

## **Alaskan Libraries Deal with the Oil Spill**

Selections from: *The Sourdough*, Vol. 26, no. 3 and 4

This document does not contain the full issues of volume 26, no. 3 and 4. It contains only those pages with articles on the Exxon Valdez oil spill of 1989, and it is cataloged as a documentation that records library responses to the oil spill.

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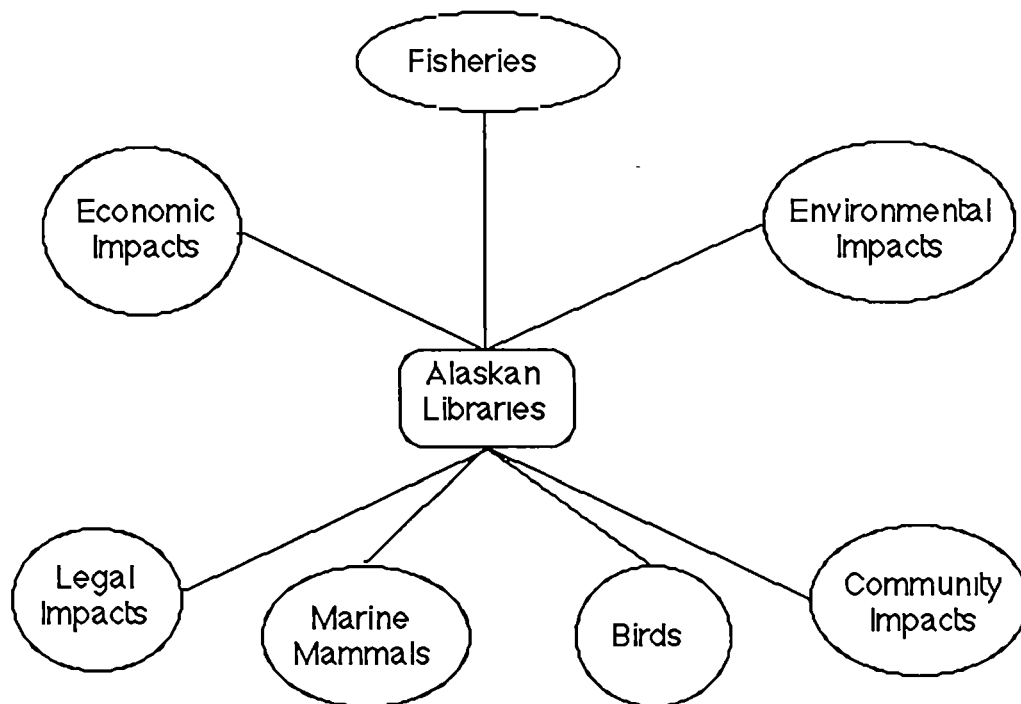
# The SOURDOUGH

vol 26, no 3

Summer 1989

ISSN 002-4570

## Alaskan Libraries



## Deal With The Oil Spill

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vol 26, no.3

Summer 1989

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**EDITOR: BILL GALBRAITH**

**REVIEWS EDITOR: BETTY GALBRAITH**

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

BY LAUREN BARKER, PRESIDENT, AKLA

## EDITOR'S NOTES

Dear Colleagues

This issue of *Sourdough* is devoted to the *Exxon Valdez* oilspill which occurred March 24, 1989. This was most certainly a tragic day for Alaska. An accident occurred in the beautiful and prolific waters off of Valdez which changed the course of the state both environmentally and politically for many years to come.

In the ensuing turmoil, librarians became a cohesive network supplying up-to-date information to all parties involved. The following accounts written by our peers will exhibit some of the intellectual and tangible work necessary to achieve organizational effectiveness and extraordinary response time during what only can be termed an "information crisis"

With the immediate crisis over, there are some of us now who are left with the aftermath of the oilspill - litigation. Our libraries and staffs will be affected for the next decade by the domain of the legal system. It is estimated that the lawsuits stemming from the oilspill will produced over one billion documents. All of this information needs to be indexed, cataloged, and made retrievable. These activities should put us well within the reach of new technology, for it will take that to control the information flow.

And, while we are working diligently with the overwhelming amount of information, nature will quietly be taking control of an overwhelming situation. Slowly as the shifting sands, water and beaches will be cleaned and returned to normal. Within a decade new generations of marine animals can exist to make the Prince William Sound area of Alaska once again one of the most pristine regions of the state.

Time, effort, and patience - for nature and for us. Working in unison with every library being an important entity in the information process. I am proud to be associated with a group whose strength resides in the ability of its members to respond quickly across organizational lines and whose emphasis is the sharing of strategic knowledge in the spirit of impartiality.



