Regional Citizens' Advisory Council

Regional Citizens' Advisory Council
750 W. Second Avenue, Suite 100
Anchorage, AK 99501-2168

1991 Annual Report

Mission

The mission of RCAC is to ensure the safe operation of the trans-Alaska pipeline terminal and the crude oil tankers served by the terminal so that environmental impacts associated with the terminal and tanker fleet are minimized.

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Executive Director's Letter

The first full year of RCAC operations was enough to take your breath away. Volunteer council and committee members devoted thousands of hours to a vast array of projects. The early months of 1991 were devoted primarily to committee organization. With staff in place, the committees spent the first several months mapping out their missions, goals and objectives, as well as specific tasks to achieve them.

The work plans were presented and approved by the full council in May, although many projects were already underway by then. By year's end, the RCAC had tallied an impressive list of activities and accomplishments, as this report documents. The RCAC has been blessed with a diverse and committed cadre of Alaskans willing to devote time and energy to a cause they believe in: minimizing the environmental impacts of oil terminal operations and marine oil transportation. Their commitment is having a very real impact on safety and environmental protection. Our first full year of operations coincided with a remarkable window of opportunity, as state and federal agencies began drafting regulations to implement new and stronger oil transportation laws.

We made sure the interests of our constituents – the communities and other groups most affected by the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill – were represented before the agencies drafting regulations. The window of opportunity will stay open at least through 1992, and the RCAC will continue to participate in and comment on regulations as they are developed.

New efforts have been initiated to protect shorelines threatened by oil. State regulations for oil spill prevention and response are the strongest in the nation. We are working side-by-side with the oil industry on important fronts: contingency planning, practice drills, towing of disabled tankers and scientific research.

We laid solid groundwork for important research into air pollution and water quality in Valdez. We drafted parameters for ecological monitoring and socio-economic studies of spill-impacted areas. We began a public outreach effort to educate residents about environmental and regulatory issues related to terminal and tanker operations.

But the road ahead is not paved; plenty of rocks and potholes await us.

RCAC must walk a thin line. On the one hand, a cornerstone of our relationship with Alyeska is that RCAC is completely independent. Our credibility in the public's eye rests on that independence. Yet much of our effectiveness as an advisory body depends on our ability to work with the oil industry in a spirit of constructive cooperation.

The relationship between Alyeska and RCAC is an evolving and, perhaps necessarily, a bumpy one. Yet despite differences in approach and perspective – much of which is inevitable – Alyeska and RCAC alike remain committed to the concept of constructive, meaningful citizen involvement and cooperation.

–by Sheila K. Gottehrer, Executive Director

President's Letter

"Give them enough rope and they'll hang themselves."

I grew up with this expression back in New England. It implies a certainty of destruction by resources not meant to hurt. That expression has caused me many a sleepless night over the last full operating year of the RCAC. Could 16 divergent communities and special interests establish a working corporation set up to maintain environmental vigilance and prevent "spill 2"? Could we avoid intra-regional jealousies or other avenues to self-destruction? Could we between us make responsible decisions without falling prey to individual agendas? Could we monitor Alyeska and disagree, and still maintain a cooperative relationship?

I'm pleased to report that perils notwithstanding, we have established an organization that will produce measurable results for the region for years to come.

We succeeded in obtaining Alyeska's agreement to create a model, unique in this country, for citizen involvement. It's a revolutionary concept in which industry pays to ensure that local citizens have the funding and the opportunity to address issues that affect their lives.

In its first six months, the RCAC established itself as totally independent from Alyeska Pipeline Service Company. Our funding was assured, even five and ten years down the road when, for many Alaskans, the *Exxon Valdez* will be only a hazy bad dream.

With a contract in hand, our challenge was to make it work and work well. We had to set and meet high ethical and professional standards. We had to produce tangible results we could be proud of years from now.

We worked hard and concentrated on establishing the corporation's direction and policies. We developed a disciplined work program. We established the budget as our operating blueprint. We identified priorities for oil spill prevention and response, Valdez terminal operations and pollution monitoring, and port and vessel projects. The work of 1991 extended beyond organizing. RCAC recommendations to Alyeska and public officials have resulted in protections far better than the system in place before the *Exxon Valdez*.

Through the hard work of our dedicated board members, staff and committee volunteers we now have an organization with resources sufficient to keep this important work running for the duration of the trans-Alaska pipeline.

The stakes are high: our communities, our lives, our environment are all at risk. That's what we learned from the *Exxon Valdez*. Maintaining vigilance is essential. When a cause or mission is important enough, people come through. And they have come through for RCAC. The result in the long run will be much safer, cleaner oil transportation and storage systems in Prince William Sound.

