

THE OBSERVER

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Presidential commission recommends regional citizens' advisory council in Gulf of Mexico

The President's National Commission on the BP Deepwater Horizon released its final report in January 2011 including recommendations for citizen oversight in the Gulf of Mexico and the Arctic.

Among the recommendations, the bipartisan commission specifically cited the citizens' councils in Prince William Sound and Cook Inlet as models for a citizen oversight system. The commission urged the creation of a similar council for the Gulf of Mexico.

"EPA and the Coast Guard should bolster state and local involvement in oil spill contingency planning and training and create a mechanism for local involvement in spill planning and response similar to the Regional Citizens' Advisory Councils mandated by the Oil Pollution Act of 1990," states the report.

The commission recommended a structure similar to the Alaska citizens' councils to provide

input and representation from a broad spectrum of those most affected by a disastrous spill. Diversity on the council was important to the commission.

"In the Gulf, such a council should broadly represent the citizens' interests in the area, such as fishing and tourism, and possibly include representation from oil and gas workers as ex-officio, non-voting members," the report states.

"Congress should also ensure that the priorities and decisions of the Gulf Coast Council are informed by input from a Citizens Advisory Council that represents diverse stakeholders."

The commission found a number of areas where a citizens' council could have improved the response to the BP Deepwater Horizon spill. Lack of communication, and perceived lack of communication, between the Unified Command, who managed the spill response, and the public created problems, especially during the early

days of the spill. The commission suggested that a pre-existing citizens' council could have improved relationships and communication between the local population and the oil industry.

"Unfamiliarity with, and lack of trust in,

"Congress should also ensure that the priorities and decisions of the Gulf Coast Council are informed by input from a Citizens Advisory Council that represents diverse stakeholders."

the federal response manifested itself in competing state structures and attempts to control response operations that undercut the efficiency of the response overall," states the report, "Federal responders improved their relationship

See page 4, **BP SPILL COMMISSION**

Fishing vessel owners meet with ADEC, Coast Guard, and council to discuss response program

By **JEREMY ROBIDA**
Council Project Manager

On March 18, the council organized a meeting between fishing vessel owners, the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, or ADEC, and the U.S. Coast Guard as part of ongoing efforts to monitor the fishing vessel response program. Council board member John French and staff members Jeremy Robida, Roy Robertson and Linda Swiss were present.

Representatives for fishing vessel owners from every port involved in the response fleet attended the meeting. The assembly gave the council the opportunity get an update on the general health of the program, and listen to concerns from the fishers.

The Coast Guard representatives presented information on new commercial fishing safety regulations and ADEC discussed the role of fishing vessels in the Prince William Sound tanker contingency plan. They also answered many questions from the fishing vessel owners.

The bulk of the meeting was spent discussing the status of the spill response program with the fishing vessel owner representatives.

Topics included crewing, trainings and exercises, operational response tactics, administrative issues, communications between fishing vessel owners and Alyeska's Ship Escort/Response Vessel System (known as SERVS),

See page 6, **FISHING VESSEL PROGRAM**

Council conducts audit of terminal maintenance

By **TOM KUCKERTZ**
Council Project Manager

A series of incidents in the past two years have combined to raise concerns for the council about Alyeska maintenance activities. Two pipeline spills in 2010 and 2011 were attributed to maintenance issues and resulted in heightened regulatory interest. With these spills, along with several other less reported issues, the council recently decided to take a look at maintenance procedures at the Valdez Marine Terminal.

At its September 2010 meeting, the council approved a project to audit maintenance activities at the Valdez Marine Terminal. The project

See page 4, **TERMINAL MAINTENANCE**

AK Chamber of Commerce - AK Wilderness Recreation & Tourism Assoc. - Chenega Bay - Chugach Alaska Corp. - Cordova - CDFU - Homer - Kenai Peninsula Borough - Kodiak - Kodiak Island Borough - Kodiak Village Mayors - OSREC - Port Graham Corp. - PWS Aquaculture Corp. - Seldovia - Seward - Tatitlek - Valdez - Whittier

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New committee volunteer is a believer in the concept of citizens' advisory councils

Scott Smith, resident of Valdez and volunteer with the council's Oil Spill Prevention and Response committee, has been a general contractor and commercial fisherman in Alaska for most of his life. As a commercial fisherman, Smith participates in the fishing vessel spill response program administered by Alyeska's Ship/Escort Response Vessel System, known as SERVVS.

Smith knows about response to oil spills. He responded to the two largest oil spills in U.S. history. In 1989, he was an early responder after the Exxon Valdez spill in Prince William Sound. During most of that recovery effort, he helped with oiled bird and otter recovery in Seward.