Lauren Barker  
President

On March 24th of this year the *Exxon Valdez* ran aground on Bligh Reef in Prince William Sound and drastically changed the state of Alaska, physically, and socially in one of the worst disasters ever. It also had its effect on libraries in the state in many different ways. Librarians in the state, particularly in Anchorage, Fairbanks and Juneau reacted to the spill in a very positive manner in terms of putting together sources of information that will be useful to researchers. Instead of waiting and reacting to requests, they anticipated needs, pulled together information and actively made this information available to researchers. Included in this issue is the story of this effort in the three major communities. Early on, the Alaska State Library sponsored an audio conference so that libraries throughout the state could share information on the spill. This was a success and resulted in the establishing of three regional centers for Oil Spill information. These are the Alaska State Library, in Juneau, The Alaska Resources Library in Anchorage and the Elmer Rasmuson Library in Fairbanks. It was agreed that these three locations would share any Oil Spill information collected with the other two so that libraries throughout the state would have close access to all Oil Spill information that has been gathered. An additional item that is worthy of note is that Martha Shepard of the Alaska Resources Library was able to get OCLC to agree to allow the transfer of her library's holdings from OCLC to WLN so that all Alaskan libraries would be able to access information about the Oil Spill. A final article is about a library that has experienced a different type of impact from the oil spill. This is the Valdez Consortium Library.

Although the Spill has been a disaster of the greatest possible magnitude, we can be proud of the way the Alaska Library community networked and worked together to make information available where it is needed.

### JOHN COTTON DANA AWARDS FOR 1990

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For an information packet containing contest entry forms, rules and guidelines contact the H.W. Wilson Company, Library Relations Department, 950 University Avenue, Bronx, NY 10452. **Hurry**, the deadline for all entries is February 5, 1990!

# ANCHORAGE LIBRARIANS REACT TO THE OIL SPILL

BY CATHY VITALE, ALASKA RESOURCES LIBRARY

"The truly noble and resolved spirit raises itself, and becomes more conspicuous in times of disaster and ill fortune."

Plutarch

Anchorage librarians (who have always seen themselves as noble and resolved spirits) certainly became more conspicuous following the Prince William Sound oil spill. Although inundated by a flood of reference requests, the librarians continued their intense networking, gained new patrons, and contributed significantly to the knowledge of those involved in the state and federal efforts. Following is an account of the unfolding impact of the oil spill on Anchorage libraries.

## Day one and immediately following:

Librarian Celia Rozen of Alaska Department of Fish and Game library came into Alaska Resources Library and checked out everything she could find about the impact of oil on herring and salmon. Her agency had to decide quickly whether or under what conditions to open or close the Prince William Sound fisheries.

Alaska Resources Library using LASER-CAT began putting together a bibliography on oil spills and the biology of Prince William Sound.

Fish and Wildlife Services librarian, Nancy Tileston, searched the Aquatic Sciences and Fisheries Abstracts CD-ROM for "birds and oil, otters and oil, mussels and oil, the effects of oil spills on (you name it)".

Sharon Palmsano, librarian for the Anchorage Daily News, phoned Alaska Resources Library, ARCO, BP, Loussac and the University and drove from library to library in search of drawings of tankers and booms and skimmers.

Anchorage Municipal Library began clipping spill articles from the local papers.

## Week 2:

Anchorage librarians teleconferenced with librarians in Fairbanks and Juneau to organize a proactive response to the oil spill that would plug existing information gaps and yet avoid duplication of effort.

Alaska Resources Library as well as Elmer Rasmuson Library and Alaska State Library were designated regional oil spill response libraries. Their purpose was to be a collection and distribution center for all oil spill related library activity.

Alaska Resources Library immediately obtained computer searches done by other Anchorage libraries on oil spill subjects, duplicated them and passed them on to the other oil spill response libraries. In turn the other two response libraries

passed Alaska Resources Library press releases, education packets and bibliographies.

Alaska libraries compiled five different bibliographies in response to the spill.

1. Oil Spill in Prince William Sound: A Bibliography. This is a bibliography of technical books on oil spill and the biology of Prince William Sound. Prepared by Alaska Resources Library.

2. Oil Spill Bibliography Kenai Peninsula-Cook Inlet. This is a bibliography of petroleum biodegradation and the biology of the new areas into which the oil has spread.

