



"Citizens promoting environmentally safe operation of the Alyeska terminal and associated tankers."

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News Release

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Whittier community engages with on-water oil spill response training

The Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council held its fourth annual fishing vessel oil spill response training tour in Whittier, Alaska, on September 25, 2018. The Whittier community was invited to join the council from 11:30 to 1:30 p.m., on a Stan Stephens Cruises vessel to observe the training. Over 60 members of the public participated in the event, including 25 students from Whittier Community School.

Whittier student Abi, 16, stated about the event, "It matters because it keeps our oceans clean and helps keep people knowledgeable about how to respond to the spills. I might want to do it when I get old enough."

The local fishermen participating in the training are contracted by the Ship Escort/Response Vessel System, also known as SERVS, to respond in the event of a Prince William Sound tanker or Valdez Marine Terminal oil spill. SERVS is Alyeska Pipeline Service Company's oil spill response organization and coordinates annual oil spill response exercises in multiple Southcentral Alaska communities, including Whittier.

This council event helps keep communities informed on what oil spill prevention and response measures are in place in Prince William Sound, especially those involving their local fishermen. Whittier residents learned about oil spill response technology, tactics and how this program helps Alyeska operate safely in Prince William Sound. Narrators from both the council and Alyeska were on board to help participants understand the training. We would like to thank our partners, Alyeska/SERVS, Stan Stephens Cruises and Whittier Community School, for helping to support this event.

When asked why it was important for community members to learn about this program, Whittier resident Krystal Sobrino said, "It's very educational. We've had staff come to the school and we learned about oil spill response in the school, but to actually see it first hand, it resonates a lot more. How big of a deal it is, how much is involved in it."

Dyanna Pratt, director of administration for the City of Whittier, said about the event, "I've been here for 14 years and I've always wanted to come out and see what they do for SERVS. As long as we transport oil in the water, we need to have clean up response."

Since the inception of SERVS after the Exxon Valdez oil spill, the council has been highly supportive of local fishermen and mariners being trained annually with the best available technology to prepare for oil spills. This system helps ensure the most comprehensive response measures are in place for both open water and nearshore resources. A major lesson of the Exxon Valdez spill was that incorporating local mariners into the spill response system helps ensure a quick, efficient and effective response. Whittier mariners have the most intimate knowledge of, and connection to, the waters near Whittier. Their involvement would help protect the most sensitive areas, such as hatcheries and spawning streams, from spilled oil.

The council has held previous fishing vessel oil spill response training tours in Seward, Cordova and Homer. Future tours are tentatively planned in other Southcentral Alaska communities, including Valdez and Kodiak. The council hopes that through such programs communities will understand the importance of oil spill prevention and having the most robust response strategies in place in the event of a spill. For more information on council projects and events, visit www.pwsrcac.org.

Several photos of the event are available through the following link:

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1xFafFj5odq0SIEdJKUayhtPPyY4IiBc6>

Additional photos are available for use on request by contacting Brooke Taylor at brooke.taylor@pwsrcac.org or 907-301-3784.

The Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council, with offices in Anchorage and Valdez, is an independent non-profit corporation whose mission is to promote environmentally safe operation of the Valdez Marine Terminal and the oil tankers that use it. The council's work is guided by the Oil Pollution Act of 1990, and its contract with Alyeska Pipeline Service Company. The council's 18 member organizations are communities in the region affected by the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill, as well as aquaculture, commercial fishing, environmental, Native, recreation and tourism groups.