When the BP/Deepwater Horizon spill response began just over a year ago, Smith was hired to bring his oil skimmer, boom, and tow-boats to the Gulf of Mexico to help pick up oil threatening the marshes. 21 years later, Smith was disappointed to find out that a number of lessons learned from the Exxon Valdez oil spill had to be re-learned during the Gulf of Mexico response.

One lesson Smith named in an interview with the Observer was the concept of the fishing vessel response system. In Alaska, SERVVS works together with fishing vessel owners to give vessel crews hands-on training and opportunities to practice with the equipment that they would be using in the event of a spill.

Because of this training, Smith said, "people understand what to do with equipment when they get it. That's huge."

"I got down there to the Gulf of Mexico, where they brought in some of the best resources, Current Busters, different styles of boom, but no

one knew what to do with it."

"You'd get boom in the water and a day later it's ripped in half because it's been towed at twice the speed it's designed to be towed," Smith said, "There were elementary mistakes because they'd never seen the equipment before."

Smith came back to Alaska with a greater appreciation for Prince William Sound's fishing vessel response system and how important it is to maintain the system with drills, annual training, practice every year, and pre-stationed equipment.

"Being able to respond with crews that are trained and have the local knowledge of the waters, with the best equipment available, is such a great partnership between the industry and the affected individuals. I love it."

Smith listened to local Gulf fishermen talk about their frustration with the system. There was no way for them to address their concerns. Many of the people he talked to like the idea of the citizens' advisory council. Smith believes the role of the citizens' advisory council is an important one and can balance the industry's drive for profits.

"Industry wants to be kind to the environment, but their overriding concern is the shareholder. I understand that," Smith says, however "citizens come from a different perspective."

The council in Prince William Sound provides a way for input to reach the people who make the decisions.

"One voice is hard to be heard. A collective voice, as in the citizens' advisory council, gives a chance for your voice to be heard and to share ideas."

In the Gulf of Mexico, Smith says, he never got the chance to recover oil. He saw oil in the distance, but due to the currents, none of the oil actually got into the marsh he was assigned to. Strict boundary lines for the recovery vessels prohibited the different teams from helping each other. Smith felt that a little flexibility on these rules could have helped pick up more oil. Unfortunately, there was not a system in place to provide such input to the Gulf response management.

Smith appreciates that he gets the opportunity to provide feedback to SERVVS. In April, Smith took part in an oil spill response drill in Prince William Sound. Afterwards, he attended a debrief meeting where he was able to give input on any aspect of the practice drill that he thought was important.

"I feel that I have a voice that is heard."



Smith has been a resident of Alaska for 42 years and has been a commercial fisherman for most of that time. Photo of the Valdez harbor by Stan Jones.

Another legislative session ends with no action on council-backed invasive-species issue

By STAN JONES
Director of Administration and External Affairs

The regular session of the Alaska Legislature adjourned last month without action on the idea of establishing an Alaska Council on Invasive Species.

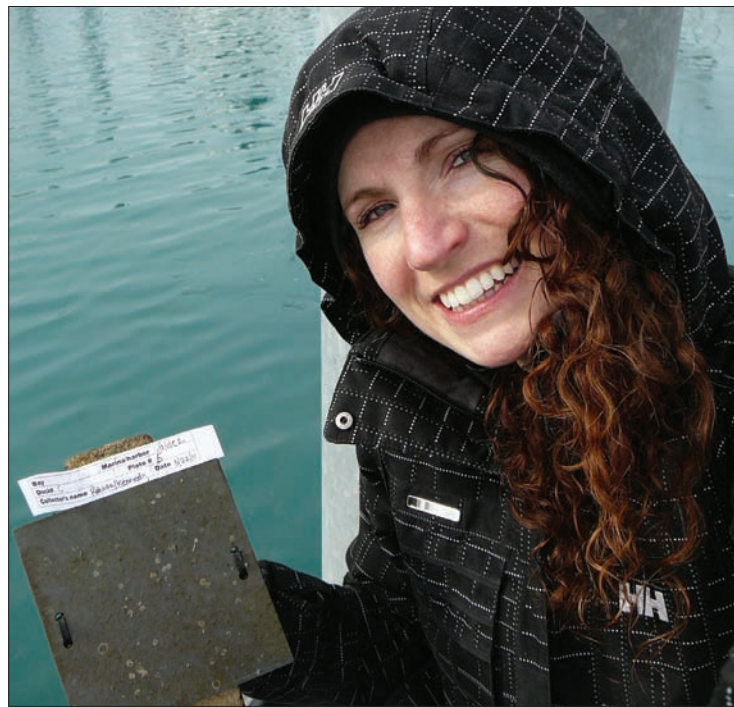
The citizens' council supports the concept, which was the subject of a bill introduced in the 2009-2010 legislature by Rep. Craig Johnson of Anchorage. That measure would have set up the panel to coordinate efforts by state and federal agencies and non-governmental organizations to deal with invasions of Alaska's lands and waters by non-indigenous species of plants, animals, and fish.

