

Community Oil Spill Response Forum Final Report

*Report to
Prince William Sound RCAC and Cook Inlet RCAC*



October 17, 2005

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Executive Summary

Since their inception, Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council (RCAC) and Cook Inlet RCAC have promoted the development of the concept of *community-based oil spill response* (COSR) in their respective regions. COSR consists of local citizens responding to oil spilled in the waters upon which they rely for income, recreation, and subsistence. There are currently three organized COSR teams in the Price William Sound/Cook Inlet area.

The Community Oil Spill Response Forum held in Anchorage, Alaska on January 14, 2005 convened a cross-section of stakeholders to review the status of existing COSR teams and share information about past and future COSR-related efforts.

Participants included representatives of state and federal agencies, local harbor facility staff, oil spill response organizations (OSROs), existing COSR teams, and other community-level organizations.

After reviewing the history and status of community-based response in Alaska, the group produced several consensus statements, all agreeing that the current system is inadequate in its response to small spills which are often associated with unregulated spillers. Further, they agreed that improved capacity for community-based response could ameliorate the situation. In so agreeing, however, the group was operating under a very general understanding of the term "community-based," and not necessarily referring specifically to the COSR team model, but rather a combination of resources, including harbor facility staff and local OSRO residents working for OSROs.

Several important pieces of information were exchanged, especially about existing US Coast Guard and Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation programs that support community-based spill response. Areas requiring further investigation and clarification were also identified, such as insurance coverage for collaborative response from one community to another, and liability issues for responses outside harbor areas. Training, personnel, and small-scale spill response costs were raised repeatedly as the primary challenges facing local responders.

The Forum concluded with a sense of both accomplishment and much work to be done. Participants reported that they would return to their home communities and organizations with useful information from the day, and requested an annual gathering to continue to improve communications among them. Further, the participants developed a list of action items, ranging from a press release about the event to setting up a voluntary roster of trained responders throughout Alaska.

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April 27, 2004

Introduction

Since their inception, Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council (RCAC) and Cook Inlet RCAC have promoted the development of the concept of *community-based oil spill response* (COSR) in their respective regions. COSR consists of local citizens responding to oil spilled in the waters upon which they rely for income, recreation, and subsistence. There are currently three organized COSR teams in the Prince William Sound/Cook Inlet area. The Community Oil Spill Response Forum held by the two RCACs in Anchorage, Alaska on January 14, 2005 convened a cross-section of stakeholders to review the status of existing COSR teams and share information about past and future COSR-related efforts.

This report provides background information leading up to the forum, a forum summary, and next steps recommended by the participants.

Background on COSR Concept

COSR Concept

The COSR concept relies on community-based teams of citizens trained as first responders to protect areas--their own communities--subject to potentially large spills or spills by unregulated spillers (Nuka Research and MAC Services, 2004). The success of this concept at the state level relies not only on cadres of trained citizens capable of responding locally, but also a network of COSR teams throughout the state.

History

In Alaska, the 1989 *Exxon Valdez* oil spill demonstrated the efficacy of small groups of local responders collecting spilled oil. In addition to their critical knowledge about local conditions and geography, residents were highly motivated to protect "their" land and water. Since that spill, regulated oil production facilities and transporters have dramatically increased their spill response capabilities. However, other potential spill sources, including numerous types of nontank vessels (such as fishing and recreational vessels) continue to pose risks to Alaska's coastal resources.

The RCACs have studied numerous oil spill response models, seeking a system that would provide coverage to all communities. Past efforts have included manuals and models for establishing response teams, as well as the support and training of local individuals. (See Appendix A for a list of relevant reports and analyses.) The most recent study proposed a universal expansion of coverage to smaller communities by establishing a “firehouse model” of response. This concept would merge the COSR team approach and that used by volunteer fire departments across the country by establishing regional service hubs from which responses to all oil spills in the region would originate.

Professionals in the response community and the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) reviewed the concept with the prevailing reaction that it was unnecessary. Industry concurred; current levels of coverage are adequate and the system works well (Nuka Research and MAC Services, 2004).

The COSR Forum convened stakeholders from government, industry, and local communities to discuss the current system to address spilled oil and identify both what works and what can be improved.

Existing COSR teams – Cordova (Eyak), Chenega, and Seldovia – in the Prince William Sound/Cook Inlet area are shown in Figure 1.

