

THE OBSERVER

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Firefighters from across Alaska converge on Valdez to learn about marine fire response

By Alan Sorum

Council Project Manager

A shipboard fire is dreaded by all mariners. When a fire occurs at a dock or a burning ship is brought into port, local fire departments are expected to respond. Since most communities in Alaska are located along a river or the coast, it is prudent to prepare for a vessel related incident.

Techniques used in marine firefighting are quite different than those normally employed in structural fires on land. To better prepare land-based firefighters for such incidents, the council developed the Marine Firefighting Symposium which is held every two years. This past May, the council hosted the eighth edition of this symposium in Valdez.

Thirty-eight firefighters from 14 different Alaska communities, ten marine fire and salvage industry representatives, and fire officials from Alyeska, attended the three-day event.

The first day provided classroom training

geared towards a State of Alaska certification test. Two special presentations were made on liquefied natural gas issues in Alaska and public-private incident response partnerships. Crowley Maritime/Marine Response Alliance representatives presented a keynote address on the salvage of the cruise ship Costa Concordia. The speech highlighted just how complicated a salvage operation can get as industry comes into new maritime salvage and firefighting capability requirements.



Unalaska and Valdez firefighters at the Valdez harbor. Photo by Zac Schasteen.

Stan Stephens Glacier and Wildlife Cruises and the Southwest Alaska Pilots Association provided vessels as training platforms for the

See page 6, *Firefighters*

Port of Valdez shrimp found generally safe for consumption

By Joe Banta

Council Project Manager

Are shrimp caught in Port Valdez contaminated by Alaska North Slope crude oil? The council recently worked with scientists from the National Auke Bay Lab in Juneau to answer that question.



The terminal's treatment cleans most of the crude oil hydrocarbons

See page 7, *Study results*

Executive committee for next year includes a mix of council experience and new members

During its annual board meeting in Valdez this May, the council board held elections to choose its seven-member executive committee.

Amanda Bauer of Valdez was elected to her third term as president. Thane Miller, who represents Prince William Sound Aquaculture

Corporation on the board, was elected to his third consecutive term as vice-president. Bob Shavelson, who represents the Oil Spill Region Environmental Coalition, was re-elected as secretary. Newly seated Orson Smith of Seward was elected as treasurer.

See page 6, *Board of directors*



Left to right: Amanda Bauer, Thane Miller, Bob Shavelson, Orson Smith

AK Chamber of Commerce - Chenega Bay - Chugach Alaska Corp. - Cordova - Cordova District Fishermen United - Homer - Kenai Peninsula Borough - Kodiak - Kodiak Island Borough - Kodiak Village Mayors - Oil Spill Region Environmental Coalition - Port Graham Corp. - Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corp. - Seldovia - Seward - Tatitlek - Valdez - Whittier

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Volunteer Spotlight

Exxon Valdez taught many lessons to those who paid attention

Volunteer Pete Heddell, member of the council's Port Operations and Vessel Traffic System committee, has seen a lot of changes in Prince William Sound and Alaska.

His parents brought him here at the age of three and a half, just 30 days after the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, where the family homesteaded outside of Homer on the Kenai Peninsula.

Heddell worked in the fishing business for several years before joining the state police in 1963. After his retirement in 1987, Heddell and his wife Marilyn, started their marine charter service, Honey Charters, out of the port of Whittier.

"We ordered the first of our four boats in the fall of 1987," Heddell said. He and his wife spent that first summer exploring Prince William Sound.

"In March of 1989, we were on the floor at our first sportsman's show when we heard the Exxon Valdez had hit Bligh reef."

Their first summer in business was active, but not quite in the way they expected. Whittier was a hub of activity for the cleanup.

"Our first full season would have been the summer of 1989," Heddell said. "But instead, we ended up with a contract on the cleanup as a medical safety boat."

Oil shows up in unexpected places

Heddell recalls being surprised by some of the places the oil from the Exxon Valdez reached. Oil showing up in unexpected places prompted a closer look at the currents in Prince William Sound which rotate in an overall counter-clockwise direction.

"Some people knew it instinctively, but they hadn't thought about it in relation to oil spills."

Heddell says that lesson about the currents in Prince William Sound is still being studied by the council. These sea currents could affect the safe navigation of tankers through the Sound, and the ability to prevent, respond to, and clean up an oil spill.

The importance of working together

Heddell learned a different lesson from the

recreational users, many of whom were in the oil industry, who hired the Heddells' vessels to take them out into the Sound.

"It was educational for me, to listen to their conversations amongst themselves about improving the way they did business," Heddell said. "It wasn't all corporate greed, there was genuine concern that they were doing the right thing."

Heddell says that the realization that everyone really wants to keep oil out of the water is an important lesson.