3. Oil Spill Liability. This was done on WESTLAW of legal periodical literature 1982-88. (Created by Alaska Court System Library)

4. Oil Spills and the Sea: A Bibliography. This is an annotated bibliography of popular books on oil spills including fiction. (Prepared by Elmer E Rasmuson Library)

5. Oil Spill Bibliography. This is a bibliography of the Alaska State Library's Materials related to oil spills. (Compiled by Alaska State Library)

In addition the Anchorage Daily News Library built a database accessible by keyword as well as name, of all those people whose names appeared in stories related to the spill.

## Month 2:

The function of a special library is to meet the information needs of its clientele, change is a way of life. The oil spill was no exception. Alaska Resources Library set up a special "rush" account with EBS Book Service and received and cataloged more than seventy five oil spill related books in the two months following the spill. At Martha Shepard's request OCLC has agreed that these and all other Alaska Resources Library holdings can now appear on LASER-CAT (they have previously been blanked out as the result of a law suit between OCLC and WLN).

The Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game Library catalogs articles they acquire for patrons via interlibrary loans on a computer system. In the two months following the spill they collected and cataloged five new file drawers of journal articles.

Alaska Court System Law Library began to collect all of the periodical articles cited in its bibliography.

British Petroleum Library participated with a consultant in building a world oil spill data base, so that company officials can retrieve citations on the immediate and long term impacts of oil spills.

## Looking Back

Did we truly become more conspicuous? Librarians report that proactive responses to the oil spill did enhance their library's position within their companies or agencies. A perplexed Fish and Wildlife employee asked early in the spill, "What does the library have to do with oil spills?" The

librarian reports that he and many parts of the agency unaccustomed to using the library now know the answer.

Alaska Department of Fish and Game Library has had a full time technician added to its staff along with the budget and ability to search LEXIS. The library will be supporting the newly created Oil Spill Assessment Division of Fish and Game.

Alaska Resources Library, whose interlibrary loans increased by fifty percent, saw use by parks that had previously never made a request.

The Daily News was so impressed with the names database that they will now keep all of their sources on the computer using the names database as a prototype.

How successful were our efforts to provide oil spill information evenly to all those who needed it? Barb Pearson of Exxon Production Research Division (Houston) reports, "Alaskan librarians are among the most professional information specialists I have ever dealt with." She had feared that the level of anger Alaskans feel about the oil spill would impede here research but found instead excellent networking. "I would hope Texas librarians would do as well," said Pearson.

### Currently

Anchorage librarians are now in the lull between immediate response to the oil spill as an information crisis and the many years of work that agency oversight, litigation and scientific research will require. Another oil spill information teleconference in September will coordinate new directions. Anchorage libraries (noble and resolved spirits) are proud of their effective response to an information crisis.

**MC**

**CHARLES D. HAYES**

SALES REPRESENTATIVE

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## JUNEAU AND THE OIL SPILL

Libraries and librarians in Juneau have been active in putting together information following the March oil spill. Sherry Taber and Sonja Lyon of the Alaska State Library have put together an "Oil Spill Research Guide" which is aimed at librarians and general researchers. The guide is not a comprehensive bibliography but is intended to be a starting point for researching oil spill information. It includes general resources for information on the oil industry as well as listing sources of unique information held and put together by librarians throughout the state. There is a draft out now with a final copy to follow.

Specific sources available in Juneau at the State Library include a newspaper clipping file of articles from papers published in Alaska on the Oil Spill. It is arranged by Newspaper title, then chronologically. The State Library has also put together press releases as well as a clipping file of Journal articles. In addition through LEGISLATE, Mike Mitchell has the full text of news programs that have been done on the Oil Spill.

Other librarians in Juneau that have put together information include Kate Sloan at the Department of Environmental Conservation. In fact her library has been impacted to the point of being moved to temporary quarters so that DEC could accommodate additional researchers. Paula Johnson, librarian at the Auke Bay Fisheries Lab, has an oil file of 15 years of material that have been collected on oil related material. In addition she has experienced very heavy use of her collection by NOAA and other government researchers, however, consultants, attorneys and contractors have also been using her collection. Her ILL requests have also doubled since the spill. Oil Spill has been so overwhelming, that she actually noted on her calendar "No Oil Spill" one day in June, with it being the first day she hadn't spent time gathering or distributing oil spill information. Paula has also had the opportunity to go to Prince William Sound participating in a NOAA research voyage to collect samples. Paul DeSloover of the Department of Fish and Game Library in Juneau did an extensive DIALOG search and has compiled a vertical file of articles from this search so that the same information would not need to be continually requested.

A final item of note from Juneau is that there is a new "Oil Spill Information Center" sponsored by the Juneau Audubon Society, the Juneau chapter of the Sierra Club and the Alaska Conservation Foundation is aimed at the general public. It is located close to the Cruise ship terminal and is heavily used by tourists. It has copies of the Newspaper clipping file. It includes all kinds of publication and information from an Exxon Annual Report to the special oil spill edition of Fish and Game Magazine to the complete National Transportation Safety Board hearings on the accident.