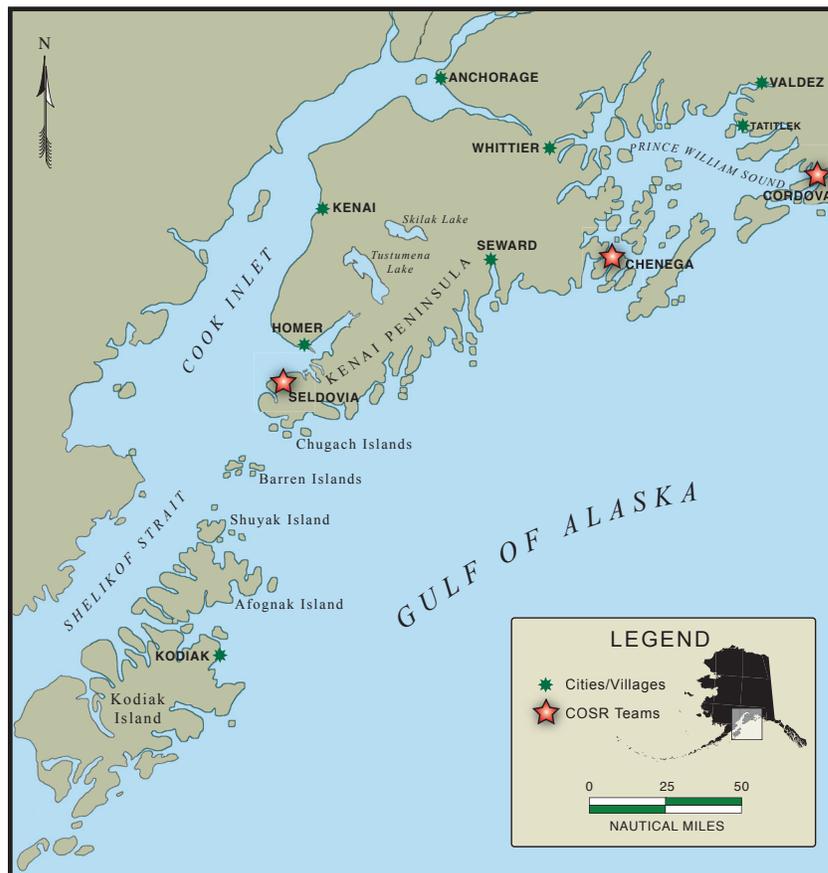


Figure 1. COSR teams in the Prince William Sound/Cook Inlet area.

Overview of the Community Oil Spill Response Forum

Participants

Forum participants included representatives of the following groups and organizations:

- Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation,
- US Coast Guard,
- US Environmental Protection Agency,
- Existing COSR teams,
- Oil spill response organizations (OSRO),
- Harbormasters and port officials,
- Local community and tribal governments, and
- RCACs staff and volunteers.

Purpose of the Forum (Mike Munger, CIRCAC)

Mike Munger, CIRCAC Executive Director, led the introductions and gave opening comments. He cited Alaska as having the largest oil spill response system of any US state. However, the oil production that helps fund this system is declining, as are the state and federal budgets. Oil production facilities and transporters have outstanding response capabilities, while other potential spill responders, such as small coastal communities and fishermen, have limited capabilities.

Mr. Munger noted that each year citizens spill more oil in the US than was spilled by the *Exxon Valdez*. With the understanding that the current system fails to address adequately a major source of spilled oil, he challenged the group to advance a dialogue on what can be done to promote and enhance local communities' capacity to respond to *all* sources of spilled oil.

COSR Teams in Alaska (Tim Robertson, Nuka Research)

Tim Robertson, General Manager of Nuka Research, provided an historical review of COSR teams in Alaska and described COSR team organizational requirements. In addition to being an environmental consultant who drafted many of the studies and reports in this subject area for the RCACs, Mr. Robertson is a founding member of the Seldovia Oil Spill Response Team, one of three existing COSR teams.

COSR in Alaska began in 1986 with Legislative House Bill 470 that established the Oil and Hazardous Substance Release Response Fund, commonly known as the "Response Fund." (AS 46.08.10) This fund provides "a readily available fund for the payment of expenses incurred by [A]DEC in protecting the environment from oil and hazardous substances releases." State monies that have supported COSR have originated from this fund.

