouveau fundraiser for the Prince William Sound Science Center in Cordova. As always, it was a great event with auction items and entertainment. Naomi Everett, born and raised in Anchorage, Alaska, now an instructor with the Culinary Arts and Hospitality program at University of Alaska Anchorage, provided delicious food for the event.

In August, Dan Gilson and I will attend the Sixth International Conference On Marine Bioinvasions in Portland, Oregon. Dan has been the council lead for training teachers and students who participate in the green crab monitoring program. For information on this conference, visit: [www.clr.pdx.edu/mbic/index.html](http://www.clr.pdx.edu/mbic/index.html).

Have a great summer!



Linda Robinson with fellow staff member Lisa Ka'aihue demonstrate the dangers of the invasive green crab. Photo by Lisa Scarborough

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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3709 Spenard Road, Suite 100  
Anchorage AK 99503  
Phone: 907-277-7222  
Toll-free: 800-478-7221  
Fax: 907-277-4523

Box 3089 / 130 S. Meals, Suite 202  
Valdez AK 99686  
Phone: 907-834-5000  
Toll-free: 877-478-7221  
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