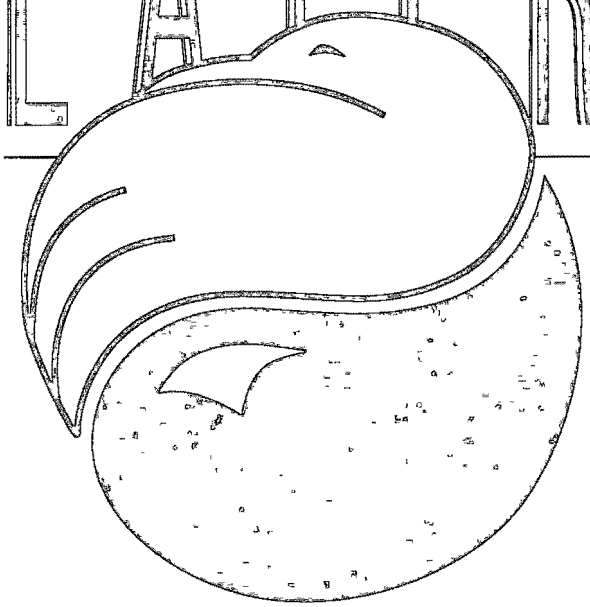
Five Years LATER



News Clips

Fifth Anniversary of the Grounding of the *Exxon Valdez*

March 1994

EVOS Fifth Anniversary News Clips

This collection includes clippings of news and feature stories published in newspapers or magazines, computer printouts of stories carried over wire services, and transcripts of broadcasts aired in Alaska and national media around the time of the March 24, 1994 anniversary of the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill.

Compiled by:

L.J. Evans, Information Specialist
Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council
645 G St., Suite 401
Anchorage, AK 99501-3451
Telephone: 907/278-8012
FAX: 907/276-7178

Carrie Holba, Librarian
Jeff Lawrence, Library Technician
Oil Spill Public Information Center
645 G St., Suite 100
Anchorage, AK 99501-3451
Telephone: 907/278-8008
Toll free within Alaska: 1-800-478-7745
Tol free outside Alaska: 1-800-283-7745

Sharks of March

WRITING IN THE Economist of London recently, science editor Matt Ridley observed "Like sharks, environmentalists must move forward or die. Without a constant supply of new incidents, new buzz words and above all new threats, they cannot keep scaring people into sending the money that pays their salaries."

With that in mind, Alaskans should be concerned that 1994 so far lacks new environmental threats, except perhaps genetically engineered hormones i cows' milk. That leaves the commercial environmental establishment stuck with reviving old "catastrophes " And what better rerun of old news to provoke contributions from a gullible public than the oiled birds and otters of Prince William Sound, circa 1989?

March 24 will be the fifth anniversary of the grounding of the Exxon Valdez, an accident that caused much grief for many Alaskans — and provided the marketing professionals of the environmental community with a fund raising bonanza.

A good example of what to expect is discussed in the adjoining column. Cordova activist Rick Steiner invited President Bill Clinton to come to town next month and join the fun Mr. Steiner, along with Ernie Piper, formerly of the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation and now gubernatorial candidate Tony Knowles' campaign manager, and Stan Stanley of the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council, will be moderating a three-day international conference in March to review — for the umpteen millionth time — what they believe are the lessons of the spill. Why?

Put the transportation accident of the tanker hitting a rock in perspective of what else has happened since 1989 The world has endured numerous environmental disasters Hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, war, other oil tankers hitting rocks, trains carrying hazardous fuel overturning, airplanes falling from the sky . . you name it, it has happened

People were killed, and damages soared into the hundreds of billions of dollars. In some instances, the environment and wildlife habitat were damaged substantially as a result of nature's wrath

But what happened after each tragic event? Life went on People picked themselves up, started rebuilding, and continued with their lives. Mother Nature, too, set out to restore what was damaged.

But only in Prince William Sound does the lure of money or political advantage continue to drive certain interest groups, politicians and individuals to incite public fervor.

If Mr. Steiner et al. were to do an objective assessment of where Prince William Sound is today, five years after the Exxon Valdez, they wouldn't have much of a story to sell — because the fish populations, birds, marine mammals and shorelines are recovering just fine

But sharks can't sit still for reality.

Ayers shares vision for oil spill information center

By Sören Wuerth
The Cordova Times

One day in the near future, a girl walking home from school will walk into Cordova's library and sit down in front of a computer terminal.

She is interested in finding out about harbor seals and how the mammals were affected by the 1989 oil spill in Prince William Sound. A graphic appears on the monitor, she punches a button on the keyboard.

Instantly, a brief description on harbor seals appears on the screen. The narration includes the animal's predators, its feeding habits, its social behavior and many other facts about the creature.

Not only can the girl find out about harbor seals, but, by entering a few commands, she can learn about almost anything in the Sound's ecosystem.

The terminals will be in every community and will link to a data base where more detailed research can be accessed.

Meanwhile, 10 sites in the spill-affected area will be working together to integrate all the information being collected by individual study groups.

This is Jim Ayers' vision.

As executive director of the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Public Information Center, Ayers is in a position to make it all happen.

The former Alaska Marine Highway director met with Cordova residents last week to lay out his plan for providing access to the various studies that have been and will be carried out with a $900 million oil spill settlement dropped into the lap of a six-member state and federal Trustee Council.

"Our most important responsibility is to develop a basis of understanding, to the best of our ability, of the ecosystem and to hand it to the next generation," Ayers said.

Since it received its first payments in 1991, many people living in the spill-affected area have been wary about the spending habits of the trustees.

During his meeting with several residents, Ayers responded to questions about how the settlement money was being spent.

"When we start hammering on you, it's because we want to be heard. We haven't been heard since the oil spill," commercial fisherman James Mykland said.

The council was criticized by a federal agency last fall for spending too much of its money to boost the budgets of its own government agencies.

The council quickly shuffled its administrative arm and hired Ayers to oversee operations.

Ayers said the council already has spent about $260 million on legal costs and to pay mandatory bills associated with oil spill cleanup work.

He said the trustees should invest $12 million to $15 million each year in an endowment fund that would reap annual returns.

The council also should integrate all the information different governmental agencies have gathered so far, Ayers said.

"It's no longer sufficient to have an annual gathering and shoot the bull and say, 'We're going to start sharing information,' then go away," Ayers said.

Ayers noted that humans, too, are a part of the ecosystem being studied.

"As the ecosystems goes, so goes the humans," he said. "We are all inextricably linked to this ecosystem — from consumption to carbon release."

One of the trustee's largest — and most controversial — efforts has been in the area of habitat acquisition.

Though many have condemned buying land rather than funding fisheries research, Ayers defended the practice.

"We need to develop a strategy that provides a broad measure of protection, one that ensures maximum habitat protection at an affordable price," Ayers said. He added that the trustees are still interested in working with the Eyak Corp. to buy land around Cordova.

Ayers visit to Cordova was lauded by Mayor Margy Johnson.

"This is the first time I've been able to put a face with the name," Johnson said. "This person was here, had an open meeting today and he's coming back. That's a gigantic step."

INSIDE STORIES

By John Keeble

After the Spill

The salmon are dwindling in Prince William Sound; its ecosystems have foundered. Five years later, is the *Exxon Valdez* still to blame?

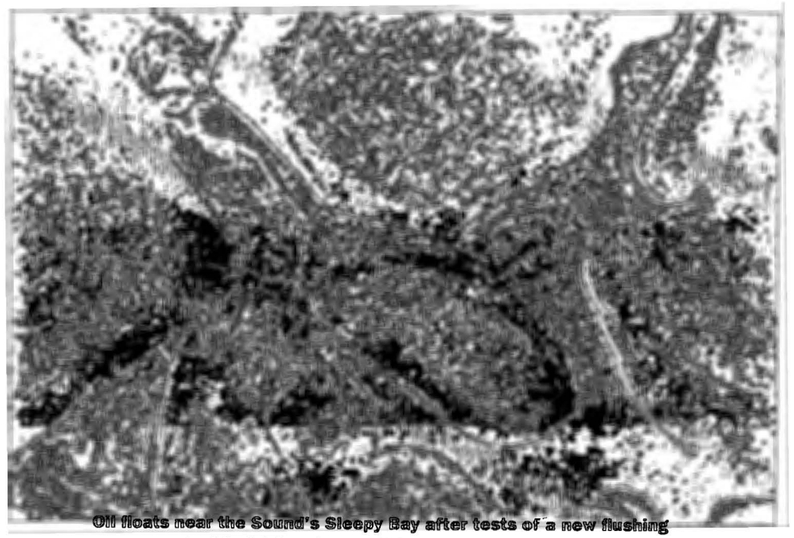
LAST AUGUST, THE SEINE FLEET IN Alaska's Prince William Sound, angry over the stricken condition of the fisheries—and over Exxon's public insistence that health had been restored to the region—was galvanized by fisherman Jim Gray's proposal to "call bullshit on Exxon's media blitz." The fleet abandoned the failed pink salmon run and set out for the Port of Valdez in gale-force winds. By the next morning, 65 seiners had gathered in Jack Bay, an inlet just off the Valdez Narrows, entrance to the Alyeska oil terminal; more fishing boats were on their way from the town of Cordova, home of much of the seine fleet.

The fishermen awaited the *SeaRiver Baton Rouge* (Exxon Shipping had just changed its name to SeaRiver Maritime). They talked by radio and held impromptu conferences on one another's boats. Hours passed, and the situation escalated into the high-stakes intrigue of a blockade. "We'd become a very determined, edgy group," fisherman Bill Webber said later. The *Baton Rouge* postponed its scheduled morning arrival to 5 P.M., then to 9, and then to the next day. When the last of the tankers taking on crude oil at the terminal left late on the night of August 20, the fishermen realized that for the first time since the opening of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System in 1977, there was not a single tanker anywhere within the Sound's 2,500 square miles.

I sailed from Cordova that night. The storm had abated. A light rain filtered down. This was a passage I had made many times, and as we passed Knowles Head, where tankers normally await permission to enter the Narrows, the anchorage seemed eerily quiet and peaceful, devoid of the humming, looming ships lit up like factories. It was as if the place were stunned to rediscover its own skin of water and headland by which it had addressed the rest of the world for aeons. We carved our turn northward, entered the tanker channel past the red warning light for Bligh Reef, where on March 24, 1989, the *Exxon Valdez* had foundered and dumped 11.2 million gallons of North Slope crude into the water. We eased against the ebb tide toward the Narrows. Off to starboard, pale lights emerged through the mist from Jack Bay. It was now a floating village of nearly 80 boats extending deep into the tongue and hard upon the hump of land, silhouetted against the dawn.

The next morning, informed that a British Petroleum chartered vessel had entered the Sound, the flotilla deployed across the Narrows. Soon the ship, the *Atigun Pass*, appeared in the distance, a behemoth the length of three football fields. A Coast Guard helicopter thumped in the air, and cutters prowled the water. Two more tankers, the *Arco Alaska* and at last the *Baton Rouge*, had also entered the Sound. The flotilla didn't move. When asked by the Coast Guard what his intentions were, Jim Gray, who had emerged as the spokesman for the demonstrators, replied evenly, "Commander, I've lost control of my fleet."

Men, women, and children on the fishing boats put on survival suits and prepared for what fisherman Max McCarty referred to as "the last resort" of laying out their seines and creating a "quarter-mile-long, 65-foot-deep nylon barrier capable of choking even the giant prop of a supertanker." The *Atigun Pass* slowed to three knots but kept coming, growing ever larger against the horizon, until a BP executive in a helicopter high overhead ordered its captain to turn it around. The fishermen had accomplished their primary objective, which according to Gray was simply to make a statement. But considered half a year later, it was at best a partial victory.



NATALIE B. FOBES

Oil floats near the Sound's Sleepy Bay after tests of a new flushing agent last July released it from beach sediments.

INSIDE STORIES

WHAT FINALLY PUSHED THE FISHERmen to block the Valdez Narrows was more than the financial ruin that many of them feared would follow the third failed pink salmon run in as many years, and more than their fury over Exxon's claims that the Sound was clean. They were frustrated by the company's refusal to settle their part of the some 5,000 outstanding suits seeking upward of $3.5 billion in damages, and angered by what they knew would be contained in a U.S. General Accounting Office report to be released in the next few days. In essence, the report would confirm that a large portion of the $240 million received so far by the Trustee Council from the 1991 *Exxon Valdez* settlement—$1.025 billion intended to "restore, replace, rehabilitate, enhance, or acquire the equivalent of the natural resources injured, lost, or destroyed" by the oil spill—had been squandered. The council, made up of six state and federal officials, had reimbursed $107 million to government agencies for expenses related to the spill, in some cases for research they had already been funded to perform. Another $40 million had been returned to Exxon for previous cleanup costs, and $19 million had been spent on administrative costs and damage assessments. The report would also criticize the Trustee Council for the glacial pace of its deliberations.

During the five years since the *Valdez* spill, certain damaging effects from the oil have become more evident, while efforts to identify and rectify them have become increasingly ensnarled in big money, politics, and wildly divergent scientific findings. Under the enormous pressure of public opinion, Exxon poured $2.2 billion into Prince William Sound during the first two years following the spill, mostly for cleanup operations, and some of the techniques used—bulldozing, chemical treatments, and hot-water washes—have since been viewed by many scientists as having further damaged the Sound. As early as 1990, a damage-assessment team from Moss Landing Marine Laboratories based near Santa Cruz, California, concluded, in an article published in the *Northwest Environmental Journal*, that "most shore cleanup methods will increase immediate ecological damage and delay recovery."

Nevertheless, Exxon's enormous media campaign has in large part been directed at convincing the public that the cleanup has been effective. The company has run a slew of ads on television, developed a traveling science-information program, produced a documentary for schoolchildren, even provided brochures for tourists at the Alyeska oil terminal.

At the same time, Exxon is involved in litigation with more than a hundred of its insurers, led by Lloyd's of London, that declined to make payments for cleanup costs. The insurers' suit states that "Exxon's expenditures were made solely as a prophylactic measure to protect its corporate public image and profits."

Last August, the demonstrating fishermen issued a position paper that began, "Contrary to continuous Exxon press releases everything is not 'better than ever' in Prince William Sound." It went on to demand the use of settlement funds for meaningful research and restoration of the ecosystem, the acquisition of forest land to help protect the entire habitat, and a resolution to litigation against Exxon. But efforts toward these ends have still barely begun. It has taken the Trustee Council more than two years to draft a comprehensive plan for carrying out its various obligations. And despite assurances of help from Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt (who, as the fishermen well knew, was touring Alaska during the blockade and was instrumental in bringing it to an end three days after it began), Exxon's position, according to Les Rogers, a media-relations spokesperson for the company, remains, "We will see them in court."

Meanwhile, stepped-up logging operations along the Sound have further threatened salmon spawning grounds, the 1993 herring fishery failed along with the pink salmon fishery, and the economy of Prince William Sound, where jobs depend primarily on com-

mercial fishing—not on oil shipping or timber—continues to falter

THE *EXXON VALDEZ* SPILL OCCURRED in early spring in a dynamic body of water that bounds the northernmost temperate rainforest in the world, and it is regarded as the most damaging tanker spill in history. Because the oil was driven from Bligh Reef to 1,200 miles of shoreline, the immediate effects were devastating. Between 3,500 and 5,500 otters died. So did 200 harbor seals and between 300,000 and 580,000 birds. Uncountable plants and microscopic creatures were lost.

North Slope crude is a relatively heavy oil, high in waxes and asphaltics, and therefore slow to disperse and difficult to retrieve. Most of the acutely toxic hydrocarbons exposed to the air evaporate fairly quickly, but the wax, the asphalt, and the less acute but persistent toxins (mutagens and carcinogens) reside on shore and in the intertidal region, as do some acute toxins sealed up in asphalt mats. Toxins also enter various organisms such as harlequin ducks and fish. They lodge in the spleens, livers, and chromosomes and therefore pass from generation to generation, from prey to predator, creating poison trails in the food web.

This toxic persistence has been the subject of scores of studies, all asking the question, Does the oil spill continue to affect life in Prince William Sound? It's a debate that ineluctably draws all players as if into a black hole. Oil spill science is arcane stuff that engenders hairsplitting disputes over sampling and testing procedures, design flaws, and statistics. While government and independent studies have found a probability that oil contamination is a significant factor in the failure of the salmon fisheries, Exxon asserts that its own studies show absolutely no link between the failed fisheries and the spill. In its documentary called *Scientists and the Alaska Oil Spill*, Jerry M. Neff, an Exxon consultant from the Batelle Ocean Science Laboratory, states, "The story is essentially closed. The hydrocarbons are gone."

At best, that is an overstatement. Recent Trustee Council–sponsored research lists 11 "resources" that "show little or no sign of recovery" since the spill, including the intertidal ecosystems, murres, otters, harbor seals, herring, and pink salmon. The dwindling salmon runs, in fact, seem to point to

lingering "sublethal' effects. In 1990, record returns of more than 45 million salmon were immediately attributed in Exxon press releases to the success of the cleanup. But pink salmon have a two-year life cycle, which means that those salmon had been spawned the year before the spill. The following season was the first real test, and although the returns from the 1989 spawn were still large in number—and were therefore cited in the Exxon documentary as another sign of recovery—the fish in fact were small, behaved erratically, and arrived two weeks late, so far along in their maturation cycle that their value

"Salmon have patterns that they follow," says Webber. "But these seem disoriented. They act strange. There's something wrong."

collapsed. Two million fish were dumped at sea because they had been refused by the canneries, and more, otherwise unmarketable, were shipped to Russia as charity. In 1992 the returns were a third of what was expected, and last year the run—the offspring of fish spawned the year of the spill—was a mere five million salmon. According to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, this marked the first time that the Prince William Sound hatchery system registered a decline for three consecutive years since its inception in the early seventies. Beyond the Sound, many areas of Alaska had record and near-record runs last year.

"Salmon have patterns they follow," says longtime Cordova fisherman Bill Webber. "But these seem disoriented, like they don't really know where to go. They seem strange. They act different. There's something wrong."

Ongoing "damage assessment" studies conducted by ADFG biologists reinforce Webber's observation. They

have shown contamination of salmon eggs and slow growth rates for juveniles, which substantially increase their mortality rate. They further show that multiple generations of salmon have been damaged, which means that the effects of oiling are possibly being propagated. Yet none of these studies claims to have isolated the mechanism that has caused the failed runs. And none of the several ADFG researchers I spoke with discounted the possibility that weather cycles, cold sea temperatures, food source depletion, and even the hatchery system itself might also be factors. Sam Sharr, an ADFG biologist studying salmon egg mortality, notes that "it is extremely difficult to set up true controls in a natural environment."

These scientists do, however, challenge Exxon's assertions that there is no relationship between oil contamination and the fishery failures. They charge that Exxon researchers are working with designs and databases that lack "power," that have insufficient range in their samplings. Mark Willett, another ADFG biologist, says that the Exxon studies "did not accurately measure growth rates of juvenile salmon." Both Willett and Riki Ott, a Cordova-based fisherman with a master's degree in marine biology and oil pollution and a Ph.D. in fisheries and marine pollution, make the stunning observation that the juvenile salmon in one Exxon study didn't show increased mortality rates because they were "sheltered," or penned. Once the juveniles are released in the wild, the decreased growth rate is precisely what increases their susceptibility to predation. At a conference last April in Atlanta, Exxon studies that showed a lack of persistence of *Exxon Valdez* oil in Prince William Sound were denounced by researchers from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. In a document handed out to the press, they said that Exxon scientists had skewed NOAA findings by using "selected bits from the raw database" to make their case.

When asked about possible bias in research last November, Ernie Brannon, the lead author of one of two Exxon studies on pink salmon, first said that he didn't feel ADFG salmon researchers gave their own data "the kind of rigorous interpretation that an unbiased reader would give it. I think that's symptomatic of the fact that they are vigilant resource managers. They're looking for ill effects." Of his own work,

he insisted that he was given independence by Exxon but granted that there was "no question about the conditions of employment always being a factor. There's always that bias if the person you work for has something at stake."

There are similar disputes regarding other species—notably murres, which suffered huge losses, mussels, an important food source for seabirds, and herring, for which the evidence of spill-related damage is even stronger than for pink salmon. Fisherman as well as Trustee Council damage-assessment researchers find the notion that Prince William Sound is cleared of

Researchers from NOAA said that Exxon had skewed findings by using "selected bits from the raw database" to make its case.

oil ludicrous. At the time of the blockade last August, the seine fleet took samples of oiled gravel from the Sound to Valdez to display to officials and the press. At a news conference in Cordova that same week, Riki Ott presented Alaska Governor Walter Hickel with a pie tin full of oiled rocks. "There are places out there, if you move a rock, you can smell it," says Bill Webber. When the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation tested a new citrus-based flushing agent on a beach near Sleepy Bay last July, 120 gallons of oily liquid were recovered. And the results of Trustee Council–sponsored surveys, presented at a Trustee Council meeting last November, showed that while the presence of *Exxon Valdez* oil seemed to be declining in Prince William Sound and along the Kenai Peninsula, some oil residue was observed at every one of 59 study sites.

MANY FEEL THERE IS VERY LITTLE that can be done to manipulate the

Sound back into health, that it's best left to heal itself, and that much of the research merely mystifies the obvious: Oil is harmful. Rick Steiner, a biologist and the University of Alaska's Marine Advisory Agent in Cordova, has long said that settlement money would be better used to acquire forest land adjacent to the Sound. He argues that marine habitats and forest are inextricably linked, that clear-cutting here in the subartic creates deserts that require 200 years to rejuvenate, and that in the present market the value of Prince William Sound timber is marginal at best. For these reasons, he says, "The best possible way to allocate monies is to buy back the timber rights, shut down the engines, and secure the entire habitat."

