



The Observer

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AK Chamber of Commerce - AK Wilderness Recreation & Tourism Assoc. - Chugach Alaska Corp. - Cordova District Fishermen United - OSREC - PWS Aquaculture Corp.

Halifax tank shows promise for dispersant tests

BY LISA KA'AIHUE
Project Manager

In chemical dispersant research, there are three general platforms for testing: laboratory, wave tank, and open ocean. This summer, the council was invited to a demonstration of a promising new wave tank near Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Each of the three platforms has its advantages and disadvantages.

Laboratory tests are relatively cheap and repeatable, as they involve only small amounts of oil and dispersant and are performed in small flasks. But they cannot accurately simulate real-world conditions such as wave energy.

Wave tanks are much larger and are used to create waves as an added parameter to dispersion testing. While there is no substitute for open-ocean testing, wave tanks do overcome some of the disadvantages of flask tests.

Occasionally, field experiments are performed in which oil and dispersants are applied to the open ocean. These are rare, however, because of the expense and because of the difficulty of obtaining government permission for a real, if small and controlled, pollution

incident.

The council has supported laboratory research to assess chemical dispersant effectiveness in cold water. The next logical step for the council is to consider wave tank testing and start incorporating more open ocean variables such as waves.

The first step in considering wave tank testing is to learn as much as possible about the handful of wave tanks available to perform dispersant testing around the world. There are tanks in Canada, the United States, France and Norway.

The newest tank on the scene is the recently fabricated wave tank facility at the Bedford Institute of Oceanography near Halifax. The tank was constructed as a partnership between the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Canadian Department of Fisheries and Oceans. The council was invited to observe the first demonstration of the tank this summer.

What makes this tank unique is its ability to mimic a wide range of breaking wave energy levels at sea, thus providing

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Oil is poured into the water for the first demonstration of the new wave tank near Halifax, Nova Scotia. Designed to test chemical dispersants, the tank is a collaboration between the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada. Photo by Lisa Ka'aihue, citizens' council.

PRTs back in service as tether line problems fixed

Alyeska Pipeline's Prevention/Response Tugs were cleared for a return to primary escort duty in September, after the state Department of Environmental Conservation concluded the problems causing broken tether lines on one of the vessels were being fixed.

Alyeska's fleet includes three of the Prevention/Response Tugs, or PRTs. One of them, the *Aware*, twice broke its tether line during practice exercises for rescuing disabled tankers. The first break came during heavy weather in December of last year, while the second was in mild weather last June.

The tether lines – high-strength hawsers 10 inches in circumference – are crucial to Alyeska's capability to rescue a disabled tanker.

Because of the two failures, the Department of Environmental Conservation banned the PRTs from serving as primary escorts for loaded tankers.

Each tanker traveling out of Prince William Sound is accompanied by two escort tugs. One – the primary tug – is actually tethered to the tanker for part of the trip to enable immediate response in case of an emergency. The PRTs

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Exchanging ballast water may reduce threat of NIS invasion

By EMMA VERLING, KAREN EASON, AND GREGORY RUIZ
Smithsonian Environmental Research Center

A six-year series of experiments suggests that ballast-water exchange aboard oil tankers may be an effective way of combating the problem of non-indigenous species invading Alaska waters.

Oil tankers traveling with empty cargo tanks carry ballast water for stability during the voyage north to Valdez to take on their next load of North Slope crude. This ballast water is taken on in the port where the tanker has unloaded – usually in Puget Sound, San

Francisco Bay, or the Los Angeles area – and millions of microscopic marine organisms are taken on with it.

When the ballast tanks are emptied upon arrival, those organisms are flushed into Prince William Sound, raising the potential that a harmful species could establish itself there and damage native species such as the salmon stocks that support Alaska's commercial fishing industry.

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Volunteer Profile

Hard-working Hungarian finds time for POVTS

In any given week, Agota Horel's to-do list may look something like this:

Work on her master's degree from a university in Alabama. Work on her bachelor's degree from the University of Alaska. Teach her calculus class at Prince William Sound Community College in Valdez. Look after guests at the bed-and-breakfast she manages. Tutor a math student.

Oh, yes—and attend a meeting of the citizens' council's Port Operations and Vessel Traffic Systems Committee.

"I don't think I really want to be this busy," she said in an October interview. "But what else can I do in Valdez when there's not much snow on the ground?"

Horel, 28, is a recent arrival to Valdez, and to America, from her native Hungary. She's from Sagvar, a hamlet of 2,000 people in the resort area around Lake Balaton, the largest lake in Central Europe.

It's also an area with lots of history underfoot – literally. Sagvar was the site of an old Roman castle, and it's now said there's no barn or outbuilding in the village without a rock from the Roman Empire. The Turks also passed through, according to Horel, and made tunnels to serve as dungeons. As a result, it's tough to dig a basement in Sagvar without hitting one.

Horel came to America three years ago, after getting a bachelor's degree in civil engineering in Hungary. Her main goal, she says, was to learn English while continuing her engineering studies.

She realized she was getting a handle on the language while watching a TV movie one day. A character made a joke, and she laughed. But she can't remember the joke or the name of the movie.

"I forget what I was watching when I first laugh that English joke,"



Agota Horel at a meeting of the Port Operations and Vessel Traffic Systems Committee, above left, and on the deck of the bed-and-breakfast she manages near Valdez, right. Lower left, a house she owns near Lake Balaton in Hungary. Lower left photo courtesy of Agota Horel. Others by Stan Jones, citizens' council.

she explained in her enthusiastic but still inexperienced English. "I was so excited to understand it, that I forget everything about that."