Heddell's wife Marilyn joined the council's board of directors in 1996, and shortly thereafter, council staffer LeAnn Ferry approached Heddell about joining the committee, where he has now served faithfully for over 15 years.

Heddell says the board and committees all went through a growth period and had to learn how to communicate with each other and also work hand-in-hand with the industry.

In the early days of the council, emotions were still high because people had just experienced a terrible disaster. These days, Heddell says things have calmed down.

"It's not a lack of passion, the passion is still there," he says "It's honed itself down to a professional approach."

"If they learn that you've done your homework and your research is valid, then you've got their attention. If you go in and pound on the table, then you lose them."

Changing technologies

Heddell says that the technology on board both tugs and tankers has changed dramatically in recent years. He reads a lot just to stay informed on vessel-related technology news.

"The equipment that goes onto these vessels is the latest and greatest. What is interesting is that a company will build it, launch it, christen it, and then it's old news because of the new technology that's right behind it," Heddell says.

"It comes back full circle," he says. "It takes money to do this." Heddell says with the declining amount of oil flowing through the pipeline, it could get harder to keep up with newer, safer

technologies.

Heddell says communications and mapping have both vastly improved through modern technology.

"When we originally started up here, the northern half of the Sound, with the exception of the established tanker lanes, were all drawn in dotted lines, so you learned the location of the rocks and a lot of underwater hazards by visiting on minus tides," he says. "You had to teach yourself the coast line."

Now, all vessels have electronic charts and GPS on board.

"During the spill recovery effort, the communications that were brought in were excellent, but of course when those folks all went home, their equipment did too." Slowly but surely communications have improved in the sound since then.

"Today, I think there's still room for improvement," Heddell says of the communications coverage in the Sound. He says that there are still areas where it's still a struggle to even make a phone call. "The eastern side and Hinchinbrook Entrance are very well covered. As the fringes expand and get better, it's going to improve the whole system."

"I don't want to sound like a broken record," Heddell says. "It all goes back to the safe transportation of oil and whether you're going to get a tanker in and out safely."



Pete Heddell

Pete Heddell is a member of the council's Port Operations and Vessel Traffic System Committee. This committee is one of five committees of volunteers from communities affected by the Exxon Valdez oil spill. Our volunteers dedicate their time and expertise to advise the council on technical issues related to the safe transportation of oil through Prince William Sound.

Whittier's Korbe resigns

Andrea Korbe of Whittier announced in June that she would be resigning her seat on the council's board.



Andrea Korbe

Korbe accepted a teaching position at the Whittier Community School and felt she would not be able to participate fully as the city's representative.

"I thank you for putting your trust in me during the past two years as Whittier's representative," Korbe said in her resignation letter to the council. "I have learned a great deal about the safe transport of oil in Prince William Sound and have worked diligently to represent our city well."

Korbe has been monitoring the Whittier area for invasive green crab and tunicates. She hopes to continue volunteering for the council's citizen monitoring efforts.

Whittier was expected to name a replacement later this summer to fill the remainder of the term, which expires in May 2016.

New law means sustainable funds for spill prevention and response in Alaska

A new refined fuel products tax to fund Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation's Spill Prevention and Response division was signed into law by Governor Walker on June 27.

The division had been facing a significant funding shortfall for some time as previous funding came solely from a per-barrel charge on crude oil produced in the state. Declining oil production meant decreasing funds.

The council has long been pushing for a more sustainable and equitable funding mechanism for the division.

The new law places a one cent per-gallon tax on wholesale refined fuels, including gasoline and heating oil.

For more information, see the May issue of The Observer: www.bit.ly/SPARbill

Right: Governor Walker signs the law, witnessed by council staff member Steve Rothchild; the bill's sponsor, Rep. Cathy Munoz of Juneau; and Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation's Commissioner Larry Hartig. Photo courtesy of the office of Governor Walker.



From the Executive Director

How can we combine efforts and verify response capabilities?

The safe transportation of oil requires that the industry plan extensively for spill prevention and response. Beyond planning, extensive practice of the tactics described in the plans help verify that these spill response plans will work as written.

Drills and exercises conducted today are many and varied. These drills test different federal and state requirements. Some are aimed at maintaining proficiency, others verify response capabilities and strategies, or marine firefighting or salvage plans.

With so many drills and exercises, surely there must be an opportunity to combine drills for the needs of both shippers and regulators for cost savings and efficiency, particularly in Alaska, where companies often share the same response contractors, equipment, and plans, without sacrificing preparedness.