After the 1989 Exxon Valdez Spill, the Alaska State Legislature passed Bill SB 264, which established oil spill response depots and corps. SB 264's purpose was to "provide assurance to the people of the state that their health, safety, and well-being would be protected from the adverse consequences of oil and hazardous substance releases of a magnitude that presents a grave and substantial threat to the economy and the environment of the state." It further mandated that ADEC "shall maintain emergency response depots in areas of the state determined by the director to be potential sites of releases or threatened releases of oil or hazardous substances. The depots shall be equipped and staffed in a manner that ensures prompt response when containment and cleanup actions are necessary."

With State Legislature and RCAC support, the Nearshore Demonstration Project was funded between 1992 and 1994 to explore the possibility of local teams trained and equipped to respond to a coastal spill. The Nearshore Demonstration Project sought to:

- Develop and train a volunteer corps of responders,
- Provide equipment to recover 650 bbl. of oil per day, and
- Demonstrate the efficacy of nearshore strike teams using local vessels and volunteer responders.

The Nearshore Demonstration Project met its objectives, culminating in a two-day demonstration and drill of Seldovia's equipment and volunteers in April 1994.

That same year, the State Legislature amended SB 264 to read, "The office *may* establish an oil and hazardous substance response corps . . . The office *may* maintain emergency response depots in areas of the state determined by the director to be potential sites of releases or threatened releases of oil or hazardous substances." This language change granted ADEC additional leeway in the administration of response funds. Two years later, ADEC eliminated the funding for maintenance of the response equipment and transferred responsibility for the equipment to local governments.

ADEC and the two RCACs have recognized the need for community-based response teams and have supported their development. ADEC has provided funds for equipment and training. Both RCACs have funded projects to provide communities with models and key information for developing local oil spill response teams.

Mr. Robertson described the three components critical to adequate local spill response:

- Equipment must be strategically located, and maintained and stored locally with cooperative agreements in place to assure ready access;
- A personnel roster must be available and include responders with adequate and updated training; and

- COSR teams must have Local Community Response Agreements with the State, insurance to cover workers and operations, and reliable funding.

Mr. Roberson ended his presentation by raising the question of whether these three components are available to all Alaskan communities at risk of spilled oil.

Panel Discussion on Status and Needs of COSR Teams

The main morning session included presentations by the following participants:

- Walter McInnes and Mark Janes of Seldovia's COSR team;
- Pete Kompkoff of Chenega; and
- Harbormasters or representatives from Kodiak, Homer, Seward, Valdez, Cordova, Seldovia, Chenega, Tatitlek, Nanwalek; as well planning staff from the Kodiak Island Borough.

Mr. Janes of Seldovia Oil Spill Response Team (SOS Team) began with an overview of its history and operations. Although significant amounts of oil did not reach Seldovia Bay, the community was still significantly impacted by the *Exxon Valdez* spill and response efforts. The entire town mobilized to assist in protecting Seldovia Bay, and many citizens worked on the clean up efforts around Kenai Peninsula. Many of these same Seldovians went on to form the SOS Team to ensure that their community would be protected from spilled oil.

The mission of the SOS Team is “to serve as a community-based response team dedicated to protecting the environment through spill education, prevention, preparedness, and response.” The SOS Team has demonstrated its effectiveness as a local emergency response team with over 30 documented responses over the past 14 years. Events to which the SOS Team has responded include boats sinking in the harbor, sunken fishing vessels in Port Graham Bay, and heating fuel spills at the local school.

The SOS Team’s services are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of services offered by Seldovia SOS Team.

Response Services	Readiness Services	Community Service
Rapid response to small spills	HAZWOPER Training	Education
1st response to larger spills	Incident management training	Information
Implementation of response plans/GRS	Maintenance of response equipment	Assistance
Mutual-aid to other response organizations		
Incident management services to aid local and state agencies		

Currently the SOS Team operates with monthly expenses of \$2,000. This provides insurance for operations, and an office with a single part-time worker who provides organizational oversight and a consistent call-out capability. With the dwindling cash assets and uncertain funding, the Team is seeking other sources of revenue and meeting with minimal success.