–by Christopher H. Gates

Members and Board of Directors

Stan Stephens (Alaska State Chamber of Commerce), Tim Robertson (City of Seldovia) and Bill Walker (City of Valdez)

The members of the Regional Citizens' Advisory Council are communities and other organizations in Prince William Sound and the Gulf of Alaska that were affected by the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill. The Board of Directors is composed of representatives appointed by the member organizations. Directors are appointed for two-year terms. There is no limit on the number of terms a director may serve.

RCAC's member organizations and their representatives on the Board of Directors:

Alaska State Chamber of Commerce ..... Stan Stephens

Chugach Alaska Corporation ..... Keith Gordaoff

City of Cordova ..... Scott Sterling

City of Homer ..... Tony Joslyn

City of Kodiak ..... Kristin Stahl-Johnson

City of Seldovia ..... Tim Robertson
resigned 12/31/91

City of Seward ..... Christopher H. Gates

City of Valdez (2) ..... Bill Walker
Jason Wells (Jan - Oct),
Mike Gallagher

City of Whittier ..... Lynda Hyce

Cordova District Fishermen United ..... Marilyn Leland (Jan - Sept)
Michelle O'Leary

Kenai Peninsula Borough ..... Andy Mack

Kodiak Island Borough ..... Wayne Coleman

Kodiak Village Mayors Association ..... Roy Jones

National Wildlife Federation ..... Ann Rothe

Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corp. ..... John McMullen (Jan - Oct)
John Herschleb

Executive Committee

Christopher H. Gates, President

Wayne Coleman, Vice President

Marilyn Leland, Secretary (Jan - Sept), Michelle O'Leary , Secretary

Bill Walker, Treasurer

Ann Rothe, Member at large

Ex-Officio Members (Seated in September 1991)

Alaska Divison of Emergency Services (Pete Petram)

Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (Simon Mawson)

Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Habitat Divison (Claudia Slater)

Alaska Department of Natural Resources (Ed Barber)

Department of Environmental Affairs, U.S. Department of Interior

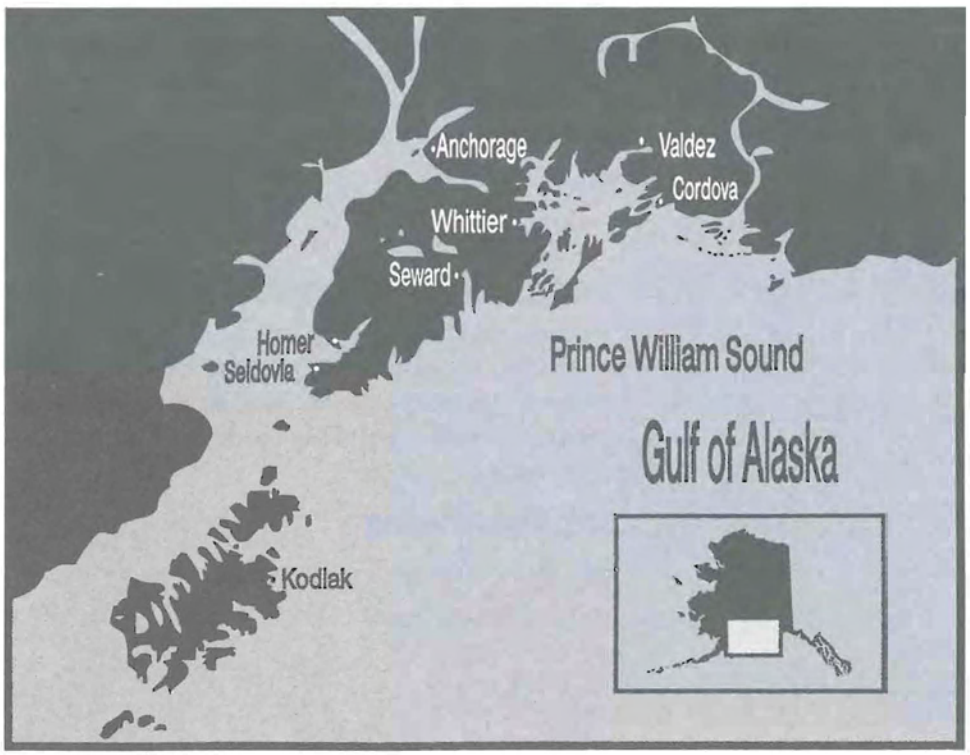
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (Carl Lautenberger)

U.S. Coast Guard/ Marine Safety Office, Valdez (Cmdr. Ed Thompson)

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (John Whitney)

U.S. Forest Service (Dave Gibbens)

Marilyn Leland (Cordova District Fishermen United) and Scott Sterling (City of Cordova)



Committees

Ken Castner, Dexter Ogle and Roy Robertson represented fishing groups at a meeting with the Oil Spill Prevention and Response Committee.