Drills and exercises in Prince William Sound

The Oil Pollution Act of 1990 requires the companies shipping North Slope crude oil out of Valdez to have a common spill response plan. Separate drills are conducted for the Valdez Marine Terminal and associated tankers, even when the same response contractor is used, because they have different plans. Alyeska, who operates the Valdez Marine Terminal, and the Prince William Sound shippers share an oil spill response organization: the Ship Escort/Response Vessel System, or SERVS. SERVS is responsible for initiating a spill response in an emergency. Both the State of Alaska and the federal government require at least one table top exercise and one field deployment exercise at the Valdez Marine Terminal every year. Some

years there are more. SERVS conducts tanker towing exercises and numerous other field deployments each year. The Prince William Sound shipping companies take turns conducting a major response exercise each year.

The shipping companies send observers to each other's exercises. Even though these companies bring their own corporate incident management teams, they are working from the Prince William Sound tanker contingency plan with the same equipment and performance expectations. This is a pretty efficient way to do business.

In most states outside of Alaska, these oil shipping companies and terminals have their own independent plans and must run their own independent exercises.

Looking for overlapping responsibilities for further efficiencies

Separate oil spill contingency plans are maintained by the federal government, regional and state agencies, and local industries. Local plans must conform to regional and state area plans, which in turn must conform to the national contingency plans.

The higher level national and regional area plans are less specific but contain valuable guidance on key matters such as how to engage and incorporate the concerns and resources of local communities and stakeholders, common geographic response strategies, spill response resources, the process for selecting potential ports of refuge, and how to deal with cultural and historical sites. They also, at least in Alaska, speak to the public expectations of transparency with the dissemination of incident information and sharing of incident action plans.

Much can be learned by observing the exercises that test these higher level plans. When one industry planholder conducts a drill, neighboring facilities and communities may learn from the principal player's incident management team for combined benefit. This can mean valuable exposure to the guidance of the federal and state on scene coordinators and agency resource trustees that attend these exercises. Oil spill response organizations can hugely benefit from observing their colleagues and counterparts during drills.



Mark Swanson

Are there situations where we might not want to combine efforts?

There are other situations where the inclusion of other plan holders and neighboring communities doesn't make much sense. Some exercises test plans for unique locations or a specific uncommon risk. There are facility-specific issues that may be of little instructive value for companies with dissimilar operations. It's probably not appropriate for an outsider to observe an exercise that is being conducted to test a specific concern about a previous failure to demonstrate the ability to implement their plan effectively. There are some major elements unique to Alaskan plans. For instance, a drill

See page 7, Swanson

From Alyeska

Alyeska's 2015 Atigun Award spotlights health and safety, hearing protection, and communication

Alyeska's Valdez Marine Terminal is a unique work environment where hundreds of professionals from dozens of trades perform thousands of various tasks daily. But there is one thing that remains the same every moment at the terminal's Power Vapor facility. "There's a constant noise of machinery here 24 hours a day," said Scott Smith, Utilities Power Vapor Supervisor.



Power Vapor staff Scott Smith and Tim Medaris sport state-of-the-art hearing protection, and Dwayne Wilson wears a more traditional model. Photo courtesy of Alyeska Corporate Communications.

Employees at Power Vapor can work in environments as loud as a 747 jet engine (118 decibels). That level of noise demands safe hearing protection and effective communication tools. After almost 18 years of working in various positions at the Terminal, Smith worried about his team's hearing protection and communications. When he landed a supervisory position, he stepped up to find a solution.

For implementing safer hearing and communications equipment last fall for the nearly 40 staff working in Power Vapor, Smith and his team were recognized with Alyeska's 2015 Atigun Award for Health and Safety.

Power Vapor operators, technicians and others working in the area now wear custom-molded earpieces created by CavCom. The earpieces offer greater hearing protection and allow wearers to communicate easier and clearer. Microphones are built into the earpieces and pick up the user's speech from their eardrum. They also eliminate loud background noise from conversations.

"It's been a real success," Smith said. "The hearing protection is superior to anything we've ever had and our technicians don't have to yell into microphones in front of their faces anymore. Everybody is telling me, 'Holy cow. I'm hearing things I've never heard before in the plant!'"

Smith said that when he became supervisor, Power Vapor operators and technicians expressed to him that their hearing protection devices weren't effective. Smith knew the feel-

ing. He said the bulky, clunky equipment was heavy and uncomfortable on the user's neck and shoulders. The equipment also made communication difficult with its faulty volume controls and microphones that allowed loud surrounding noises to wash out a user's voice. That caused occasional communication issues between staff and the control room.

Smith examined data from Alyeska's Safety program, which took noise readings from around the Terminal. He then reached out to Tom Brady of Alyeska's Occupational Health Unit.

"Tom was key in helping out with this - he found CavCom, which offers intrinsically safe, good communications," Smith said. "I recognized the issue, but the solution wouldn't have happened without Tom."