The measure died when the legislature adjourned in the spring of 2010 and was never introduced in the new legislature, though drafts of a new version of the bill circulated during the session. While the current legislature was in special session as this issue of the Observer went to press, it appeared unlikely to result in action on non-indigenous species legislation. However, such a measure could be introduced next year and see action before the legislature adjourns ahead of the 2012 state elections.

"We were sorry to see the lack of action on this issue," said Pat Duffy, chair of the council's Legislative Affairs Committee. "But we still support the

concept and will work to get it passed if it's introduced next year."

The issue of invasive species has long been of concern to the citizens' council because of the risk that non-indigenous organisms arriving in oil tanker ballast water could establish themselves in Prince William Sound and harm indigenous populations, including commercial fish species.



Council staffer Jacquelyn Kennedy holds a PVC plate used to monitor for invasive species in Port Valdez. Plates are retrieved every three months to check for tunicate species. Invasive species were not attached to this plate. For more on this monitoring program, visit: platewatch.nisbase.org. Photo by Jeremy Robida.

Council is recertified by Coast Guard

By STAN JONES
Director of Administration and External Affairs

The Coast Guard has recertified the citizens' council as meeting its responsibilities under the Oil Pollution Act of 1990.


In a March 24 letter to the council, Rear Admiral Christopher Colvin, commander of the Coast Guard's District 17 in Juneau, notified the council of the recertification.

The 1990 Act requires the council to reapply yearly for the Coast Guard's approval as the official citizens' advisory group to the oil industry in Prince William Sound.

Guidelines established in 2002 streamlined the recertification process for two out of three years, with every third year requiring stricter procedures. That process—known as comprehensive recertification—was used this year.

The new recertification expires in February 2012. At that time, the council is scheduled to undergo the streamlined version of recertification.

The council recieved 68 letters of support from organizations, agencies, businesses, Native corporations, and members of the public during the recertification process. You can read these letters on our website: www.pwsrccac.org/about/2011SupportLetters.html



Citizens promoting the environmentally safe operation of the Alyeska terminal and associated tankers.
www.pwsrccac.org

From the Executive Director

As concerned citizens, our work is far from done

This past April marked the 22nd anniversary of the Exxon Valdez oil spill. If we have learned anything, it must be that we can take nothing for granted. Every day, we must improve our understanding of the technical and operational risks of marine oil transportation. Every day, we must learn how to be most effective in influencing industry and regulators who manage those risks. It is a delicate dance.

Locally, we have learned from the spill in 1989 that appropriate citizen, state, and federal oversight needs to go hand in hand with marine oil transportation. We have learned that in all events prevention is far more effective than response. We have learned that we cannot afford the consequences of not being informed and not being engaged. We cannot allow industry and regulators and even citizens to get too focused on facilitating business interests and too complacent regarding our responsibility to protect the general public and the environment.

How about on a national scale? Beautiful and pristine as Prince William Sound and the surrounding waters were, and in many cases still are, our corner of the maritime world is not more important or more precious than others. The Oil Pollution Act of 1990 did much to redirect how the government and industry manage the risks of pollution from oil terminals and transportation on ships, but did less to manage the risks of oil exploration and extraction. From the spills in the Gulf of Mexico and on the trans-Alaska pipeline this past year, it is apparent we also need more effective oversight for exploration and pipeline operations. New spilled oil and more dead dolphins washed up on the beaches of the Gulf of Mexico as recently as last month. In 2010 and again in 2011, the 34-year-old Alyeska pipeline suffered major world headline grabbing spills and disruptions. Newspaper articles about the first pipeline spill attributed the loss of electrical power and tank overflow at Pump Station 9 to cost-linked personnel relocations and human error. The more recent spill at Pump Station 1 was linked to corrosion in a section of pipe that had

been pre-identified as hard to access or maintain. Luckily, neither of these spills escaped secondary containment. The consequences of shutting down the pipeline to make repairs were so serious that the ability to safely restart the pipeline was an openly debated question. U.S. west coast refineries, normally supplied by Alaska oil, took a few tanker loads of Russian oil. Both spills left many Alaskans justifiably nervous. We are currently engaged in an advisory maintenance audit of the Valdez Marine Terminal in the hopes that an external look at terminal maintenance practices will help the system operators better see and address any parallel risks and vulnerabilities similar to those found on the pipeline that might exist on the terminal.

And so, 22 years after the Exxon Valdez oil spill and only one year after the Gulf of Mexico spill, the pressure is on to drill more wells on and off shore and get the stalled oil industry moving. As Alaskans we are sympathetic, but not naïve. Our economy is hugely dependent on oil activities. We are told Alaskan oil is comparatively expensive. We are told the pipeline is aging and in jeopardy from too little oil and dropping production and throughput.