The Alaska State Library is the Regional resource center for Oil Spill information.

## FAIRBANKS RESPONSE TO THE OIL SPILL

Although Fairbanks is not geographically located near the oil spill, the University community, particularly the Institute of Marine Science was very active in studying the spill and its effects, so when the Oil Spill first hit, Sharon West at the Rasmuson Library did a quick and dirty search of Monographic material owned by the Rasmuson Library and came up with 278 citations of material owned by the Rasmuson and Biomedical Libraries.

The Institute of Marine Science has compiled a list of IMS reports and reprints of Journal articles, theses and dissertations that have been written on the Oil Spill.

In the Government Documents section of the Rasmuson Library, Joanna Phillips compiled a bibliography of Minerals management Service Publications as well as a list of Environmental Impact Statements published by the Federal Government relating to Alaska.

The Arctic and Polar Regions Department of the Rasmuson Library, has the Bibliography of Alaskana available on line. This database indexes over 400 journals for articles relating to Alaska and should be an important resource in the months to come. Ron Inoye of the Rasmuson Library can be contacted for log on instructions.

Marjorie Cole of the Rasmuson Library compiled a popular Reading Bibliography of Materials relating to the Oil Spill that are located in the Rasmuson and Fairbanks North Star Borough Library.

A final note in Fairbanks is that the Rasmuson Library has been designated the regional clearing house for information on the Oil Spill.

## PUBLIC LIBRARY STANDARDS

The Public Library Standards Committee has completed its first year of work. A revised draft of community library guidelines was mailed to all public and military public libraries in Alaska in June. If you did not receive this mailing, the committee invites you to request a copy of the first year's draft and a reaction form. The committee has been funded for another year through an interlibrary cooperation grant and will be resuming its work in conjunction with the proposed state plan for libraries in Alaska. Guidelines for combined community/school libraries and improvements to make the guidelines more meaningful to medium sized libraries will be among the objectives of the second phase of the project.

For further information or a copy of the most recent draft and a reaction form, contact.

Sue Shenf  
Fairbanks North Star Borough  
Public Library  
1215 Cowles St Fairbanks, Alaska  
99701  
(907) 452-5177

## VALDEZ LIBRARY DEALS WITH THE OIL SPILL BY KAREN WIELAND

Overnight the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill transformed our small, quiet city of 3,600 into a noisy frantic boomtown of 10,000 to 11,000 people. Small mobile, fast buck business quickly invaded the town, street vendors set up tents selling "lovely" velvet paintings, stereo equipment, and junk of all kinds. Fast food trailers rolled into town selling Mexican and Oriental food as well as standard burger joint fare. Burger King sent down a motor home and Mafia Mike actually leased space to set up a pizza place. The prize for the most imaginative fast food trailer goes to the Hot Dog Factory whose trailer resembles a huge twelve foot long hot dog. ATCO units abound everywhere as well as r/v's and campers. Our everyday vocabularies have expanded to include words such as Vecoids, Exxoids and Norclones (Veco, Exxon, and Norcon employees), THE SPILL, impact, response, and time spent in waiting lines at the bank and post office.

Unprecedented numbers of people are using the library (or abusing as the case may be). What better place to spend time than in the warm, dry, and hospitable library! Unfortunately, this heavy traffic has resulted in oil stains on the carpets and

oil spill graffiti on the wallpaper. Daily a new spill t-shirt makes its appearance at the library. One of our favorites is "let's go to Naked Island and get crude" (Yes there really is a Naked Island in Prince William Sound).

Library statistics have jumped astronomically! In June there were 350 new library cards. Normal June totals are around 150. Circulation took an expected huge jump to 5,400 items for the month as opposed to a "normal" June of 4,400. Our viewing room that includes a VCR and monitor is booked ahead days at a time for patrons to watch rented movies. Our new CD player is so overworked that it overheats and just quits operating! We suspect that the two public typewriters are worn out from typing resumes. The "I" key on one of them fell off. Interlibrary loan statistics for June were way up mainly due to requests from the Animal Rescue Center on handling oiled animals and birds.

All in all, it has been and continues to be an unpleasantly memorable summer. The unheard of 17 straight days of sun in July made it bearable, although two library staff members did resign in mid July. Never before have Valdez residents so eagerly awaited the arrival of snow!