Much of the council's work is done through volunteer committees, consisting of council members and other citizens with interest, experience and background in a given field. The committees work for the council, with assistance from staff provided by the council. All official policy is presented to the full council for approval and further action. Public members of the committees are selected through a formal application process conducted twice annually. (*Denotes member of the board.)

Oil Spill Prevention and Response Committee

The Oil Spill Prevention and Response (OSPR) Committee promotes spill prevention and response measures and adequate contingency planning. The OSPR Committee works with industry and government agencies on mechanisms and procedures to minimize the risks and impacts associated with oil transportation. OSPR has been actively involved in development and review of state and federal regulations pertaining to spill prevention and response requirements.

Chair: Tim Robertson*

Members: Wayne Coleman* • Tom Copeland • Gail Evanoff • Trisha Gartland • Floyd E. Heimbuch • Charles Lundfelt • Skip Richards • Ann Rothe* • Patti Saunders

TOEM Committee members Bob Benda and E.A. Jim Levine

Port Operations and Vessel Traffic Systems

The Port Operations and Vessel Traffic Systems (POVTS or Port Ops) Committee addresses port and tanker operations in Prince William Sound. In 1991, the POVTS Committee focused primarily on safety issues such as tanker integrity, pilotage requirements, traffic monitoring systems and tanker towing. POVTS laid the groundwork for a major study, co-sponsored by industry and government agencies, of disabled tanker towing.

Chair: Stan Stephens*

Members: Bill Conley • Chris Gates* • Tony Joslyn* • Jeff Guard • Dennis Lodge • Tom McAlister • Richard Nagel

Terminal Operations and Environmental Monitoring

The Terminal Operations and Environmental Monitoring (TOEM) Committee evaluates terminal operations in terms of their effect on the environment and identifies possible sources of chronic pollution. In 1991, the TOEM Committee laid the foundation for a comprehensive program of monitoring environmental impacts of terminal and tanker operations on air and water quality in Port Valdez and Prince William Sound.

Chair: Jason Wells* (Jan - Oct); Scott Sterling*

Members: Bob Benda • Dave Dengel • David Hall • Judy Kitigawa • E.A. Jim Levine • Carl Propes • George Skladal • Kristin Stahl-Johnson* • Dennis Ulvestad • Greg Winter

Scientific Advisory Committee

The Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) provides scientific assistance and advice to the other RCAC committees on technical reports, scientific methodology, data interpretation and position papers. SAC recommends research priorities and policy and reviews proposals. SAC reviews research sponsored by RCAC to ensure compliance with high contractual, scientific and technical standards.

Chair: Lynda Hyce*

Members: Kristin Stahl-Johnson* • Merritt Helfferich • James Hemming • John Morsell • Dr. A.J. Paul • Lyle Perrigo • Gerald Sanger • Rick Steiner

Legislative Committee

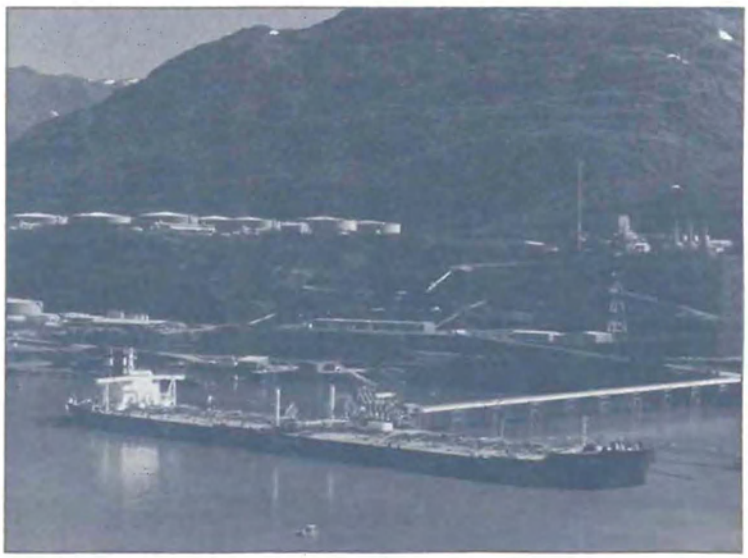
The Legislative Committee serves the RCAC by monitoring, analyzing and reporting on legislative affairs to the RCAC Executive Committee and the RCAC Board of Directors. The committee also serves as the RCAC representative and advocate before legislative bodies once the Executive Committee or the Board of Directors sets official RCAC positions on legislative matters.

Chair: Scott Sterling*

Members: Chris Gates* • Marilyn Leland* • Michelle O'Leary* • Tim Robertson* • Ann Rothe* • Bill Walker*

Education Committee

The Board of Directors amended the bylaws in 1991 to include an Education Committee. An ad hoc committee established its mission and scope. The committee will be appointed in 1992.