One of Exxon's scientists disputed the government researchers. "They're looking for ill effects."

From the start there has been strong public support for using settlement money to acquire timberland held by Alaskan Native corporations, and in many cases the financially strapped companies are willing sellers. But progress has been agonizingly slow. In the past five years, as logging in the region has increased fivefold, from 40 million board feet in 1988 to an estimated 200 million in 1993, contracts have been negotiated for only two parcels of land—private holdings within Kachemak Bay State Park and on Afognak Island. The most controversial clear-cutting has been on 15,000 acres of land held by the Eyak Corporation not far from Cordova, an area known as the Copper River Delta Region. This despite the facts that the project is operating at a loss and that both fishermen and many native people are actively opposed to it—to the silt that washes into spawning streams and to the visible destruction of a beloved place.

I visited some of those logging sites last fall. There is nothing like a clear-cut to fill one with the sense of barrenness that humankind can wreak: the stumps of several-hundred-year-old trees, smaller unmarketable trees strewn like matchsticks, mudslides, and deep cuts left by machinery. Even now, after long and complex negotiations, a mini-blockade of Eyak logging operations at a bay near Cordova, and a bloodless revolution within the company, the Trustee Council and the Eyak Corporation are still deadlocked. "It would be a real tragedy if, five years after the spill, Prince William Sound is clear-cut," says Pam Brodie, a Sierra Club representative in Alaska.

In recent months, however, the Trustee Council seems to have made more of an effort to move forward on habitat acquisition. In the comprehensive work plan released for public comment in late 1993, 17 parcels of land were selected for possible acquisition, and sources within the Trustee Council and the Department of the Interior say it's likely that several deals will be struck this year. The council is gathering some momentum on other fronts as well. Previously an unwieldly structure headed by an acting administrative director with marginal power, the council now has a new executive director with substantial authority. Jim Ayers, a businessman who has served as director of the Alaska Marine Highway System and as ADFG deputy commissioner, has ordered a review of all past Trustee Council expenditures and is seeking competitive bids for further spill-related projects. Estimated administrative costs for 1994—which include all expenses for a staff of 23—have been reduced to approximately $4.2 million, in comparison with $6 million for each of the two previous years.

Another change is a high-profile research effort called the Prince William Sound Fisheries Ecosystem Research Planning Group, which brought in more than 20 government, university, and independent scientists for its initial meeting in Cordova last December. In its prospectus, it promises to assess the entire Prince William Sound ecosystem, establish a comprehensive scientific database, forecast fisheries production, and avoid tangential, excessively discreet, litigation-driven, or otherwise spurious research. This is the kind of targeted effort that the fishermen had requested in their August position paper. It may also be a way to fight back. Any findings that show damage from *Exxon Valdez* oil will surely be used to prepare for the upcoming court dates with Exxon on May 2 and June 6.

But not everyone is pleased with the new program. Some observers wonder whether the Planning Group is yet another potential example of science cornering funds, and note that it has an as-yet unspecified budget for the remaining eight years in which settlement income will be received from Exxon. One can only hope that the project isn't just another indulgence in the dark, quintessentially late-twentieth-century business of chasing poison, this time in a Sound that is huge and complex to the point of intractibility.

"Why do we need to know every detail about how oil affects a seal's brain?" asks Steiner.

"What they're designing worries me because it's so comprehensive," says Brodie. "I'm alarmed. They could certainly use up the entire settlement studying the Sound into the next century and have no money left for habitat acquisition."

Rick Steiner argues that "this is already the most studied oil spill in history. I'm absolutely furious at the self-centeredness of science. If they could spend all the money on science, they would. A lot of what they've done is so-what science. We know oil is bad for seals. Why do we need to know every excruciating detail about how oil affects seals' brains?" His point is that we have still failed to learn a central truth about environmental destruction: that we long ago passed through the portal to a desolate territory where the consequences of our actions far exceed the values of the lessons they teach. What we need to do now is act on what we already know.

John Keeble is the author of Out of the Channel: The *Exxon Valdez* Oil Spill in Prince William Sound *(HarperCollins)*

Bigger anniversary

WE ALREADY have pointed out in these columns that the professional environmentalists are hoping to earn zillions of national headlines and gobs of prime time television attention on the fifth anniversary of the oil spill in Prince William Sound

A much bigger anniversary, of an event that caused enormously more environmental damage, is coming up at about the same time — but it will draw little or no attention, especially from the eco-crowd which will use the spill date as yet another opportunity to raise big money from the gullible.

The anniversary of the day the Exxon Valdez went aground comes up on March 24

It may come as a surprise to the sky-is-falling crowd that the Prince William Sound spill of 1989 — which was, after all, a transportation accident, not a pipeline catastrophe — isn't even listed by the World Almanac among record oil spills of the world. But no matter. It has became a cash cow for environmental lobbies

For too many, the accident has been institutionalized as an event on which to build careers and one that — with the help of the willing media — will be an everlasting fund-raising tool

THE OTHER anniversary is just three days later

It will be 30th anniversary of the great Good Friday earthquake that ripped Southcentral Alaska on March 27, 1964. It was the most severe quake ever recorded in North America.

You won't, however, be hearing much about the anniversary of the Good Friday quake, even though it did enormous — and in many ways, lasting — environmental violence. It's just not something that will win headlines and TV time for those whose special interest is to raise money in order to beat up on resource development in Alaska.

But we guarantee you're going to be sick to death once again seeing 5-year-old pictures of oily sea otters and dead ducks That's where the money is for the professional eco-crowd

Whiners fear spill lessons

On Feb 17 and 28, the Whine of The Times wrote about Rick Steiner's invitation to our president to visit Alaska during a conference regarding the lessons of the Exxon Valdez oil spill. It seems that when anyone takes a position in the environmental arena that is of any positive nature, the Whiners go into their feeding frenzy However, in their frenzy to pick the most trivial of points and shred things way out of proportion, they continue to show all Alaskans exactly why The Times "didn't move forward . and died"!

Their effort to make the Exxon Valdez oil spill seem like a "past and small inconvenience" for the people of Alaska tells many things — they haven't been out to the spill zones lately, they must really believe that the spill didn't affect or is still not affecting anyone, they must not believe that it could ever happen again, or that the reason that it has happened only once, so far, is due to the intense scrutiny by the people who are the most caring and outspoken for ensuring environmental protection They use the term "environmentalist" as if it were a bad concept

Mr Steiner is a biologist who [illegible]s the University of Alaska's marine biology department As they attempt to insult Mr Steiner in any way they can, I must ask if their "credentials" are better Obviously not! If his invitation to our president to come review the "lessons of the Valdez oil spill" has The Times frothing at the mouth, the Whiners must be a little nervous about what may actually be learned

The Times folks sit at their desks, day by day, insulting anyone and everyone who attempts to protect or offer opinion on our fragile environment, Sadly, their own combined life's knowledge amounts to whining and they offer no solutions to anything

— Dave Parkhurst

Spill conference confusion

Thank you for the Feb 17 editorial about the upcoming Exxon Valdez oil spill conference Publicity will heighten interest in this important event Still, I feel the need to correct some of the editor's misconceptions

The conference is not an opportunity for the environmental community to solicit contributions for their various causes Likewise, the conference will not review the environmental damages caused by the spill

Rather, this month's conference will highlight the steps taken during the past five years to improve the nation's oil spill protections It is a conference on policy issues and technology research, not dead birds and deformed herring

Indeed, a focus on spill prevention, response and oversight measures taken since the spill seems a highly appropriate way to mark the anniversary of the Alaska oil spill After all, many of the nation's oil spill protections we now have arose from the lessons learned from this spill

Alaska can be proud of the new spirit of cooperation and growing mutual trust that now exists among once polarized groups After five years, this is in itself a major accomplishment, and worthy subject material for your next editorial

Doug Schneider
Information Officer
Alaska Sea Grant College Program
Fairbanks

Greenpeace hypocrites

Thanks so much to the hysterical showboats at Greenpeace for sounding the trumpets re the upcoming anniversary of the Exxon Valdez disaster Heaven knows we wouldn't want the environmental community to miss out on a fund-raising opportunity like the fifth anniversary of the tragic event in Prince William Sound

Courtesy of television news, America was able to view several Greenpeace zealots motoring out in their fossil-fuel-powered rubber boat to the ship formerly known at the Exxon Valdez, breaking out their high-tech cans of aerosol spray paint and engaging in a well-publicized illegal act of graffiti

Wielding her can of paint proudly and screeching about the world's unhealthy dependence on fossil fuels, a Greenpeace representative dangled from the ship in her petroleum-based survival suit, spraying madly

I guess the lesson we are supposed to learn is it's OK to be a hypocrite — using oil to help make your point that we shouldn't continue to use oil And it's OK to break the law, breech security and despoil someone else's property if it helps our cause

Never mind that the U S and Alaska passed some of the toughest environmental laws the world following this incident Never mind that the lesson has been learned and oil operators are held to the strictest standards in their Alaska operations Publicizing the improvements that have resulted in the last five years wouldn't make good press or raise bucks

I hope people see these cheap public relations acts by the environmental community for exactly what they are — a way to raise money for Greenpeace and other environmental defenders Maybe they plan to buy more boats with the cash

— Debbie Reinwand, executive director
Arctic Power

Exxon attempt to put dollar value on culture is unacceptable

By GEORGE N. AHMAOGAK, SR.

COMPASS
POINTS OF VIEW FROM OUR COMMUNITY

What price do you place on your culture? Its practices and customs as handed down through the generations?

Friday, I — as an Alaska Native leader — will listen intently, as will my fellow Alaska Natives in the Prince William Sound, to the latest developments in the Exxon Valdez case. Oral arguments are scheduled over fundamental questions. Will the federal district court judge allow compensatory damages to the Alutiqs' subsistence lifestyle and resources resulting from that horrible accident? Or will he buy Exxon's argument that "They do have grocery stores, after all?"

We Inupiat on the North Slope empathized and watched, along with all other Alaskans, in horror at the oil spill and the attempts to clean soiled waters and beaches. As a people whose culture and customs are inextricably tied to the subsistence resources in our area, we wondered, "What about the seals? The fish? The birds? The whales? How will the Alutiq survive?"

I am a whaling captain. Every year, I set forth with my crew. Each spring, we watch for open leads. In the fall, we pray for calm waters. Perhaps a whale will offer itself to us. In a successful hunt, every ritual, every bit of sharing, is governed by ancient rules that hold together and define our culture.

My wife and I have responsibilities mo[illegible]d simply by the fact that we are Inu[illegible]at — and an Inupiat whaling family completes all the tasks necessary regardless of the season. I cannot envision circumstances where we could not do so. Nor can I imagine the effects on my family and my people were we suddenly unable to harvest other resources.

Given the ice conditions on the North Slope, we are fortunate that the oil industry has chosen not to ship over our waters. Imagine, however, if it were otherwise? And the same thing happened here that did in the Prince William Sound?

The North Slope Borough has a strong working relationship with the oil companies in our region, but what seemingly would be inconceivable in terms of the industry's responsibility for oil spill-related damages is happening to our relatives in the Prince William Sound. In the unlikely event of a major spill, whether onshore or offshore, would we, too, be forced to contend with Exxon's attitude? ("They can always go to the supermarket.") Where would we seek redress?

Exxon's attempt to limit its liability to strictly commercial interests is simply unacceptable. Exxon argues that "subsistence" is a right accorded to all Alaskans. True enough. We Alaskans spend a lot of time and energy fighting over rights to certain catches of this state's considerable resources.

On the other hand, what happens when a people's customs and practices are so badly disrupted, whose own patterns of sharing and passing on cultural traditions are "put on hold"? In essence, what the judge will hear from Exxon is that — "Just wait. The fish will come back. The seals will come back. The birds will come back. Give it time, then you can get back to your merry business."

Exxon's legal arguments' miss the point. You hurt, you pay. Exxon wants the Alutiq to demonstrate, in cash value, the extent of their injuries. Exxon wants quantification.

"Exactly how many times did you and your family, including your grandparents, rely on seal meat for sustenance over the past, oh, say, six years?" Exxon wants to reduce the damage to an entire culture to such "measurable" parameters as "Did you seek psychological help because your hunting was prevented?"

The Alutiq cannot afford that attitude. Nor can their fellow Alaska Natives. Exxon is fighting every inch to limit its liability for the damage caused by the oil spill.

I, personally — but especially as a leader — would want someone to pay for an avoidable accident that did so much harm to my people.

Exxon's liability extends beyond the "prove to us how much money you lost" aspect.

Under the circumstances, and considering the damage involved, Alutiq in the Prince William Sound should be accorded compensatory damages. I shudder at the thought of what they already have had to endure.

In contrast to Exxon's characterizations, I know, like most other Alaskans in the rural and coastal areas, we can't just hit the grocery store. Our entire lives are bound by subsistence. The heart of all Alaska Native cultures is based on a simple struggle for survival.

The difference now is that we live in a world where someone is trying to force us to put a dollar value on our cultural practices. Exxon is asking the judge to dismiss the Alutiqs' very real claims on [illegible] rationale that they can always go [illegible]opping.

George N[illegible]ogak Sr. is the mayor of the North Sl[illegible]e Borough.

Greenpeace paints 'Exxon Valdez' on renamed tanker

The Associated Press

FREEPORT, Bahamas — Environmental protesters painted "Exxon Valdez" on the hull of the renamed tanker that five years ago spilled 11 million barrels of oil into Alaskan waters

The ship, now called the SeaRiver Mediterranean and still owned by Exxon, was unloading U.S.-bound oil onto smaller tankers, South Riding Point ship supervisor Angelo Hall said Tuesday.

The protest was intended to mark the upcoming fifth anniversary of the March 24, 1989, Exxon Valdez spill, the worst in U.S. histor[illegible]d Greenpeace spokeswom[illegible]n-thia Rust

"There are far fewer environmental regulations in the Bahamas than in the United States," Rust said "And I think Exxon wanted to avoid bringing this supertanker into U S waters so close to the anniversary of the spill "

The stop in the Bahamas is the ship's first return to North America since it was repaired after the Alaska spill, said Arthur Stephen, spokesman for Exxon's shipping subsidiary SeaRiver Maritime in Houston The tanker has made 46 voyages since then, most in the Mediterranean, and is now awaiting its next assignment

Stephen said the protest Tuesday was broken up by local authorities and did not affect the ship's operations.

The action involved about 15 Greenpeace protesters in four small boats, said Hall.

They approached the ship and wrote Exxon Valdez in large white letters on the ship's hull They also climbed onto a sea anchor and unfurled an anti-pollution banner, Rust said

Police reported to the scene, but Hall said there were no immediate arrests

Greenpeace said the prote[illegible]s was not simply to recall the spill in Prince William Sound, but to alert the public to the ongoing danger of fossil fuels.

"Even if the tanker's not spilling oil into the water, it's spilling oil into the sky in the form of carbon dioxide," Rust said

Some scientists believe that increased levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere from burning fossil fuels could alter the world's climate

Blues processional canceled

By Cindy M. Stimson
The Cordova Times

On March 26, near the fifth anniversary of the Exxon Valdez oil spill, some Cordovans — including Mayor Margy Johnson — wanted to "Bury the Blues," their answer to getting rid of woes and troubles left in the aftermath of the spill.

They were, that is, until the event was canceled, according to information released last week by the Bury the Blues committee.

In a letter to The Cordova Times, J.R. Lewis, manager of KLAM radio and a member of the Bury the Blues planning committee, said he had encountered many people wary of the concept from the start

Lewis says the aim of Bury the Blues was to "allow Cordovans who are tired of fighting with each other to come together and have some fun."

Mayor Johnson said it was a committee decision to cancel the procession

"We wanted something to mark the fifth year and it was meant to be a positive event," she said

Although she has voted in favor of oil exploration and development in the Gulf of Alaska, Mayor Margy Johnson was a leading force behind the sea-burial of the Exxon Valdez oil spill troubles.

Johnson said the Bury the Blues ceremony was a way to bury the past and get on with the future

She acknowledged that the event was not for everyone and that parts of PWS have not yet healed

'We wanted something to mark the fifth year and it was meant to be a positive event.'

— Margy Johnson
Mayor

"It's time to move on, to look into our bright future ahead and kick free of the blues that keep dragging this community back into the spill era," Johnson said.

Rich Septien disagrees

In a rebuttal letter written to the Times on March 3 concerning the event, Septien says he isn't able to "forgive and forget "

Septien wrote, "I find it quite inappropriate to take emphasis off what Exxon did in 1989. Justice has not yet been served. To forgive Exxon without justice being served can be equated to someone raping and killing your mother, then telling you, just forgive them and get on with your life — while the perpetrator is still at large.

"It seems every time I hear this 'forgive and get on with your life' statement, it's coming from someone who is not under the financial gun because of the oil spill," said Septien.

"Feelings are still very tender where this is concerned," Johnson said. "I think we do need to do something to mark the fifth (anniversary) of the spill, but the City is handling that now "

Interim City Manager Ed Zeine said at one time the City was planning to do something to commemorate the anniversary, but they've since decided to do nothing instead

"We're going to let it rest for now, maybe we'll do something this summer, but for right now, we're not going to do anything," said Zeine

Lewis blames the lack of media coverage as one reason the Bury the Blues idea failed

"All of the local media should have done more to explain the purpose of this event really was As a result of inadequate information, a good idea has been killed by rumors, politics and heresy," wrote Lewis

Memories keep Exxon Valdez oil spill alive

By MARYBETH HOLLEMAN

PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND — The weather was warm and clear last July as our boat pulled away from Whittier for a five-day tour of Prince William Sound The last time we'd seen such perfect conditions in the Sound was nearly four years earlier on Perry Island, where we'd spent a week observing the effects of the Exxon Valdez oil spill Back then, we awoke every morning hoping for cooler weather, the hot sun on the beach outside our tents made the oil soft and vaporous, with fumes that made our heads ache. But this trip was more pleasant I was out with my husband and son to enjoy the solitude and beauty of the Sound's wilderness, just as we've done every summer for nearly 10 years The weather was so nice we wore T-shirts and shorts as we crossed the calm, glittering waters in late afternoon light.

As we approached the familiar shape of West Twin Bay on Perry Island, however, I began to feel uneasy I remembered the huge barge that sat in the middle of the bay that summer of the spill It seemed then like a large metal island, brought there to clean the oiled seaweed hauled to its side by fishing boats, trolling for a different catch that season. I toured the barge and even joined a Fourth of July picnic on its football-field-size deck But that was then. Last summer, the only boat in West Twin Bay was ours We anchored behind a spit at the bay's end and watched the sun set In the fading light, we spied a solitary sea otter diving for food offshore

In the morning, I walked the beach — up one side of the spit, down the other Officially, it hadn't been oiled But in that summer of '89 we'd seen tarballs there among the white granite stones I found no tarballs this trip, but I looked twice at every dark-colored rock

I remembered visiting a beach on the other side of Perry Island a year after the spill The gray cobblestones at Meares Point looked clean there, too — it was a "high-energy" beach that got scrubbed and reshaped by winter storms Still, one of us took a shovel and dug down about a foot, and there it was: a thick pool of oil

Except for the clarity of such memories, it was hard to believe now that there'd ever been so much human activity in this place Looking inland last summer, all I could see was the patchwork of dark spruce, emerald meadows and tan rock outcroppings of the hills and mountains All I heard was the high-pitched cackling of an eagle Scanning the water, all I saw were the ripples made by fish, otters and seabirds.

Over the next few days, we traveled Prince

William Sound as far as Whale Bay and Chenega Island We saw only five boats, all of them there for pleasure or fishing. We passed a series of rocks on the water's edge, so smooth they looked like they'd melted in the heat. Upon them were four sea lions, brown velvet basking in sunlight. I was glad to see them again, the summer of the spill, we didn't observe any sea lions hauled out there, though in years past, nearly a dozen frequented these rocks every afternoon

For the rest of our trip, I was reminded of the spill both by what I saw and what I didn't see. I found what I came for: a maze of bogs sprinkled with sundews and iris leading to a crystal lake, columns of ice calving from a tidewater glacier sending long waves to rock our boat, a wave of sea lions snorting and circling us, Dall porpoises arcing in front of our bow. But I also found some painful memories.

And I know now that as long as we have memory, the oil spill won't go away Pools of oil still lay hidden under rocks Sea birds and mammals still struggle to recover Fish stocks are still less predictable than before Even after those outward signs of the spill fade, our memories will not.

J Marybeth Holleman teaches writing at the University of Alaska Anchorage.

Five Years Later: What have we learned?
A free public forum and status report on the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill.

Sponsored by the *Exxon Valdez* Oil Spill Trustee Council
March 22, 1994, 1-5 PM
Regal Alaskan Hotel, 4800 Spenard Road, Anchorage

- Updated information on past effects of the spill and a discussion regarding the outlook for the future
- Maps, photos, computer programs and other up to date information about restoration of the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill will be on display
- Social hour following the program to meet the scientists and the Trustee Council
- Persons who may need a special modification in order to participate in this meeting should contact L.J Evans or Carrie Holba at 278-8008 to make any necessary arrangements
- For more information contact the *Exxon Valdez* Oil Spill Trustee Council, 645 G St , Suite 401, Anchorage, AK 99501 or call 907/278-8012, toll free within Alaska at 800/478-7745, outside Alaska at 800/283-7745

Scientific investigation continues

The Associated Press

ANCHORAGE—Two more conferences are scheduled in Anchorage this week to coincide with the fifth anniversary of the Exxon Valdez spill, already the most scrutinized disaster of its kind.