Smith is also quick to deflect special attention for the success of the new earpieces, but proud to know that his team is safer and their story might help others on TAPS work safely, as well.

"I was surprised with the Atigun Award; pleased but surprised," Smith said. "I'm just doing my job and trying to make sure we don't walk out of here with no hearing. I prize my hearing. ... I hope this kind of recognition inspires people to make their workplace safer and find better ways to do things, whether they get recognized for it or not. We just don't want people to get hurt."

• Submitted by Alyeska Corporate Communications

A look back at the early years of the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council

One of the most radical innovations to come out of the Exxon Valdez spill was the establishment of permanent, industry-funded citizen oversight to promote the environmentally safe operation of the oil industry. It's been over a quarter of a century since the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council was formed. To mark that anniversary, The Observer is running a four-part series documenting the founding and early development of the council, and the hopes and

intentions of some who were closely involved with the early days of the council.

These stories help us understand how citizens and the oil industry rallied together to create a citizens' oversight group to protect Prince William Sound from future oil spills.

The stories are in oral history format. Oral history is the practice of preserving personal testimonies about the human experience. Subjectivity is both the greatest strength and weakness of oral history; it can convey emo-

tions linked to a specific time period, but the information may not be as accurate as other methods of documenting history. As stated by Mark Hutton in his interview, "sometimes memories are colored by the hope of what you thought you were trying to do and not necessarily exactly the way it happened. Twenty years ago was a long time ago, and this is my best recollection."

Part three of four

The January talked about efforts to form a council before the spill and immediately after, and in May, we read about the emotional turbulence of the first few years of the council and how members learned to channel that emotion into a professional, effective organization. This issue, we are covering the positives and negatives of the way the council was organized. Finally, in September, we will hear lessons learned about the value of citizen oversight in our region.

All four parts, plus the full interviews, are now available on our website, please visit: www.bit.ly/PWSRCACstories.

"I think the positives far outweigh the negatives. The fact that citizens and grassroots organizations in their cities and other interest groups have a very solid, assured voice that guarantees that they will be listened to, and that they can participate in the decisions that affect the traffic in the TAPS system, is very positive."

- Scott Sterling

Sterling represented the City of Cordova on the council's board of directors from December 1990 to March 1993.

"It's a give and take process, and that's what it was set up to do. Some people say the RCAC has too much input into industry and some people say we shouldn't be shipping oil because it's too dangerous. On the other hand, reason dictates that the world moves by oil, and though we have all kinds of alternative energy, for the foreseeable future we are a world that uses oil."

- Sen. Frank Murkowski

Murkowski was a U.S. Senator from Alaska in March 1989, helped craft the Oil Pollution Act of 1990, and proposed an amendment to require citizens' oversight councils for Prince William Sound and Cook Inlet.

"I think the organization has done a real good job of protecting the economic interests of the people and the organizations they serve. I think, honestly, as far as what works, we protect the oil industry's economic interests as well. Because of our counter force to the constant cost cutting, I think we have kept the pressure on to assure good systems are in place, or to actually improve them, and that's good for industry's bottom line. But their system, which is set up with bonuses based on cost cutting, doesn't deal well with that. So we're kind of like this counter process and counter pressure to actually get appropriate environmental protections and expenses built in and paid for, despite the cost cutting pressures that they have."

- Joe Banta

Banta was one of the first staff members for the council. He has managed projects for the Oil Spill Prevention and Response and the Scientific Advisory Committees.

"It's very important for people involved with RCAC and the shippers to go around the different communities to see the beauty of the area that we want to protect. I remember specifically one meeting in Seldovia, there was a new representative for Exxon at that meeting, and I think it had an impact on him, to see the level of commitment on a volunteer basis, folks coming together to provide input that otherwise they wouldn't have a vehicle available to do that. I think it's a very positive outcome, the benefit of having stakeholders involved in the process at the ground level rather than the decisions coming out from some regulatory body, and the only option is to file suit."

- Bill Walker

Walker represented the City of Valdez on the council's board of directors from July 1989 to September 2001.



Council members at a board meeting in December 1993. Pictured: Mike Gallagher, representative of Valdez; Dennis Lodge, representative of Seward; Jim LaBelle, representative of Chugach Alaska Corporation; Wayne Coleman, Representing the Kodiak Island Borough; Darrell Olson, representative of Tatitlek; and Bill Walker, representative of Valdez.



“The really important thing about the contract was, we had to be funded well enough to be able to hire experts, predominantly scientists, to do studies and make recommendations; we needed money to compete with the experts that the

oil industry was coming up with. The contract allowed us to be independent. We gave Alyeska advice. We couldn't make them do anything, but they had to listen to our advice and they had to respond to our advice. They could comment and give feedback, but they didn't have a say in the final decision on our advice. When the decisions on what the advice would be were made and votes were taken, the shippers and the oil industry did not have a vote.”