She spent a year working and studying in South Carolina before coming to Valdez to attend Prince William Sound Community College. She learned about the school online.

"It was cheap, and it offered a safety management course," she said.

The biggest difference between Valdez and Hungary? Gasoline. Americans may whine about prices north of two dollars a gallon, but not the thrifty Agota Horel.

"The gas is so cheap," she said. "In Hungary, it's like five or six dollars a gallon."

She got her Associate of Applied Science degrees in safety management and oil spill response from the Valdez

college last spring. She graduated summa cum laude on both counts and gave the valedictory speech at commencement. And she's already at work on two more degrees: the master's in occupational safety and health from Columbia Southern University in Alabama, and the bachelor's in science and technology from the University of Alaska Anchorage.

"I can't control myself, but I'm going to stop after this," she said with a grin.

A common stereotype holds that girls aren't interested in math. It certainly doesn't fit Agota Horel today, although it once did. In elementary school, she had little interest in the subject, preferring to goof off and look out the window. Then came the day when influenza struck and only six of the 35 students in her math class showed up

for school.

Suddenly, young Agota had no choice. She had to pay attention to the problems the teacher was putting on the board.

"I got the right answer and, after that, there was no stop," she said. "I just love math."

It paid off right away. Agota's sister, Nora, wasn't good at math, and Agota wasn't good at literature. So they traded. Agota did Nora's math homework and Nora took care of Agota's literature assignments.

Agota became involved with the citizens' council during her studies at the community college in Valdez. She served a council internship, working with Project Manager Tom Kuckertz on issues relating to the Ballast Water Treatment Facility at the Alyeska tanker terminal, and researching a whitepaper on the issue of dismantling and removing the terminal and the trans-Alaska pipeline facilities once the oil stops flowing.

She plans to work in this country for perhaps a year after completing the two degrees, then take her knowledge back to Europe."

Meantime, she's hunkered down in Valdez, studying, working and cruising around town at extremely low speeds – she's still a nervous driver on ice and snow – in her Ford Escort. She claims to actually find some spare time occasionally, during which she does a form of highly decorative needlework called gobelin, cross-country skis, rides snowmachines and even mashes dogs.

What Valdez doesn't offer at the moment, however, is much of a social life for a workaholic Hungarian math whiz.

"Trust me," she said. "When I find my man, I'll slow down."

PRTs: Line problems solved

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were allowed to continue serving as secondary escorts, but only Alyeska's Enhanced Tractor Tugs, the *Nanuq* and the *Tan'erliq*, were allowed to serve as primary escorts. Neither of those vessels has experienced tether line problems during exercises.

The state's decision to reinstate the PRTs came after an investigation of the line breaks by Crowley Marine with the assistance of the Department of Environmental Conservation, the citizens' council, and other stakeholders.

The investigation revealed the primary cause of the breaks was the line burying itself in wraps lower on the winch drum as it came under load during the exercises. The resulting compression, heat and chafing caused the breaks, according to an analysis by Samson Rope Technologies, manufacturer of the parted line.

The council and the other organizations working on the issue came to believe the fundamental issue was



Alyeska's three Prevention and Response Tugs have been approved to return to primary escort duty. Shown here is the *Alert*, sister ship to the *Aware*.

a failure to properly rewind the line onto the winch. Crowley—which operates the tugs for Alyeska—has since revised and strengthened its procedures for spooling the line tightly onto the winch drum.

In addition, the winch drums on the PRTs are being modified by Markey Machinery (which made the winches) to make them stronger. The modifications were expected to be complete on the *Aware* by mid-December 2004, with completion of the work on the other two vessels following at four- to six-week intervals. The total cost was projected at about \$40,000.

Anchorage front-desker says so long

Bernie Cooper, who had staffed the front desk in the council's Anchorage office since the summer of 2000, announced her retirement last month.

Bernie has been best known to people outside the office – board members and volunteers – as the person in charge of travel, lodging and catering for board meetings

all around the council's region. In addition, she helped staff the council booth at numerous public events.

Inside the office, she has been



Bernie Cooper

known not only for her administrative skills, but also for making gourmet coffee and keeping the reception area stocked with chocolate candy.

Bernie says she will miss the council and the people who make it what it is.

"The ideals that you work for day after day are admirable," she

said.

As of Observer press time at the end of November, the council was still looking for a replacement.

THE OBSERVER is the quarterly newsletter of the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council. Except as noted otherwise, articles are written by Stan Jones, the council's Public Information Manager. For a free subscription, please contact either of the council offices listed on the back page.

From the Executive Director

Exporting ideas from our sound to Puget Sound

I was mayor of Valdez when the *Exxon Valdez* hit Bligh Reef fifteen years ago. Like most Alaskans, I watched in sorrow and anger as regulators and responders fumbled, waters and beaches were fouled, wildlife died, and communities crumbled.

Recently, I found much of the anguish of that time coming back to me as I read and watched coverage of the Dalco Passage spill in Puget Sound.

The spill, estimated at approximately 1,000 gallons, was discovered and reported by a tugboat captain shortly before 2 a.m. on Oct. 14. The site is at the south end of Puget Sound, about five miles north of Tacoma.

Sadly, responders there appeared to be nearly as unprepared in 2004 as ours were in 1989. According to news reports, it was not until 8 a.m. – more than six hours after the tugboat captain’s report – that the most basic first step, a general notification of responders, took place. More precious time was needed after that for people and equipment to reach the scene. By then, as with the *Exxon Valdez*, it was too late. The oil had spread too far to be contained and miles of beaches were fouled.