A three-day meeting beginning Wednesday concentrates on oil-spill prevention in the wake of the Prince William Sound spill. A second meeting, the day before will look at projects to restore the environment.

Other scientific sessions over the past year have pitted Exxon's optimistic findings regarding the damage caused by the spill against more guarded forecasts produced by government agencies.

Numerous reports have detailed the damage: Harbor seals, sea otters, pink salmon, Pacific herring and several kinds of birds—including common murres and harlequin ducks—show "little or no sign" of recovery in Prince William Sound, the state says.

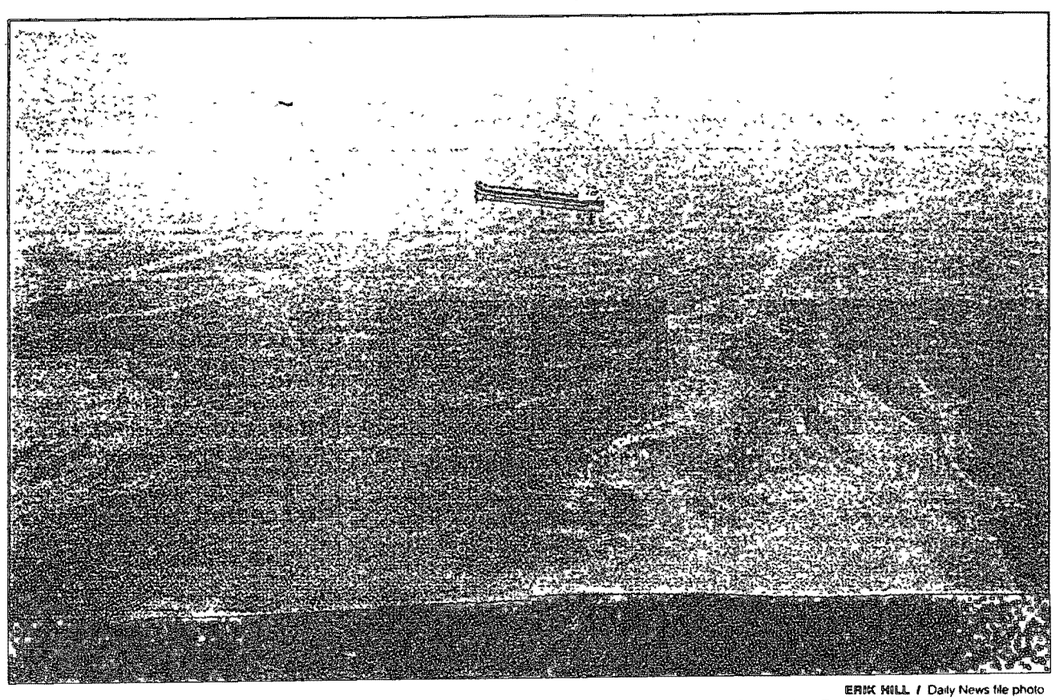
Herring losses are significant, experts say, since the small fish are targeted by commercial fishermen and are a key link in the sound's food chain. Meanwhile, survey teams at Sleepy Bay last year reported oil floating to the surface after chemical treatment.

Pete Peterson, a University of North Carolina marine scientist, said the sound's mussel beds are a lingering concern. Mussel colonies act like armor, shielding any oil trapped under the beds. Peterson says trapped oil may contribute to chronic, low-grade pollution that could do damage over time.

Other species proved nature's resilience Thirteen killer whales disappeared from a Prince William Sound pod between 1988 and 1990, state scientists say that group is growing again.

As many as 300 bald eagles died in the spill Five years later, a draft plan for Prince William Sound restoration notes that eagles already may have recovered.

5 YEARS AFTER THE SPILL



ERIK HILL / Daily News file photo

Oil spills from the tanker Exxon Valdez after it ran aground on Bligh Reef in Prince William Sound.

INSIDE

☐ Seventeen people who had roles in the Exxon Valdez oil spill or the cleanup and investigations that followed reflect on the effects of the worst oil spill in U.S. history and talk about what they're doing now **Metro, B-1**

Time dulls the pain, urgency

By KIM FARARO
Daily News business reporter

No one has forgotten the footage of the stranded tanker belching waves of thick, black crude into Prince William Sound, or the photos of oiled otters, belly up on blackened beaches.

Yet while major gains in tanker safety have been made since the Exxon Valdez disaster that began five years ago today, some of the Sound's protectors say Alaskans are forgetting how difficult it is to clean a catastrophic spill and are losing the will to fight for costly protection

The resulting complacency, those activists say, is slowing needed reforms and threatening to undo some of the improvements in spill protection made since 1989.

Only months ago, there was a striking echo of the unpreparedness that marked the early effort at cleaning up the 11-million-gallon spill from the Exxon Valdez. In each case, a barge was involved.

Just how badly the industry was prepared in 1989 became apparent after the 12:27 a.m radio message from Capt. Joseph Hazelwood to the Coast Guard in Valdez

"We've fetched up hard aground north of Goose Island off Bligh Reef," Hazelwood said in a slow, deep monotone "Evidently we're leaking some oil, and we're going to be here for a while"

In the hours that followed, Alyeska Pipeline Service Co. workers struggled in the dark to reload cleanup equipment onto the company's spill-response barge. Some equipment was in warehouses. Some was buried under mounds of Valdez snow

The barge had been unloaded weeks before for repairs and had not been readied for service.

The barge made it to the stricken ship 14 hours later — and hours too late. By then, the bulk of the oil that spilled had escaped into the Sound

Last December — four years and eight months after that disaster — Alyeska sent its largest barge out of state for maintenance.

The state Department of Environmental Conservation could have demanded the barge stay put until a replacement was found But it didn't

Steve Provant, the department's top man for spill prevention in Valdez, believed Alyeska's assurances that it could handle a spill using backup equipment on other barges.

Provant, the official who directed the state's cleanup effort after the Exxon Valdez spill, changed his mind when a test of a backup skimmer failed But it was too late The barge was gone, and a new one couldn't get there for several weeks

Alyeska, owned by seven of the North Slope oil producing companies, won't be punished for the barge incident. But the state has proposed fining the tanker companies that have spill-cleanup agreements with Alyeska a total of $110,000.

"Complacency is insidious and this is how it starts," said Joe Banta, a spill specialist with the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council, an oil-industry watchdog group "People say nothing happened, so it's OK. But we can't say that because what's the next step backward? The point is, had we had a spill, we might really not have done as good a job because this barge was gone."

Even the most die-hard environmental defenders of Prince William Sound agree the oil industry's ability to prevent and react to spills has dramatically improved since March 1989. In most cases, the changes were mandated by a flurry of state and federal laws passed in the wake of the Exxon Valdez

Tankers that relied mainly on the skills of their crew to keep them out of trouble in the sometimes stormy Sound now have a virtual armada of escort vessels to choose from. Each ship is

"Complacency is insidious and this is how it starts. People say nothing happened, so it's OK. But we can't say that because what's the next step backward? The point is, had we had a spill, we might really not have done as good a job because this barge was gone."

— Joe Banta, Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council

trailed by at least one tug, which could push or pull the tanker away from danger, and a response vessel carrying cleanup equipment in case the rescue fails.

The escort vessels' much-expanded inventory of spill-fighting equipment is considered among the best in the world, and their crews have practiced cleanup maneuvers countless times during the past five years

The Coast Guard stiffened rules for safe travel through the Sound, forbidding sailing in high winds The agency also expects to finish installing a tanker tracking system this summer that will finally allow it to keep tabs on ships all the way through the Sound

Alyeska has instituted tight procedures designed to catch drunken crew members before they board their ships Hazelwood was charged with drunkenness after the disaster, though a jury acquitted him

And in case the Coast Guard or other regulators go soft on industry — as was widely charged after the Exxon Valdez disaster — two citizens' groups have been created that bird-dog their activities and those of the oil companies.

The older of the groups, the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council, spends a lot of time nudging regulators to take a tougher stance with industry on such issues as how much spill equipment is needed. The group receives more than $2 million a year for its work from the oil industry and spends much of its money on scientific and technical studies that test oil-industry assertions about pollution and spill preparedness

But even with all the improvements, environmental regulators and activists say, more needs to be done to keep history from repeating itself.

Some major battles have ended in compromises that will delay improvements for years

In 1990, Congress required oil tankers to have a double hull, but allowed ship owners up to 25 years to switch. The hulls would add what government and other experts say is a critical layer of protection between a ship's cargo tanks and the rocks and reefs that could tear them open.

That same year, Arco Marine tried unsuccessfully to interest Alaska's other oil shippers to join it in designing a super skimmer to augment crude cleanup by small skimmers that slurp oil

Jay Kitchener, an Arco Marine official, said at the time that such improved spill technology was crucial to giving oil companies a fighting chance to pick up more than just a fraction of Exxon Valdez-sized spills

Other battles continue.

The Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council, or RCAC, is leading the fight to get more weather stations installed in the Sound, arguing that the Coast Guard's wind restrictions make sense only if the agency knows how hard the wind is blowing.

The Valdez Coast Guard station agrees that it knows very little about the weather in much of the Sound and relies on ships to report on high winds by radio Officials there have asked for more money from their Washington, D.C., headquarters to add reporting stations, but have not yet won approval

RCAC also is pushing regulators to consider making Alyeska add versatile tugs to its response fleet The citizens' group has joined shippers in paying for a study of the tugs and other response equipment that is expected to be completed this year

Fishermen and environmentalists are still pushing the Coast Guard to order tanker escorts in less-traveled Cook Inlet And Dan Lawn, a longtime DEC official and oil-industry critic, is still hoping for rules that would increase the size of tanker crews to reduce fatigue on ships.

At the same time, battles that already were won are being refought.

RCAC's Joe Banta is trying to get regulators to adhere to post-Exxon Valdez legislation that required agencies to stash spill-response equipment at depots around the state

The law, passed in 1989, was written to ensure that

themselves from spills if industry and government spill-fighters were overwhelmed Banta recalled that volunteers were forced to build booms made of logs during the Exxon Valdez spill because no other boom was available.

No depots have been created yet. Pete Wuerpel of the state's division of emergency services, which is charged with creating the depots, says the division has so far purchased a communications system for use in remote areas He says such systems are essential to efficient spill cleanup.

Wuerpel blames the DEC for delays in getting other equipment, saying the agency officials haven't said what they think would work best. The DEC says it has been difficult to figure that out because each community's needs are different. The agency is testing equipment this year so it can make recommendations to the emergency services division

RCAC also is expecting to follow up results of a 1992 study showing some tankers plying Prince William Sound would need hours — and in one case, days — to deploy towing gear mandated years ago Tankers that lose power can use the cables to connect to tugs that can control the bigger ships' movement. The Sound's tugs also have towing gear, but the author of the study said a good towing system deployed from a tanker would likely work better in stormy seas.

With so much to accomplish, oil-spill activists say they need every ounce of support they can get from the public, the regulators, the legislature and the industry Instead, they say, attention is straying, threatening not only future reforms but those already made.

Stan Stephens, a Valdez charter boat operator who heads RCAC, and others say DEC will need to be more aggressive if it hopes to keep up with an oil industry increasingly concerned with saving money as production declines.

That decline already has had an effect. Late last year Alyeska announced it would cut the number of people who tie up tankers for loading. The company cited declining oil production for the cutbacks. Company officials said that if they needed help with the tankers, they would call in workers whose only job had been to prepare for oil spills.

Alyeska said the move won't hurt oil-spill preparedness because it will only need the workers occasionally. But environmental activists see history repeating itself. Alyeska dismantled the crews dedicated to oil-spill response in the early '80s Those crews were re-created June 1, 1989, after a frustrated Gov. Steve Cowper put pressure on Alyeska

In the legislature, politicians sympathetic to the oil industry, including Republican Rep. Joe Green, continue to try to roll back a 5-cents-a-barrel tax imposed on Alaska crude after the Exxon Valdez spill The tax is expected to raise $26 million this year

The legislature enacted the tax in 1989 so the state would have the ability to clean up oil and other hazardous spills But the money is paid into a fund with broader uses, and it has become an important funding source for the DEC. The agency is using the money in part to beef up monitoring of companies' abilities to clean up oil and other types of spills.

Mead Treadwell, deputy DEC commissioner, said the idea behind the increased inspections is to avoid repeating past mistakes Although Alyeska had a spill-response plan in 1989, regulators hadn't carefully checked to see if it was doable It wasn't.

Industry supporters have argued that the oil industry shouldn't have to pay for nonoil cleanups, but a recently released legislative audit says the tax money can be used for those purposes.

The audit also says funding cuts could jeopardize DEC's ability to maintain a viable prevention program, which it suggests is key to avoiding another Exxon Valdez disaster. The auditors noted that the state oil spill commission investigating the spill blamed the disaster in good part on the lack of focus on prevention and on complacency.

"We wonder whether complacency is again taking root," the audit said

FIRST OF A SERIES: OIL SPILL ANNIVERSARY

SPILL LEAVES A LASTING SHEEN

AROUND the SOUND

EXXON VALDEZ
FIVE YEARS LATER

Today the News-Miner begins a three-day series to mark the fifth anniversary of the nation's worst oil spill, the Exxon Valdez disaster of March 24, 1989.

- Today: The spill touched many lives. Some have benefitted, others have suffered, but one thing is sure: Life will never be the same in Prince William Sound.
- Monday—Cordova, hit hard by the spill, fights to rid itself of complications caused by the disaster and looks forward to its day in court against Exxon. Meanwhile, biologists say the fish aren't coming back.
- Tuesday——Could it happen again? Since the spill, the oil industry has spent millions on spill prevention. News-Miner Staff Writer Kelly Bostian takes a ride on a Ship Escort Response Vessel tailing an oil tanker through Prince William Sound.

By KELLY BOSTIAN
Staff Writer

VALDEZ—Stan Stephens sat back in his downtown Valdez business office one Sunday morning and looked out the front windows to snow-covered mountains and slushy streets.

The captain and tour boat business operator looked every bit the part of an old salt. His steel blue eyes reflected the bright morning light. A close-trimmed beard traced his jawline, an extension of his thinning hair, white as hoarfrost.

He looked often out that window as he discussed the past five years.

Much has changed in his life and the lives of others since the Exxon Valdez struck Bligh Reef some 50 miles southeast of the port town and dumped an estimated 11 million gallons of crude into Prince William Sound.

Like a greasy stain on a white shirt, the spill isn't something easily wiped away. Five years later, a sheen remains over life in the sound's communities.

In the summer Stephens runs a fleet of boats, urging tourists to "see the sound," as he has since 1971. In the winter he spends 40 to 60 hours a week as an oil industry watchdog, doing what he can to ensure another spill won't happen.

"I don't think I have stopped ever since then (the spill)," Stephens said. "It has totally, totally changed my life. I have no free time anymore, because you try to make up time spent on the issues to keep your own business running."

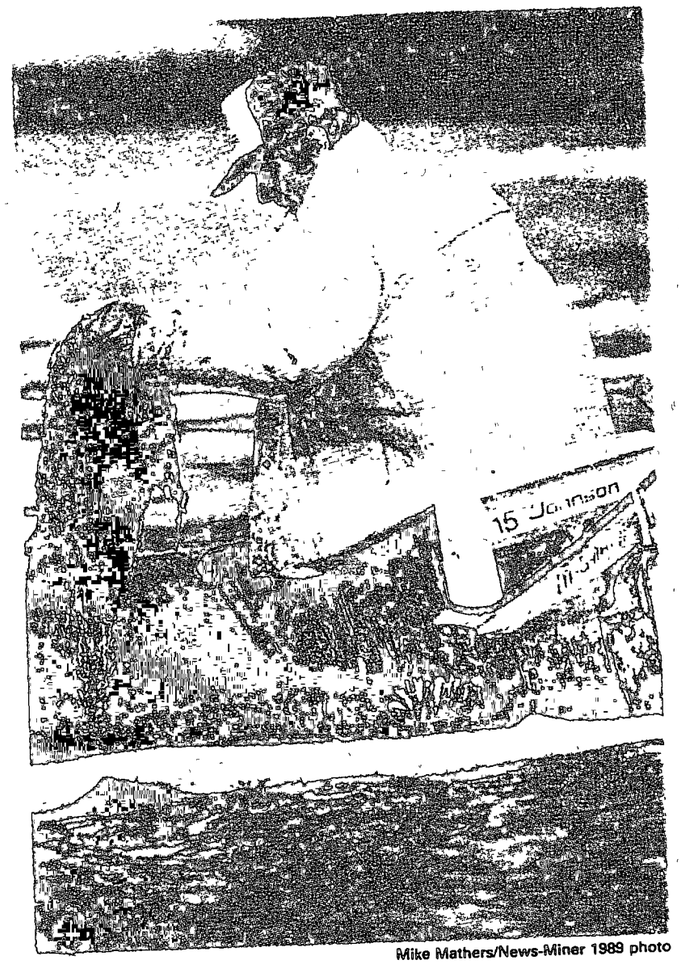
For better or for worse, people in communities as diverse as Valdez, an oil town at one end of the Richardson Highway, and Chenega, a remote Native village, will never be the same.

Valdez has prospered the past five years. The spill was far from the town and the crude flowed soutwest and away. The greatest effect was a huge influx of laborers seeking high-paying cleanup jobs. Residents had to put up with lines at the post office, traffic jams, fender-benders, and crowds. It was tourist season multiplied by five hundred.

As the home of Alyeska Pipeline Service Co.'s Valdez Marine Terminal, the city is growing as the company adds staff and builds new facilities to better handle its marine traffic and expand efforts to avoid another spill.

The only problems are a housing crunch and that utility systems are being used to near maximums. Stories of rent price-gouging are surfacing The charter boat fleet expanded

ON THE ROCKS—A tanker lightens the load of the Exxon Valdez as it sits grounded at Bligh Reef in March 1989. The tanker spilled about 11 million gallons of crude oil



Mike Mathers/News-Miner 1989 photo

FOUL JOB—A cleanup worker hoists an oiled mass from the waters of Prince William Sound in March 1989.

on oil spill cleanup money. The tourists are back in numbers greater than ever.

It's a different story at Chenega, 80 miles to the southwest.

A village of about 80 people in winter and 350 in the summer, Chenega grew off the bounty of fish and wildlife harvested from the protected waters that surround Evans Island in southwest Prince William Sound.

But five years ago, the village lay directly in the path of oil flowing from the Exxon Valdez. Oil boom was dragged into the area to protect a fish hatchery about a mile down shore. While it helped shelter the shore in front of the village, oil basically hit the village square.

Larry Evanof, president of the village council, wonders if life ever will be the same there.

"We used to have a saying, when the tide is out the table is set. It doesn't happen like that around here anymore," Evanof said.

People of the village, he says, are afraid to eat their traditional foods, a large part of which were clams and mussels gathered from the shoreline.

"People go out and they see the oil out there so they don't bother with the clams or mussels anymore," he said. "The majority of meat people are eating now comes from stores in the bigger towns."

Last year Evanof joined recreational clam diggers at Deep Creek on the Kenai Peninsula Then he shared his wealth upon returning home. "So I guess you could say we are still eating clams, but not from around here," he said

Change of diet aside, Evanof said his concern is for younger generations. Seal hunting is a rare activity now, with those marine mammals fewer in number, he said. And the staples—the clams and mussels—no longer are harvested. It may be years before people feel it is safe to eat them again.

"I think we are losing a generation. A lot of the kids, their parents are afraid to give them the traditional foods," Evanof said "They are growing up and not using it There is a big loss there. We are losing a generation of gatherers."

It's anyone's guess when the beaches will return to normal. "Exxon said some of that oil they picked up off the beaches came from the earthquake in 1964, from the communities that were destroyed then. That's 30 years ago the same day as the Exxon Valdez. So who knows how long," he said.

Fish prices have been low and last year the salmon run was weak, so seasonal income has been less than in past years. Working on cleanup operations in the three years since the spill allowed some villagers to make money to pay for their new food sources and tide them over through poor fishing seasons.

But the people of Chenega still are angry.

"There are still a lot of upset people. It has changed our lives," Evanof said. "But I guess you've got to go on, find another way to keep going."

While Chenega residents suffer from the changes they see on their beaches at low tide, many Valdez residents continue to enjoy a rising tide of new jobs, new business, and more money.

"The spill was great for us and almost every business in town benefitted in one way or another," said Valdez mayor John Harris, a Valdez native who worked for his parents in Harris Sand and Gravel during the spill. He now owns Valdez Industrial Supply.

The furor over the spill has mostly died down in Valdez, he said. "I think that overall people in the community are relaxed. You want them to be able to relax and not have to constantly worry about it."

With a citizens' advisory group dogging the industry and constant news bits appearing about Alyeska measures to prevent future spills, people have a general feeling that things are well in-hand, he said.

"I think the industry overall has done a good job of policing itself and making sure things are taken care of. There are some people in the community with concerns, but I think anything the industry did would be the wrong thing as far as they are concerned."

Terry Hermacher, board member of the Prince William Sound Conservation Alliance, said the two best things to come of the spill are increased communication between the oil industry and residents, and Alyeska's Ship Escort Response Vessel System.

"Although there are still those people who just don't care, the ones who say, 'Please God give us another spill, we promise not to piss the money away this time,' " he said.

Hermacher doesn't get out on the sound as much as he used to. He sold the wooden barge he built years ago, and then piloted during the early phases of the spill cleanup. His favorite pastime is beachcombing, as evidenced by the many glass floats, shells, and other seashore items that decorate his Valdez trailer home.

"The sound doesn't have the magic it used to have for me," he said.

During the spill he spent two weeks combing the beaches for Exxon, picking up birds smothered by oil.