Pete Kompkoff of the Native Village of Chenega described the status of spill response measures in his community. The 150 fishing vessels and up to 40 tenders that use Chenega Harbor during the salmon season present the most significant risk of spilled oil in Chenega. Mr. Kompkoff also sees an increasing number of small cruise ships transiting the area. Although the village has not experienced a significant spill since the *Exxon Valdez*, risks are always present. Residents' experience during the *Exxon Valdez* spill motivated them to maintain local response and regulation of oil in their home waters. The village requires strict regulations during fueling of vessels in local waters, but oily waste from unidentified sources continues to appear in Sawmill Bay.

Chenega's response capabilities are considered excellent due to the relationships with the Ship Escort Response Vessel System (SERVS) and the US Coast Guard (USCG). SERVS has helped to maintain a ready response capability in the community with mandated spill response training for individuals through their fishing vessel response program in the Sound. The USCG assists with pre-positioned equipment and a Memorandum of Understanding that would hasten response. The result is 17 trained response personnel, adequate equipment, and an established funding mechanism to address oil spill in the village's home waters. Mr. Kompkoff would like to pursue a Community Response Agreement with the State of Alaska to further ensure responses to spilled oil.

Joe Banta, PWSRCAC Project Manager, moderated a discussion focusing on the harbors and their response capabilities. Harbormasters or their representatives from Kodiak, Homer, Seward, Valdez, Cordova, Seldovia, Chenega, Tatitlek, and Nanwalek, as well as planning staff from the Kodiak Island Borough, responded to a series of questions. Their responses are summarized in Table 2 on the following page.

Table 2. Summary of comments by local harbor facilities staff.

Question	Response
What are your harbor response capabilities?	All facilities reported having adequate equipment available for initial responses within the harbors. The addition of the ADEC equipment in the communities had greatly expanded coverage. The expense of responding to “mystery sheens” was raised. ¹
How is training provided or addressed by your organization?	Collectively, training is a problem for harbor facilities. Ongoing, mandated training is a challenge for seasonal employees, creating situations where access and expense become prohibitive. The group discussed online training options and recommended that Alaska develop a state-specific online training.
What currently makes operating difficult, i.e., personnel, funding, training, maintenance, equipment, insurance, etc...?	Training, enforcement, and public education are consistent challenges. A common difficulty was that the drain on manpower for spill response activities puts other essential operations on hold. This forces the staff to prioritize activities such that small spills remain unaddressed.
What is the history of spills in your harbor?	Most of the spills described were small and of unknown origin. Sinking vessels and spills during fueling continue to be significant issues.
What are the lessons you have learned in responding to spills at your facility?	Communities in Prince William Sound indicated the relationship with SERVS and the training provided through the fishing vessel response program as contributing to community response viability. The availability of response equipment for public access on docks was seen as an effective tool in harbors where it is present.

The moderated discussion that followed the questions revealed additional issues facing harbor staff. Common issues raised were:

- Uncertainty about who should provide immediate response to spills outside the harbor,
- Liability incurred by the municipalities if staff responds outside the harbor,
- Murky response structures and relationships between cities and response teams, and
- Possible means for federal and state governments to assist in supporting response activities.

¹ USCG representative Commander Swanson proposed zero tolerance of such spills to drive down the threshold of acceptability. He recommended that the responsible parties for small spills also be held accountable; however, this requires spill reporting and available response personnel.

Presentations and Panel Discussion on Developing and Maintaining a Community Response Network

The afternoon discussion was anchored by presentations from:

- Leslie Pearson (ADEC) on the State of Alaska's Community Response System,
- Chris Woodley and Mark Swanson (USCG) on USCG Response Capabilities in Alaska,
- Bob Heavlin (Alaska Chadux) on Alaska Chadux in Alaska Communities, and
- Dave Owing (SEAPRO) on the SEAPRO Model.

Leslie Pearson, Program Manager of ADEC's Program on Emergency Response Program, filled out the picture of ADEC's COSR activities. She indicated the legislative mandates and noted that ADEC seeks to maximize the funding it receives by partnering with other governmental agencies and industry to develop response resources in local communities.

ADEC's key initiatives to address COSR consist of the Nearshore Response Project, Local Response Equipment Project, and Local Community Response Agreement (CSRA) Project.