As the Observer went to press, the

ship responsible for the spill hadn’t been identified, although one of the oil tankers in the Valdez trade – the *Polar Texas*, operated by ConocoPhillips – was among those under investigation by the Coast Guard as the possible culprit.

Luckily, the spill was relatively small and damage to wildlife was limited because many bird species hadn’t arrived for the winter. Still, given the lack of readiness that apparently slowed the response, it’s impossible not to wonder what would happen if Puget Sound had a catastrophic spill.

These thoughts prompted me to publish a guest opinion in the *Seattle Times* last month to share some of the lessons Alaska citizens learned from the *Exxon Valdez* spill.

Since 1989, many safety improvements have been made to the oil transportation system in Prince William Sound – better radar, better tankers, and an elaborate escort system, to name a few that Observer readers will

be familiar with.

And I believe our group is an equally important innovation. But as I struggled for the words to explain the idea of a citizens’ council to Puget Sound residents, I was obliged to think again about how and why citizen oversight works.

One reason it does, I concluded, is that citizens never let up. We stay in place as industry and agency personnel rotate through the system. Unlike regulators and elected officials, citizens are relatively immune to being lobbied or ‘captured’ by the industry they oversee. And, perhaps most importantly,

citizens have the most to lose from a catastrophic spill.

Based on our experience in Alaska, I know that many factors determine whether citizen oversight, once instituted, can be effective. But I think two top the list.

Independence is the first necessity. The governing board must consist entirely of citizens. No company or

agency should have a voting seat. And board members must be chosen by the communities and interest groups they represent, not appointed by an elected official, agency head, or industry executive.

Guaranteed funding is also essential, and it should be paid by the cost-causer – that is, the shipping industry being overseen – not by the communities at risk from shipping operations. Overseeing a complex shipping system is expensive, requiring a professional staff and frequent recourse to hired experts for technical analysis and advice.

I don’t know if the Dalco Passage spill will lead to the creation of a citizens’ council in Puget Sound, but I hope so. Their Sound is as beautiful as ours, and perhaps even more vulnerable to oil spills because it gets more traffic.

Under federal law, our council serves as a demonstration project for citizen oversight. So if our neighbors to the south do decide to form a comparable organization, we stand ready to help in any way we can. I believe Puget Sound would be safer with citizen oversight, just as Prince William Sound is.

• John Devens is executive director of the citizens’ council.



John Devens

HALIFAX: New tank could improve tests

Continued from Page 1

the conditions necessary for dispersants to work effectively. Plans to start on a series of efficacy tests are under way, using Canadian oil products and at least two dispersants. The next phase will focus on toxicity to different organisms, such as herring.

The tank sits on the shore of Halifax harbor and is 60 long by two feet wide. The sea water used in the tank is taken from the harbor and pumped through a filter to remove particulate matter. During the demonstration I observed, the water depth was a little over four feet to simulate deep-water conditions.

The tank includes a “bubble ring” used to keep the oil off the sides of the tank during the experiments. Air is forced through a curtain of copper tubing with holes in it. The rising bubbles prevent the oil from coming in contact with the tank walls.

Once the bubble ring was operational, oil was laid on the water, then dispersant was sprayed onto the oil. Next, the wave generator was turned on. Observers saw dispersion taking place as shown by the coffee-colored cloud forming in the water. But, more importantly, the tank has scientific instruments to measure wave energy and dispersion rates.

The tank was constructed so that it could easily be emptied and filled for multiple experiments. This is a huge advantage over much larger tanks where it is difficult to clean the tank between every experiment.

The council is part of an effort in Alaska to foster broad-based disper-



HALIFAX TANK – Top: The new tank is relatively small, making it easier to change water between tests. Bottom: Dr. Kenneth Lee of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada explains the mechanics of the new wave tank. Photos by Lisa Ka’aihue, citizens’ council, and Rosalie Allen Jarvis, Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

sant research supported by regulators, industry, academics, and stakeholders. Although the process has not reached a stage of implementing research, wave tank tests are certainly a high

priority for all. Judging from this summer’s demonstration, it seems likely the Bedford tank could help answer our questions about chemical dispersants.

State DEC chief leaves for job in timber company

Ernesta Ballard, commissioner of Alaska’s Department of Environmental Conservation, resigned her post in October to work for Weyerhaeuser Co., one of the world’s largest forest products companies.

Ballard relocated to Federal Way, Wash., to take the position of senior vice president of corporate affairs with the company.

Ballard had served as environmental commissioner since soon after Gov. Frank Murkowski’s election in 2002. Her job included some oversight of the state’s timber industry, but not of any Weyerhaeuser operations. The company says it does not have any timber holdings in Alaska.

Ballard told reporters at the time of her resignation that being a top executive at a big company was something she had dreamed of since her girlhood.

Murkowski named Deputy Commissioner Kurt Fredriksson as acting commissioner of environmental conservation. Fredriksson was formerly director of the Division of Spill Prevention and Response, a component of the Department of Environmental Conservation with which the citizens’ council interacts regularly.



Ernesta Ballard

Alyeska Viewpoint**Workforce performs well despite stressful times**

In recent months representatives of the citizens' council have spoken frequently about their concerns over workplace morale at the Valdez Marine Terminal. It is well known that, through the Strategic Reconfiguration project, potentially significant modifications to terminal operations are undergoing preliminary engineering study. The objective of Strategic Reconfiguration is to simplify terminal facilities, operations, and maintenance to accommodate changes in production, while maintaining safety, operational integrity, environmental and regulatory commitments. Still, Valdez employees understand that a simplified terminal will require fewer jobs. Then this summer, as should also be well-known, the Paper, Allied-Industrial, Chemical and Energy Workers International Union began an organizing campaign among Valdez technicians that is still under way.