With oil over \$100 per barrel, the oil companies that own the pipeline are quite profitable. Arguably very profitable, given that year after year and quarter after quarter we hear that these are the richest and most profitable companies in the history of the world and that this profit is predominantly derived from oil taken from public lands and public waters leased out for private exploitation and private profit.

As we learned in the Deepwater Horizon spill, the federal government as the public owner of these privately extracted resources, in order to incentivize development, requires relatively very little in the way of spill prevention, spill response or financial insurance. Consequently, the public and even the budgets of the federal and state agencies that must respond bear the majority of the consequences of any under-managed and under-insured risks when the oil escapes

into the environment. Alaskans understand first-hand the consequences of environmental damage and the need for appropriate protections.

The bottom line is that cheap oil is high-risk oil. The environmental and financial risks of a really large accident are borne predominantly by the public and not by the industry that makes a profit from taking these resource extraction and transportation risks.

Our national energy policy isn't taking us away from oil dependence anytime soon. In the meantime, regardless of whether we face a future of declining throughput or a new wave of exploration and production, surely we can and need to continue to find the right balance to afford and require good prevention measures and appropriate response capabilities.

The National Commission on the BP Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill's report has examined this conundrum from all sides and suggests many improvements to oil spill prevention and response including increased citizen oversight. We could do a lot worse than to implement a few of these suggestions.

Meanwhile, on the 22nd anniversary of the Exxon Valdez oil spill, many risks have been well managed and are reduced, but others are likely increasing as ships and infrastructure age and cost pressures increase. Overall, the risks continue.

As concerned and informed citizens, our work is far from done.

• Mark Swanson is the Executive Director of the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council.



Mark Swanson

Alyeska Viewpoint

New Alyeska president excited to be back at Alyeska

By Thomas Barrett
President of Alyeska Pipeline Service Company
Greetings!

Thanks for the opportunity to share a little bit about myself, my vision, and my commitment to partnership with the people and communities of Prince William Sound and the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council.

I respect and value the work of the citizens' council and its advisory role for Alyeska. In a prior role as commander of Coast Guard operations in Alaska, I benefited from strong working relationships with the Prince William Sound council and the Cook Inlet Regional Citizens' Advisory Council. Having lived and worked in Alaska's coastal communities for almost 15 years, I also understand what a natural treasure Prince William Sound is. Its bounty provides livelihoods and puts food on the table for many Alaskans. I fully share your commitment to protecting Prince William Sound. I am also committed to keeping the council's membership informed of goings on at Alyeska.

My approach to leadership is pretty straightforward. For me, effective leadership at every level is grounded in being very good at what we each do, looking out for each other, and acting with integrity. At Alyeska, that means striving every day for flawless operations. Like any operational business, Alyeska faces challenges, from the safety and environmental risks associated with day-to-day operations, to new regulations, to aging assets, to oil throughput decline. But I am also confident that Alyeska personnel and contractors, many of whom are your neighbors and friends, are capable of managing these.

January's shutdown event that you are familiar with highlighted the challenges we face as throughput continues to decline. But it also spoke to the strength of the Alyeska team – the response was outstanding. We have a first rate team in Valdez. Your friends and neighbors working at the Valdez Marine Terminal and Alyeska's Ship Escort/Response Vessel System performed admirably, and do so every day.

The shutdown should also be a wake up

call for Alaskans on the complications of declining throughput. This is a serious issue for Alaska. The decline needs to be reversed. Doing so is in large measure a question of political will.

On a personal note, I've been fortunate to have lived 15 years in Kodiak, Juneau and Anchorage. My wife, Sheila, and I are thrilled to be back home in Alaska. We love this state, its communities, and its people, including its unique and remarkable Alaska Native heritage. We look forward to meeting many of you in your communities in the months to come.



Thomas Barrett

TERMINAL MAINTENANCE: Review of management strategy being conducted by council

Continued from page 1

seeks to verify that the maintenance needs of each system and subsystem at the terminal have been identified and that Alyeska’s maintenance procedures are being used to appropriately maintain each system and subsystem.

For the audit team, the council hired two former Alyeska employees who have extensive experience with the Alyeska maintenance system, Dan Hisey and Darryl Hammond. Hisey is a former vice-president and chief operating officer at Alyeska. Hammond is a retired Alyeska employee who was heavily involved in the creation of the current Alyeska maintenance system.

A kickoff meeting on February 8 was attended by management teams from both Alyeska and the council. Initially, Alyeska presented information about its strategy for performing maintenance, known as Reliability Centered Maintenance. This high level maintenance management strategy consists of specific procedures developed in a formalized fashion for many of the terminal’s systems. The council’s contractors reviewed these procedures prior to beginning the onsite audit.