Tanker at berth, Valdez Marine Terminal

History

Timeline

March 24, 1989
Exxon Valdez grounds on Bligh Reef

May
Cordova fishermen meet with Alyeska officials, urging them to form a citizens' advisory group.

Early July
Jim Hermiller pulls together ad hoc committee to review Alyeska's new spill response plan ("C-plan").

July
Alyeska Citizens' Advisory Committee (ACAC) begins meeting weekly; reviews new c-plan section by section; begins drafting articles of incorporation and bylaws; starts discussing contract terms with Alyeska.

October 5
ACAC finalizes organization structure, committees

December 29, 1989
RCAC incorporates as non-profit corporation

Jan. 15, 1990
Officers elected

Feb. 8, 1990
RCAC and Alyeska sign contract

August 18, 1990
Oil Pollution Act of 1990 signed into federal law

November 1, 1990
RCAC requests certification as citizens' oversight council for Prince William Sound

March 1991
President Bush certifies RCAC as citizens' council for Prince William Sound under OPA 90

In July 1989, Jim Hermiller started making calls. Two months earlier, a group of Cordova fishermen had met with him, urging Alyeska to organize a citizens' advisory group. The BP executive, recently reassigned to Alyeska Pipeline Service Company in the wake of the catastrophic *Exxon Valdez* oil spill, was pulling together an ad hoc group of citizens to advise Alyeska on its new oil spill contingency plan.

The concept of a citizens' advisory group didn't start in Alaska. The model came from Scotland's Sullom Voe Terminal in the Shetland Islands. The idea of adapting that model in Alaska had been broached by a Cordova group in the mid 1980s.

But it wasn't until the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill of March 24, 1989, and a change in leadership at Alyeska, that the idea took hold. Hermiller had been brought to Alyeska to help stem the damage from the public anger directed toward Alyeska. Whether the anger toward Alyeska was justified or not – Alyeska officials maintain they took more of the public blame than they deserved - it had taken a serious toll on the oil company consortium.

The aftermath of the oil spill had demonstrated that the oil industry could learn a lot from citizens of the region; those people who had the most to lose from an oil spill also knew the region and its conditions better than anyone else. They could help improve Alyeska's new contingency plan.

Jim Hermiller had another incentive to pull local citizens into advising Alyeska on its oil spill prevention and response plan for Prince William Sound. Alyeska officials felt misunderstood. The general public believed Alyeska was responsible not just for the terminal in Valdez, but also for all the tankers and any oil they spilled. Alyeska officials reasoned that it was to their advantage to have local citizens knowledgeable and informed about their prevention and response capabilities.

The group pulled together by Hermiller ultimately included representatives of affected communities and boroughs, Native groups, commercial fishermen, aquaculture and environmental organizations. The Alyeska Citizens' Advisory Committee was formed specifically to review and comment on Alyeska's rewrite of its oil spill contingency plan, which had been ordered by the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC). The group had plenty of comments to offer:

> *"Prevention is seriously understated ... time and weather variables aren't included ... response should include a plan for long-term recovery ... dedicated phone lines to affected communities ... call-out and notification should include public affairs ... more detail on the transition of spill management from Alyeska to the spiller ... the plan should have escort coverage for tankers past Seal Rocks ... "*

At the same time, they began to lay the groundwork for a permanent citizens' group.

In December 1989, the Regional Citizens' Advisory Council incorporated as a non-profit corporation. After six months of negotiations, RCAC and Alyeska signed a contract in February 1990. RCAC had insisted on absolute independence from Alyeska, access to Alyeska facilities, a guaranteed source of annual funds and assurances that the contract would last as long as oil flows through the pipeline.

Alyeska agreed to all four. RCAC receives $2 million a year for which it provides specific services. Those services include environmental monitoring, independent research; local and regional input on a broad range of contingency planning, environmental and oil transportation issues; and public information about Alyeska's capabilities in oil spill prevention and response, and environmental protection.

The concept of citizen involvement in industry decisions emerged as a fundamental lesson from the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill. While the contract between RCAC and Alyeska stands on its own, the relationship is bolstered and reinforced by provisions in the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (OPA 90), the federal law enacted in response to the *Exxon Valdez*.

OPA 90 established two pilot projects – one in Prince William Sound, the other in Cook Inlet – for citizen involvement in contingency planning and environmental monitoring of oil terminal and tanker operations. OPA 90 requires that terminal operators or industry cooperatives in those two areas establish and fund citizens' advisory groups. In March 1991, President Bush certified RCAC as the citizens' advisory group for Prince William Sound pursuant to OPA 90.

Scenes of **Exxon Valdez** *clean up*

Responsibilities

The work of the Regional Citizens' Advisory Council is guided by its contract with Alyeska and the Oil Pollution Act of 1990.