With so much uncertainty, some ask whether Alyeska managers and employees can work together to maintain the focus necessary to assure that we continue to operate safely and in an environmentally responsible manner.

The answer is that, despite the fact that these have been challenging times for all of us, we are doing so.

A few weeks ago, the Oil Movement and Storage team celebrated four years of work without an injury requiring a report to the Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA). This

team operates the tank farm, the two metering facilities, and essentially all assets on the terminal other than the berths or the ballast water treatment operation, and has processed an average of over 9,000 work permits per year during that period. The ballast-water team recently completed 3 years without an OSHA recordable injury. To date, Alyeska employees have worked without a single recordable injury since the start of 2004.

This fall, Alyeska employees and contractors in Valdez set a new record for pledges and contributions to United Way, showing that in a time of uncertainty that the men and women who work at the terminal and the Ship Escort/Response Vessel System (SERVS) remain committed to their community and to response to the many needs here in Valdez. This doesn't include the many volunteer hours employees of Alyeska and its contract partners provide to Valdez schools, non profit agencies, youth and community activities. This May, in fact, Valdez-based employees of Alyeska's contractor Houston NANA contributed over \$3,000 and formed the largest single contributing group supporting the Second annual American Cancer Society Relay for Life in Valdez.

In October the Alyeska Fire Brigade swept all four events in the state firefighter competition for the 11th straight year, following that with a highly successful, week-long, live fire training exercise at the world-class Texas A&M facility near College Station.

Also in October, SERVS and terminal employees and contractors participated in the 2004 Valdez Marine Terminal Oil Spill Drill. This one-day drill of a large scale spill to water included activities in both the field and the Valdez Emergency Operations Center and involved over 160 players, controllers, and evaluators. Field responders set a



Rod Hanson

new speed record of 3.5 hours for the deployment of protection boom at the Solomon Gulch Hatchery and Valdez Duck Flats.

In August, EPA staff performed a surprise audit to evaluate the terminal's compliance with its Title V Air Quality Permit and found that we were in good compliance with only minor and correctable document deficiencies. During 2004 to date, we have had only four spills at the terminal, involving a total of slightly over six gallons, and none to water.

Some significant projects were completed this summer, including the

isolation, drain down and cleaning of Berth 1 ballast water and crude oil piping, and the isolation and drain down of Berth 3 crude oil piping (cleaning is scheduled for 2005), the completion of the end seal and liner repair of the main firewater system, and draining, cleaning and inspection of four crude oil tanks. As many at the citizens' council may be aware, we have also undertaken a major project this year at the Ballast Water Treatment Facility to study the fate and effects of benzene and other soluble hydrocarbons as ballast water moves through our three-stage treatment process. Council representatives and consultants have had the ability to observe this work, and access to the ballast water facility to carry out their own independent evaluations. The two studies will continue into next year and have marked a new threshold in information sharing between Alyeska and the council.

I would be less than honest if I didn't admit that these are challenging times for Alyeska employees in Valdez, and that there have been many times when morale has been better. But in a time of uncertainty like we are experiencing now, I couldn't be prouder of the efforts and the accomplishments of the men and women who work for our company and for our contractors, doing their best to move Alaska's oil safely.

•Rod Hanson is manager of Alyeska's Valdez Marine Terminal.

BALLAST: Exchanges could help combat invasive species problem

Continued from Page 1

Ballast-water exchange refers to the practice of replacing the ballast water taken on in port with ballast water from the open ocean. In theory, this could reduce the risk of invasion by non-indigenous species in two ways. One, water on the high seas may contain less microscopic life than coastal waters, because there are more nutrients near the coast. And, two, species that survive well in open ocean may not be well-suited to life in the shallows near shore.

In a series of experiments dating back to 1998, Smithsonian scientists have found that ballast-water exchange is capable of removing more than 90 percent of the coastal organisms taken on in West Coast ports.

The scientists tested three methods of ballast-water exchange:

- 100 Percent Flow-Through. A volume of water equal to the volume of the ballast tank is pumped into it, forcing out an equal volume of water.
- 300 Percent Flow-Through. A volume of water three times the volume of the tank is pumped into and through it.
- 100 Percent Empty-Refill. The tank is completely emptied and then refilled with oceanic water.

These experiments have produced the most extensive, quantitative examination of ballast water exchange and have resulted in the best data-set of its kind anywhere in the world.

The 300 percent Flow-Through method and the 100 Percent Empty-Refill method (now required for vessels arriving from overseas at U.S. ports) removed an average of 99 percent of the original coastal water and more than 90 percent of the coastal organisms originally in the ballast water.

These results, presented at the recent 13th Interna-



During exchanges, ballast water from port is discharged and replaced on the high seas. In these examples, ballast water is being pumped onto the deck and is running over the side. On other vessels, ballast water is discharged directly from the side of the ship. Photos courtesy of Smithsonian Environmental Research Center.

tional Aquatic Invasive Species Conference in Ireland, contradict the common perception (which has grown in the absence of such measures) that ballast-water exchange is not effective at removing coastal organisms and reducing the risk of invasions.

This initial body of research, now including 12

different voyages on oil tankers en route to Alaska, has served as an important model for understanding ballast-water exchange. It is now being broadened to include several different voyage routes as well as different vessel types (e.g., container vessels, bulk carriers, and military supply vessels).