"I never made more money but it was the worst thing I've ever experienced," he said. "One day I walked 30 miles of beach without seeing a living thing—not a bird, otter, nothing."

The communication between the oil industry and small towns mostly happens now through the Regional Citizens' Advisory Council, a formal entity formed by the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 in the wake of the spill. Local activists first organized in 1989, then found their power as an RCAC with a $2 million annual budget

provided by Alyeska. Stephens has been president of the group since the start. RCAC includes representatives of 18 member organizations and communities affected by the spill.

The RCAC has come a long way in five years, he said.

"We have come out of most of the emotional-anger-hate syndrome to where we are trying to understand the oil industry and trying to get them to understand us," Stephens said. "If we ever can come together, we might set a precedent that might be useful worldwide. I think RCAC has to succeed for that reason."

Council members and subcommittees tackle complex issues such as the weather restrictions, Alyeska terminal emissions, the suitability of escort vessels, environmental concerns, and spill response abilities. They have funded studies into many of those areas.

Stephens, who never thought of himself as an environmentalist, now said he has joined others in recognizing himself under that title.

"I've heard (Gov.) Wally Hickel say that the good Lord put all these things in the earth to better the life of people—the oil, the coal—and I agree with that."

"But he also gave man brains and enough sense that we should be able to move and extract these items without damaging the environment. So that by moving them we're not going to totally destroy the rest of our lives," he said. "There is a balance, and I think we can find it."

Kelly Bostian/News-Miner

OIL INDUSTRY WATCHDOG—Stan Stephens sits on the bridge of his Prince William Sound tour boat, the Nautilus. He said his 23-year-old tour business would have gone broke had he not leased the boat for spill-cleanup operations five years ago. When not running his business Stephens labors as an oil industry watchdog.

Cordlova looks to May Exxon trial

By ROSANNE PAGANO
Associated Press Writer

CORDOVA—Tides and times have been kind to Prince William Sound in the five years since the Exxon Valdez rammed a charted reef, dumping nearly 11 million gallons of crude oil into pristine waters.

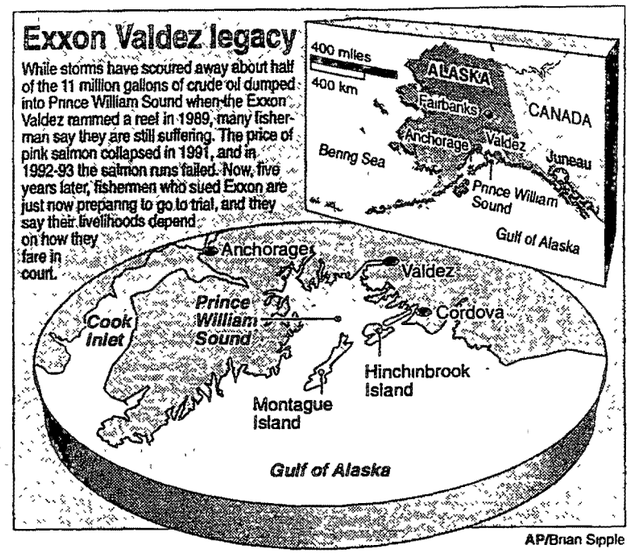
Storms have scoured Alaska's 1,500 miles of polluted coastline, removing about half the oil embedded in some places. Many beaches look clean. Population forecasts for bald eagles are good. The tourists are back.

"It's behind us," said John Manly, an aide to Gov. Walter J. Hickel, whose administration won a $900 million settlement from Exxon Corp. in 1991.

But it's not over for the people of Cordova, homeport to Prince William Sound's commercial fishing fleet.

Cordova fishermen are among the plaintiffs who filed damage claims in the wake of

FUTURE UNCERTAIN—Fisherman R.J. Kopchak, his wife Barclay and youngest child, Zeben, 4, stand by their fishing boat in Cordova. Because of low fish prices and poor salmon runs, Kopchak was forced to sell one of his two boats. Depending on this year's run, he says he may have to give up fishing and move out of Cordova.



AP/Brian Sipple

the March 24, 1989 accident. They are only just getting their day in court, and until they do, they will not turn the page on the Exxon Valdez.

They blame the Valdez spill for bad salmon harvests over the past two years. They say they are just hanging on, and that massive Exxon is trying to wait them out, an assertion the company denies.

"It's been a war of attrition," says salmon fisherman R.J. Kopchak, a former Cordova city councilman whose three-story house overlooks Cordova's dock and forested Orca Bay.

A typical week's mail, stacked on Kopchak's kitchen table, contains court notices about his lawsuit: More papers to sign, more documents to file.

"We know one guy, a fisherman here with a valid claim, who just quit sending in his paperwork. Refuses to do it anymore," Kopchak says as he scans the foggy bay.

"The longer Exxon and its attorneys can make it miserable for you, the greater the chance the settlement will be less."

Kopchak is among fishermen who say this summer's salmon season could be his make-or-break year. If the run fails or prices are weak, Kopchak says he may have to polish up his carpentry skills and move his wife and four young children somewhere else.

"I built this castle because I figured I'd live and die here," he says. "I really love this place. We don't lock our doors, we don't worry about our kids. The problem is, what I want to do is fish."

Lawyers for Exxon, the world's largest corporation, reject any suggestion that delay was a tactic. Complaints have been separated into state and federal class actions, each with separate trial judges, schedules and evidence rules.

The federal suit, scheduled to start May 2, includes 100,000 potential class members. Some estimates put the damages at $1.5 billion or more.

A trial in state Superior Court is scheduled to start June 6 and includes seven towns oiled in the spill's path. The mayors want compensation for municipal services they say were diverted in response to the spill.

Other state plaintiffs include 13 Alaska Native corporations; they claim damage to their land and archaeological sites. Natives also sued Exxon in federal court over damage to their traditional ways, which depend on the sound for food.

Evidence-gathering for all these actions has consumed the past five years. The company said more than 5 million pages of documents have changed hands; nearly 2,000 depositions were taken.

A list filed by Exxon names 315 planned witnesses in the federal case. Plaintiffs planned to call 270 witnesses in a case scheduled to last all summer. Authorities will testify on marine science, land values, fish abundance and—hardest of all—whether there are any lingering effects of the spill.

In Cordova, everyone wants an Exxon settlement—even townspeople with no claim pending.

"We don't want to be known as the oil spill town any more," Mayor Margy Johnson said.

Seated at a table in the restaurant of her dockside hotel, Johnson points out a pair of sea otters playing in icy waters where, in late February, the fishing fleet is idle. Some Cordovans, hoping for a new image as a tourist town, say the city should adopt a new slogan—"sea otter capital of the world" is mentioned.

Johnson, a can-do businesswoman, wants action.

Until it was abruptly canceled this week, she was helping organize Cordova's first "Bury the Blues Day" on March 26. The event, complete with a New Orleans-style band parading through town, was aimed at uniting the community. But organizers called it off when too many people complained they weren't yet ready to forgive and forget.

"For Cordova, the spill was like a death in the family," Johnson says. "I'm appalled that five years later there's still no settlement with Exxon. That's like trying to get over a death when you can't read the will."

Cordova, a town of nearly 2,600 on the sound's eastern edge, is reached only by boat or plane.

Nearly half the work force is directly employed in fish harvesting or processing. State labor economists reported this month there was "little prospect" that salmon prices would bounce back soon.

Employment has receded over the past three years, sales receipts dropped and more than two dozen homes are on the market, the state said.

Real estate agent Linden O'Toole—among the only families to get out of fishing, remain in Cordova and pursue a new occupation—says she is fielding about as many inquiries from out of state as from Cordovans looking to buy.

O'Toole, who is supporting her fisherman husband and two small children, says earnings from real estate have gone to pay off tens of thousands of dollars in fishing debts.

"I'm hoping for our sake and a lot of people in this town that Exxon will come through with a settlement," she says. "They're a huge company. They don't need to hurt families like ours to do business."

In 1990, one year after the spill, the fleet turned in a near-record pink salmon harvest and prices were good. Then, in 1991, prices on the worldwide market collapsed and harvests were dumped back into the sea.

The next two years, for undetermined reasons, the run failed. Last year, the Pacific herring season, which typically begins in April and is the fishermen's first cash crop of the year, was cut short in Prince William Sound when schools failed to materialize. Some fish were diseased.

Last year, frustrated by Exxon's claims that the spill caused no ongoing harm, a mosquito fleet of 65 seiners gave up the dismal pink salmon season to bottle up the Port of Valdez, terminus of the trans-Alaska oil pipeline. For nearly two days, no tankers could arrive or depart during the protest.

"I will never forgive and forget," says 42-year-old Doug Pettit, a Cordova fisherman who since 1987 has run a local heating repair business to tide his family over the winter.

"It's as if someone murdered my daughter," he says "You can never forgive the person who did that."

Pettit is an oil-spill domino. Since fishing has declined, he has worked harder at the heating company. But his neighbors are living on savings and hopes for an Exxon settlement, and Pettit—who also has an Exxon claim pending—said he has gotten lenient on pricing.

"It isn't like you tapped a new resource," he says, taking a break one rainy morning as he coaxed heat from the pipes at the fishermen's union hall, in Cordova's downtown.

"You're still working with money from fishing. We all share the problem."

SECOND OF A SERIES: OIL SPILL ANNIVERSARY

Sound fishermen offered little hope

Study details oil's impact on salmon

By KELLY BOSTIAN
Staff Writer

VALDEZ—Fishermen of Prince William Sound are used to lousy forecasts—arctic gales, high seas—but the forecast for fishing this summer is one that really is going to hurt.

"Unless we are totally haywire, we are predicting a very low return of salmon to the sound again this coming year," said Ted Cooney, a University of Alaska Fairbanks biological oceanographer. "It is a little like predicting the weather, but at the moment our prediction is a low return of both wild and hatchery fish."

The forecast for herring isn't much better. Alaska Department of Fish and Game biologists expect to see a herring return of 30,000 to 40,000 tons in 1994. It is not an all-time low, but it pales in comparison to highs in recent years of more than 100,000 tons.

Oil left from the Exxon Valdez spill five years ago may be at least partly to blame.

A recent Fish and Game study, yet to be published, shows that salmon in streams that were oiled have a lower survival rate. It also indicates that the salmon that were reared from eggs laid in oiled streams may have suffered some genetic damage.

Fish and Game biometrician Brian Bue wrote in a December memo to Commissioner Carl Rosier, ". . . there is a difference in embryo survival between oil contaminated and control streams and that these differences are carried by the parents. The question still remains whether this is a direct consequence of the oil spill. There is the potential that this pattern of survival was present prior to the spill. I personally doubt it."

Herring meanwhile, seem to be dying from a virus that causes skin lesions and eventual death, said John Wilcock, herring research biologist with Fish and Game in Cordova. "There is every indication that the virus always has been around and always has been present all along

the coast," he said. "What brings it on is high levels of stress."

That stress could be due to a lack of available food in the sound, or possibly to exposure to toxins. "The link to the oil spill that some people are talking about comes from a number of studies that show that fish exposed to toxins have reduced resistance to disease," he said. "But it is unknown what level of exposure herring experienced in the sound . . . at best, there is some speculation that it could have contributed to some level of mortality due to the disease."

The foul predictions add to the strain that salmon and herring fishermen of the area have suffered since the tanker Exxon Valdez cracked its hull against a charted reef and dumped 11 million gallons of crude into the sound.

"A lot of fishermen are in financial straits," said Michelle Hahn O'Leary, who represents Codova District Fishermen United. "Unlike what Exxon likes to report, not every fisherman worked on the spill and not everyone that did made huge amounts of money. A lot of them are just hanging on, waiting for the (Exxon) settlement, hoping with fingers crossed that the fishing will be better next year. If it isn't I know lots of people will be losing boat, permits, houses. . . ."

A year after the spill, salmon came back in record numbers, but prices were dismally low. Herring came back in record numbers as well. But since then both fish stocks have declined, and some fingers are pointing toward Exxon crude as the culprit.

But is poor production in oiled streams and a possible link between toxins and herring enough to explain the run failures?

"It is a mystery no longer," said Riki Ott, chairman of the habitat committee for United Fishermen of Alaska. The activist, who has master's and doctorate degrees in marine pollution, is convinced oil has played a large role in fishery declines.

"The interesting thing I find in the studies is there were effects exhibited by the pink salmon embryos when the effluent from the tests showed no sign of oil," she said.

Mike Mathers/News-Miner 1989 photo

ON THE ROCKS—An oil spill cleanup worker surveys a beach as crude oil clings to rocks below. Five years later, scientists are finding the crude that hit Prince William Sound beaches may be having a lasting effect on salmon populations.

That opens possibilities that fish are responding to chemicals present in stream sediments or in the water in levels modern sampling methods can not detect, or that fish are affected by much lower levels of chemicals than previously thought.

While she believes oil played a big role in the declines, she said recent downturns likely are a result of many factors. "It is a matter of what was the straw that broke the camel's back," she said.

UAF's Cooney isn't willing to put so much weight on the oil theory. "Probably 20 or 30 percent of the pink salmon populations can be accounted for from the streams that are oiled, in terms of death in natal habitats. But that doesn't square with the magnitute of failures in all streams in the sound," he said.

Cooney said long-term oceanographic and climatic changes can bring about periods of high or low productivity. He believes Prince William Sound is in a low right now, and therefore predicts a low pink salmon return this coming summer.

Much of his population theory is tied to the abundance of plankton, which are a major food source for both salmon and herring. "Salmon feed almost exclusively on plankton," he said. "The spill year, 1989, was excellent for planktivorous fish. Since that time plankton has declined."

The lack of plankton is doubly bad for salmon and herring, because other fish, such as pollock and tom cod, that normally feed on plankton then turn to salmon and herring fry as a food source.

There is no simple answer, Cooney said.

"It's not an either or. There are a couple things happening in the natural environment that it is tuned in such a way to have a lower carrying capacity . . . and there seems to be a lingering oil spill effect in the southern part of the sound."

Escort system means safer Sound

AROUND the SOUND

EXXON VALDEZ FIVE YEARS LATER

By KELLY BOSTIAN
Staff Writer

ABOARD THE FREEDOM SERVICE—Across the glassy, black waters of Port Valdez our companion ship, despite its size, was barely visible.

The morning's mixed rain and snow had stopped, and a few lingering clouds hung over the bay like wisps of pipe smoke. Through the haze we could make out the black outline of the oil tanker Keystone Canyon.

Its tanks topped off with crude oil from the trans-Alaska pipeline, two tugboats labored to push the behemoth clear of the Valdez Marine Terminal.

Three football fields long and nearly two wide, it carried more than a million barrels of crude—a precious and toxic cargo. The bottom of its hull plied the depths 75-feet below the surface, about as far down as a five-story building is high.

I was aboard a modified supply boat, the Freedom Service, which, along with the tugboat *Dr. Jack*, would pull out from Valdez Harbor to flank the big tanker like a pair of tiny pulling guards leading a huge halfback downfield.

The two vessels and crews are part of a fleet of eight owned by Tidewater Pacific and in service under contract with Alyeska Pipeline Service Company The boats are the frontline defense against disaster.

Capt. Jerry Richmond, of Galliano, La., a 40-year-old sailor who has been a certified captain half his life, summed up our job for the day. "We will be within a quarter mile of him at all times.

LAST OF A SERIES: OIL SPILL ANNIVERSARY

TANKER TALK—Freedom Service mate Scott Bossert and captain (in training) Neal Ford discuss features of the ship's radar as they follow the oil tanker Keystone Canyon through Prince William Sound.

We're in the business here to prevent stuff from happening," he said with his mild Cajun accent.

"Stuff," like what happened on March 24, 1989.

That's when the oil tanker Exxon Valdez veered out of tanker traffic lanes to avoid icebergs and then smacked into charted Bligh Reef, cracked open its hull and spilled 11 million gallons of crude oil into Prince William Sound. The Good Friday disaster was the largest oil spill in U.S. history.

Since that time, no tanker leaves Port Valdez without at least two escorts from Alyeska's Ship Escort Response System, or "SERVS vessels," such as the Freedom Service and the Dr. Jack.

Capt. Tim Plummer, manager of marine operations for Alyeska, was hired to set up the SERVS outfit in 1989. While the system still is evolving, he said he feels good about what is in place so far.

Earlier in the day, he had escorted me on a tour of the Valdez Marine Terminal. We sat in his parked truck, outside his office, and pondered whether the system guarantees no more spills.

As snowflakes landed on his windshield and dissolved into tiny rivulets, his conservative official remarks finally melted away to show his personal confidence. "You can never say never," he first said. But finally he offered, "If I was a betting man I think that the programs we have in place would make me comfortable enough to bet that there will not be another major oil spill in Prince William Sound."

It is tough to find critics of the SERVS program. Although the Regional Citizen's Advisory Committee is somewhat at odds with Alyeska over its choice of vessels, a disabled tanker towing study out soon should help settle that dispute "But it's 100 percent better than what we had before the spill," said RCAC president Stan Stephens.

"Still, you won't see me give SERVS too much credit, because it should have been put in place a long time ago, before the spill "

What's new?

- In addition to the SERVS escorts, several new developments have changed the way tanker traffic is handled, or will be handled, in Prince William Sound.
- Speed limits. Tankers can travel at a maximum of 10 knots in the sound—6 knots through the Valdez Narrows.
- One-way traffic zones. The U.S. Coast Guard has established one-way traffic restrictions when icebergs flow into the tanker traffic lanes.
- Satellite Tracking. The U.S. Coast Guard is installing a Global Positioning System, due to be online by July of this year, that will track tankers through the sound with an accuracy to within 10 feet. Tankers will carry a "black box" as part of the system. Existing radar has been upgraded to track ships in inclement weather. The radar will be integrated with the GPS system
- Double hulls. A federal requirement mandates that all oil tankers will have double hulls by the year 2015
- Alcohol testing Oil tanker captains and state-licensed pilots are subject to alcohol testing before boarding a tanker
- State-licensed pilots now board inbound tankers before they reach Bligh Reef, and pilot outbound tankers out past Bligh Reef.
- Weather Restrictions. The U.S. Coast Guard will not allow a laden tanker to leave the marine terminal if winds exceed 40 knots. Extra tugboat escorts are required in the Valdez Narrows if winds are 30 knots or more. Also, no laden tanker can leave Prince William Sound if seas at Hinchinbrook Island are 15 foot or higher, or if winds exceed 60 knots.

Changes have been many in the oil shipping industry in the past five years. "I have been in this business basically my whole career, and the way we do business changed for everybody in 1989," Plummer said

The focus, he said, is on spill prevention. Oil spill response is important and spill drills are conducted every week, but the reality is that oil spill containment and cleanup always will be subject to the whims of weather.

Weather forecasts ahead for my trip on the Freedom Service looked relatively mild.

However, a Coast Guard one-way traffic restriction was in place. Icebergs had calved off Columbia Glacier and floated into the tanker lanes. Traffic was one-way from the Valdez Narrows all the way out to Naked Island.

If an inbound tanker arrived, it would have to wait out beyond Naked Island until our little flotilla passed.

Richmond said Icebergs were plentiful in the area near Bligh Reef when the Freedom Service escorted a tanker through the sound the night before.

Sitting in the captain's chair on the bridge, radar screens flanking him, he described the scene from the night before. "He (the tanker) slowed down to about four knots and we pulled up ahead. I had his bow right off my starboard side. We turned on our searchlights," he said.

The escort boats swept the waters with their lights, and crew members scanned the water with night-vision binoculars The two little escorts led the giant tanker through the icebergs, serving as a pair of floating headlights.

Radar can pick up icebergs, but at night, in times of low visibility, and when ice warnings are heavy, a human eye now will scan the waters as well.

It is a relatively new procedure, begun after the Overseas Ohio, an inbound tanker, smacked into an iceberg near Bligh Reef and cracked open its bulbous bow on January 4. The unladen tanker did not spill any oil, but was sent back south without a load

Experts guess that tanker hit a submerged or low-floating berg, heavy with morraine material—basically a floating rock. Several boats had passed through the area prior to the tanker and not spotted the berg.

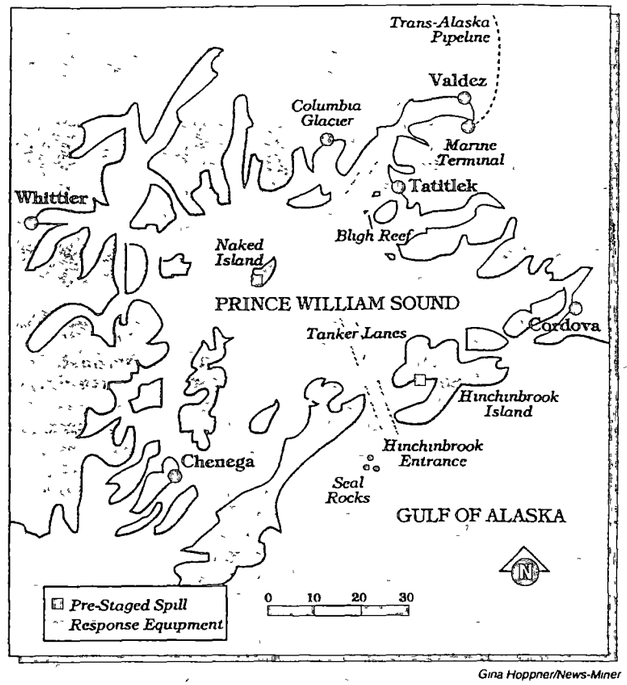
My ride on the Freedom Service would take me along the port side of the Keystone Canyon as it made its way out through Prince William Sound, until it passed Hinchinbrook Island and found Seal Rocks off its starboard side—the boundary between Prince William Sound and the wide-open Gulf of Alaska. We left Valdez Harbor at about 1 p.m. and would return at about 2:30 a.m

Our top speed would reach 10 knots, but we slowed to 6 knots in the Valdez Narrows, where our ship moved to within 300 yards of the tanker.