Alyeska Contract

The contract between Alyeska and the Regional Citizens' Advisory Council is explicit about RCAC's independence:

"The independence, and public perception of independence, of the Committee is of overriding importance to the Committee in fulfilling its functions and in meeting public needs. This contract shall be interpreted in such a way as to promote the independence, both actual and perceived, of the Committee from Alyeska. ... Alyeska shall have no right ... to have any degree of control over the formation or operation of the corporation ..."

Under the terms of its contract, the RCAC provides specific services to Alyeska and the public. They include:

- Local and regional input, review and monitoring of Alyeska oil spill response and prevention plans and capabilities, environmental protection capabilities, and actual and potential environmental impacts of terminal and tanker operations;
- Increase public awareness of Alyeska oil spill response and prevention capabilities, environmental protection capabilities, and actual and potential environmental impacts of terminal and tanker operations;
- Input into monitoring and assessing the environmental, social and economic consequences of any oil related accidents and actual or potential environmental impacts in or near Prince William Sound;
- Local and regional input into the design of appropriate mitigation measures for potential consequences likely to occur as a result of oil or environmental related accidents or impacts of terminal and tanker operations;
- Recommendations on, and participation in continuing development of the spill prevention and response plan; annual plan review; periodic review of operations under the plan, including training and conducting exercises; input into selection of research and development projects.

The contract also has sufficient flexibility to allow the council to work on other related issues not specifically identified when the contract was written.

Oil Pollution Act of 1990

RCAC's contract with Alyeska pre-dates the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (OPA 90), but the similarities are not coincidental. Many of the people involved in the establishment of the RCAC also actively promoted citizen involvement provisions in the federal law.

OPA 90 establishes two demonstration projects in Alaska – one in Prince William Sound, the other in Cook Inlet – designed to promote cooperation between local citizens, industry and government; build trust and provide citizen oversight of environmental compliance by oil terminal facilities and tankers.

As the certified advisory council for Prince William Sound, RCAC's job is to:

- Provide advice and recommendations on policies, permits, and site-specific regulations relating to the operation and maintenance of terminal facilities and crude oil tankers;
- Monitor the environmental impacts of the operation of the terminal facilities and crude oil tankers;
- Monitor aspects of terminal facilities' and crude oil tankers' operations and maintenance which affect or may affect the environment in the vicinity of the terminal facilities;
- Review the adequacy of oil spill prevention and contingency plans for crude oil tankers operating in Prince William Sound ;
- Provide advice and recommendations on port operations, policies and practices;
- Recommend -

(i) standards and stipulations for permits and site-specific regulations intended to minimize impact in the vicinity of the terminal facilities;

(ii) modifications of terminal facility operations and maintenance intended to minimize the risk and mitigate the impact of terminal facilities, operations in the vicinity of the terminal facilities and to minimize the risk of oil spills;

(iii) modifications of crude oil tanker operations and maintenance in Prince William Sound intended to minimize the risk and mitigate the impact of oil spills; and

(iv) modifications to the oil spill prevention and contingency plans for terminal facilities and for crude oil tankers in Prince William Sound intended to enhance the ability to prevent and respond to an oil spill.

Prince William Sound Tanker Spill Prevention and Response Plan

OSPR Committee member Gail Evanoff (left) and RCAC board member Lynda Hyce take Alan Duggins on a tour of oiled beaches in Prince William Sound. Duggins is Nearshore Project Manager for the Prince William Sound Plan Holders.

A cornerstone of RCAC's existence, under both its contract with Alyeska and the Oil Pollution Act of 1990, is to provide local and regional input on the development, revision and operation of oil spill contingency plans for Prince William Sound.

Anyone who carries oil or other hazardous substances must prepare a plan detailing steps it takes to prevent a spill and how it will respond should a spill occur. These spill prevention and response plans – commonly called "contingency plans" – ensure that potential spillers draw detailed blueprints of what personnel and equipment would be needed in the event of a spill.

RCAC has been studying, reviewing and helping develop various elements of contingency plans since its inception. The general tenor of RCAC's comments has consistently been for stronger spill prevention measures and comprehensive response planning using local personnel and resources.

Many of RCAC's recommendations and suggestions have been adopted by Alyeska, tanker owners and, more broadly, by the State of Alaska. For example, the state now requires that contingency plans include use and training of local fishing fleets, more realistic spill scenarios and increased training of response personnel. While Alyeska has concurred with many of RCAC's comments and suggestions, it does not always do so. Some issues raised by RCAC in its March 1990 comments are still under review by Alyeska.

In 1991, RCAC council, committee and staff worked on contingency plans in several different ways. The council took positions, as developed and recommended by the Oil Spill Prevention and Response Committee.

Steering Committee

A second avenue for comment is the "Prince William Sound Tanker Spill Prevention and Response Plan Steering Committee." The Steering Committee is composed of representatives from Alyeska, tanker owners, state and federal agencies and RCAC. Its purpose is to resolve outstanding or controversial issues before contingency plans are submitted to the state for approval.