- **Nearshore Response Project:** Provides equipment to local governments to protect coastal environments in seven locations with elevated risk levels for oil spills. Resources are maintained by the local government and are available for use by the State On-Scene Coordinator during an event. With a Community Spill Response Agreement in place, local governments could respond quickly with the equipment and be reimbursed for expenses incurred during a spill.
- **Community Response Equipment Depot Project:** ADEC has placed 42 response equipment packages throughout Alaska. Equipment packages are designed to supply local communities with first response capabilities using the responsible parties, local individuals, spill response cooperatives, or response action contractors as responders. ADEC retains control over the depots but ensures local access with cooperative agreements with the local government. Similar to the Nearshore Response Project, when the depot is accessed in conjunction with a Community Spill Response Agreement, the local government is reimbursed for expenses incurred.
- **Community Spill Response Agreement Project:** To build and maintain spill response capabilities at a local level, ADEC developed the Community Spill Response Agreement (CSRA) Project. These agreements facilitate the reimbursement of a local government for expenses incurred during a response action and may provide equipment and training to locals to ensure adequate response. This allows ADEC to maximize resources by requesting local assistance based on the needs of a particular incident. Currently ADEC has reached agreements with 44 governmental entities around the state and is continuing outreach to expand the program.

Commander Mark Swanson described USCG oil spill response programs, including efforts in the Prince William Sound area to protect local communities. Commander Swanson was active in the dialogue throughout the forum; many of his comments are included in this section for clarity.

Commander Swanson explained that the best oil spill prevention the USCG can provide is through the enforcement of the laws related to discharged oil in the water. Individuals can understand that spilling oil does have consequences and the number of spills can be reduced. Enforcement at all levels will raise awareness and increase prevention efforts of individuals and organizations.

The Commander reiterated that Prince William Sound has vast resources dedicated to responding to another major spill, but these are of little use with the majority of oil spills the USCG is called to address. He commended SERVS and the OSROs for providing training to the communities of the Sound, and for doing an excellent job in fulfilling their mandates. However, they remain unable to address smaller spills, often because of expense or the risk of distracting response resources in the event of a large-scale spill. He has had difficulty finding someone willing and able to respond to the unregulated and possibly uninsured spiller in the Sound.

Commander Swanson reviewed a response for a sunken fishing vessel immediately outside the Cordova Harbor to which the Eyak Village Tribe's COSR team responded. The Eyak Village Tribe had the appropriate agreements in place with the USCG. The team was mobilized almost immediately, while weather prohibited USCG personnel from ready access to the spill site. The cost for the clean up was around \$30,000. The Commander surmised that a regional OSRO's expenses would be almost 10 times as much, and SERVS response would be far greater still for the same spill response. The Eyak COSR team's response beat other potential responses in low cost, speed, strategic location of equipment and personnel, and engaging community involvement to assist the uninsured spiller. Overall it was the best outcome to a bad situation for the community, the individual, and for the USCG.

Commander Swanson explained USCG programs to facilitate oil spill response in general, and COSR in specifically:

- **Pollution Removal Funding Authorization (PRFA):** A tool available to the USCG to quickly obtain needed services and assistance in response in oil spills by establishing agreements prior to a spill. This authorization grants the funding to other non-federal governmental agencies to remove oil, saves on procurement lead-time, and provides fixed unit prices for most services. When in place, the agreement allows for immediate spill response with Coast Guard approval.
- **Memorandum of Understanding signed by USCG and a local government:** This agreement outlines the government's ability to respond to a spill in its local waters.

- **Emergency Response Basic Ordering Agreements (BOA):** This agreement is signed with non-governmental entities. The USCG and the entity pre-determine the rates for the cost of a clean up, allowing for quicker call out of responders and equipment by the USCG.

Harbor staff expressed interest in these programs, as they consistently struggle with manpower and equipment expenses incurred during spills. Commander Swanson encouraged harbor staff present to explore the possibility for these agreements with each harbor's local Captain of the Port.

Bob Heavlin, Executive Director of Alaska Chadux, described Alaska Chadux's spill response system as related to the COSR concept. Alaska Chadux began operations in 1993 as a non-profit oil spill response organization. It currently operates in communities from Southcentral Alaska to the oil fields on North Slope. Alaska Chadux maintains 10 equipment hubs from Cordova to Barrow.

To maintain these hubs and provide responders across a vast area, Alaska Chadux has developed a program using Equipment Maintenance Agreements (EMA). These agreements, made with local individuals and communities, employ first responders in a region. Alaska Chadux trains these individuals and identifies team leaders who serve as the primary contact for the region and are capable of organizing and initiating a response if called out.