The tanker can move faster, but is required by law to go slow, mostly to allow the escorts the ability to assist if there is trouble. "He could leave us in the dust if he wanted to," Richmond said.

Richmond has piloted the Freedom Service for three years. It is 207- feet long, 40-feet wide, and on the bridge the captain stands about 35- feet above the water's surface.

Boats such as the Freedom Service are used all over the world, usually as a supply boats, Richmond said. "These boats have a lot of deck space for supplies, but we're carrying oil spill equipment, and a towing package too," he said, pointing to the mounds and boxes of equipment painted orange or covered with orange tarps on the back deck. In the forward center of the deck stood a spool eight feet tall and wrapped with cable thick as a man's arm—part of the towing package.



Gina Hoppner/News-Miner

Variable-pitch propellers on the boat take the 7,500 horsepower of its rumbling engines and turn it into maneuvering power suitable for tight quarters, Richmond said. "You can make these boats just barely inch along. You can move it at a half knot if you want to," he said. "We've towed rigs, we've towed barges. I've towed tankers with it," he said.

The boat is manned by the captain, mate, chief engineer and a crew of 10. Also on board is an Alyeska representative.

Rob Cowart is assigned to the Freedom Service. On our trip, he logged the ship's progress and radioed in periodic reports. In the event of a spill he becomes an on-site coordinator. "Other than that, my job is to stay out of the way," he said with a chuckle.

Cowart said emergency equipment on board includes two 385-barrel-per-hour oil skimmers, 3,000-feet of rapid-deployment oil boom, 1,600-feet of inflatable ocean boom, plus an ocean-going inflatable skiff with outboard motor to assist in deployment. All of it is packaged in ready-to-go form on the rear deck of the ship.

The gear is a small part of the extensive list of equipment that falls under the SERVS operation, according to SERVS manager Jim McHale.

Counting skimmers, oil collection barges, and tanks, the SERVS operation can collect and hold more than 450,000 barrels of oil. That's more than enough storage to allow for all-out spill pickup until an empty tanker could arrive to serve as a depository, McHale said.

Oil response vessels and crews also are stationed, full time, at Port Etchess on Hinchinbrook Island, and on Naked Island, he said Alyeska also has contracted with 260 fishing boats from areas around

the sound, and regularly includes them in their weekly spill drills.

A warehouse facility in Valdez holds more than $70 million in gear, including miles of various kinds of containment boom, and a selection of oil skimming devices—from handheld models to rigs the size of a small car. The warehouse holds everything from piles of lifejackets and safety glasses to stacks of prepackaged rescue kits for marine birds and mammals.

In all, Alyeska has spent more than $200 million building up the operation in the past five years. The 1994 budget for operations and maintenance is $60 million, McHale said.

By next next winter, the SERVS operation will be centered at a new $12 million facility in Valdez Harbor that will include all the offices, warehouses and a dock for its ships. Construction begins later this month.

"I would say we have the most oil spill recovery equipment for a single geographic area than anywhere in the world," McHale said. "We're pretty much the leading edge."

Back on the front lines, the Freedom Service and Dr. Jack tailed the Keystone Canyon like parents watching a child walk off to its first day of school.

After nearly six hours of calm seas and no problems—even the icebergs had cleared the traffic lanes—tailing the Keystone Canyon became a little tedious.

Suffice to say that crew members get to know each other very well on these trips. Still, someone is always monitoring something—weather, temperature, position, wind, ice, there are enough required reports to ensure the crew stays busy

They keep binoculars near the front windows, and it seems someone is always eyeing the tanker. "I'll look for anything unusual, maybe a sheen in the water behind the ship, anything," Cowart said.

To keep their minds on the job, they also like to make up disaster scenarios and talk them out. "That makes for some real interesting discussion—debate over what the tanker captain would ask for and what if this happened or that happened." Cowart said.

By the time we reached Seal Rocks, the Keystone Canyon appeared as a giant shadow off our starboard bow. It was highlighted by its running lights and lights on the bridge and a few lower decks.

The tanker captain radioed his escorts, thanked us for a fine ride, calm seas and good weather, and said he looked forward to the next visit.

Richmond slowed the Freedom Service and brought her about to point her bow back toward Valdez. It had been a routine run.

"Yeah, it's pretty routine sometimes," Richmond said. "But we have to be here—just in case it's not routine."

Fifth anniversary

OVER THE LAST five years, so much has been written, said and aired to describe the Exxon Valdez oil spill that there is no adjective, adverb or other modifier that has not become clichéd with overuse.

Nonetheless, anniversaries are a time for reflection For the spill, the date of record is March 24, 1989.

Because there are tens of thousands of people, and their lawyers, anticipating financial settlements from Exxon — and the court action on the claims does not begin for another few weeks — it is futile to suggest an objective consensus about the status of the recovery of Prince William Sound today. Until the lawsuits are resolved, every party that stands to gain something from the process will allege that the worst possible damage occurred and that harm continues

Even if such allegations fly in the face of science, research, observations and fact, the critical hype will continue. The national media is not about to let go of a sensational story And the professional environmental industry intends to keep profiting, shamelessly, from its exaggerations and doomsday pronouncements

So be it. In time, the mischief will be exposed

For now, let's focus on one of the more positive developments to emerge from the disaster.

We speak of the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council, the six-member, state-federal board that determines how to spend each year's installment of the $900 million being paid by Exxon over a 10-year period for environmental damages caused by the accident.

Gov. Walter Hickel, who engineered the settlement with Exxon, envisioned a portion of the money being used to enhance the Sound as a major marine recreation area. His goals were torpedoed by the environmental lobby that wants to lock up the area and use settlement money to buy up what little private land or timber rights exist in the region.

We had our doubts about the trustee operation at first. In addition to the political tug of war that stymied policy decisions, too much money initially was diverted to pay lawyers and supplement budgets of state and federal bureaucracies.

However, today there is encouraging evidence that a balanced investment program is emerging — one that includes a combination of habitat acquisition, restoration and investment in sound science.

Among actions that demonstrate this balance are the purchase of inholdings in Kachemak Bay State Park, the establishment of a long-term restoration reserve account, partial funding for the Seward Institute of Marine Science, and investments to assist the recovery of fish stocks.

It takes significant concessions from all sides to reach compromises like these. That accomplishment alone is worth celebrating on this anniversary

Spill's legacy lingers

Researchers say damage continues

By NATALIE PHILLIPS
Daily News reporter

The 11 million gallons of North Slope crude spilled in Prince William Sound five years ago this week continues to wreak havoc with the ecosystem, state and federal scientists still studying the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill said at a forum in Anchorage on Tuesday

The first couple of years after the spill, scientists documented and quantified damage on the surface They counted oil-covered sea otters and bird carcasses and devised models to calculate the total damage And they measured how much oil residue was left on the shore

Now, the scientists say, they are beginning to see and document the spill's more insidious and long-term effects. They include possible genetic damage to Prince William Sound's pink salmon, an inexplicable disease affecting herring in the Sound, and the continued decline in harlequin duck populations Scientists also are continuing to study mussel beds, many of which still have perfectly preserved oil trapped beneath them.

And scientists recently discovered the spill may have harmed goldeneyes, a duck that winters on the coast, said David Irons, a biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

"There are a lot of unknowns," said Stanley Rice, program manager for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. "But things are not normal. We still need to monitor it We still have a need to monitor it and track that oil, but probably not with the same intensity."

Rice and Irons are two of the more than 200 scientists, environmentalists, fishermen, Natives and politicians who gathered Tuesday at the Regal Alaskan Hotel for a forum called Five Years Later — What Have We Learned?

The forum was scheduled to commemorate the fifth anniversary of the spill on Thursday When the Exxon Valdez tanker vessel ran aground at Bligh Reef, more than 1,300 miles of coastline in Prince William Sound and outlying areas were tainted with oil. In late 1992, Exxon agreed to pay the federal and state governments nearly $1 billion to settle claims.

Tuesday's forum was sponsored by the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council, the panel charged with deciding how the settlement money is spent. A dozen government scientists and officials gave presentations Tuesday summarizing what has been learned about damage done by the spill and what is still unknown

While Exxon officials did not make presentations at the forum, they have repeatedly said there was virtually no long-term damage and the ecosystem is recovering rapidly

One of the government scientists, Charles Peterson of the Institute of Marine Sciences at the University of North Carolina, said the near-shore ecosystem still shows the effects of the 1989 spill, including an explosion of the sea urchin population.

Rice said a high concentration of oil remains under some mussel beds That may be causing problems for species that feed on mussels, including harlequin ducks and juvenile sea otters

"If we are going to wait for nature to take care of it, it will take a significant amount of time," Rice said

In some areas, subsistence harvests have yet to return to normal, according to James Fall, head of the Subsistence Division of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. Right after the spill, some Natives said they were worried about contamination in their food supply. Now they are saying the resources are in short supply, Fall said.

Ted Birkedal, head of Cul-

tural Resources for the National Park Service, said that while a number of archaeological sites were damaged by oil or vandalized during spill cleanup, "the bureaucratic process" set up to protect the sites worked.

"If it had not been in place, the injury level would have been greater," Birkedal said.

Biologist Irons of the Fish and Wildlife Service suggested that the species of birds injured by the spill should be looked at again to see what part contaminated food sources played in their injury.

With some understanding of what species and resources were damaged by the spill, officials are now turning their attention to figuring out what can be done to help those species revive and how the declines might be interrelated, said Steve Pennoyer, a Trustee Council member and regional director of NOAA.

Areas that are key to the health and revival of an injured species can be identified through scientific study, according to the keynote speaker, George Rose, a fisheries scientist from Newfoundland. If those areas can be identified, they may be the areas that need protected, he said.

In the wake of the Exxon oil spill

JIM JAGER / Daily News file photo

Ernie Piper checks a map while looking for a test pit from an earlier oil-spill survey on Seal Island last summer. He led a team of researchers who evaluated cleanup progress

Five years later, principle players recall catastrophe

Over the spring, summer and fall of 1989, news coverage of the Exxon Valdez disaster overshadowed virtually all other other events in Alaska Many of the names from that period became household words, and a few were media stars

Five years later, most of them have returned to private life and relative obscurity Here are 17 people — and one infamous ship — who played prominent roles in the Exxon Valdez oil spill

The Exxon Valdez

☐ **WHAT IT DID:** On March 24, 1989, the Exxon Valdez, with more than 50 million gallons of North Slope crude on board, shuddered as it steamed through the shallows of Bligh Reef It jerked to a halt, impaled on a spire of rock, as the first of some 11 million gallons of oil began boiling from its hull

☐ **WHERE IT IS TODAY:** With the name "Exxon Valdez" firmly etched in the public mind as a symbol of environmental disaster, Exxon sought to rehabilitate the ship's image by changing its name to "Exxon Mediterranean" and banishing it to oil hauling far from the United States, in the Mediterranean Last year, Exxon Shipping, the subsidiary that owned the ship, changed its corporate name to the more mellifluous and organic "Sea/River Maritime," so the Exxon Valdez is now the "Sea/River Mediterranean " Last month, it crept back to North America for the first time since the spill, where protesters from Greenpeace discovered it at anchor in Freeport, Bahamas, and painted its old name on its hull In nontoxic paint, they claimed At the moment, the ship that became history on Bligh Reef is tankering oil back in Europe, said Les Rogers, a Sea/River spokesman

Steve Cowper

☐ **WHAT HE DID:** As Alaska governor from 1986-1990, he played a high-profile role in the state's response to the spill On the morning of March 24, 1989, before even hearing about the spill, Cowper announced to a Fairbanks newspaper that he would not seek re-election in 1990 A few hours later, he flew to Valdez and motored out to the stricken ship, climbing a dangling ladder to reach the deck What he saw so angered him that nine days later, he threatened to shut down the pipeline — and forgo millions of dollars in state revenue — if Alyeska Pipeline Service Co and its oil company owners couldn t come up with a workable plan for cleaning up spills

☐ **WHERE HE IS TODAY:** Despite gaining nationwide prominence, Cowper stuck to his decision to leave politics He spent some time in California, then returned to Anchorage in 1992, where he works as a business consultant

☐ **WHAT HE SAYS:** The spill left Alaska and the oil industry with a "permanent burden of proof" that oil and gas can be developed without jeopardizing the environment But he also says the spill belongs to history now "There's been a fixation on the Exxon Valdez To me, it's time to move away from that It's time to declare our lessons learned "

Samuel Skinner

☐ **WHAT HE DID:** Samuel Skinner was U S Transportation Secretary when the Exxon Valdez went aground That made him the boss of the Coast Guard Apart from cameo appearances by Vice President Dan Quayle, Skinner was the highest-ranking federal official to monitor the spill and the cleanup

☐ **WHERE HE IS NOW:** He later became President George Bush's chief of staff Soon after Bush left office, Skinner was hired as president of Commonwealth Edison, an electric company serving Chicago and northern Illinois

☐ **WHAT HE SAYS·** When the state and environmental groups were criticizing Exxon's beach-cleaning and oil-skimming efforts, Skinner defended the company, saying it had done all it could Looking back, Skinner said he remains convinced of that "I still believe that we were very fortunate it was Exxon that was the spiller They were willing to step up to the plate and spend several billion dollars " He said he thought the spill had resulted in better control of tanker traffic, better spill-response plans and a better understanding of oil in the environment

Ernie Piper

☐ **WHAT HE DID:** As a special assistant to Gov Steve Cowper at the time of the oil spill, Ernie Piper became the governor's chief spokesman on spill matters Straight-talking and quotable, Piper was a frequent critic of the early cleanup effort led by Exxon and the U S Coast Guard In September 1990, Piper was named "on-scene coordinator" for the spill, but news reports generally referred to him as the state's "cleanup chief " Although his credentials were solidly Democratic, Gov Wally Hickel, Republican turned Alaskan Independence Party standard-bearer, asked Piper to stay on, citing his advocacy for the state's interests Piper also served on the Department of Environmental Conservation restoration team, wrote a history of the spill for DEC and, last summer, ran a shoreline survey for the Exxon Valdez Trustees Council

☐ **WHERE HE IS TODAY.** Piper is serving as campaign manager to former Anchorage mayor Tony Knowles' gubernatorial bid

☐ **WHAT HE SAYS:** "The thing that stands out most for me is the fact that, not just in government but also in industry and the general public, there are some fundamental misunderstandings about science and about technology and about the environment. Science and technology cannot do everything that people think they can do, and at the same time the environment can be more resilient and more complex than we like to think "

Michael Tumey

☐ **WHO HE WAS:** Michael Tumey was a volunteer firefighter from Girdwood who became one of the most visible protesters in the months following the spill In April 1989, he climbed down the side of the Calais II building in Midtown, where Exxon had its offices, and draped a huge sign on the side of the building "Oil Spilled, Exxon Killed, Remember the Sound!" In October, he interrupted an Anchorage Chamber of Commerce meeting where Exxon USA President William Stevens was scheduled to speak Standing up with a blackened Sesame Street Big Bird that looked like a large, oiled bird, Tumey said "Mr Stevens, I have a bird I don't believe you counted on "

☐ **WHERE HE IS TODAY:** Tumey still lives in Girdwood, where he is a self-employed construction worker and a volunteer firefighter He remains interested in oil-spill prevention, but now concentrates on issues like ozone depletion and pesticide use His last major involvement in the oil-spill issue was lobbying Congress to require double hulls on tankers

Frank Iarossi

☐ **WHAT HE DID** As president of Exxon Shipping Co , the subsidiary that operated the tanker, Iarossi flew from Houston to Valdez the morning of the grounding He was the top — and most visible — Exxon official in Alaska during the spill's early days, appearing at a series of noisy Valdez press conferences Early on, he admitted the oil had slipped beyond Exxon's control, despite years of industry assurances that it could handle a major spill He also acknowledged that Joe Hazelwood, the captain of the grounded tanker, had a history of drinking known to the company He received praise from some Prince William Sound fishermen for his willingness to work with them during in the spill's early days

☐ **WHERE HE IS TODAY:** Iarossi left Exxon about a year after the spill to become chairman and chief executive of the American Bureau of Shipping, a nonprofit corporation that inspects and classifies ships to make sure they are seaworthy Both Iarossi and Exxon have maintained his leaving the company had nothing to do with the Exxon Valdez Iarossi splits his time between Houston and New York

☐ **WHAT HE SAYS** Iarossi is traveling in Asia and could not be contacted, Publicly he has had little to say about the oil spill But in an interview last year with the Houston Post, Iarossi said his top priority was fulfilling the shipping bureau's mission of promoting safety at sea An aging fleet, he said, means substandard vessels must be identified and upgraded or removed from service "I think I understand the consequences of an unsafe ship like very few people in the world do," he said "If I let myself, I could become a crusader "

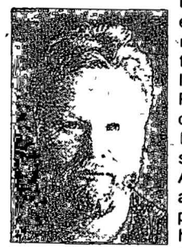
Dan Lawn

☐ **WHAT HE DID:** Dan Lawn, the state regulator with the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, had warned that Alyeska was unprepared for a big spill long before the Exxon Valdez ran aground On March 24, 1989, he was the first DEC official to reach the stricken Exxon Valdez Later, in a BBC-Home Box Office docudrama, he was portrayed as one of the few heroes in the spill

☐ **WHERE HE IS NOW.** Lawn still works for the DEC in Valdez, but was stripped of his oil-industry watchdog duties in August 1989 In January 1992, an independent arbitrator ruled that Lawn should not have been demoted, but the DEC has kept him in a job overseeing sewage and drinking water systems Lawn is suing to get his old job back

Rick Steiner

☐ **WHAT HE DID:** A Cordova marine biologist, he helped organize fisherman to protect three fish hatcheries in the hectic days following the spill and became a leading spokesman for local interests Later, he came up with the idea to use Exxon settlement funds to conserve forests in Prince William Sound, Kenai Fjords National Park and Kachemak Bay by buying out loggers

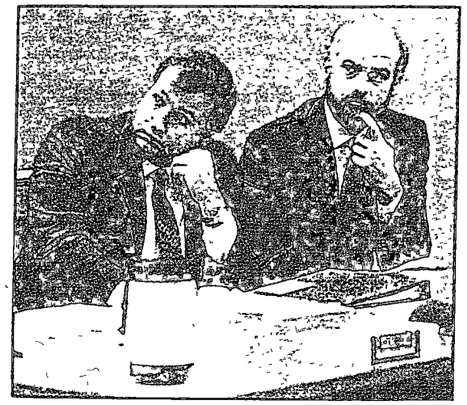


☐ **WHERE HE IS TODAY·** He is still working for the University of Alaska Marine Advisory Program, and still devoted to oil-spill issues, particularly tanker safety He helped organize a conference in Anchorage this week marking the five-year anniversary

☐ **WHAT HE SAYS:** "We know that oil, fish and wildlife don't mix," Steiner says "We know that oil is harmful We know we can't fix what we've done That says to me that at least 90 percent of our effort should be prevention" of oil spills Tanker safety has been improved in Prince William Sound, he said, but there are still improvements to be made here and around the world

Joseph Hazelwood

☐ **WHAT HE DID.** The skipper of the Exxon Valdez,



Michael Chalos and Joseph Hazelwood

Joseph Hazelwood ordered the tanker to shift position to dodge icebergs, then left the bridge With Third Mate Gregory Cousins in charge, the tanker failed to make a second turn and ran aground on Bligh Reef Hazelwood was acquitted of three charges, including operating a vessel under the influence of alcohol, and convicted of negligent discharge of oil, a misdemeanor The conviction was overturned by the Alaska Court of Appeals, but the Alaska Supreme Court last December directed the lower appellate court to reconsider

☐ **WHERE HE IS TODAY:** Since the spill, Hazelwood has worked as an oysterman in Long Island Sound, an instructor at the State University of New York Maritime College and, presently, as a maritime consultant for the New York law firm of his defense attorney, Michael Chalos Hazelwood, who has an unlisted telephone number, did not return messages left with his parents and with the law firm, Chalos and Brown

Robert Kagan

☐ **WHAT HE DID.** The man at the helm when the tanker failed to negotiate a simple turn and ran aground, Robert Kagan testified at Joseph Hazelwood's trial that the tanker captain had told him later that night he had done "a hell of a job " Third Mate Gregory Cousins testified that what Hazelwood actually said was, "Damn fine job, Bob." Cousins said he interpreted the remark as an attempt at black humor

☐ **WHERE HE IS TODAY:** According to an Exxon spokeswoman, Kagan continues to work for Sea/River Maritime Inc , the new name for Exxon Shipping Corp The spokeswoman declined to say where and in what capacity Kagan is employed

Adm. Paul Yost

☐ **WHAT HE DID·** Adm Paul Yost, the national commandant of the U S Coast Guard, was President Bush's man on the scene in Prince William Sound a month after the spill Stung by criticism that the federal government wasn't doing enough, Bush dispatched Yost, a gruff-talking, take-charge guy In Valdez, Yost fended off suggestions that the Coast Guard take over the spill response, saying that would absolve Exxon of liability He forced Exxon to come up with a much-delayed beach cleanup plan, but some of his other pronouncements, such as a swift decision that beaches should be cleaned with hot-water spray, were shelved as the jockeying over who should do what continued. The following year, in May 1990, he retired

☐ **WHERE HE IS TODAY:** Yost is president of the James Madison Memorial Fellowship Foundation, a federally funded agency in Washington, D C , that awards student fellowships to high school social science and history teachers Funded with a $20 million endowment from Congress, the agency's aim is to increase teachers' understanding of the Constitution

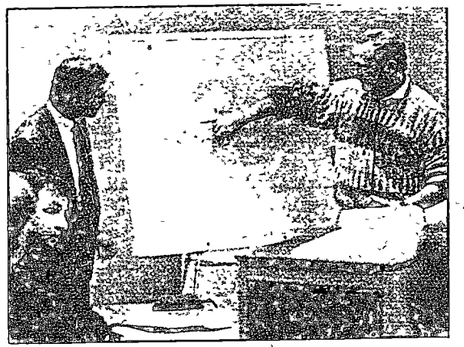
Chuck Hamel

☐ **WHAT HE DID.** A disgruntled oil broker and investor in North Slope leases, Chuck Hamel became the biggest critic of the Alaska oil industry Four years before the March 1989 spill, Hamel had warned that Alyeska Pipeline Service Co and its oil-company owners were systematically dismantling the spill-response program to cut costs After the spill, Hamel was in Valdez working with commercial fishermen and helping arrange for congressional hearings Hamel later became a conduit for Alyeska whistleblowers reporting persistent problems along the pipeline His criticism of the oil industry made him the target of a 1990 spy investigation by Alyeska and the Wackenhut Corp Hamel settled a damage lawsuit against the two companies last December for an undisclosed sum

☐ **WHERE IS HE TODAY:** After the settlement of his lawsuit, Hamel has virtually stopped his self-created role as the Alaska oil industry's biggest and most effective critic, as he was once described by a House committee that investigated the spill and the spy operation Operating out of his home in Alexandria, Va , Hamel is now pursuing a variety of business opportunities and he said he may get back into the oil transportation business

☐ **WHAT HE SAYS:** Alyeska and its owner companies "dismantled the spill-response system because of greed

The spill demonstrated that cutting corners hurts everybody "



Greg Cousins testifies in court.