- Marilyn Leland

Leland represented the Cordova District Fishermen United on the council's board of directors from July 1989 to September 1991.

“The paradigm shift was making citizens have an ability, by having the money, to have staying power. The money goes toward providing informed, technical comments to the agencies that were modifying or marginalizing the regulations and requirements. Before, without active citizen input, we ended up with a spill response plan that gathered dust, a spill barge that was frozen in the ice, less Coast Guard oversight and legislative oversight, and on and on and on. So combating complacency really is the driving force of what we're about.”

- Joe Banta

“I think the funding is adequate to make sure its scientific and technical arms are competent. The review process and the addressing of the many engineering, technical, and maritime commerce issues that go into it are understood and reviewed by people with the aid of competent contractors and advisors. That enables a person from a fishing group or a municipality or one of the other constituent members to be effective. I think with proper leadership and good faith you can't expect more from a democracy than people putting their energy into being effective and using their own voices.”

- Scott Sterling

“I think it's a pretty revolutionary idea that has had positive impacts all over the world. Again, the only downside of trying to translate this to other parts of the world is the idea of granting this kind of group a level of autonomy that allows them to step out and criticize industry and really demand changes. But I know that in other places where they've tried to establish these kinds of organizations, where there isn't a guaranteed source of funding or industry isn't required to provide a minimum amount each year, it just doesn't work.”

- Anne Rothe

Rothe represented the National Wildlife Federation on the council's board of directors from July 1989 to December 1993.

“There are no guarantees that can absolutely insure against any kind of mishap or disaster, but the entire process of enhancing safety is greatly benefited by having the local people who know local conditions and who care about the locality where they live take part in the decision making process. By that I don't mean that they share authority, but their input is solicited and appreciated.”

- Scott Sterling

“The one thing that joins everyone is their pride in our mission. Even though the board members may have different political beliefs, they have that one thing that ties them all together; they truly want to see industry work safely.”

- Linda Robinson

Robinson was one of the first staff members, hired as administrative assistant in 1990. She later served as financial manager and outreach coordinator.



“I think allowing citizens to have a say, to sit at the table, has been a tremendous benefit. You never know how things would have gone if there hadn't been an RCAC, but you can look at other parts of the world such as the Gulf [of Mexico] Coast and see how disconnected the people who utilize the water there are from the industry. We don't have that issue in Alaska anymore.”

- Tim Robertson

Robertson represented the City of Seldovia on the council's board of directors from July 1989 to December 1991.



The council's board of directors meet in Cordova in 2001.

Firefighters learn how to respond to fires onboard marine vessels

Continued from page 1

firefighters for the second day of the symposium. The City of Valdez provided one of their warehouses to simulate a roll-on/roll-off cargo vessel. The exercises held at the warehouse proved useful to participants on any vessel response, including oil tankers.

The last day's highlight was a final exercise, a simulated incident that required all the participating squads to work together. The exercise simulated all of the actions from the initial response to final "overhaul," when firefighters verify the fire is completely out.

Participants were tested at the end of the symposium by a representative of the State of Alaska's Department of Public Safety to receive their state certification in marine firefighting.

Thank you to the symposium sponsors:

The Marine Firefighting Symposium could not be held without the significant support of industry and community participants:

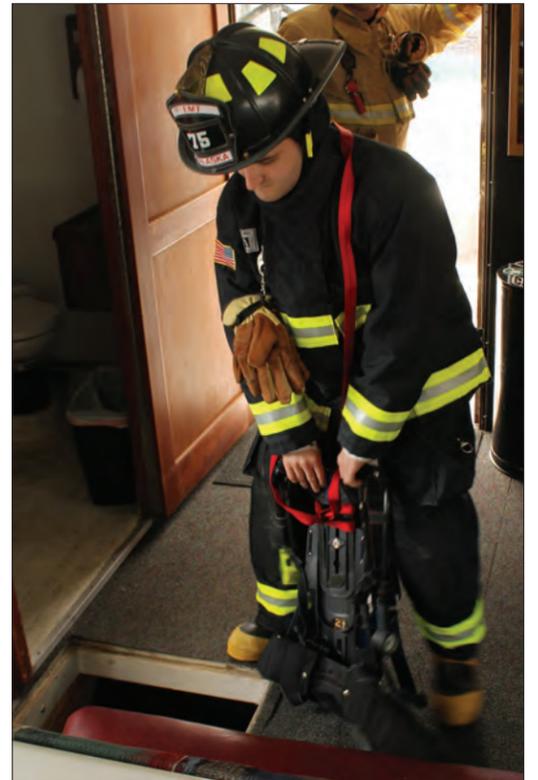
- The State of Alaska provided travel funds for many of the fire department personnel.
- Crowley Maritime/Marine Response Alliance provided substantial financial support for the symposium.
- The City of Valdez waived facility fees for use of the Civic Center.