Following the review of these higher level

management strategy documents, the audit team, including Hisey, Hammond and council staff began work at the terminal. During the week of March 21, the team worked onsite with Alyeska personnel to review additional information about maintenance strategies and procedures.

Thus far, Alyeska has cooperated fully to provide conference facilities, information technology support, and staff to facilitate the audit process, provide access to its systems, and to schedule its maintenance experts for interview.

Once a review of the high-level maintenance procedures is completed, the audit will focus on the finer details of two of the systems for which a formalized maintenance strategy has been developed. Additionally, the audit process will also entail a top to bottom look at two smaller systems maintained by means of documented procedures but which have not been through the Reliability-Centered Maintenance process.

Preliminary audit findings are expected by the end of June. Prior to release, the council plans to informally review the preliminary findings with Alyeska. A formal report of findings including review commentary will be submitted for Board approval in September.



Council contractors Dan Hisey (left) and Darryl Hammond (middle) work on the terminal maintenance audit with Alyeska’s Barry Roberts (right) to gather information and data to be analyzed. Photo by Tom Kuckertz.

BP SPILL COMMISSION: Recommends council in Gulf of Mexico

Continued from page 1

with state and local officials as the response progressed—but had better coordination and communication existed sooner, that relationship could have been more productive in the early days of the spill response.”

The commission recommended input from users of the waters, such as fishers, shrimpers, and the tourism industry, channeled through a council, to help with communication and planning prior to an accident and to aid in response efforts. Local residents know the areas and the waters better than spill response personnel from elsewhere.

“Moreover, increased citizen involvement before a spill occurs could create better mechanisms to utilize local citizens in response efforts, provide an additional layer of review to prevent industry and government complacency, and increase public trust in response operations,” the report states.

The commission suggested funding for the council come from Gulf oil and gas lease holders.

Fran Ulmer, former chancellor of the University of Alaska, Anchorage, was chosen to serve on the commission. During Ulmer’s keynote speech to the Alaska Forum on the Environment in February of 2011, she talked about the commission’s findings and how the decades-long recovery from the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill was used as a resource for the commission.



Fran Ulmer

“We do it in Alaska very differently,” Ulmer said of the system of prevention and response in Prince William Sound and Cook Inlet, “A lot of the things that we have come to take for granted in Alaska, in terms of preparedness, spill drills, training of responders on a regular basis at the Prince William Sound Community College, a whole lot of things that we do, they weren’t doing.”

Ulmer noted that the commission is recommending quite a few measures that were put in place in Alaska after the Exxon Valdez oil spill.

“A great example are the RCAC’s,” Ulmer said.

To read the full excerpts regarding the recommendations for citizen oversight by the commission, visit our website: www.pwsrcac.org/newsroom/Obs11.Jan/BPSpillReport.html

To read the full recommendations by the commission, visit: www.oilspillcommission.gov

THE OBSERVER

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In an effort to reduce waste and conserve valuable natural resources, the council has begun issuing an email edition of The Observer. If you would like to receive The Observer by email rather than by postal mail, please visit our website, www.pwsrcac.org to sign up. You will be given an opportunity to unsubscribe to the printed version at that time.

If you prefer the good old fashioned printed version, don’t worry! No need to contact us. We will continue to mail The Observer to you. Thank you!