Greg Cousins

☐ **WHAT HE DID:** As third mate on the Exxon Valdez, Greg Cousins was in charge on the bridge when the ship hit Bligh Reef five years ago In October 1989, he pleaded no contest to civil charges of failing to navigate the tanker properly A Coast Guard judge suspended his license for nine months

☐ **WHERE HE IS TODAY:** Cousins is no longer with Exxon As of six months ago, he was working on a freighter, according to his Anchorage attorney, Bob Richmond "The last I heard, he was sailing from Portugal to South Africa," Richmond said "I couldn't tell you much more than that " Cousins may be back in the spotlight soon, however. He is one of the defendants in a civil lawsuit stemming from the spill It is scheduled for trial in Anchorage federal court in May

Dennis Kelso

☐ **WHAT HE DID:** As Alaska's commissioner of Environmental Conservation, Dennis Kelso was the state's chief oil regulator at the time of the spill and the cleanup that followed Quotable and telegenic, he became the state's chief spokesman — and a major oil company critic In one East Coast press conference, he called Alyeska Pipeline's cleanup plan "the biggest piece of American maritime fiction since Moby Dick."

☐ **WHERE HE IS TODAY:** Now enrolled in a Ph D. program at the University of California, Berkeley, studying energy and resources He returns to Alaska during the summer and works as a consultant and occasional wilderness guide

☐ **WHAT HE SAYS:** The people of Prince William Sound "experienced the Exxon Valdez spill as a direct and frightening threat to their whole way of life, but they never gave up . They believe there are still adverse effects of the spill, on salmon returns, physical lesions on herring, anomalies with salmon behavior " On learning the Alaska Legislature is considering a bill to cut back on tax collections for its oil-spill response fund, Kelso said, "Five years out of the box, are we already forgetting that the time to prepare for a spill is before there is one?"

Don Cornett

☐ **WHAT HE DID:** Don Cornett was Exxon's manager of Alaska operations and was one of those on the front line of the press conferences and company public relations efforts With his rich drawl, he fielded thousands of tough questions about the slow progress of the spill cleanup

☐ **WHERE HE IS TODAY·** After the spill he was promoted and returned to Exxon Co USA headquarters in Houston He is now Exxon's manager of public relations An Exxon spokesman said Cornett couldn t talk about the spill because of pending litigation

Cmdr. Steven McCall

☐ **WHAT HE DID.** As the federal on-scene coordinator and captain of the Port of Valdez, he was the point man who tried to keep the federal, state and oil industry groups working together to clean up the spill This put him in the middle of fierce infighting that broke out between different agencies and between agencies and Exxon over how to proceed with the cleanup

☐ **WHERE HE IS TODAY:** McCall has retired from the Coast Guard and is working with Maritime Overseas Corp , a tanker operator, as manager of environmental affairs Maritime operates tankers under charter to British Petroleum, including some that ply the Alaska trade McCall's job is to develop oil pollution contingency plans that meet federal requirements developed in the aftermath of the Exxon Valdez spill

☐ **WHAT HE SAYS:** The spill came in McCall's fourth and final year in Valdez, an unusually long tour of duty for a Coast Guard officer and one that he did not expect "By all rights I shouldn't have been anywhere near Valdez on March 24 But being there that long helped me because I knew all the people and who I could rely on and who I couldn't rely on, and who was twisting the truth and who was talking on both sides of their mouth "

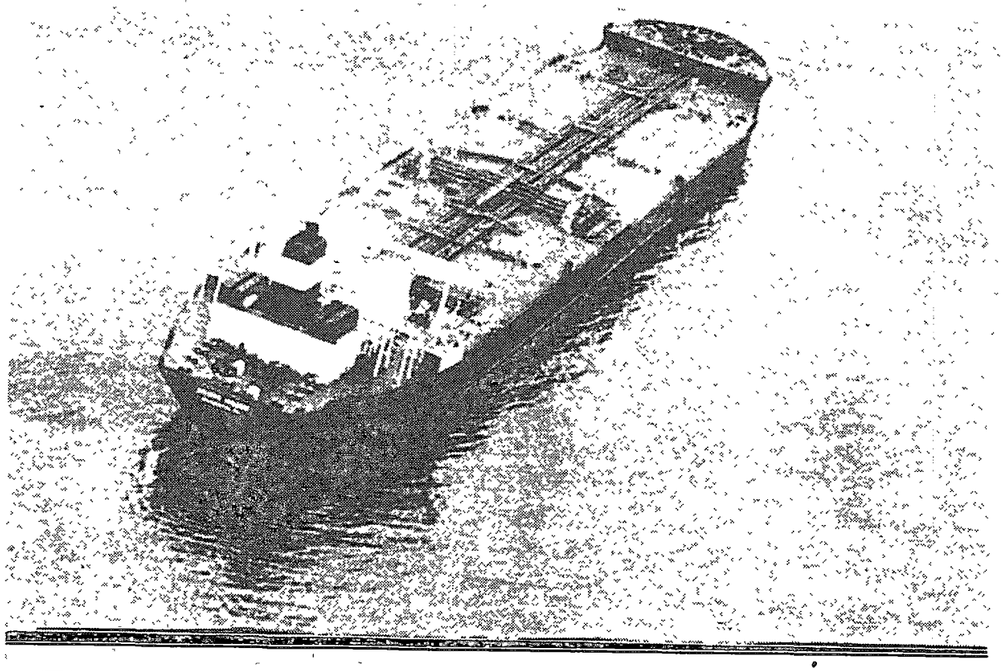
Riki Ott

☐ **WHAT SHE DID:** As an established resident of Cordova and a commercial fisherman with advanced degrees in marine pollution, Riki Ott was well-known around Prince William Sound before March 24, 1989 But she leaped into prominence on a much broader stage during the press conferences that followed the oil spill, asking tough, technical questions about oil-spill cleanup plans, particularly those involving chemical dispersants She later helped form the Oil Reform Alliance, which brought environmentalists and commercial fishermen together to work

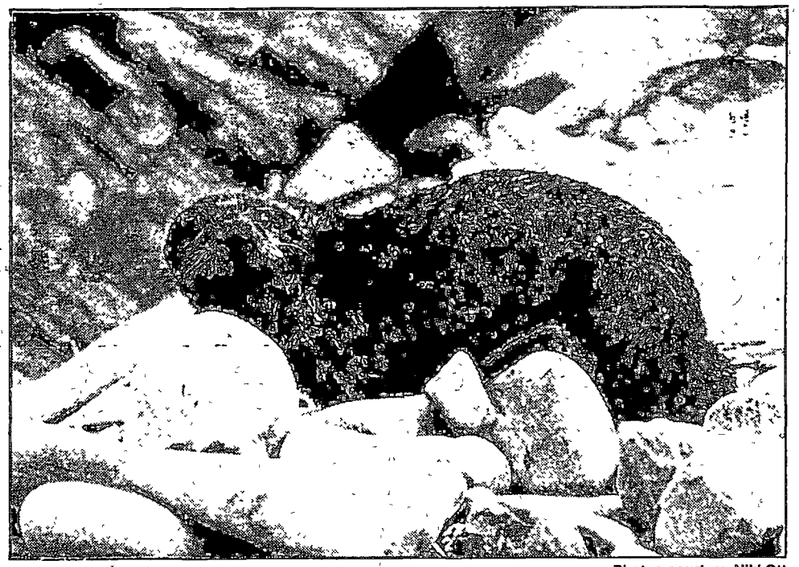
☐ **WHERE SHE IS TODAY:** Ott says she is still doing the same work She is reviewing, questioning, interpreting and commenting on the government's and Exxon's scientific findings She has done some consulting work for Greenpeace She is doing volunteer work for Alaska Clean Water Alliance and is habitat chairman of the United Fishermen of Alaska She is also a fiber artist whose work focuses on marine ecology themes The Oil Reform Alliance she helped form was dissolved earlier this month, but has been replaced by other grass-root groups made up of commercial fishermen and environmentalists, Ott said

☐ **WHAT SHE SAYS:** "The tragedy now is the incredible manipulation by Exxon to make us think that the spill is not as bad as we think," Ott said Without the spill, she added, "I wouldn't be who I am today They (Exxon) created me "

The Exxon Valdez disaster revisited



The Exxon Valdez shortly after it hit Bligh Reef on March 24, 1989. The tanker leaked 11 million gallons of crude oil, which tainted more than 1,547 miles of shoreline.



Photos courtesy Niki Ott

Lest we forget. . .

By Sören Wuerth
The Cordova Times

Five years ago today, a plane swung in low over Prince William Sound. The plane's passengers were Exxon public relations specialists, attorneys and corporate leaders.

A woman aboard the plane glanced away, for a moment, from the open briefcase on her lap. She looked at the razor-sharp peaks that sliced their way down into rain forests. She followed the forests to the shores, then to the ocean. The scenary captivated her.

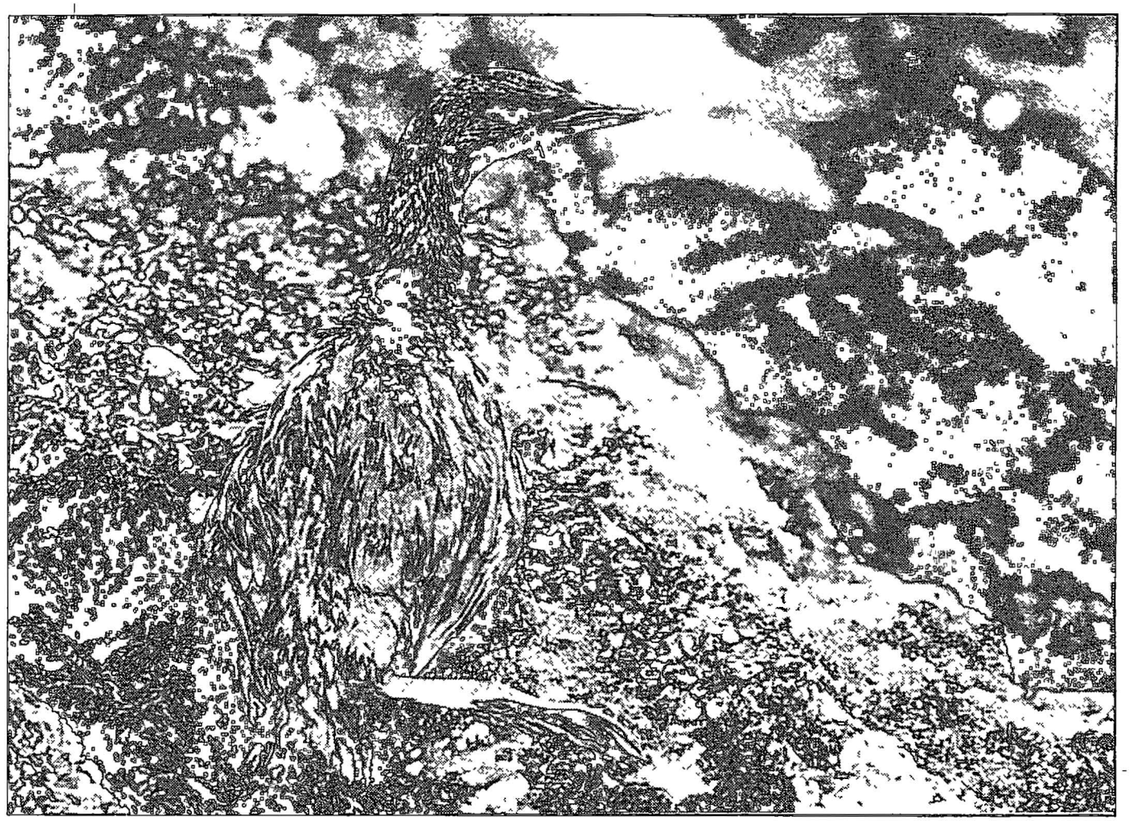
She looked harder at the ocean. Black oil swirled like a plague around the mountainous islands that had just compelled her to stare.

"A-hem, we've got work to do," a public relations experts suddenly interrupts. She turns from the window

The story may not be far from reality. For five years, Exxon has carried out an arguably successful campaign to help people forget their 11 million gallon oil spill

Well, here are a few reminders ...

Clockwise from top: A scientist inspects an oiled bird he pulled from Prince William Sound. An estimated 4,500 sea otters died as a direct result of the spill. The population in Prince William Sound may have been reduced by as much as 30 percent. Clean-up workers spray down beaches in remediation efforts



Photos courtesy Niki Ott

An oil-covered commorant struggles on a beach shortly after the spill. Bird mortalities due to the spill may have totaled as much as a half a million. About 90 species of birds and ducks were affected.

Quotes from the past

The following are quotes by Exxon's Don Cornett, while he addressed a town meeting, March 28, 1989, at the Cordova High School

Cornett:

"You have had some good luck and you don't realize it You don't have the Glacier Bay, you have Exxon and we do business straight.

Questioner:

"We don't have the ability to assess what the financial loss might be for a period of up to 10 years."

Cornett:

"That's right, we don't have any idea We are afraid of what might happen Were I in your shoes, I would be very afraid. But these gentlemen who are hired by the state and paid to monitor those things and keep track of the fisheries, who know jillions times more than I do about the fishing business, will be able to tell us whether that impact is a long range impact and that falls in the same category, 'show us and we'll take care of it.' And that's what I am here to tell you tonight."

Local business man:

"This oil spill is going to be a devastating factor for this community."

Cornett:

"If you can show that you have a loss as a result of this spill we will compensate it ... I know what

A fishing boat booms off oil in Prince William Sound.

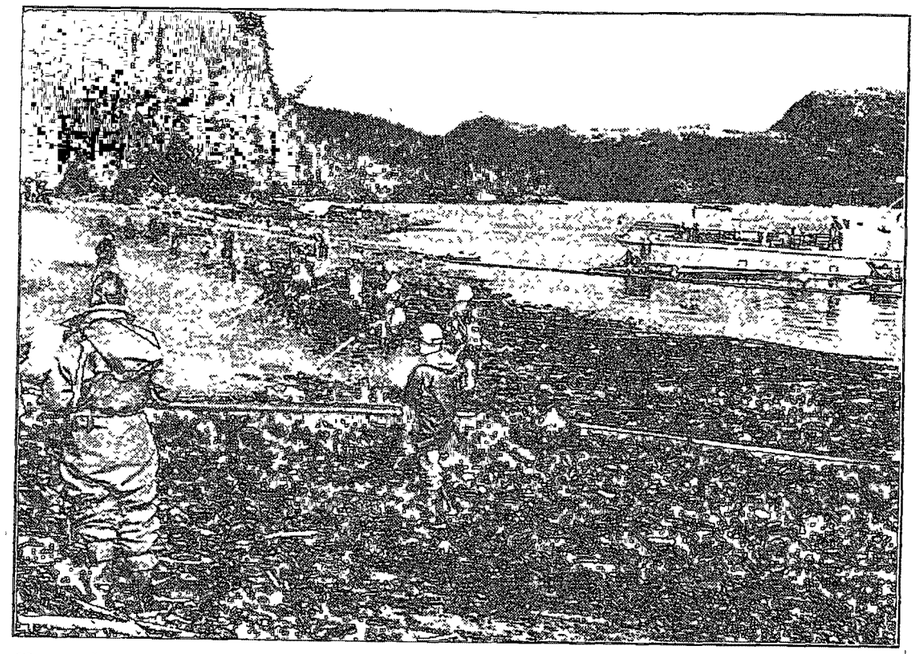


Photo courtesy of Riki Ott

Crude clean-up

I am talking about I'm not going to get into a yelling match about your life style .. I am going to tell you what Exxon is prepared to do. You want to come in today and have me hand you some money?"

What have you lost at this point that I could compensate you for, other than the fact that we have had to have this meeting, and the fact that you have had to see your beautiful Prince William Sound besmirched with crud, I am sorry about that, but that is not at this stage in time compensable, but if you nets don't fill up — that we can take care of.

If you show that you motel goes out of business — that we can take care of

I feel for you ... I spoke with the president of the company three times today . I know what I am talking about.

You don't remember this, but I was here 13 years ago in this very room. We had this same conversation and I told you the same thing then that I telling you now — we will consider whatever it takes to make you whole

Put it on paper and bring it to the table.

USCG Commander Morton, of the Port of Valdez:

"There is 240,000 barrels of oil out there. I have never seen that much oil in my life before and I have been doing this for 15 years This is a tremendous amount of oil. It's your worst nightmare From a response mode its very, very difficult. You feel totally useless."

Cornett:

"This (oil spill) is a very low probability event. Unfortunately, it happened and we are taking the responsibility for it."

— Compiled by Ross Mullins.

Exxon says Prince William Sound's fine, others disagree

By Tony Bickert
Alaska Newspapers

In December 1993, some Florida high school students watched an environmental video titled, "Scientists and the Alaska Oil Spill." When the video was over, some students wanted to know if they had just watched a documentary on the environmental impacts of the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill, or a "commercial" for Exxon Oil Co., which produced the video and distributed it to schools nationwide as an "educational aid."

The teacher, Ricki Richmond-Sills of Jones High School in Orlando, voiced this concern in a letter she wrote on her students' behalf to the Valdez Chamber of Commerce last month. It was signed by 72 science students who wanted to know how Alaskans and scientists not on Exxon's payroll feel about Exxon's assessment of the environmental state of Prince William Sound, five years after the March 24, 1989, 11-million gallon oil spill.

"We realize there are two sides to every story," the students wrote. "We would appreciate anyone who would please write and inform us of your feelings about the clean-up effort, the quality of fishing and sea life and impact on your daily lives We hope for all of you that your beautiful community will never experience another disaster "

The other side to the story is contained in a report called "The Truth About The Exxon Valdez Oil Spill," a compilation of data and analysis presented by local marine experts and scientists not under contract to Exxon.

In summary, the "Truth" document contradicts much of Exxon's assessments; contains statistics that show environmental recovery to be "decades" away; and accuses Exxon of manipulating data and releasing the video in an attempt to "construct a false reality of the situation in Alaska in order to influence public perception."

Exxon spokesman Dennis Stenczuk, when asked to update Exxon's spill assessment contained in the 18-month-old video, declined further comment and said Exxon "stands by" the video which, in summary, says the Sound has recovered from the spill.

° ° °

"Scientists and the Alaska Oil Spill:"

The green and white video case — which includes color photos of a bald eagle, sea otter and starfish — states: "Learn from the experts who worked behind the scenes on the front lines. . . . Learn how scientists determined the best ways to clean the shorelines. Hear them assess the state of the environment today and its prognosis for the

future."

Mostly heard is the narrator's voice, which sounds nearly identical to that of George Paige, the voice of PBS's "Nature" series The Exxon-hired narrator's name is not credited in the video.

Throughout the 22-minute assessment, the narrator refers to the spill as "the 1989 Valdez oil spill." leaving out the word Exxon and perhaps further confusing those non-Alaskans who, because of the name of the tanker, assume Valdez was environmentally impacted by the spill when, in actuality, its shores didn't receive a drop of oil.

The narrator does, however, use the word Exxon frequently as he talks about how the oil company helped to "save" wildlife in the aftermath of the spill

"How are the animals doing?" he asks students nationwide as they watch a clean, healthy female sea otter frolicking with its newborn pup The next scene shows other clean otters getting a bubble bath at one of the three oiled-animal treatment centers set up with Exxon funds and manned by Exxon-hired workers

"Plain dish-washing liquid was most effective in removing the oil," the narrator says, adding that 63 percent of the 357 otters captured were returned alive to the sound

Elsewhere in the video, Exxon estimates 1,000 otters died in the spill

Next, the narrator tells students how Exxon helped capture and save bald eagles The scene shows a woman working with one of the 113 captured birds at a treatment center

"Scientists wrapped the eagles in soft, flannel pajamas," the narrator says. "Was there any oil in their beaks?"

Exxon says 98 of the 113 birds were released unharmed but mentions no estimate of the number of eagles killed in the spill.