This program has required a long-term commitment on the part of Alaska Chadux, but the benefits have been numerous. As relationships are established and developed, the stability of the program in each community increases. The communities--many of them rural and underserved--gain skilled workers, local environmental protection, and jobs. Mr. Heavlin's written comments to the Forum are included in Appendix B.

Dave Owings, General Manager of Southeast Alaska Petroleum Resource Organization (SEAPRO), presented his organization's spill response capabilities and their interactions with local communities. SEAPRO was established in 1990 to help members in Southeast Alaska meet requirements under the Oil Pollution Act of 1990. Member organizations now support response equipment stored in nine regions from Ketchikan to Yakutat with the mission of providing oil spill response support at the direction of the members.

Similar to Alaska Chadux, in order to achieve mandated readiness levels across a large, sparsely populated area, SEAPRO trains and equips local individuals to respond in the event of a spill by one of its member organizations. SEAPRO has responders throughout the region maintained at the 24 hour HAZWOPER certification level. Additionally, SEAPRO trains responders in the areas of operations of a response team, incident command system procedures, and wildlife hazing. In the event of a spill, these responders are "hired" and fully-covered by SEAPRO's insurance and policies. Consistent training of residents and equipment based throughout the region meet the needs of both local communities and SEAPRO.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The afternoon discussion, led by PWSRCAC Executive Director John Devens, yielded consensus on the following statements about the status of COSR in Alaska:

- **Community-based spill response teams are a necessary part of the Alaskan oil response system.** The term “community-based response” is understood here to mean the collection of individuals and organizations responding to a spill in a community, not necessarily a separate organization whose main focus is responding to spilled oil. Harbor staff, city or municipal employees, emergency service personnel, as well as COSR teams, are included under this rubric of community-based responders.
- **To varying degrees, our communities/local governments are willing to do their part to support community-based response teams given external training, equipment, and funding.** The discussion of this point acknowledged that local governments struggle to provide services in general, and oil spill response is not seen by the public as a critical activity of local governments. This results in limited attention from elected officials.
- **Contingent on funding, our state is willing to do its part to support community-based response.** Again, the group discussed funding challenges and public pressure as key to the support the State is able to extend to community spill response.
- **Contingent on funding, the federal government is willing to do its part to support community-based response.** The same issues were raised regarding federal funding, but it was pointed out that information presented during the forum regarding USCG programs will help community-based responders leverage existing resources.
- **Contingent on funding and the support of member companies, spill co-ops/OSROS are willing to do their part to support community based response.** Representatives of the OSROS pointed out that they are motivated to include locals in their activities, but that they are responsible to a client base and need to justify any costs to that constituency.
- **USCG MOU/BOA/PRFA are tools that should be pursued by community-based response teams.** Many individuals were unaware of these programs and agreed that the information would be valuable to take back to their organizations.
- **Community Response Agreements with ADEC are a good tool for community-based response teams.** All agreed that the agreements are useful in hastening response.
- **There is not adequate spill response equipment in the region for unregulated users.** This point generated much discussion; it was felt that although there are extensive resources available in some areas, immediate response elsewhere is hindered due to lack of equipment.

- **There is not adequate spill response training in the region for unregulated users.** Additional training would be beneficial to harbor officials and volunteers. Expense in travel, time away from jobs, and cost of the training can be prohibitive.
- **Often, harbormaster departments are the appropriate first response organizations to spills in their harbors.** The harbor officials agreed that this was appropriate, but cautioned that financial and personnel constraints present ongoing problems. Other organizations need to be available to complete any longer term response.
- **It is not clear whether communities and local governments have adequate insurance to cover their spill response activities.** The type of insurance, and the necessary coverage for responses staged by different organizations and government agencies, are unclear. OSROs carry different insurance than a city, which points to possible exposure when a harbor staff responds to oil spills.
- **There is value in including community-based response groups in oil spill drills, training, and exercises.** The relations between ORSO and communities have been positive in the past and the inclusion of other responders has yielded trained personnel throughout the State.
- **Small spills from unregulated vessels are not adequately covered by the present response system.** The group agreed on this issue but was not able to produce consensus on how to address it.