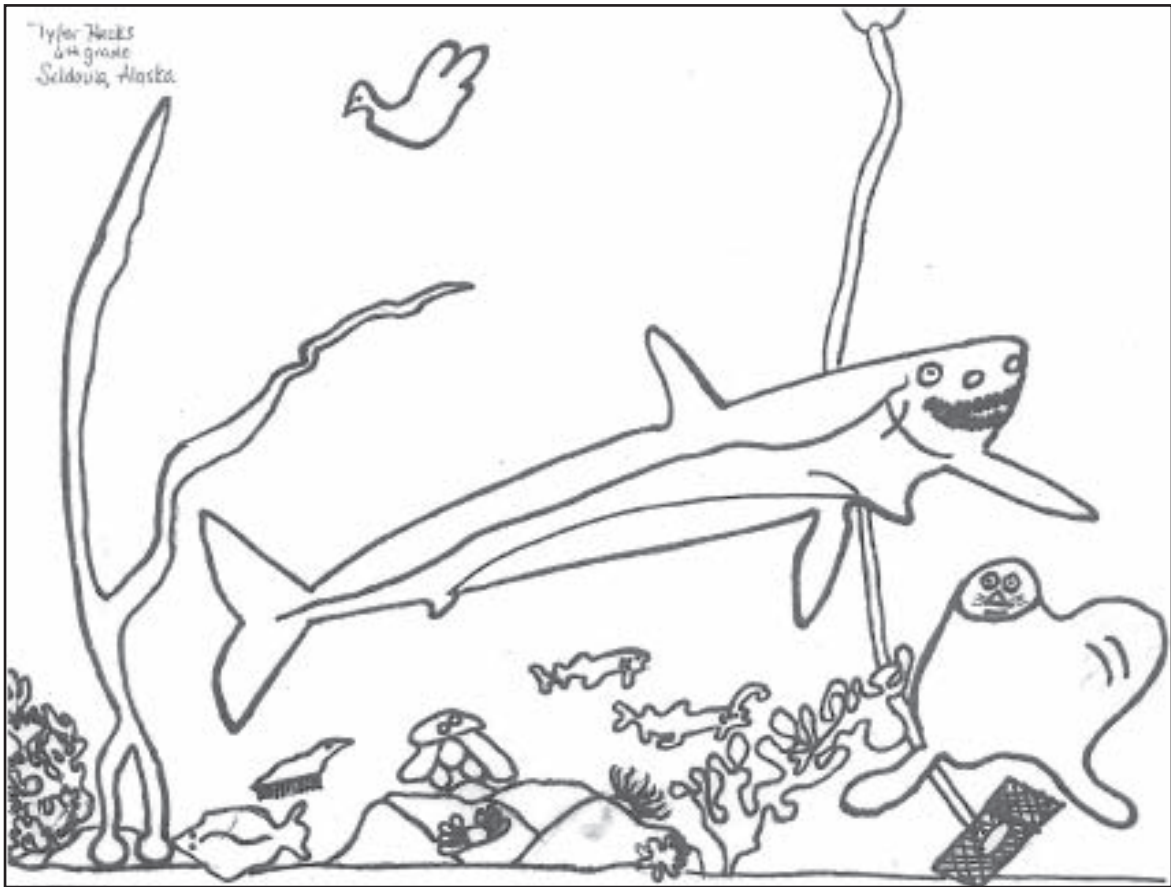
Kid’s corner

Council Outreach Coordinator Linda Robinson developed a coloring book for distribution at public events. The book consists of drawings donated by local artists relating to the wildlife in Prince William Sound and the safe transportation of oil. The coloring book has been so popular that it is now in its fifth edition!

For your free copy, contact our Valdez or Anchorage office. Pages from the book are downloadable from the PWSRCAC website: www.pwsrcac.org/outreach/coloringbook.html



Drawing by: Kathleen George, Seldovia



Drawing by: Tyler Hicks, Seldovia

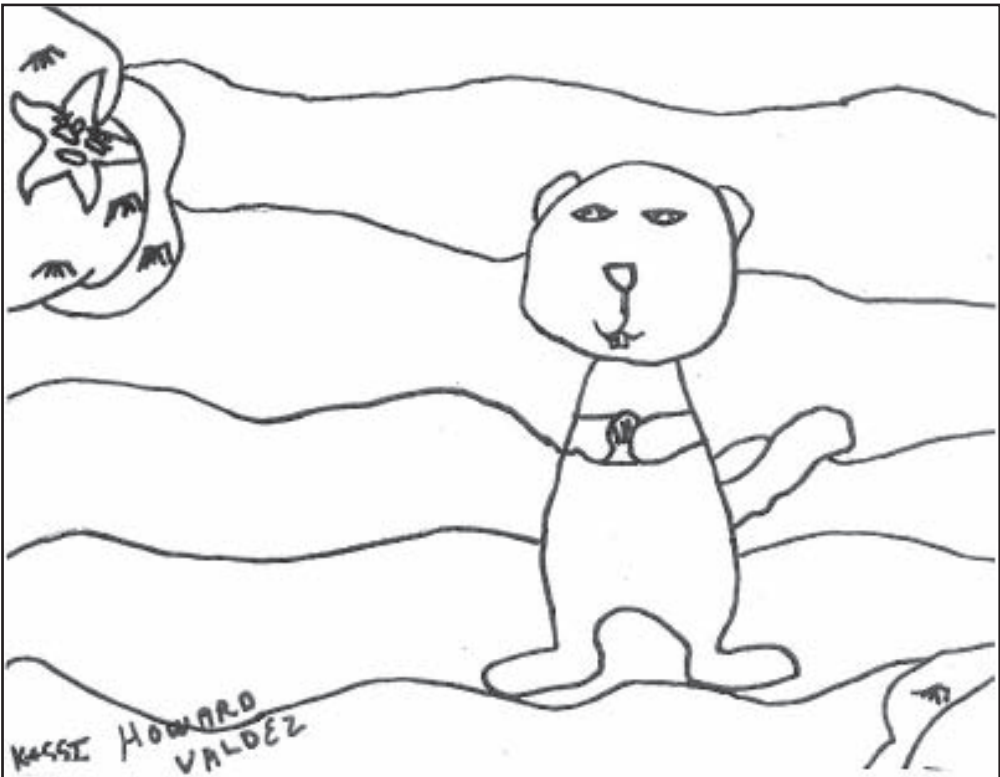
The council is currently accepting submissions for the sixth edition of the coloring book.