Exxon also boasts of being able to save "many" sea birds, such as murres and gulls.

"Unfortunately, many others died," the narrator says, estimating the number of dead seabirds at 36,000.

"Fortunately, scientists know that the area contains large populations able to overcome these losses," he adds

"And what about the fish?" he asks "Scientists know from previous observations of other spills around the world that open water fish are rarely at risk because little oil gets into the water column where they live "

Exxon backs up that statement by pointing out that the 1990 Sound pink salmon run — the fish that swam through the spill as fry on their way to open sea — and the 1991 run were the two of largest ever recorded, with the 1991 harvest "so abundant that millions of pounds were given to needy people in the Soviet Union."

The Exxon video then shows a conveyor belt full of packing boxes, presumably full of salmon heading to the Russian needy.

• • •

"The Truth About The Exxon Valdez Oil Spill:"

The nine-page report opens with a harsh criticism of Exxon's version of the current state of the Sound

"Exxon has aggressively attempted to trivialize the public's genuine concern for the extraordinary damage they caused to one of the most outstanding marine areas in the world," wrote co-author Rick Steiner, a marine biology professor at the University of Alaska and fisherman of Prince William Sound

Steiner and Riki Ott, a Cordova environmentalist, scientist and chairwoman of the Habitat Committee of United Fishermen of Alaska, compiled a list of spill-related wildlife damage and casualties, using data from the U S Fish and Wildlife Service and from scientists hired by the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council.

"The irony in all of this is that everything looks OK out there," Ott said "If you're out in a boat you'll see eagles and sea otters and maybe a whale if you're lucky But looks can be deceiving And Exxon is playing on that "

The numbers in the report show significantly more damage than Exxon's, both short-term and long-term

Sea otters: "3,500 to 5,500 killed by acute exposure to oil." (Exxon said 1,000.) Study results released in 1993 show no recovery yet due to higher yearling mortality and "possible" reproductive problems in sea otters which continue to eat oiled prey, particularly blue mussels

The studies also point out other marine mammal mortality not mentioned in the Exxon video, such as the 25 killer whales still missing from the pre-spill population of 182

Bald Eagles: An estimated 580 killed from exposure to oil (Exxon didn't mention any eagle mortality.) Studies also show an additional loss of more than 100 chicks but agree with Exxon that the population had begun to recover as early as 1990.

Sea Birds: An estimated 300,000 dead murres (Exxon estimated 36,000 total sea bird mortality.) The studies found the population has not begun to recover since surviving murres experienced breeding disruptions due to oil exposure, which accounts for an additional loss of "at least" 300,000 chicks

Among the other sea birds not mentioned in the Exxon video is the harlequin Duck, which the report states has experienced nearly total reproductive failure in the western region of the Sound every year since the spill

Pink Salmon: An estimated 15 million to 25 million "missing" from 1990 return, and more missing from 1992 and 1993 returns. Studies show high egg mortality in oiled streams in 1989, higher egg mortality in 1990 and 1991, and "gross deformities," such as clubbed fins and curved spines in larvae from oiled streams.

The report does not contest the high 1991 return mentioned by Exxon, but Steiner said that particular harvest did not navigate properly, which resulted in a mass of salmon holding out in the Sound and returning late, already spawned-out, and therefore practically valueless to fishermen, which is why hatcheries and processors quickly donated the fish to other markets, rather than wasting it.

Senator faces questions

By Cindy M. Stimson
The Cordova Times

Thanks to the organization of Patti and Jim Kallander, 24 select Cordovans were given the opportunity to directly question U.S. Sen Frank Murkowski at an informal lunch last weekend at the Cannery Row Cookhouse Cafe

A bid was offered last year to have lunch with Sen. Murkowski during Anchorage-based KAKM T.V. station's annual fund-raising drive, and now — almost a year later, the Senator was able to keep his commitment to the highest bidders.

When the opportunity to have lunch with Murkowski was announced, Patti Kallander took that idea and expanded on it — she went around Cordova and gathered what she considered to be "intelligently targeted donations," rounding up $800 cash to bid on the lunch

"I just thought it would be neat if we could get Sen. Murkowski to actually come to Cordova and answer some direct questions," said Kallander. "I think he thought he'd be having a nice little lunch with the Anchorage Chamber of Commerce, or something along those lines. I don't think he ever thought he'd have to have real meeting facing real people."

The questions put to Murkowski were varied — Nancy Bird asked him to look into the issues facing the Middle East; Torie Baker, John Bocci, Karl Becker and EJ Chesier's questions dealt with specifics relating to the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill, and Ed Bilderback wanted to know Sen Murkowski's stand on the Brady Bill and gun control

Baker requested Murkowski's support on the SEA Plan and the

approximate $4 million the EVOS Trustees are slating for PWS research and restoration

Jeff Bailey asked what can be done to extend the date of the IRS permit issue regarding the depreciation of permits purchased after 1991.

After failing to get answers to specific questions, several members at the private function came to the conclusion that Sen Murkowski came to Cordova with a set agenda already in place.

"I thought Murkowski continually told us we have to do the work ourselves, he isn't going to help us," said Jim Kallander. "He basically told us to promote our own concerns. I explained that's what we've been doing all along and we aren't getting anywhere with the EVOS trustees We've been trying to secure the funding and after all of our continual huge lobbying efforts all we've gotten is $15 million out of the settlement Murkowski didn't listen to us — he said we had to keep on doing it ourselves "

Kallander went on to say he sees Cordova possibly getting help from Gregg Renkes, Murkowski's Chief of Staff

"Maybe we'll be able to get some assistance from him. I would say he seemed a lot more interested in what we had to say than Murkowski did," Kallander said

Sheelagh Mullins handed Sen Murkowski a package with the words, "It is time for JUSTICE to be served .. " from her husband, Ross Mullins, who in April of 1971, expressed that "an oil spill is inevitable if Valdez is turned into a pipeline terminus."

Mullins, a commercial fisherman and fighter for Prince William Sound, put together the package containing materials substantiating his claim of the oil industries broken promises to the people of the Sound over the past 20 years

Patti Kallander saved her question for the end of the lunch, a question the people of Alaska have been rumoring about for several months now — will Frank Murkowski be running for Governor of Alaska?

Cindy Stinson/Cordova Times

U S Sen Frank Murkowski talks with Al Rule, a Cordova fisherman.

Murkowski said he was interested in returning to work for the people of Alaska, although he wasn't interested in announcing if he would be running in the next election for governor, " ... anytime within the next three days "

Murkowski said he has seniority in the Senate and he knows that's valuable to have as a politician and eventually that will be helpful to the people of Alaska

After spending all of two hours in Cordova, Murkowski was whisked away to the airport by Mayor Margy Johnson, where he was headed to Juneau for a dinner in his honor

"At least the food at the luncheon was really great," said Kallander

Spill thrust some from obscurity to spotlight:

Where they are now

By Tony Bickert
Alaska Newspapers

Five years ago today, the following 15 people had their 15 minutes of fame, or perhaps infamy, as they were involved at least indirectly in the March 24, 1989 Exxon Valdez spill that spilled 11 million gallons of oil into Prince William Sound — the most damaging, man-made environmental disaster ever recorded in the U.S

Today, some of those people — the officers on the bridge of the tanker, the initial responders to the spill, and the regulators and watchdogs who oversaw the incident — have gone on to other places and professions Some remain in their professions in different capacities, and some are still doing the same job

Where were they then and where are they now?

◦ **Joseph Hazelwood**

Then: Captain, Exxon Valdez Hazelwood, under the influence of alcohol, was dozing in his suite when the ship ran aground off of Bligh Reef.

Now: Consultant for his attorney, Michael Chalos of Chalos & Brown, the New York law firm who represented him and successfully appealed his misdemeanor charge of negligent discharge of oil. Hazelwood, who now offers advice to his employer on oil industry-related litigation, is currently residing in California

◦ **Greg Cousins**

Then: Third mate, Exxon Valdez. Cousins had been in charge of the ship's passage through the Sound when it struck Bligh Reef. After an investigation, the U.S. Coast Guard suspended his license for nine months.

Now: Cousins is no longer employed by Exxon. He is once again licensed to operate oil tankers. His whereabouts were unknown at the time of this writing.

◦ **Bob Kagan**

Then: Helmsman, Exxon Valdez Kagan was at the wheel when the ship ran aground

Now: Still employed by Exxon's shipping company, now called SeaRiver Maritime Inc.

◦ **Maureen Jones**

Then: Lookout, Exxon Valdez Jones was first on the bridge to realize the ship was off course

Now: Jones is no longer employed by Exxon, but is reportedly still employed in the maritime industry. She lives in North Carolina

◦ **Bruce Lanford**

Then: Radar watch stander, U S Coast Guard's Valdez office Lanford was the first person not on board the ship to learn of the incident when Hazelwood radioed him at 12.26 a.m. that the Exxon Valdez was "hard aground" off Bligh Reef

Now: Radar watch stander, U S. Coast Guard's Valdez office

◦ **Gordon Taylor**

Then: Radar watch stander, U.S Coast Guard's Valdez office Taylor had been on watch during the ship's passage through the Valdez Narrows and had just changed shifts with Lanford when Hazelwood radioed the grounding.

Now: Alyeska Pipeline Service Co. employee, with the Ship Escort Response Vessel System in Valdez.

◦ **Steve McCall**

Then: Commanding Officer, U.S. Coast Guard's Valdez office.

Now: Government Liaison, Maritime Overseas, New York.

◦ **Dan Lawn**

Then: Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation Prince William Sound District Supervisor, with complete over-

sight of Alyeska Marine Terminal and all tanker traffic

Lawn was asleep at home when, at 12 50 a m , Alyeska's Operations and Control Center notified him of the grounding. An hour later, Lawn, aboard an Alyeska pilot boat, was among the first to survey the initial spillage

Now: DEC Environmental Engineer, but can only deal with non-Alyeska-related issues

(Lawn, an aggressive regulator who questioned Alyeska as well as his own department for the inept initial response to the spill, was demoted after the spill to his current position He sued the DEC on charges of wrongful demotion, won his case in 1992 in binding arbitration, but has still not been given back his Alyeska oversight duties The case is now pending in state Superior Court)

◦ **Larry Shier**

Then: Marine Manager, Alyeska Marine Terminal. Shier directed Alyeska's initial spill response.

Now: Oil spill contingency plan review department, Alyeska Marine Terminal

◦ **Chuck O'Donnel**

Then: Terminal Manager, Alyeska Marine Terminal.

Now: In charge of oil movement and storage, Alyeska, Anchorage.

◦ **George Nelson**

Then: President, Alyeska.

Now: Alyeska owners asked Nelson to retire shortly after the spill. He now resides in Sudden Valley, Wash.

◦ **Bill Deppe**

Then: Ship-ground coordinator, Exxon Shipping Co. Deppe relieved Hazelwood of his duties and oversaw lightering operations — pumping oil from the Exxon Valdez onto other Exxon tankers.

Now: Valdez port operations coordinator, SeaRiver Maritime Inc (formerly Exxon Shipping Co) Deppe oversees shipping operations in Valdez

◦ **Phil Eichenberger**

Then: Chief mate, Exxon Shipping Co Eichenberger was also involved in lightering operations

Now: Supplemental mate, SeaRiver Maritime Inc. Eichenberger assists tanker loading operations in Valdez

◦ **Frank Iarossi**

Then: President, Exxon Shipping Company. Iarossi flew from Houston to Valdez to direct Exxon spill response

Now: Chairman, American Bureau of Shipping, a world-wide firm based in New York that inspects and classifies oil tankers

(According to the book "Tankers Full of Trouble," by Eric Nalder, Iarossi recently criticized insurance companies for coming aboard tankers to conduct safety inspections in which they labeled 22 of 28 tankers unsafe. Iarossi accused the insurance companies of "distracting" the tanker captains, which could someday cause an accident.)

◦ **Rikki Ott**

Then: Cordova marine scientist, ecologist, environmental activist, oil industry watchdog, member United Fishermen of Alaska. Ott, speaking at a teleconference about oil transportation in Valdez on March 23, 1989, accused the oil industry of playing "Russian roulette" and that it was not a question of "if" an oil spill would occur in Prince William Sound, but "when." Four hours later the Exxon Valdez ran aground.

Now: Cordova marine scientist, ecologist, environmental activist, oil industry watchdog, member United Fishermen of Alaska.

◦ **Exxon Valdez**

Now: The repaired tanker hauls oil across the Mediterranean Sea as the SeaRiver Mediterranean.

Scientists learn from Exxon Valdez spill

The Associated Press

Other species proved nature's resilience. Thirteen killer whales disappeared from a Prince William Sound pod between 1988 and 1990; state scientists say that group is growing again.

ANCHORAGE — Two more conferences are scheduled in Anchorage this week to coincide with the fifth anniversary of the Exxon Valdez spill, already the most scrutinized disaster of its kind

A three-day meeting beginning Wednesday concentrates on oil-spill prevention in the wake of the Prince William Sound spill

A second meeting, the day before will look at projects to restore the environment

Other scientific sessions over the past year have pitted Exxon's optimistic findings regarding the damage caused by the spill against more guarded forecasts produced by government agencies

Numerous reports have detailed the damage harbor seals, sea otters, pink salmon, Pacific herring and several kinds of birds — including common murres and harlequin ducks — show ``little or no sign'' of recovery in Prince William Sound, the state says

Herring losses are significant, experts say, since the small fish are targeted by commercial fishermen and are a key link in the sound's food chain.

Meanwhile, survey teams at Sleepy Bay last year reported oil floating to the surface after chemical treatment

Pete Peterson, a University of North Carolina marine scientist, said the sound's mussel beds are a lingering concern Mussel colonies act like armor, shielding any oil trapped under the beds

Peterson says trapped oil may contribute to chronic, low-grade pollution that could do damage over time

Experts are particularly concerned about birds that eat the mussels

Other species proved nature's resilience

Thirteen killer whales disappeared from a Prince William Sound pod between 1988 and 1990, state scientists say that group is growing again

As many as 300 bald eagles died in the spill Five years later, a draft plan for Prince William Sound restoration notes that eagles already may have recovered, along with some populations of black oyster catchers and sockeye salmon near Kodiak.

Judge sides with Exxon over Native damage claims

The Associated Press

ANCHORAGE — A federal judge deciding pretrial issues in the massive Exxon Valdez civil lawsuit has said Alaska Natives may not collect damages for harm to their way of life following the oil spill in 1989

A plaintiffs' lawyer has said he will appeal once the class-action trial, scheduled for May 2, is over

The suit in U.S District Court in Anchorage has been described as the most complicated of its kind in Alaska history. Experts will testify on marine science, land values and whether there are any lingering effects.

The tanker accident dumped nearly 11 million gallons of oil, the largest spill in U.S history.

'The Exxon Valdez oil spill was a disaster of major proportions, but it did not deprive Alaska Natives of their culture.'

— H. Russel Holland
U.S. District Judge

Siding with lawyers for Exxon, U.S. District Judge H. Russel Holland said in a decision Wednesday the company was not liable for ``non-economic'' damages, which could include intangibles such as disruption in traditional sources of food.

Villagers in the spill's path were warned not to eat seafood that smelled oily Holland said Natives from Kodiak, Kachemak and Prince William had not suffered greater disruption than avid sport fishermen or committed environmentalists, who also cherished the region.

``The Exxon Valdez oil spill was a disaster of major proportions, but it did not deprive Alaska Natives of their culture,'' Holland wrote.

Michael Hausfeld, a Washington, D.C., lawyer representing villagers, said Natives may still sue for loss of fish, game and wild plants Hausfield, who said plaintiffs eventually would appeal, said Holland's ruling was a serious setback

``The major injury to the Alaska Natives was the disruption caused by the damage to the resource,'' Hausfeld said.

He said Holland had determined that in their relationship to resources, Alaska Natives were not different than other rural Alaskans. ``We disagree,'' the lawyer said.

The suit, which involves an estimated 100,000 plaintiffs including commercial fishermen, Natives and landowners, has been organized in three phases:

First, a jury will decide if Exxon acted in a way that makes it liable for punitive damages

A second phase will decide what compensation — if any — the oil giant owes, and a third step would set that amount.

In a philosophical departure from legal reasoning, the judge noted that incursions by Russians, American whalers and miners have over the centuries influenced Native culture

But, he wrote, a way of life is ``deeply embedded in the mind and heart'' and cannot be changed by catastrophe.

``Development of the Prudhoe Bay oil fields, the construction of processing facilities, and the trans-Alaska pipeline on the North Slope of the Brooks Range were, in all probability, a much greater and certainly longer-lasting incursion into Native culture than the Exxon Valdez oil spill, yet the Inupiat have thrived,'' the judge said.

Tides, time help Prince William Sound recover from spill

By Rosanne Pagano
Associated Press

CORDOVA — Tides and times have been kind to Prince William Sound in the five years since the Exxon Valdez rammed a charted reef, dumping nearly 11 million gallons (42 million liters) of crude oil into pristine waters.

Storms have scoured Alaska's 1,500 miles (2,400 kms) of polluted coastline, removing about half the oil embedded in some places. Many beaches look clean Population forecasts for bald eagles are good The tourists are back.

``It's behind us,'' said John Manly, an aide to Gov Walter J. Hickel, whose administration won a dlrs 900 million settlement from Exxon Corp in 1991

But it's not over for the people of Cordova, homeport to Prince William Sound's commercial fishing fleet.

Cordova fishermen are among the plaintiffs who filed damage claims in the wake of the March 24, 1989, accident They are only just getting their day in court, and until they do, they will not turn the page on the Exxon Valdez.

They blame the Valdez spill for bad salmon harvests over the past two years. They say they are just hanging on, and that massive Exxon is trying to wait them out, an assertion the company denies.

``It's been a war of attrition,'' says salmon fisherman R J Kopchak, a former Cordova city councilman whose three-story house overlooks Cordova's dock and forested Orca Bay.

A typical week's mail, stacked on Kopchak's kitchen table, contains court notices about his lawsuit. More papers to sign, more documents to file

``We know one guy, a fisherman here with a valid claim, who just quit sending in his paperwork Refuses to do it anymore,'' Kopchak says as he scans the foggy bay.

``The longer Exxon and its attorneys can make it miserable for you, the greater the chance the settlement will be less ''

Kopchak is among fishermen who say this summer's salmon season could be his make-or-break year. If the run fails or prices are weak, Kopchak says he may have to polish up his carpentry skills and move his wife and four young children somewhere else.

``I built this castle because I figured I'd live and die here,'' he says ``I really love this place. We don't lock our doors, we don't worry about our kids The problem is, what I want to do is fish ''

Lawyers for Exxon, the world's largest corporation, reject any suggestion that delay was a tactic. Complaints have been separated into state and federal class actions, each with separate trial judges, schedules and evidence rules

The federal suit, scheduled to start May 2, includes 100,000 potential class members Some estimates put the damages at dlrs 1.5 billion or more.

A trial in state Superior Court is scheduled to start June 6 and includes seven towns oiled in the spill's path The mayors want compensation for municipal services they say were diverted in response to the spill

Other state plaintiffs include 13 Alaska Native corporations; they claim damage to their land and archaeological sites. Natives also sued Exxon in federal court over damage to their traditional ways, which depend on the sound for food

Evidence-gathering for all these actions has consumed the past five years A list filed by Exxon names 315 planned witnesses in the federal case Plaintiffs planned to call 270 witnesses in a case scheduled to last all summer Authorities will testify on marine science, land values, fish abundance and — hardest of all — whether there are any lingering effects of the spill

``For Cordova, the spill was like a death in the family,'' Mayor Margy Johnson says ``I'm appalled that five years later there's still no settlement with Exxon. That's like trying to get over a death when you can't read the will ''

Cordova, a town of nearly 2,600 on the sound's eastern edge, is reached only by boat or plane Nearly half the work force is directly employed in fish harvesting or processing

State labor economists reported this month there was ``little prospect'' that salmon prices would bounce back soon

Employment has receded over the past three years, sales receipts dropped and more than two dozen homes are on the market, the state said

Real estate agent Linden O'Toole — among the only families to get out of fishing, remain in Cordova and pursue a new occupation — says she is fielding about as many inquiries from out of state as from Cordovans looking to buy

O'Toole, who is supporting her fisherman husband and two small children, says earnings from real estate have gone to pay off tens of thousands of dollars in fishing debts

``I'm hoping for our sake and a lot of people in this town that Exxon will come through with a settlement,'' she says ``They're a huge company They don't need to hurt families like ours to do business ''

In 1990, one year after the spill, the fleet turned in a near-record pink salmon harvest and prices were good Then, in 1991, prices on the worldwide market collapsed and harvests were dumped back into the sea

The next two years, for undetermined reasons, the run failed Last year, the Pacific herring season, which typically begins in April and is the fishermen's first cash crop of the year, was cut short in Prince William Sound when schools failed to materialize

Some fish were diseased

Last year, frustrated by Exxon's claims that the spill caused no ongoing harm, a mosquito fleet of 65 seiners gave up the dismal pink salmon season to bottle up the Port of Valdez, terminus of the trans-Alaska oil pipeline.

For nearly two days, no tankers could arrive or depart during the protest

``I will never forgive and forget,'' says 42-year-old Doug Pettit, a Cordova fisherman who since 1987 has run a local heating repair business to tide his family over the winter

``It's as if someone murdered my daughter,'' he says ``You can never forgive the person who did that ''

Hazelwood still appealing conviction

The Associated press

The man who was the focus of the inquiry into the Exxon Valdez spill is still fighting his conviction in the case.