The group generated several recommendations for steps to be taken as a result of the Forum:

- **Communities should clearly define initial command and control structure, and responsibilities in their community emergency response plan.** The discussion focused on how a COSR organization should be called out produced this statement. A clear line of understanding would optimize response activities.
- **Regulators should develop an on-line refresher course to improve and maintain training for community-based teams in our region.** The group thought that a course designed for Alaska would be most beneficial and that costs to the individual should be minimal.
- **Develop recommendations for relationships and communication between governments, agencies, and response organizations in the case of small spills, such as phone trees.** The response system comes together well in the event of a crisis, such as major spills and events, but for smaller events, communities rely on limited resources which could be better leveraged with clear lines of communication and information exchange.
- **A statewide roster of trained spill responders needs to be compiled and maintained.** This item produced discussion about how to maintain the list, who would provide the service, and how privacy could be protected. The discussion ended with the agreement that inclusion on the list would be voluntary. The organization that would maintain the list was not identified.

- **Liabilities and other legal constraints for communities and community-based response organizations should be clearly defined.** The issue of insurance and liabilities needs to be more clearly defined to ensure that the system is not placing individuals and organizations at undue risk.
- **Do a news release about this forum.** It was agreed that the more public awareness of the issues faced by the group, the more likely actions could be taken to address them.
- **Establish an *ad hoc* community-based response work group to meet on an annual basis.** Universally, participants reported that the forum was a very useful exercise and that they would return to their communities with additional information regarding COSR. An annual meeting would continue to educate responders and communities about oil spill response.

The Forum itself provided an opportunity for review of the status of COSR in the region, but the discussion lacked a basic agreement of what a COSR system should look like. Participants agreed that harbor facility staff would be the appropriate first responders in their area of operations, but outside the harbor, roles and responsibilities become unclear. The USCG and ADEC do use local response teams, but organized teams are not in all communities and therefore are not a viable option in responding to unregulated spillers throughout the region. Additionally some teams' existence is uncertain due to funding problems.

As evident in the consensus statements produced, the group succeeded in addressing the need for additional community-based spill response capabilities. Numerous statements point to the need for more response-building activities and capacity. All agreed that small spills from unregulated vessels are not adequately covered by the present response system.

The Forum's greatest success was in opening communication between agencies and first responders in the regions covered by Prince William Sound and Cook Inlet RCACs. The dialogue was active and wide ranging, with attendees acquiring information on other first responders' practices and access to USCG and ADEC programs. It is indicative of the success of the Forum that a majority of attendees would like to open an ongoing dialogue regarding COSR, including meeting annually.

References

Alaska Statute: AS 46.08.10

Nuka Research and Planning Group, LLC. and MAC Services. 2004. "Combining the Firehouse Model and the Community-Based Response Teams for an Improved Regional Oil Spill Response Management System in Alaska." Report to the PWSRCAC and CIRCAC. October.

Appendix A:

Relevant Reports and Analyses

A Coastal Communities Cooperative for Alaska - A Feasibility Study (1992)

International Spill Technology of College Station, Texas

This study detailed the need for a coordinated effort to organize and equip a community-based oil spill response effort. It outlined in detail the organization and equipment necessary to form such a cooperative.

Community Response Center Manual (1996)

EcoSystems of Juneau, Alaska

This manual is an aid to coastal communities that wish to establish a community response center.

Near-shore Systems Analysis (1996)

Tim Robertson

This paper provides a concise history of the community response program and analyzes the current status of the program compared to the intent of the enabling legislation. The paper clarifies the intent and use of the Oil and Hazardous Substance Response Fund (470 Fund) including the FY 97 and FY 98 budgets for the fund. Finally the paper addresses outstanding issues, including insurance and indemnification and the state's ability to lease its response equipment to other parties.

Proposed Model for Community-Based Nearshore Strike Teams (1997)

Tim Robertson

This paper presents a model for a network of community-based oil spill response strike teams.

Community-based Nearshore Strike Teams (1997)

Tim Robertson

This is the final report under a contract with the RCACs. It summarizes the current project status and details next steps for implementation.

Combining the Firehouse Model and Community Based Response Teams for an Improved Regional Oil Spill Response System in Alaska (2004)

Nuka Research and Planning And MAC Services

This concept paper furthers the discussion regarding development of a new system of near-shore response.