Much of the Steering Committee's work is conducted through six technical working groups, each addressing specific aspects of prevention and response: oily waste disposal; prevention and navigation (now called Valdez Marine Operations); nearshore response and shoreline protection; dispersants, burning and bioremediation; plan coordination; and mechanical, technical and training. The working groups operate by consensus; recommendations are not forwarded to the Steering Committee until all members agree. Several documents were completed and approved by the Steering Committee in 1991. The Oily Waste Disposal Working Group completed its work in July 1991 and the Dispersants Resource Document was finalized in November.

Nearshore Response

RCAC has been especially active in the Nearshore Response Working Group, which is chaired by an RCAC board member. While the other working groups addressed existing elements of the contingency plan, the Nearshore Response Working Group started from scratch. Prior to 1991, oil spill contingency plans addressed only the immediate vicinity of the spill and

shoreline clean-up. Plans didn't adequately address oil after it leaves the spill site and before it hits shore. RCAC called attention to the need for a response plan to recover oil that has escaped initial recovery and threatens to impact nearby shoreline. "Nearshore response" was the term adopted for attacking the front line of a spill before it does major damage to a coastline.

After the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill, the State of Alaska instituted a new requirement for tanker owners to have a nearshore contingency plan. Those plans must be in place by June 1, 1992.

To citizens who live in the path of a potential spill, nearshore response is essential to protect their communities and the resources on which they depend. The Nearshore Response Working Group was formed in March 1991. In June, a three-day workshop was held in Homer to define the scope of the nearshore plan and identify areas of agreement and disagreement.

Sixty people – citizens, industry and government representatives – participated in the workshop, which helped to identify which entities would be responsible for development and implementation of a nearshore response plan. Just as important, it contributed to a more cooperative environment.

The group agreed that responsibility for planning and responding to oil in the nearshore environment is shared jointly by Alyeska, North Slope shippers, other potential spillers, the state and local communities. The shippers agreed to refine, expand and implement the nearshore response portion of the Prince William Sound Oil Spill Prevention and Response Plan. Alyeska agreed to cooperate with owner companies in formulating their nearshore plans. RCAC and local communities committed to work with shippers and state and federal resource managers to identify and prioritize important coastal resources.

Subsequent to the June workshop, tanker owner companies formed the Response Planning Group to write the nearshore plan and coordinate other aspects of a tanker plan of common interest to Prince William Sound shippers. The Response Planning Group and the Nearshore Response Working Group maintain close contacts and a cooperative working relationship.

Nearshore Response Working Group includes representatives of industry, government agencies and RCAC.

HB 567

A third avenue for RCAC input on contingency plans was a working group formed by the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) to develop regulations on HB 567, Alaska's revised oil spill law enacted in 1990. The HB 567 technical working group met for six months beginning in February 1991. RCAC representatives worked aggressively for strong regulations. While the final regulations released by ADEC were not as stringent in some areas as RCAC had hoped, they are still the strongest in the nation.

Accomplishments and Activities

Nineteen ninety-one was the first full year of operations for the Regional Citizens' Advisory Council (RCAC) of Prince William Sound. While the following list does not cover every activity and contract, it reflects major work RCAC accomplished or undertook in 1991 as part of its responsibilities under its contract with Alyeska Pipeline Service Company and the Oil Pollution Act of 1990.

Prevention and Response

1. Prince William Sound Tanker Spill Prevention and Response Plan

• Advice and recommendations: RCAC submitted comments on two appendices to Alyeska's "Prince William Sound Tanker Spill Prevention and Response Plan" relating to community and fishing vessel involvement and dispersants. (RCAC submitted comments earlier on Appendix A "Scenarios" and Appendix D "Training Plan for Oil Spill Management"). Many of RCAC's recommendations and suggestions have been adopted, resulting in the use and training of local fishing fleets, more realistic spill scenarios and increased training of Alyeska's response personnel.

• Steering committee: As a member of the Prince William Sound Tanker Spill Prevention and Response Plan Steering Committee, RCAC worked with Alyeska, other contingency plan

Valdez Marine Terminal

holders, and state and federal agencies on a continuing basis to resolve problems and outstanding issues in contingency plans. The Steering Committee was formed in September 1990 by the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation to address issues it had flagged in its review of the contingency plans. Much of the Steering Committee's work is accomplished by six working groups, organized by topic: nearshore response and shoreline cleanup; dispersants, burning and bioremediation; plan coordination; mechanical, technical and training; navigation and prevention; and oily waste disposal.

• Nearshore response: Prior to 1991, oil spill contingency plans addressed only the immediate response area, e.g., the vicinity of the spill, and shoreline clean-up. RCAC called attention to the need for a response plan to recover oil that has escaped initial recovery efforts at the scene of the incident and threatens to impact nearby shoreline. "Nearshore response" was the term adopted for attacking the frontline of a spill before it does major damage to a coastline.