Above and below: Firefighters participate in a simulated vessel fire exercise at the Valdez harbor. Photos by Zac Schasteen.



- The Alaska Fire Chief's Association donated textbooks.
- Polar Tankers provided operational support and sponsored travel for the Nikiski Fire Department.
- Stan Stephens Glacier and Wildlife Cruises and the Southwest Alaska Pilots Association allowed their vessels to be used as training platforms for the firefighters.



Among the dangers that firefighters responding to a marine vessel fire might encounter are small, smoky, dark spaces. Photo by Nelli Vanderburg.



2015 symposium participants gather for group photo. Photo by Nelli Vanderburg.

Board: Elections and new members for council's directors

Continued from page 1

Elected to serve as at-large members of the executive committee were Melissa Berns, who represents the Kodiak Village Mayors Association, and Robert Archibald of Homer, two newly seated members. Long-time board member Patience Andersen Faulkner, who represents the Cor-

dova District Fishermen United, is the third at-large member.

These officers will serve until the next elections in May 2016.

New board members seated in May include: Mako Haggerty of

Homer, who replaced Blake Johnson as the Kenai Peninsula Borough representative; Alisha Sughroue of Seldovia, who replaced Steve Lewis; and Orson Smith of Seward, who replaced Jim Herbert.



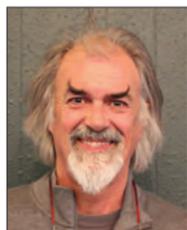
Patience Andersen Faulkner



Robert Archibald



Melissa Berns



Mako Haggerty



Alisha Sughroue

THE OBSERVER is published in January, May, July and September by the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council. Except where credited to others, articles are written by Amanda Johnson, the public communications project manager for the council.

Questions or comments about anything in The Observer? Another topic that you want to hear about? Let us know!

Contact us:
newsletter@pwsrca.org

New staff member has deep ties to Alaska

The council recently welcomed Shawna Popovici to the Anchorage staff.

Popovici has lived in Anchorage since 2005, but previously lived in several Alaska communities: Soldotna, Seward, Kodiak and the Juneau area.

Popovici's grandfather first came to Alaska in 1946 as a missionary in Ketchikan and southeast Alaska. Her parents met in Juneau, and her father, a Coast Guard captain, worked for the VECO Corporation as a contractor helping clean up the Exxon Valdez oil spill.



Shawna Popovici

While Popovici was working on her a Bachelor of Arts in Rec-

reation and Leisure Services from Western Washington University, she spent summers in Alaska working as a deck hand for Kenai Fjords Tours in Seward.

After graduation, she served three years in the Peace Corps for the Environmental Sector in Resita, Romania, where she met her husband Ovidiu. They moved back to Alaska in 2005 when she accepted a position with the Municipality of Anchorage. She served the city for ten years, first as the Central and Southeast Park District Manager, and most recently as the Executive Assistant to the Chief Information Officer.

Growing up with a life on the water really cemented her love for Alaska and the coast. She is excited to join the council's staff.

"It is great to join an organization with a clear vision to support citizen involvement in protecting their local assets," Popovici said.

Study results: No threat to human health

Continued from page 1

from the ballast water that arrives on oil tankers, however small amounts of hydrocarbons from various sources still make it into Port Valdez. Since the early 2000's the amount has declined by about 90%, in part because all tankers in Prince William Sound are now double-hulled, which means that most ballast water is typically separated from the oil cargo tanks and does not need to be treated at the facility. In addition, decreased oil flow through the pipeline means fewer tankers and consequently less ballast water that requires treatment. Improvements in ballast water treatment processes have further lowered the discharge of hydrocarbons from the terminal.

Oil detected in mussels raise concern for shrimp

The council has been monitoring mussels and sediments in the region for the last 21 years. Since then, traces of hydrocarbons from the terminal and tanker operations have always been detected in the samples taken in Port Valdez.

While the council's research shows that the amount is small and has been declining in recent years, these detected levels of hydrocar-

bons in mussels raised concerns among those who harvest shrimp from the area, prompting the council to test hydrocarbon levels in shrimp from the port.

Study results

The study determined that the shrimp's exposure to hydrocarbons from the terminal does not pose a human health risk. Very low levels of hydrocarbons were found in samples closest to the terminal. The study also compared the amount of oil found in various parts of the shrimp, as well as amounts found in different species of shrimp. The highest levels of hydrocarbons found in the study were in the eggs of pink shrimp, where the average concentration was 630 parts per billion, well below contaminant levels considered unsafe to eat. No evidence of hydrocarbon contamination was found in the shrimp's tail, which is the part usually consumed. Researchers, however, suggested further study to determine whether the hydrocarbon levels detected in the eggs have an effect on the shrimp's development.