The most recent of these voyages took place in June of this year, when two Smithsonian scientists boarded Alaska Tanker Company's *Kenai* for a five-and-a-half day voyage from Benicia, California, in San Francisco Bay, to Valdez.

The methodology was typical of how the ballast-water exchange experiments have been conducted since 1998. Throughout the voyage, the scientists repeatedly sampled two pairs of ballast tanks that had been filled in Benicia. Each pair consisted of one "experimental" tank and one "control" tank. Water in the control tank was not exchanged, providing a baseline measure against which the effects of exchanging the water in the "experimental" tank could be gauged.

The scientists measured changes in salinity, and in the concentration of a dye introduced into the tank, to estimate the amount of original coastal water removed by exchange. In addition, biological samples were collected to assess the efficacy of ballast-water exchange at removing various microorganisms from the water. These samples are still being analyzed.

The ballast-water exchange work in Alaska was made possible through a cooperative effort and broad-based support among several partners: the citizens' council, National Sea Grant, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the American Petroleum Institute, Great Lakes Protection Fund, and the management and staff of the shipping companies SeaRiver Maritime and Alaska Tanker Company.

Council documents available to public

Single copies of most documents produced or received by the citizens' council are available free to the public. To make a request, contact either council office. Addresses appear on the back page of the Observer.

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ConocoPhillips tanker *Texas* is under scrutiny for Puget Sound's mystery spill

ConocoPhillips, already involved in three unreported oil spills early this year, has become a suspect in a fourth incident: a mystery spill in Puget Sound.

The spill was at Dalco Passage, near Tacoma in south Puget Sound. Estimated at about 1,000 gallons, it was reported by a passing tugboat captain early on the morning of Oct. 14. Despite its relatively small size, it fouled over 20 miles of beaches, in part because of a slow response by agencies in the area.

Because no vessel or shipping company admitted responsibility for the spill, the Coast Guard began investigating all vessels in the area at the time, one of which was ConocoPhillips' *Polar Texas*. Coast Guard investigators boarded the *Texas* in Valdez on Oct. 17 to take samples for comparison with oil collected from the Dalco Passage spill.

The agency boarded the vessel again on Nov. 5 at the ConocoPhillips refinery in Ferndale, Wash., and Seattle newspapers quoted unidentified sources as saying the *Texas* had become the primary focus of the Coast Guard investigation.

The Coast Guard, however, has refused to publicly confirm the claim. In a statement emailed to the Observer, ConocoPhillips spokesman Rich John-



Antonio Valdes, general manager of ConocoPhillips Marine, addresses the citizens' council at its September board meeting in Kenai. Valdes discussed three ConocoPhillips spill incidents earlier in the year, and his company's efforts to prevent further spills. Photo by Stan Jones, citizens' council.

son wrote that the company had not been made aware of any findings from the investigation. But, he said, "We do not believe we are the responsible party based upon our own ongoing internal inquiries and we continue to cooperate fully with the investigation."

In Valdez, meantime, the Coast Guard, has begun routinely boarding each ConocoPhillips tanker docking at the Alyeska terminal to spot-check compliance with international and U.S. pollution prevention regulations. Commander Mark Swanson of the Coast Guard's Valdez Marine Safety Office advised ConocoPhillips that the boardings were instituted only as a precautionary and preventative measure

and were not investigative in nature.

The *Polar Texas* is a double-bottom vessel built in 1973. It was due for retirement in November as new double-hulled vessels enter the ConocoPhillips fleet and older vessels are taken out of service.

The earlier series of spills involving ConocoPhillips ships began in January of this year.

- A federal criminal investigation was launched for a spill to deck that took place on January 16, 2004, on the *Polar Discovery*. The incident was not reported to the Coast Guard as required by regulation or within the company as required by

internal policies.

- The Coast Guard issued a letter of warning to the company for failure to report a March 16, 2004, spill of bunker fuel to the deck of the tanker *Polar Endeavour*.

- A second criminal investigation was begun for the alleged intentional bypassing of the oily water separator on the *Polar Alaska*. This device is used to clean bilge or ballast water before it is discharged overboard.

In an unrelated Alaska incident, ConocoPhillips was fined \$485,000 by the federal government earlier this year for discharging poorly treated wastewater from its Tyonek natural-gas platform in Cook Inlet.

New reps for Homer, Valdez, take council seats

John Velsko of Homer and Connie Stephens of Valdez have joined the board of directors of the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council. They were seated Sept. 16 at the board's quarterly meeting in Kenai.

Velsko represents the city of Homer on the council. He is a commercial fisherman and formerly worked at the Alyeska tanker terminal in Valdez.

"I was intimately involved with many of the issues and problems that the board is currently dealing with," Velsko said. "I felt that I had the practical knowledge necessary to comment on board matters and the time commitment required to become a valuable member."



Connie Stephens

John Velsko

He replaces Paul McCollum, who also resigned. Velsko's term expires in March of 2005, and he said he hopes to be reappointed as Homer's representative.

Stephens represents the city of Valdez. She manages a sporting-goods store in Valdez, serves on the

city council, and has been a commercial fisher in Prince William Sound.

She was raised in Anchorage, but moved to Valdez in 1973. "I am really looking forward to working with the council," she said. "I have lived around Prince William Sound for over 30 years. As a former commercial fisherman and an avid sport fisherman, I have a great love of the Sound."

She replaces Rich Nielsen, who resigned from the council. Her term expires in March of 2006.

She is not related to Stan Stephens, also of Valdez, who represents the Alaska Wilderness Recreation and Tourism Association on the council board.