As a direct result of RCAC's efforts, the State of Alaska began requiring all tanker owners to have a nearshore contingency plan in place by June 1, 1992. The nearshore plans must include use of local resources, such as fishing vessels. The Nearshore Response Work Group, chaired by an RCAC board member, worked with contingency planholders to develop nearshore response plans.

Fishing vessel tows boom during a drill.

2. Regional response cooperative & response tools

RCAC initiated a study on the feasibility of establishing a community-based regional spill cooperative and a spill school in the Gulf of Alaska.

RCAC encouraged and promoted interest in development of a non-toxic crude oil substitute to be used in oil spill drills. It also succeeded in keeping bioremediation under "experimental" status as a spill mitigation option pending scientific validation of its effectiveness and safety.

3. Spill management course

RCAC sponsored "Spill Management for the '90s," a five-day course in Anchorage on the intricacies of spill management. The 25 participants included citizens from RCAC communities, representatives of state and federal agencies and oil industry employees.

4. State plans

• Master Contingency Plan: RCAC submitted comments and recommendations on drafts of the State of Alaska's "Master Oil and Hazardous Substance Discharge Prevention and Contingency Plan." Based on RCAC's recommendation, the draft master plan includes regional citizens' advisory councils in spill response activities.

• State Oil and Hazardous Materials Substance Discharge Prevention and Contingency Plan: RCAC submitted comments and assisted the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, at its request, in refining the plan in greater detail.

5. Spill drills

RCAC monitored nine spill drills, both on-water and tabletop drills. Formal comments were submitted after some of the drills.

Legislation and Regulations

6. Response action contractors' liability

RCAC participated in the effort to obtain state legislation conferring limited liability on response action contractors. The temporary law prevented a crisis that would have forced small transporters of oil out of business for lack of access to response action contractors.

7. State oil spill regulations (HB 567)

RCAC represented local and regional interests in a working group process developed by the state to draft regulations implementing the state's new oil spill prevention and response law (HB 567). RCAC increased public understanding of the regulations through guest editorials, news stories and informational advertisements encouraging public comment.

8. OPA 90 rulemaking

- Double hulls: RCAC reviewed the proposed rulemaking and submitted comments on five separate issues, including cargo piping in the void spaces, bunker tanks, hull separation minimums, suction wells, carriage of oil or oil products between hulls, need for increased scantlings in TAPS trade vessels and a ban on use of high tensile steel in TAPS trade vessels.
- Vessel contingency plans: RCAC reviewed the proposed rulemaking, submitted extensive comments, solicited public comment and participated in a workshop conducted by the Coast Guard. Key areas of local and regional concern included, but were not limited to, the need for specific planning standards, standardized planning strategy, individual plans versus regional response plans, specific requirements for on board equipment and training for vessel crews, response protection coastwide in Alaska, a working group process in rulemaking that includes meaningful participation by local representatives and consideration of economic impacts on local communities when spill prevention is inadequate.
- Single hulls: In comments on the proposed rulemaking, RCAC recommended the issues be broken into more manageable units; objected to most of the listed structural measures as unproven; recommended new navigation technologies be required on tank vessels; and urged that vessel traffic systems be mandatory for vessels 300 tons and over.

Valdez Marine Terminal

9. Ballast water treatment

- RCAC began developing an independent testing and monitoring program for the ballast water treatment plant at the Alyeska Marine Terminal. The program includes review of toxicity testing at the plant, and design of sampling and testing plans to monitor ballast water influent and effluent.
- RCAC began formulating comments on Alyeska's revised Best Management Practices Plan and reviewing lab results of tests on incoming ballast samples.
- RCAC contested Alyeska's proposal that the State of Alaska drop Port Valdez from the federal list of impaired waterways. RCAC pointed out that doubts have been raised about the data used to justify removing the port from the list, and recommended a field verification study before doing so.

10. Air quality

- RCAC began independent reviews of Alyeska air quality studies in Valdez. The Alyeska studies were undertaken to measure ambient levels of vapors emitted during tanker loading and assess the risk of human exposure to those vapors. RCAC retained consultants to evaluate methodologies and data interpretation.
- RCAC began a study of the fate and effects of airborne hydrocarbons emitted from the Alyeska Marine Terminal.
- RCAC began an assessment of the need for vapor control technology at the Alyeska Marine Terminal.

11. Fire and Explosion

RCAC began monitoring fire prevention and safety at the Alyeska Marine Terminal. An independent review will be conducted in 1992.

The Heritage Service escorts a tanker in Prince William Sound. Each tanker is accompanied by two escort vessels.