To read the full report, visit our website: www.bit.ly/PWSshrimpstudy.

Swanson: Verify training and capability to respond

Continued from page 3

to test the 400 plus fishing vessels that annually train with SERVS and remain ready to provide response to a crude oil spill may not be of interest to a company without such vessels.

Drills and exercises are expensive and take a lot of staff and time. So are spills and spill responses with equipment and responders that are not prepared and ready to work. While there are logical limits

to what should be combined for drill credit purposes, and there are clearly opportunities for shippers to learn from each other, we must still verify that all responders are fully trained and have the capability and equipment to respond effectively. Let's make sure we get the most from all of these efforts without reducing their ability to respond to an oil spill.

- Mark Swanson is the executive director of the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council.

ABOUT THE COUNCIL'S ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Much of the council's work is done through permanent volunteer committees made up of board members, technical experts, and citizens with an interest in making oil transportation safer in Alaska.

These standing committees work with staff on projects, study and deliberate current oil transportation issues, and formulate their own advice and recommendations to the council's full board of directors.

Our committees provide an avenue for public participation in the council's work.

The council has five technical committees:

Terminal Operations & Environmental Monitoring:

The Terminal Operations and Environmental Monitoring Committee identifies actual and potential sources of episodic and chronic pollution at the Valdez Marine Terminal.

Members:

Chair: Harold Blehm, Valdez	Steve Goudreau, Valdez
Vice-chair: Mikkel Foltmar, Anchorage	Tom Kuckertz, Anchorage
Amanda Bauer, Valdez*	George Skladal, Anchorage

Port Operations and Vessel Traffic Systems:

The Port Operations and Vessel Traffic Systems Committee monitors port and tanker operations in Prince William Sound. The committee identifies and recommends improvements in the vessel traffic navigation systems and monitors the vessel escort system.

Members:

Chair: Amanda Bauer, Valdez*	Bob Jaynes, Valdez
Vice-chair: Pat Duffy, Valdez*	Orson Smith, Seward
Cliff Chambers, Seward	Jeremy Talbott, Valdez
Pete Heddell, Whittier	

Scientific Advisory:

The Scientific Advisory Committee sponsors independent scientific research and provides scientific assistance and advice to the other council committees on technical reports, scientific methodology, data interpretation, and position papers.

Members:

Chair: John Kennish, Anchorage	Roger Green, Hope
Vice-chair: Paula Martin, Soldotna	Dorothy M. Moore, Valdez*
Sarah Allan, Anchorage	Debasmita Misra, Fairbanks
Wayne Donaldson, Kodiak*	Mark Udevitz, Anchorage

Oil Spill Prevention and Response:

The Oil Spill Prevention and Response Committee works to minimize the risks and impacts associated with oil transportation by reviewing and recommending strong spill prevention and response measures, adequate contingency planning, and effective regulations.

Members:

Chair: John LeClair, Anchorage	David Goldstein, Whittier
Vice-chair: Jerry Brookman, Kenai	Jim Herbert, Seward*
Robert Beedle, Cordova*	Gordon Scott, Girdwood
Colin Daugherty, Anchorage	Alisha Sughroue, Seldovia*

Information and Education:

The Information and Education Committee's mission is to support the council's mission by fostering public awareness, responsibility, and participation in the council's activities through information and education.

Members:

Chair: Cathy Hart, Anchorage	Ruth E. Knight, Valdez
Vice-chair: Linda Robinson, Homer	Kate Morse, Cordova
Trent Dodson, Kodiak	Savannah Lewis, Anchorage
Jane Eisemann, Kodiak	
Patience Andersen Faulkner, Cordova*	

*council director

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You can also reach us at: newsletter@pwsrccac.org

Community Corner

Sharing our mission with students

By **Lisa Matlock**
Outreach Coordinator

Universities, both from Alaska and out-of-state, offer field courses that can connect students to places and topics firsthand, adding a dose of reality to their academic learning and creating lifelong memories for participating students. Every year the council receives requests for presentations and educational activities to help students understand our mission, our work, and its global significance.

High school to college

For the past two years, the council has participated in one such course, an "Environmental Leadership Lab." Rhode Island's Brown University partners with the Cook Inlet Tribal Council and Kenai Peninsula College to provide exceptional high school students the opportunity to learn about the complicated interactions between natural and social systems in Alaska. Participants spend two weeks traveling throughout southcentral Alaska exploring how multiple stakeholders — corporate, governmental, native and non-native — struggle to balance consumption of natural resources with long-term sustainability.