Please submit original line drawing in black ink on white paper. Minimum size is 8 1/2 inches by 11 inches. Please send your drawing, and your grade and school or community to robinson@pwsrcac.org or mail it to:

Linda Robinson
Prince William Sound Regional Citizens’ Advisory Council
3709 Spenard Rd., Suite 100
Anchorage AK 99503

Or call 907-277-7222.

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, public communications project manager for the council. For a free email or print subscription to the Observer, contact the council office in Anchorage or in Valdez. See back page for contact information.



Drawing by: Kassi Howard, Valdez

FISHING VESSEL OIL SPILL RESPONSE: Vessel owners provide feedback

Continued from page 1

and issues related to specific ports. Many of these subjects were prevalent in similar meetings coordinated by the council in 2005 and 2007. Similar themes are also documented in minutes of meetings sponsored by SERVS in years past.

The council does not involve itself in the contractual details and

fine print between SERVS and participants in the response fleet. The council's interests are in promoting the long term health of the spill response program and helping to ensure that the program complies with regulations and planning commitments.

ADEC particularly welcomed feedback about October's no-notice nearshore exercise. (For more information on this no-notice drill, see the January 2011 issue of the Observer: www.pwsrcac.org/newsroom/Obs11.Jan/Drill.html)

All involved expressed appreciation to the council for organizing the meeting. The fishing vessel owners felt that citizen involvement, input, and engagement were essential to the program.

The council will issue a final report with recommendations pending a review process.



John Kotula, ADEC, and John French, council board member from Seward, listen during the March 18 meeting with fishing vessel representatives. Photo by Amanda Johnson.



A fishing vessel tows boom during a 2010 readiness exercise. Photo by Jeremy Robida.

Council Board Meetings

The citizens' council board of directors meets three times annually. The January meeting is held in Anchorage, the May meeting in Valdez, and the September meeting is rotated between the other communities affected by the Exxon Valdez oil spill. This September's meeting will be held in Kenai.

Here is the tentative board meeting schedule for the coming year:

- September 15-16, 2011: Kenai
- January 20-21, 2012: Anchorage
- May 3-4, 2012: Valdez

Board meetings are open to public, and an opportunity for public comment is provided at the beginning of each meeting. Agendas and other meeting-related materials are available on the council web site at www.pwsrcac.org/about/boardintro.html. Or, contact either council office: Anchorage, 907-277-7222, or Valdez, 907-834-5000.



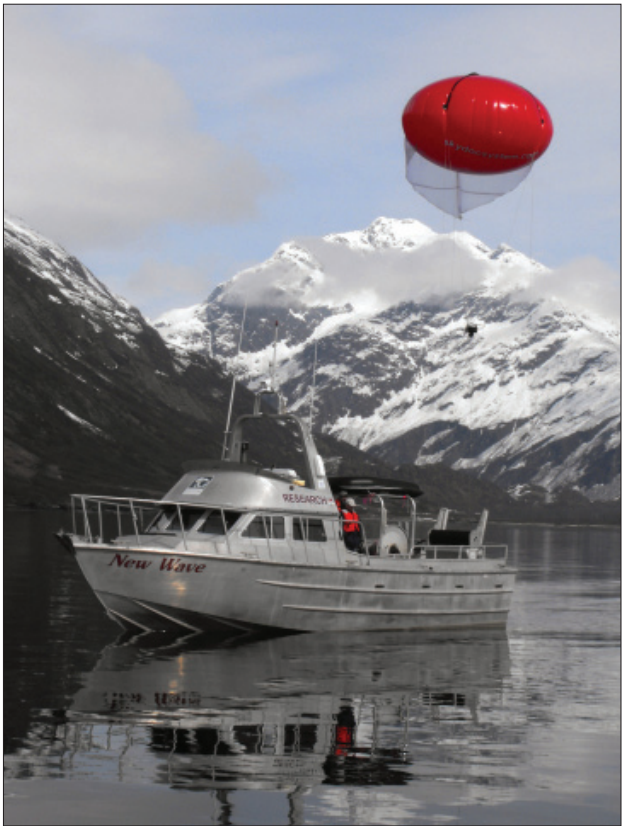
Board and committee volunteers, industry representatives, staff, and members of the public gathered outside the Seldovia Conference Center in September 2010.

In the next Observer...



Council staffer Linda Robinson talks to Homer high school students about coastal mapping during the Kackemak Bay Research Reserve’s Discovery Lab on April 6th. Hear more from the Reserve about this program in the July Observer, Photo by Amanda Johnson.