Tankers and Tanker Traffic

12. Tanker towing study

RCAC worked cooperatively with industry and government agencies to jointly draft a proposal for a major study of disabled tanker towing. The study will evaluate the capability of existing emergency towing equipment and procedures in Prince William Sound and examine alternatives that could enhance escort and assist capabilities.

13. Tanker integrity

RCAC wrote to shippers expressing concern about the structural integrity of the tanker fleet, in light of a hull-cracking incident and information contained in a U.S. Coast Guard study. RCAC asked shippers to comment on the Coast Guard study, provide an assessment of the structural status of their vessels and advise the council of current and planned efforts to correct structural problems in the aging fleet. The RCAC also urged the U.S. Secretary of Transportation to provide full funding for an expanded Coast Guard inspection program, and urged the Commandant of the Coast Guard to intensify inspections of the Prince William Sound fleet.

14. Vessel traffic

RCAC reviewed proposed changes in the vessel traffic system and submitted comments to the U.S. Coast Guard on its decision to use a dependent surveillance system in Prince William Sound.

15. Staffing levels on tankers and escort vessels

RCAC began a review of existing studies, including a database and literature search, on the impact of reduced manning levels aboard tankers and escort vessels.

16. Weather reporting

RCAC reviewed weather reporting and dissemination practices in Prince William Sound and conducted a preliminary assessment of the need for additional weather reporting stations.

17. Pilotage requirements

RCAC reviewed the state's draft regulations on pilotage requirements in Prince William Sound and will track their progress.

Other

18. Annotated science bibliography

RCAC developed an annotated scientific bibliography of research conducted since 1986 on the biology of Prince William Sound. In addition to past research, the bibliography includes current projects and proposed research. After the initial compilation, the bibliography will be maintained and updated as new research is planned, conducted and completed.

19. Ecological monitoring study

RCAC drafted parameters for a multi-year study to identify present and potential human-induced stress on the ecosystem of Prince William Sound. The monitoring program will identify potential indicators of impacts that ultimately will enable RCAC to develop mitigation measures.

20. Socio-economic study

Groundwork was laid for development of a socio-economic baseline study and model of spill-affected communities. The model will be used to assess and mitigate future economic and social changes from major ecosystem disturbances.

21. Research coordination

RCAC coordinated with state, federal and industry regarding scientific research, monitoring projects and program integration.

22. Public education

RCAC contributed to increased public understanding of oil transportation and terminal operations through a public information program. RCAC began publishing a quarterly newsletter, distributed to most of the households in the Prince William Sound and Gulf of Alaska communities represented on the council. The newsletter is also distributed to the oil industry and government agencies.

RCAC held public meetings on issues such as vessel contingency plans, appeared before community groups and conducted informational media campaigns to promote public awareness of oil-related environmental issues.

RCAC staffed information booths at Fish Expo in Seattle, Washington, Comm Fish in Kodiak, and the Alaska State Chamber of Commerce Convention in Kenai.

RCAC board member Ann Rothe and Harry Bader, chairman of the Citizens' Oversight Council on Oil and Other Hazardous Substances, lead discussion during a public meeting.

Consultants' Reports - 1991

Subject	Contractor	Status (12/31/91)
Alyeska, Sullom Voe & OPA 90: Comparison of Legal & Regulatory Regimes	Vince Kelly	Paper received
Bioremediation in Prince William Sound	Gene E. Keyser	White paper received
Annotated Bibliography	Nancy Lethcoe	Draft completed
Training Program Analysis	Stacie Pascal	Report received
Oil Terminal Analogies: Norway, Scotland and Alaska	Riki Ott	Report received
Small Boat Technology for Oil Spill Response	Ted Palmer	Report received
Status of OPA 90	Michelle Straube	Report received
RCAC Comments on PWS Tanker Plan	Falls Creek Environmental	Draft completed
Analysis of "470 Fund"	Big City Service Bureau	Draft completed
Analysis of National Contingency Plan	Big City Service Bureau	Draft completed
ADEC Overview and Analysis	Big City Service Bureau	In Progress
Feasibility study of spill cooperative	Dr. Roy Hann	Draft completed
Fishing Vessel Analysis, Gulf of Alaska	Jeannine Buller	Report received
Nearshore Equipment Strategies	Graham Lascelles	Report received
Alyeska Terminal Plan Critique	Dr. Roy Hann	Report received
Scoping Study for Peer Review of risk assessment study	University of Washington	Report received
Peer review of air studies	Environmental Toxicology Int.	In Progress
Material in northbound ballast	Richard Fineberg	Report received
Fate and effects, airborne hydrocarbons	Dr. Yoram Cohen	In Progress
Toxicity/ballast water treatment	Northwestern Aquatic Services	In Progress
Oil Spill Prevention Guidelines for PWS	Jim Dickson	Report received

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Regional Citizens' Advisory Council

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