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- Report titled 'Review of Oil Spill Responses on Moderately-Sized Spills in US Waters from 1993-2000. Elise DeCola, Nuke Research & Planning Group, 6/24/2004. 700.431.040624.OSRe sponRvw.pdf
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- Dr. Sean Anderson's report to Susan Harvey, Environmental Solutions titled 'Non-indigenous Species of Concern for Ballast Water Introduced by Crude Oil Tankers into Prince William Sound.' Dr. Sean Anderson, Environmental Solutions, 10/6/2004. 952.431.041001.AnderAnal.pdf
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- Geographic Response Strategies (GRS) Deployments August 16-20, 2004. Tim Jones, 8/24/2004. 752.431.040816.GRSdeploy.doc
- Papers and Presentations**
- PowerPoint Presentation on pipeline from Alyeska to Prince William Sound Community College class. Alyeska Pipeline, 3/16/2004. 500.107.040316.APSCpsconfig.pdf
- Presentation: "Approach to Downstream Planning in Prince William Sound Alaska," by Project Manger Joe Banta and contractors Elise DeCola, Tim Robertson and Roy Robertson at the 2004 AMOP Conference. Joe Banta, citizens' council, 6/8/2004. 651.107.040608.AMOPDownstrm.pprg
- PowerPoint presentation to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game on citizens' council in general, and on non-indigenous species issues in the council region. Lisa Ka'ahue and Marilyn Leland, citizens' council, 5/25/2004. 952.107.040525.F ishGameNIS.ppt
- Presentation to the Alaska Chapter America Fisheries Society on non-indigenous species in Alaska, with an emphasis on ballast water issues and technologies. Bob Benda, citizens' council, 11/1/2003. 952.107.031101.BendaACAFS.ppt
- Public comment/speech to the National Research Council Committee for Understanding Oil Spill Dispersants Efficacy and Effects. John Devens, citizens' council, 5/17/2004. 955.107.040517.jdNRCspe ech.doc
- Speech to the Pacific States / BC Oil Spill Task Force, July 20, 2004 in Portland Oregon. John Devens, citizens' council, 7/14/2004. 800.107.040714.BCStatSpeech.doc
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- Presentation by president of Alaska Tanker Company to the citizens' council at its 2002 September quarterly board meeting. Anil Mathur, Alaska Tanker Company, 9/26/2004. 800.107.020926.ATC present.ppt
- Presentation to the citizens' council at its 2004 May quarterly board meeting regarding the upcoming Best Available Technology Conference in Anchorage. Rhonda Arvidson, citizens' council, 5/20/2004. 661.107.040521.BATconf.ppt
- Presentation to the citizens' council at its 2004 May quarterly board meeting regarding the April 28, 2004 Jack Bay Diesel Spill. Tony Parkin, citizens' council, 5/21/2004. 752.107.040521.JackBaySpill.ppt
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- Valdez Marine Terminal Crude Tank Internal Floating Roofs PowerPoint presentation; IFRs; East Tank Farm; Graph on Throughput and Valdez Oil Temperature vs. Time; Forecast Production with Future Discovery Sensitivity; Description of the Rim Seals. Alyeska, 10/22/2004. 500.107.041022.StreReIFR.fld
- Letters of Advice and Comment**
- PWSRCAC supports the formation of the Advisory Committee on Anthropogenic Sound and Marine Mammals and nominates John Devens to serve on the committee if it is formed. To Erin Voss, Marine Mammal Commission, from Marilyn Leland, 11/4/2003. 854.105.031104.MMCdevensNom.pdf
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- Letter nominating Tom Copeland (former board member) to the Oceans Studies Board, Committee on Understanding Oil Spill Dispersants Efficacy and Effects. Copeland would not be representing PWSRCAC on this committee. To Dan Walker, Ph.D., Ocean Studies Board, from John Devens, 12/12/2003. 955.105.031212.CplndOSBnom.doc
- Letter regarding the *Guard*, and the RPG's consideration of not renewing its contract. In this letter, PWSRCAC strongly opposes taking the *Guard* out of service, as the tractor tugs have better maneuverability than conventional tugs. To Tom Colby, ATC/RPG, from John Devens, 12/11/2003. 700.105.031211.ATCguard.doc
- Docket No. USCG-2001-10486 - Standards for Living Organisms in Ship's Ballast Water Discharged in US Waters (formal comments). To USCG Docket Management Facility, from John Devens, 12/19/2003. 952.105.031226.CGBallastCmt.doc
- Letter offering our support to their proposal to establish a Long Term Ecological Research (LTER) site in Coastal Alaska. To G. Carl Schoch, OSRI/PWSSC, from John Devens, 12/15/2003. 900.105.031215.OSR I.LTER.doc
- June 4, 2003 and September 30, 2003 Unannounced Drills. To David Wight, Alyeska, from John Devens, 12/11/2003. 752.105.031210.APS CdrillLtr.doc
- Alyeska's Response to the Request for Additional Information (RAI) on the application for amendment of the TAPS C-Plan. To Becky Lewis, ADEC, from John Devens, 12/5/2003. 658.105.031205.RFAIrspn ADEC.doc
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- US EPA's WATER9 Model of the Ballast Water Treatment Facility at the VMT and its findings. To Elaine Manning, US EPA, from John Devens, 12/9/2003. 557.105.031209.USEPAbwth209.doc
- Letter requesting a resolution from the Valdez City Council stating that the citizens of Valdez deserve the highest air quality standards available. To Mayor Cottle and Council Members, City of Valdez, from John Devens, 11/25/2003. 557.105.031125.VdzCouncSprt.doc