The council recently worked with Cordova-based Oil Spill Recovery Institute and BP Alaska to conduct an open house demonstration of a new technology for providing aerial observations during an oil spill. The helium balloon, tethered to a vessel, carries cameras and can be lofted up to 500 feet in the air. The public was invited to observe the demonstration on April 25 in the Valdez small boat harbor and Port Valdez. More in the July issue of the Observer. Photo by Donna Schantz.



2011 Marine Firefighting Symposium

Prince William Sound Regional Citizens’ Advisory Council is sponsoring the
6th Land-based Marine Firefighting Symposium
in Valdez, Alaska, October 4-6, 2011.



- Through this program, 50-75 firefighters and responders from Prince William Sound and other Alaska coastal communities will be provided hands-on classroom and field training opportunities tailored for the challenges faced in Alaska.
- Topics include: shipboard basics, cruise ship awareness, fire plans and ships crew coordination, politics of a marine incident, and more.
- Classes will be a mix of hands-on training and classroom lectures.
- More information on the upcoming symposium,

including a complete schedule, will be posted online as details are worked out:
www.bit.ly/2011Symposium

Contact Project Manager Alan Sorum if you are interested in participating or helping to sponsor the event:
907.834.5020
or
alan.sorum@pwsrccac.org

Youth Involvement programs on the increase at the council

By **LINDA ROBINSON**
Outreach Coordinator

I'm very pleased to report that our endeavors to increase our youth involvement program are coming to fruition.

In 2010, Homer's Kachemak Bay Research Reserve approached the council about collaborating on a learning event at the Islands and Ocean Visitor Center in Homer. "Could It Happen Here? Coastal Mapping and Oil Spill

Response" was a public discovery lab that explored information about Kachemak Bay's ocean circulation patterns, coastal mapping, ocean bathymetry (measurement of ocean depth), coastal habitat mapping, bluff erosion and salt marsh mapping, and basic map-reading skills. The event also covered oil spill preparedness and response measures, animal rescue, and the specialized maps spill responders use to identify critical habitats for near-shore and marine species.

The council will be provided with a kit with information from the lab that can be loaned to teachers in our region. Find out more about this lab in the July 2011 issue of the Observer.

This past February, the council issued a call for proposals for educational youth involvement projects and activities related to the council's mission.

Three local organizations were awarded money to fund projects; Valdez High School, Alaska Geographic, and Wrangell Institute for Science and Environment.

Students from the Valdez High School science program travelled to Peterson Bay Field Station and the Kasitsna Bay Lab in Kachemak Bay in April. While there, the students participated in a coastal ecology workshop hosted by the Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies.

In early May, Alaska Geographic took students from Cordova, the Native Village of Eyak, Chenega Bay, Tatitlek and Whittier to participate in the International Youth EcoForum and Classrooms for Climate Symposium in Anchorage.

The third project will occur in June, when students will participate in the Copper River Stewardship Program coordinated by the Wrangell Institute for Science and Environment. This trip will include a visit to the council's Valdez office for presentations on citizen oversight and on oil spill prevention and response capabilities.

All three projects have multiple organizations collaborating to fund and coordinate the projects. Each

project will provide the council with articles, videos, and or presentations at upcoming council meetings. Find out more about these projects an upcoming Observer.

If you missed the chance to apply to participate in this program, don't worry. A new request for proposals will be advertised beginning in late May. Successful proposers may begin as early as July 1, 2011. For more information on many of these activities, or

to apply for this program, please check out our youth involvement project web page at www.pwsrcac.org/outreach/youth.html.

Events around the community:

Two science symposiums were held in March and April. Cordova hosted the Copper River Delta Science Symposium, covering topics related to the Delta such as earthquakes, aquatic invertebrates, birds, climate change and how it will affect the delta, the impact by humans on the delta, and fishes. The presentations and photos of the symposium can be found at www.ecotrust.org.

At the Kodiak Marine Science Symposium in April, researchers had an opportunity to talk about their research and local people learned how Kodiak's marine environment and resources function, change, and affect their lives and livelihoods. A workshop was held on invasive species. For more information on that program please visit: seagrant.uaf.edu/conferences/2011/kamss/program.php

The Kodiak symposium was followed by ComFish Alaska, the State's largest commercial fishery trade show and Whale Fest Kodiak, a celebration of the return of the Eastern Pacific Gray whales to Alaskan waters. April 17-18, Kodiak hosted the 2011 Alaska State Envirothon. This year-long environmental education program for high school students culminates in a statewide competition, held this year in Kodiak. Winning teams from each state or province advance to Canon Envirothon to be held in New Brunswick, Canada.

On May 11, council staff will be working with the U.S. Coast Guard, the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration, and Alyeska's Ship Escort/Response Vessel System in sponsoring an Oil Spill Awareness Symposium in Tatitlek. Topics will include oil spill response equipment and techniques, boating safety, effects of oil and minimizing environmental impacts.



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 19 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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