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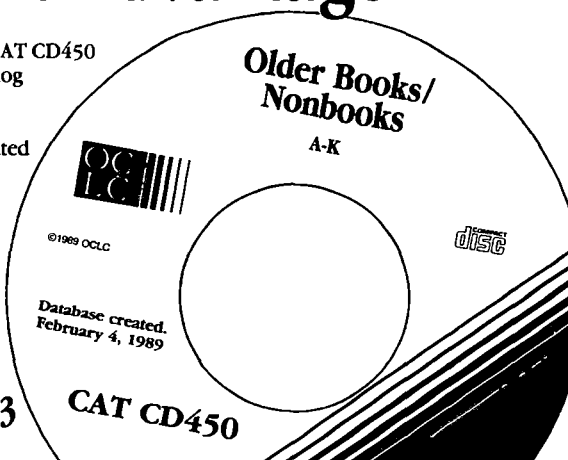
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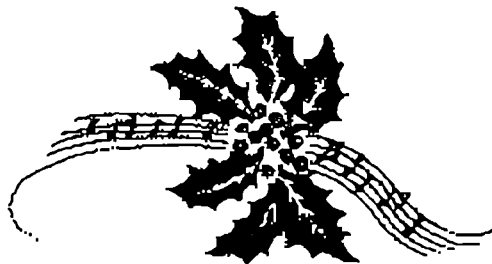
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**EDITOR: BILL GALBRAITH**

**REVIEWS EDITOR: BETTY GALBRAITH**

**COVER PHOTO BY: CHRISTINE NIEMIC**



## OIL SPILL TELECONFERENCE

On September 11, 1989 the State Library hosted a second teleconference to allow librarians to bring each other up to date on the information sources that have been discovered or set up to respond to information needs resulting from the March oil spill in Valdez.

The State Library in Juneau has completed its research guide which is a "Pathfinder" on Oil spill information. Instead of being a comprehensive guide to everything available it lists major sources and locations for materials. It has been sent to all of the major libraries in the state. In addition they have a series of Public Radio Audio Tapes which include news broadcasts from the Alaska Public Radio Network from Valdez. This series is currently indexed by reporter and subject with a keyword index in the works. The Historical Library is collecting photographs, and the Oil Spill Information Center in Juneau continues to operate and collect information. Paula Johnson of the Auke Bay Fisheries Lab is spending \$30,000 in an effort to pick up back issues of oil related journals. The Lab is also working on an annotated bibliography of work done by researchers at the Lab. Katie Sloan of the DEC library reported that her library was still packed up to make room for researchers, however, she does have Oil Spill Conference proceedings, is doing Dialog searches, and keeping legislative histories.

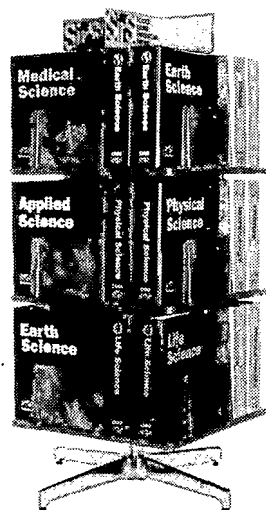
The Alaska Research Library continues to be active performing specific Dialog searches and collecting materials. Sharon Palmisano of the Anchorage Daily News is continuing to keep newspaper clippings. These are available on line by keyword by contacting Sharon at the News. Nancy Tileston at the Fish and Wildlife Library is keeping species information on birds and mammals affected by the oil spill. The AEIDC is the state repository for the Alaska Oil Spill Commission.

In Fairbanks Judy Triplehorn at the Geophysical Institute Library has remote sensing information on floppy disc as well as high resolution maps and NTIS reports from Canada. Pauline Gunter at Rasmuson reminded the group that they have the Congressional Research Service available. They are also microfilming materials from the Valdez Sea Otter Center although there may be some restrictions on this due to litigation. At the time of the teleconference the *Bibliography of Alaskana* had 79 citations and is expected to grow quickly during the next few months.

There were other rumored publications such as a new Alyeska "Contingency Plan" and a NOAA Compact Disc on "Contaminants in Marine Water." The teleconference ended with some discussion of where we go from here with the possibility of a spring workshop at the AkLA Conference.

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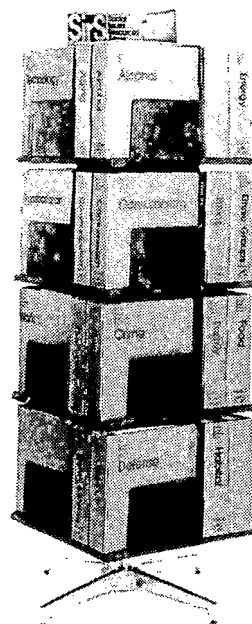
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