- Letter citing specific instances where communication between Alyeska Pipeline and PWSRCAC has been less than desirable, or non-existent. To Greg Jones, Alyeska, from John Devens, 11/14/2003. 400.105.031114.APSCcmuncate.doc
- AQC Permit No. 082CP05 - Air Quality Permit to operate the VMT. To Commissioner Ernesta Ballard, ADEC, from John Devens, 11/12/2003. 557.105.031112.ADE Ctitle5.doc
- A letter regarding the nomination of Scott Smith for the upcoming term on the National Invasive Species Council. To Lori Williams, National Invasive Species Council, from Marilyn Leland, 1/9/2004. 952.105.040109.ISAC-nominate.pdf
- A letter regarding National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants Organic Liquids Distribution (Non-Gasoline) Docket A-98-13. To Elaine Manning, EPA, from Marilyn Leland, 1/8/2004. 557.105.040108.NESHAPwater9.pdf
- A letter regarding National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants Organic Liquids Distribution (Non-Gasoline) Docket A-98-13. NESHAPOLD Rule, 40 CFR. Part 63, Subpart EEEE Rule. To Sally Shaver, EPA, from Marilyn Leland, 1/8/2004. 557.105.040108.NESHAPoldRul.pdf
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- Comments on the Preliminary Effluent Guidelines Program Plan for 2004/2005. EPA Docket: OW-2003-0074. To Water Docket, EPA from John Devens, 2/13/2004. 500.105.040213.EPAeffGuide.doc
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- Letter asking about a presentation and remarks made during an Alaska Regional Response Team meeting in Juneau and requesting literature. To Joe Mullin, U.S. Minerals Management Service, from Lisa Ka'aihue, 3/4/2004. 955.105.040304.MMSARRT.pdf
- Letter to ADEC regarding PWSRCAC's comments on the Marine Terminal C-Plan. We support the proposed amendment. To Becky Lewis, ADEC, from John Devens, 3/23/2004. 651.105.040323.ADECvmtCmmts.pdf
- Nomination for the Coastal America Partnership Award - letter nominating the PWSRCAC SAC committee for this award. To Kevin Goldstein, Coastal America, from John Devens, 4/7/2004. 250.105.040407.CAPANominat2.doc
- Letter in response to the February 20, 2004 public notice requesting comments on the Alaska Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) proposed changes to the Alaska Coastal Management Program (ACMP) regulations in response to requirements in the legislation passed last year (HB 191). To Randy Bates, DNR Office of Project management and Permitting, from John Devens 4/1/2004. 600.105.040401.ADNRAcomp.doc
- A letter in response to Dietrick's December 5, 2003 letter and also responding to ADEC's Kurt Fredriksson's March 2, 2004 letter to Rep. John Harris regarding ADEC oversight of the TAPS VMT and tanker traffic in Prince William Sound Staffing. To Larry Dietrick, ADEC, from John Devens, 4/5/2004. 400.105.040405.ADECstaffing.pdf
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- Letter of support for the Tatitlek Navigational Improvements and Small Boat Harbor Project. To Gary Kompkoff, Tatitlek Village IRA Council, from John Devens 3/17/2004. 400.105.040317.Tatl kSmBtHbr.doc
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- Cover letter to PWSRCAC's 2003 Drill Monitoring contractor Annual Report by Tim Jones . To Ed Morgan, Alyeska/SERVS, from John Devens, 3/17/2004. 752.105.040317.AnlRptCvrLtr.doc
- Letter showing PWSRCAC support towards SOS Funding request to the Senate dated February 28, 2004. To Lisa Murkowski, U.S. Senate, from John Devens, 3/17/2004. 600.105.040317.SMurkSOSSprt.doc
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- Letter to the GEM Program expressing PWSRCAC's strong support of the PWS Shore-Zone Mapping grant application by Carl Schoch and John Harper through PWS Science Center. To Phil Mundy, Ph.D., Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council, from John Devens, 4/14/2004. 900.105.040414.EVOSTszmGrnt.pdf
- Letter regarding PWSRCAC's concern on Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) oversight of the Trans Alaska Pipeline System (TAPS). VMT staffing. To Frank Murkowski, Governor, State of Alaska, from Tom Jensen, President, 5/21/2004. 400.105.040521.GovADECStaff.doc
- Letter nominating the PWS TAPS Shippers for the 2004 Legacy Award. To Jean Cameron, States/BC Oil Spill Task Force, from John Devens, 4/15/2004. 800.105.040415.LegyNomnate.doc
- Letter regarding PWSRCAC's concerns on JPO staffing at the VMT and portions of the TAPS. To Jerry Brossia, Joint Pipeline Office, from John Devens, 4/14/2004. 400.105.040414.JPOStaffing.doc
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- Letter regarding the Air Quality Permits for the Valdez Marine Terminal VMT . To Commissioner Ernesta Ballard, ADEC, from John Devens, 5/26/2004. 557.105.040526.DECaqpmtAdj.doc
- Letter requesting data and information about Air Emissions from the Valdez Marine Terminal. This letter lists 13 specific reports and documents that PWSRCAC requests. To Richard Ranger, Alyeska, from John Devens, 5/26/2004. 557.105.040526.APSCReq4Info.doc
- Letter regarding PWSRCAC's being actively involved in researching the issue of non-indigenous species in ballast water and working to find ways to prevent invasions of aquatic nuisance species in Alaskan waters. To Senator Lisa Murkowski, United States Senate, from John Devens, 7/8/2004. 952.105.040708.MurkWRPinvite.pdf