Executive Director Mark Swanson and Programs Director Donna Schantz met with the students last summer when they were touring Valdez. Swanson described the connections students made to the council's work as "astounding in their global focus. The students were very aware of models from all over the world that address risk management."

College field courses

For years, New York's Elmira College has held an environmental sciences field course in the Homer area, and has included the council in its syllabus. Before this year,

the council's presentations focused on the Exxon Valdez oil spill and changes that make oil transportation safer today. This spring, we added a mock oil spill activity to help the students understand oil spill response in the Alaskan environment.

Students from Vermont's Middlebury College are planning to visit Kenai Peninsula College and Alaska Pacific University campuses this summer to study Arctic char in Alaska and the environmental issues and threats to that species. The council's presentation will share specific Prince William Sound fisheries-related research and history with the students, along with a mock oil spill response.

Post-graduate opportunities

The council also works with graduate and post-graduate educational programs. This past spring council volunteer Jim Herbert met with Marshall Memorial Fellows in Seward. This fellowship program introduces a new generation of European leaders to different areas of the United States and helps them better understand transatlantic relations. Herbert talked to them about the Exxon Valdez oil spill and how efforts to prevent oil spills have changed since 1989. Swanson and I also met with two Seagrant legislative fellows from Washington, D.C. last year who were investigating Alaska marine systems with regard to science and law.



Lisa Matlock



Elmira College students participate in a mock oil spill cleanup. Photo by Lisa Matlock.

Upcoming high school and college internships:

This summer, the council will begin recruiting for next year's interns. Several internship projects are being sought both at the high school and college level. The Scientific Advisory Committee hopes to replace intern Sarah Hoepfner's aquatic invasive species monitoring and education project in Cordova.

Hoepfner has monitored the Cordova area for invasive green crabs and tunicates for the past two years, and has taught area students about invasive species. She recently graduated and is leaving for college this year.

The council is also seeking two

college-age interns. The first is an environmental education intern who will bring the council's K-12 Oil Spill Curriculum lessons to regional community classrooms. The second is a engineering student for an oil properties comparison project. If you, or student that you know, might be interested in one of these internships, please contact me at lisa.matlock@pwsr-cac.org or (907) 273-6235.



Sarah Hoepfner

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.

Board of Directors

- Pres.: Amanda Bauer - City of Valdez
- Vice Pres.: Thane Miller - Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corp.
- Secretary: Bob Shavelson - Oil Spill Region Environmental Coalition
- Treasurer: Orson Smith - City of Seward

- Ian Angaiak - Community of Chenega Bay
- Robert Archibald - City of Homer
- Robert Beedle - City of Cordova
- Melissa Berns - Kodiak Village Mayors Association
- Al Burch - Kodiak Island Borough
- Wayne Donaldson - City of Kodiak
- Pat Duffy - Alaska State Chamber of Commerce
- Patience Andersen Faulkner - Cordova District Fishermen United
- Mako Haggerty - Kenai Peninsula Borough
- John Johnson - Chugach Alaska Corporation
- Andrea Korbe - City of Whittier
- Jim LaBelle - Port Graham Corporation
- Dorothy Moore - City of Valdez
- Alisha Sughroue - City of Seldovia
- Roy Totemoff - Community of Tatitlek

Staff

Mark Swanson, Executive Director

Anchorage

- Joe Banta, Project Manager
- Gregory Dixon, Financial Manager
- Amanda Johnson, Project Manager
- Lisa Matlock, Outreach Coordinator
- Natalie Novik, Administrative Assistant
- Shawna Popovici, Project Manager Assistant
- Steve Rothchild, Administrative Deputy Director
- Linda Swiss, Project Manager
- Alicia Zorzetto, Digital Collections Librarian

Valdez

- Jennifer Fleming, Executive Assistant
- Austin Love, Project Manager
- Leigh Lubin, Administrative Assistant
- Roy Robertson, Project Manager
- Jeremy Robida, Project Manager
- Donna Schantz, Director of Programs
- Alan Sorum, Project Manager
- Nelli Vanderburg, Project Manager Assistant

COUNCIL BOARD MEETINGS

The citizens' council board of directors meets three times annually. The January meeting is held in Anchorage, May in Valdez, and the September meeting is rotated among communities affected by the Exxon Valdez oil spill. Board meetings are open to the public, and an opportunity for public comments is provided at the beginning of each meeting. Agendas and other meeting materials are available on our website: www.pwsr-cac.org

The tentative board meeting schedule for the coming year is: September 17 and 18, 2015 in Kodiak; January 21 and 22, 2016 in Anchorage; and May 5 and 6, 2016 in Valdez.

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