Seldovia Oil Spill Team- Non-profit Business Development Plan (2004)

Appendix B: Document Submitted to the Forum by the Alaska Chadux Company

COMMUNITY OIL SPILL RESPONSE SYSTEM FORUM

Friday, January 14, 2005

Introduction:

Robert E. Heavilin, General Manager, Alaska Chadux Corporation

18 Full Member Companies fund the corporation and we have 23 Associate member companies that also include approx. 350 non-tank vessels that operate in Alaskan waters.

Training and employing local residents for spill response is beneficial for everyone. State, federal, local governments and OSRO's (oil spill removal organization—cg term) support the concept. Such a program meets multiple goals:

1. Rural residents acquire marketable job skills.
2. A cadre of responders with local knowledge and a personal interest in protecting the natural resources provides an excellent first response capability.
3. Employment opportunities are improved where severe unemployment exists.

Presence in communities:

Chadux has a presence in numerous Alaskan communities. Our presence involves storing and maintaining equipment, training local residents, and conducting periodic spill response exercises. In addition to the equipment in Anchorage at our Anchorage HQ's, Chadux stores and maintains spill response equipment in ten Alaskan communities. These are called response hubs. The communities are located over a very large area from Cook Inlet, to the Aleutians, western Alaska, and Barrow. The amount of equipment in each community is defined in an agreement for compliance with the USCG and ADEC and also personnel and equipment required under state regulations for non-tank vessel clean-up contractors. Each hub has:

1. several thousand feet of boom
2. several skimmers
3. temporary and fixed storage
4. skiffs
5. decon, hazing and beach clean-up kits
6. other miscellaneous related spill response equipment.

Use of local resources:

If a member company of Chadux resides in the community, Chadux will contract with the member for storage, security, and maintenance of the equipment in that community and can also include rates for member company personnel to be able to help with the initial response to an incident----these are called EMA's (equipment, maintenance agreements).

We are trying to develop a relationship with a responsible local Team Leader for response personnel

in each region. The Team Leader would be our primary contact in the community for exercises, training, and response. The Team Leader would maintain the call out roster of local trained personnel, be familiar with the local resources, and initiate the response to a spill in their area of responsibility.

Three companies supply response personnel to Chadux for manning oil spill responses. All responders are hired through these three companies. The companies are CCI, Penco, and Trident. The contracts are assignable to the Responsible Party. This allows Chadux to assign the contracts to the responsible party once the response is in the project mode. Assigning the contract provides a smooth transfer of response personnel to the command and control of the responsible party without discharging and rehiring each employee.

Chadux has identified resources in each hub that might be useful during a spill response. We would like to have contracts with the owners of these resources that could be initiated immediately when a spill occurs. We presently have contracts throughout our area of operation and work continues on building what I would call the Chadux “yellow pages”.

The idea of closest, available, qualified responders is a good concept and it works very well in the wild land fire world. Ideally, we would like to be able to deploy responders from any region to a spill anywhere in the state. Local responders would be employed first. Responders from other regions would be mobilized as needed. We know from experience that communities want local residents hired first. Having local trained responders we can employ makes for good community relations.

Maintenance & training:

Chadux visits every equipment hub annually to inspect and maintain the equipment. A deployment exercise is conducted in three hubs each year. The exercises are rotated among the communities so that each hub is exercised every three years. An exercise involves training residents in the deployment and use of the equipment. As part of the exercise, the equipment is deployed, operated, inspected, and maintained.

Sometimes a community will request training. The request is usually for 24 or 40 hr. HAZWOPER, refresher training, spill response training, and ICS. Chadux member companies and other non-member companies and jurisdictions sometime request Chadux for various types of training or participation in exercises or drills.

Closing:

Developing community response personnel is a worthwhile endeavor. However, nothing worth doing is easy. It is expensive and time consuming. To be worthwhile, the effort must be long term or the responders will not be available when needed and the effort will be wasted. Serious liability issues require diligent planning to protect the employees, the OSRO, and its members. This requires staff personnel dedicated to the effort for the long term.

The benefits are plentiful, but we must be realistic about the long term commitment and the cost. False starts will simply perpetuate the frustration of rural residents. If we are not realistic about the cost and complexity of the task, we will create unrealistic expectations, perpetuate frustration, and widen the urban rural divide. Only if we embark on this endeavor with a realistic commitment to the cost and effort required can we further the ideal of the State slogan, “Bringing Alaskans Together.”