Council Meeting Schedule

The citizens' council board of directors meets four times each year. Here is the schedule for the coming year:

March 10-11, 2005, Anchorage
 May 12-13, 2005, Valdez
 September 15-16, Seward
 December 1-2, Anchorage

For more information on council meetings, visit our web page at www.pwsrcac.org or contact us using the information on the back page of the Observer



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Community Corner

It's the volunteers who make our council work

During our December quarterly meeting, we take time to thank our volunteers at our volunteer appreciation party. This is an opportunity for us to honor the many volunteers that donate so much to make our organization effective. At any one time, we have from 50 to 60 volunteers who serve as board members and committee members.

Our volunteers represent the communities and organizations that were affected by the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill. They include scientists, educators, students, small business owners and many other professionals and laypersons interested in promoting environmentally safe oil transportation.

Suggestions for new projects generally come from these volunteers, and the volunteers are instrumental in laying out the plans, hiring the contractors, reviewing and approving each project. They work closely with staff to ensure that the council produces quality data and reports. They are willing to spend time away from job and family to work for the good of our mission.

As we approach a new year, we would like to take this opportunity to give our heartfelt thanks to all of the folks who have donated their time and expertise to advance our mission. They are the ones who have caused this "noble experiment" to succeed.

On the Road Again

Following a reception for the Kenai Peninsula Borough during our September board meeting, the booth was set up for three additional conferences. The Alaska State Chamber of Commerce, a member of the council, hosted its annual convention this year in Juneau. The booth was assembled and board President Tom Jensen, and Executive Director John Devens also attended. Devens gave a presentation to the Chamber's board to update them

on the council's current activities. Jensen moderated a panel discussion with Senators Ted Stevens and Lisa Murkowski, and Representative Don Young.

The booth was assembled at Pacific Marine Expo (formerly Fish Expo) in Seattle in mid-November.



Linda Robinson

John Devens, Marilyn Leland and Scientific Advisory Committee member Michelle Hahn O'Leary assisted me with the booth. We were able to update many visitors and friends on the council's activities. There was particular interest following the recent Dalco Passage "mystery spill"

in Puget Sound.

The following week the booth was assembled at the Society for Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry annual meeting in Portland. Board member John French, staffer Lisa Ka'aihue, and I spent time in the booth discussing scientific projects. Jon Bower, volunteer for the Terminal Operations and Environmental Monitoring committee, had a poster titled "Synoptic survey of major solutes, metals, and volatile organic compounds in snowpacks of Valdez, Alaska" accepted for the conference.

This event attracts scientists, industries and students from around the United States and the world and our organization always receives a good deal of interest. We meet people interested in being included in our experts database and others that provide us with information that can assist the council in its mission and outreach efforts. We believe the council's booth adds some balance to the focus on industry at this conference and is a good place to promote citizens' concerns and set an example for those who want to have input in the development of their communities.



PORTLAND MEET – Project Manager Lisa Ka'aihue and board member John French helped staff the council booth at the Society for Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry annual meeting in Portland last month. Photo by Linda Robinson.

Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council

The Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council is an independent, non-profit corporation formed after the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill to minimize the environmental impacts of the trans-Alaska pipeline terminal and tanker fleet.

The council has 18 member organizations, including communities affected by the Exxon Valdez oil spill and groups representing Alaska Native, aquaculture, environmental, commercial fishing, recreation and tourism interests in the spill region.

The council is certified under the federal Oil Pollution Act of 1990 as the citizen advisory group for Prince William Sound, and operates under a contract with Alyeska Pipeline Service Co. The contract, which is in effect as long as oil flows through the pipeline, guarantees the council's independence, provides annual funding, and ensures the council the same access to terminal facilities as state and federal regulatory agencies.

The council's mission: Citizens promoting environmentally safe operation of the Alyeska terminal and associated tankers.

Board of Directors

- President: Tom Jensen - Alaska State Chamber of Commerce
- Vice President: Marilyn Heddell - City of Whittier
- Secretary: Steve Lewis - City of Seldovia
- Treasurer: Patience Andersen Faulkner - Cordova Dist. Fishermen United

- John Allen - Community of Tatitlek
- Louis Beaudry - Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corp.
- Nancy Bird - City of Cordova
- Sheri Buretta - Chugach Alaska Corp.
- Al Burch - Kodiak Island Borough
- Jane Eisemann - City of Kodiak
- John French - City of Seward
- Blake Johnson - Kenai Peninsula Borough
- Pete Kompkoff - Community of Chenega Bay
- Jo Ann C. McDowell - City of Valdez
- Jim Nestic - Kodiak Village Mayors Association
- Walter Parker - Oil Spill Region Environmental Coalition
- Connie Stephens - City of Valdez
- Stan Stephens - Alaska Wilderness Recreation & Tourism Association
- John Velsko - City of Homer

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- Gregory Dixon, Financial Manager
- Joe Banta, Project Manager
- Lisa Ka'aihue, Project Manager
- Linda Swiss, Project Manager
- Linda Robinson, Community Liaison
- Stan Jones, Public Information Manager

Valdez

- Donna Schantz, Program Coordinator
- Jennifer Fleming, Executive Assistant
- Dan Gilson, Project Manager
- Tom Kuckertz, Project Manager
- Tony Parkin, Project Manager
- Rhonda Williams, Project Manager
- Tamara Byrnes, Administrative Assistant

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

339 Hazelet, PO Box 3089
Valdez AK 99686
Phone: 907-835-5957
Toll-free: 877-478-7221
Fax: 907-835-5926

Internet: www.pwsrccac.org
Email: fleming@pwsrccac.org