Former Exxon skipper Joseph Hazelwood was convicted in 1990 of illegally discharging oil, a misdemeanor, but acquitted of more serious counts of operating a vessel while intoxicated

Hazelwood has appealed his conviction and his sentence to clean oily rocks; his case is pending with the state appeals court.

New radar among improvements made since the spill

By Steve McHenry
Alaska Newspapers

When the Exxon Valdez went aground five years ago, the ship was unescorted, outside the tanker lanes and apparently not seen on Coast Guard radar. Alyeska also had no watchdog groups looking over the company shoulder to guard against complacency that had set in though 12 years of relatively clean tanker operations.

Now, all that has changed, as a direct result of the spill

The Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council was formed in the spill aftermath to give people living in the oiled areas a means of communicating their concerns to Alyeska

Alyeska and the shipping companies have instituted numerous changes in tanker operations, including new ice escorts when conditions require it. The ships have increased manning, and working hours have been cut to decrease fatigue among crewmembers.

Tankers are now escorted by trained response crews through Prince William Sound.

And the Valdez Coast Guard office is currently installing the most sophisticated radar system in the United States, as a means of watching tanker traffic even more closely.

The new Automated Dependent Surveillance System will give the Coast Guard vessel tracking office a view of tanker traffic like nowhere else in the country, maybe the world, said Lt. Frank Wakefield.

Instead of radar watchers sitting in a darkened room peering into radar screens, the new video radar system will appear on large TV-type color monitors, and will enable the Coast Guard to track tankers from deep into the Gulf of Alaska.

"It will improve the surveillance of tankers to include all of Prince William Sound and 30 miles into the Gulf," he said "We will track (ships) as soon as we pick them up."

The current system tracks the ships to just south of Bligh Reef, said Wakefield.

The system is required to be operational by July, he said.

He said one of the biggest advantages to the $6.5-million system is that operators won't have to sit in the dark, so it will be easier on them

And, he said, "The video is recorded, so if an incident happens, we will have a record of it It's an outstanding system"

Wakefield described the shipboard system as being similar to an aircraft's "black box," which will offer a 12-channel global positioning system with an accuracy of plus or minus 10 meters, a data encoder and a VHF transmitter to send information to Valdez.

Other changes made by the Coast Guard since the spill include increased personnel in the Valdez office; a radar system that sees better in bad weather; tighter wind and wave restrictions on tankers sailing in bad weather, and restrictions on the shipping lanes when ice is heavy, Wakefield said

° ° °

Alyeska's Ship Escort Response Vessel System began after the spill to escort tankers completely through the Sound, instead of merely through the Narrows, as was done before the spill

SERVS manager Jim McHale said the system is designed to do more than simply escort tankers, however, as one of the most important components of SERVS is its spill-response capabilities

SERVS has five escort response vessels, three tugs, five oil-recovery barges with skimmers and boom stored aboard, and numerous smaller vessels The company also operates the Valdez Star, one of the largest skimming vessels in the country

In the event of a spill, SERVS also has contract for spill response with several hundred fishing vessels located around the Sound, and has pre-positioned response centers stationed in Chenega Bay, Cordova, Kodiak, Seldovia, Seward, Tatitlek, Valdez and Whittier.

Boom and other equipment is also stationed near five hatcheries in the Sound.

° ° °

The Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council was also set up in the aftermath of the spill, as a way to give those most likely to be hurt by an oil spill the chance to deal with sensitive issues before they become big problems.

"The real big improvement since the spill is open communication," said RCAC president Stan Stephens, of Valdez.

He said communication has improved not only with Alyeska, but with the Coast Guard, Bureau of Land Management, Department of Environmental Conservation and other agencies

"We're not always going to agree, but we're listening to each other," said Stephens "That can only be a plus; that's what it's supposed to be about"

Stephens said the RCAC has been involved in helping Alyeska and others develop spill response plans, and air- and water-quality issues

"We're going to get vapor-recovery (at the Alyeska Marine Terminal), only because of EPA requirements," he said "But EPA would not require it without citizen involvement"

The RCAC is soon to complete a disabled tanker-towing study, he said.

"This is the first time that industry, citizens and the Coast Guard worked together to tell if the escort system is working properly," Stephens said.

Public airs concerns about sea life center's environmental impact

By Christopher Smith
LOG Staff

Nancy Swanton came to Seward looking for questions from the community on the Alaska Sea Life Center Tuesday evening.

About 60 people from Seward to Moose Pass were happy to help her out.

Swanton is the project manager writing an environmental impact statement on the Alaska Sea Life Center for the U.S. Department of the Interior The impact statement is required by the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council before spill settlement funds can be used for the research portion of the center.

The first of two public meetings for gathering comments and ideas on community effects of the Alaska Sea Life Center was a success, Swanton said. The meeting took nearly three hours at the K.M. Rae Building Tuesday night.

"I was really pleased with the number of people that took the time to come down," Swanton said. "I was real impressed with the level of interest and amount of questions from the cross section of people there."

Swanton, along with Kim Sundberg from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, representing the oil spill restoration team, and Maureen Sims, from Anchorage environmental consulting firm Dames and Moore, fielded a wide variety of questions after introducing the sea life center project and the process for writing the impact statement.

Questions from the audience ranged from general inquiries into the structure of the Seward Association for the Advancement of Marine Science, the center's main proponent, to specific concerns about the effects of an increased population and number of visitors to Seward resulting from the project.

Fundraising and the implications of a financial shortfall was one of the first issues discussed. Currently SAAMS hopes to land around $25 million from the trustees and $10 million in private donations to complement the $12.5 million appropriated by the Alaska Legislature last year

If the private fundraising effort falls through, Gene Skinner asked, "will two-thirds of the project be completed, and after it's built, who will maintain it?"

Sundberg said the research portion of the project, called Improvements to the Institute of Marine Science, could be built with trustee money and the $12 5 million state appropriation He added that there seems to be a lot of interest from private sources in the sea life center, which would fund the visitor part of the center

Provided the center is built in it's entirety, a nonprofit entity similar to the SAAMS organization would run the sea life center facility, Sundberg said.

The center's effect on downtown traffic patterns, including potential parking problems and where the state ferry would go, was another main issue of discussion.

"With all the ferry traffic, increased cruise ships and railroad traffic, how would this (project) be integrated with all of that," asked Kevin Walker.

Sims said Dames and Moore has subcontracted the firm Transpo to complete a detailed examination of the traffic issues brought on by the center. People from Transpo, as well as from Dames and Moore, will work with the city's planning department and the planning and zoning commission during their analysis, she said, and the Anchorage firm Jon Isaacs and Associates will study the social and economic impacts.

Rick Smeriglio of Moose Pass asked how the impact statement will address potential negative aspects, such as pollution, crime and congestion downtown resulting from the large influx of visitors and new residents needed to keep the center running.

"A project of this magnitude would result in a population increase of 10, perhaps 15 percent, and the changes in the social environment is a big deal," he said. "I was wondering who would pay for the increased public service?"

The sea life center plan calls for the facility to "pay its own way" for water, electricity and sewer services, Sundberg said, adding that the increase in property values in town would presumably cover additional public service costs created by the center.

The issues brought out at the meeting Tuesday evening will be considered and incorporated into the development of a draft impact statement, which is due out in late June, Swanton said.

The goal of the impact statement, scheduled for completion in late October, is to look at all the impacts and point out what benefits and problems might result from the sea life center, Swanton.

A second public meeting will be held March 24 in Anchorage at 7 p.m. at 645 G Street, and everyone is welcome to send in their comments on the project to Swanton by April 11, she said.

Seward Phoenix Log
March 24, 1994 Vol. XXVIII #28 P.1 & 11

New radar is advance since spill

By Steve McHenry
Valdez Vanguard

When the Exxon Valdez went aground five years ago, the ship was unescorted, outside the tanker lanes and apparently not seen on Coast Guard radar. Alyeska also had no watchdog groups looking over the company shoulder to guard against complacency that had set in though 12 years of relatively clean tanker operations.

Now, all that has changed, as a direct result of the spill.

The Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council was formed in the spill aftermath to give people living in the oiled areas a means of communicating their concerns to Alyeska.

Alyeska and the shipping companies have instituted numerous changes in tanker operations, including new ice escorts when conditions require it. The ships have increased manning, and working hours have been cut to decrease fatigue among crewmembers.

Tankers are now escorted by trained response crews through Prince William Sound.

And the Valdez Coast Guard office is

installing the most sophisticated radar system in the United States, as a means of watching tanker traffic even more closely.

The new Automated Dependent Surveillance System will give the Coast Guard vessel tracking office a view of tanker traffic like nowhere else in the country, maybe the world, said Lt Frank Wakefield.

Instead of radar watchers sitting in a darkened room peering into radar screens, the new video radar system will appear on large TV-type color monitors, and will enable the Coast Guard to track tankers from deep into the Gulf of Alaska

"It will improve the surveillance of tankers to include all of Prince William Sound and 30 miles into the Gulf," he said. "We will track (ships) as soon as we pick them up"

The current system tracks the ships to just south of Bligh Reef, said Wakefield

The system is required to be operational by July, he said

He said one of the biggest advantages to the $6.5-million system is that operators won't have to sit in the dark, so it will be easier on them.

And, he said, "The video is recorded, so if an incident happens, we will have a record of it. It's an outstanding system"

Wakefield described the shipboard system as being similar to an aircraft's "black box," which will offer a 12-channel global positioning system with an accuracy of plus or minus 10 meters, a data encoder and a VHF transmitter to send information to Valdez.

Other changes made by the Coast Guard since the spill include increased personnel in the Valdez office; a radar system that sees better in bad weather; tighter wind and wave restrictions on tankers sailing in bad weather; and restrictions on the shipping lanes when ice is heavy, Wakefield said

• • •

Alyeska's Ship Escort Response Vessel System began after the spill to escort tankers completely through the Sound, instead of merely through the Narrows, as was done before the spill.

SERVS manager Jim McHale said the system is designed to do more than simply escort tankers, however, as one of the most important components of SERVS is its spill-response capabilities

SERVS has five escort response vessels, three tugs, five oil-recovery barges with skimmers and boom stored aboard, and numerous smaller vessels The company also operates the Valdez Star, one of the largest skimming vessels in the country

In the event of a spill, SERVS also has contract for spill response with several hundred fishing vessels located around the Sound, and has pre-positioned response centers stationed in Chenega Bay, Cordova, Tatitlek, Valdez and Whittier.

Boom and other equipment is also stationed near five hatcheries in the Sound.

• • •

The Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council was also set up in the aftermath of the spill, as a way to give those most likely to be hurt by an oil spill the chance to deal with sensitive issues before they become big problems

"The real big improvement since the spill is open communication," said RCAC president Stan Stephens, of Valdez.

He said communication has improved not only with Alyeska, but with the Coast Guard, Bureau of Land Management, Department of Environmental Conservation and other agencies.

"We're not always going to agree, but we're listening to each other," said Stephens "That can only be a plus; that's what it's supposed to be about."

Stephens said the RCAC has been involved in helping Alyeska and others develop spill response plans, and air- and water-quality issues

"We're going to get vapor-recovery (at the Alyeska Marine Terminal), only because of EPA requirements," he said. "But EPA would not require it without citizen involvement"

The RCAC is soon to complete a disabled tanker-towing study, he said.

"This is the first time that industry, citizens and the Coast Guard worked together to tell if the escort system is working properly," Stephens said.

Exxon says Sound's just fine; others disagree

By Tony Bickert
Valdez Vanguard

In December, some Florida high school students watched an environmental video, "Scientists and the Alaska Oil Spill."

When the video was over, some wanted to know if they had watched a documentary on the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill, or a "commercial" for Exxon Oil Co., which produced the video.

The teacher, Ricki Richmond-Sills of Jones High School in Orlando, wrote on her students' behalf to the Valdez Chamber of Commerce last month. It was signed by 72 students who wanted to know how Alaskans and scientists not on Exxon's payroll feel about Exxon's assessment of the state of the Sound, five years after the March 24, 1989 oil spill.

"We realize there are two sides to every story," the students wrote. "We would appreciate anyone who would please write and inform us of your feelings about the clean-up effort, the quality of fishing and sea life and impact on your daily lives."

The other side to the story is contained in a report called "The Truth About The Exxon Valdez Oil Spill," a compilation of data and analysis presented by local marine experts and scientists not under contract to Exxon.

In summary, the "Truth" document contradicts much of Exxon's assessments; contains statistics that show environmental recovery to be "decades" away, and accuses Exxon of manipulating data and releasing the video in an attempt to "construct a false reality of the situation in Alaska in order to influence public perception."

Exxon spokesman Dennis Stenczuk, declined further comment on the18-month-old videoand said Exxon "stands by" the video which, in summary, says the Sound has recovered from the spill.

• • •

"Scientists and the Alaska Oil Spill:"

The green and white video case — which includes color photos of a bald eagle, sea otter and starfish — states: "Learn from the experts who worked behind the scenes on the front lines. . Learn how scientists determined the best ways to clean the shorelines. Hear them assess the state of the environment today and its prognosis for the future."

Throughout the 22-minute assessment, the unnamed narrator refers to the spill as "the 1989 Valdez oil spill," leaving out the word Exxon and perhaps further confusing those non-Alaskans who, because of the name of the tanker, assume Valdez was environmentally impacted by the spill when, in actuality, its shores didn't receive a drop of oil.

The narrator does, however, use the word Exxon frequently as he talks about how the oil company helped to "save" wildlife in the aftermath of the spill.

"How are the animals doing?" he asks students nationwide as they watch a clean, healthy female sea otter frolicking with its newborn pup. The next scene shows other clean otters getting a bubble bath at one of the three oiled-animal treatment centers set up with Exxon funds and manned by Exxon-hired workers.

"Plain dish-washing liquid was most effective in removing the oil," the narrator says, adding that 63 percent of the 357 otters captured were returned alive to the sound. Elsewhere in the video, Exxon estimates 1,000 otters died in the spill.

Next, the narrator tells students how Exxon helped capture and save bald eagles. The scene shows a woman working with one of the 113 captured birds at a treatment center.

Exxon says 98 of the 113 birds were released unharmed but mentions no estimate of the number of eagles killed in the spill.

Exxon also boasts of being able to save "many" sea birds, such as murres and gulls.

"Unfortunately, many others died," the narrator says, estimating 36,000 dead seabirds.

"Fortunately, scientists know that the area contains large populations able to overcome these losses."

"And what about the fish?" he asks. "Scientists know from previous observations of other spills around the world that open water fish are rarely at risk because little oil gets into the water column where they live."

Exxon backs up that statement by pointing out that the 1990 Sound pink salmon run — the fish that swam through the spill as fry on their way to open sea — and the 1991 run were the two of largest ever recorded, with the 1991 harvest "so abundant that millions of pounds were given to needy people in the Soviet Union."

• • •

"The Truth About The Exxon Valdez Oil Spill."

The nine-page report opens with a harsh criticism of Exxon's version of the state of the Sound.

"Exxon has aggressively attempted to trivialize the public's genuine concern for the extraordinary damage they caused to one of the most outstanding marine areas in the world," wrote co-author Rick Steiner, a marine biology professor at the University of Alaska and fisherman of Prince William Sound.

Steiner and Riki Ott, a Cordova environmentalist, scientist and chairwoman of the Habitat Committee of United Fishermen of Alaska, compiled a list of spill-related wildlife damage and casualties, using data from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and from scientists hired by the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council.

"The irony in all of this is that everything looks OK out there," Ott said. "If you're out in a boat you'll see eagles and sea otters and maybe a whale if you're lucky. But looks can be deceiving. And Exxon is playing on that."

The numbers in the report show significantly more long and short-term damage than Exxon's.

Sea otters: "3,500 to 5,500 killed by acute exposure to oil." (Exxon said 1,000.) Study results released in 1993 show no recovery yet due to higher yearling mortality and "possible" reproductive problems in sea otters that continue to eat oiled prey, particularly blue mussels.

Bald Eagles: An estimated 580 killed from exposure to oil. (Exxon didn't mention any eagle mortality.) Studies also show an additional loss of more than 100 chicks but agree with Exxon that the population had begun to recover as early as 1990.

Sea Birds: An estimated 300,000 dead murres. (Exxon estimated 36,000 total sea bird mortality.) The studies found the population has not begun to recover since surviving murres experienced breeding disruptions due to oil exposure, which accounts for an additional loss of "at least" 300,000 chicks.

Pink Salmon: An estimated 15 million to 25 million "missing" from 1990 return, and more missing from 1992 and 1993 returns. Studies show high egg mortality in oiled streams in 1989, higher egg mortality in 1990 and 1991, and "gross deformities," such as clubbed fins and curved spines in larvae from oiled streams.

The report does not contest the high 1991 return mentioned by Exxon, but Steiner said that particular harvest did not navigate properly, which resulted in a mass of salmon holding out in the Sound and returning late, already spawned-out, and therefore practically valueless to fishermen.

Spill moves some from obscurity to spotlight

By Tony Bickert
Valdez Vanguard

Five years ago today, the following 15 people had their 15 minutes of fame, or perhaps infamy, as they were involved at least indirectly in the March 24, 1989 Exxon Valdez spill that spilled 11 million gallons of oil into Prince William Sound — the most damaging, man-made environmental disaster ever recorded in the U.S.

Today, some of those people — the officers on the bridge of the tanker, the initial responders to the spill, and the regulators and watchdogs who oversaw the incident — have gone on to other places and professions. Some remain in their professions in different capacities, and some are still doing the same job

◦ Joseph Hazelwood

Then Captain, Exxon Valdez Hazelwood, under the influence of alcohol, was dozing in his suite when the ship ran aground off of Bligh Reef

Now Consultant for his attorney, Michael Chalos of Chalos & Brown, the New York law firm who represented him and successfully appealed his misdemeanor charge of negligent discharge of oil Hazelwood, who now offers advice to his employer on oil industry-related litigation, is residing in California

◦ Greg Cousins

Then: Third mate, Exxon Valdez Cousins had been in charge of the ship's passage through the Sound when it struck Bligh Reef After an investigation, the U S. Coast Guard suspended his license for nine months

Now Cousins is no longer employed by Exxon He is once again licensed to operate oil tankers His whereabouts were unknown at the time of this writing

◦ Bob Kagan

Then Helmsman, Exxon Valdez Kagan was at the wheel when the ship ran aground

Now. Still employed by Exxon's shipping company, now called SeaRiver Maritime Inc.

◦ Maureen Jones

Then. Lookout, Exxon Valdez Jones was first on the bridge to realize the ship was off course

Now Jones is no longer employed by Exxon, but is reportedly still employed in the maritime industry, living in North Carolina

◦ Bruce Lanford

Then Radar watch stander, U S Coast Guard s Valdez office Lanford was the first person not on board the ship to learn of the incident when Hazelwood radioed him at 12 26 a.m that the Exxon Valdez was "hard aground" off Bligh Reef

Now Radar watch stander, U S Coast Guard's Valdez office

◦ Gordon Taylor

Then· Radar watch stander, U S. Coast Guard's Valdez office Taylor was on watch during the ship's passage through the Valdez Narrows and just changed shifts with Lanford when Hazelwood radioed the grounding.

Now Alyeska Pipeline Service Co. employee, with the Ship Escort Response Vessel System in Valdez.

• Steve McCall

Then Commanding Officer, U.S Coast Guard's Valdez office

Now: Government Liaison, Maritime Overseas, New York

• Dan Lawn

Then: Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation Prince William Sound District Supervisor, with complete oversight of Alyeska Marine Terminal and all tanker traffic

Lawn was asleep at home when, at 12.50 a m., Alyeska's Operations and Control Center notified him of the grounding. An hour later, Lawn, aboard an Alyeska pilot boat, was among the first to survey the initial spillage

Now DEC Environmental Engineer, but can only deal with non-Alyeska-related issues

(Lawn, an aggressive regulator who questioned Alyeska as well as his own department for the inept initial response to the spill, was demoted after the spill to his current position. He sued the DEC on charges of wrongful demotion, won his case in 1992 in binding arbitration, but has still not been given back his Alyeska oversight duties The case is now pending in state Superior Court.)

• Larry Shier

Then. Marine Manager, Alyeska Marine Terminal Shier directed Alyeska's initial spill response.

Now: Oil spill contingency plan review department, Alyeska Marine Terminal

◦ Chuck O'Donnel

Then. Terminal Manager, Alyeska Marine Terminal

Now Heads oil movement and storage, Alyeska, Anchorage.

◦ George Nelson

Then: President, Alyeska.

Now: Alyeska owners asked Nelson to retire shortly after the spill He now resides in Sudden Valley, Wash

◦ Bill Deppe

Then Ship-ground coordinator, Exxon Shipping Co Deppe relieved Hazelwood of his duties and oversaw lightering operations — pumping oil from the Exxon Valdez onto other Exxon tankers

Now Valdez port operations coordinator, SeaRiver Maritime Inc (formerly Exxon Shipping Co) Deppe oversees shipping operations in Valdez.

• Phil Eichenberger

Then: Chief mate, Exxon Shipping Co Eichenberger was also involved in lightering operations

Now· Supplemental mate, SeaRiver Maritime Inc Eichenberger assists tanker loading operations in Valdez

• Frank Iarossi

Then. President, Exxon Shipping Company Iarossi flew from Houston to Valdez to direct Exxon spill response

Now: Chairman, American Bureau of Shipping, a worldwide New York-based firm that classifies oil tankers

(According to the book "Tankers Full of Trouble," by Eric Nalder, Iarossi recently criticized insurance companies for coming aboard tankers to conduct safety inspections in which they labeled 22 of 28 tankers unsafe Iarossi accused the insurance companies of "distracting" the tanker captains, which could someday cause an accident)

◦ Rikki Ott

Then· Cordova marine scientist, ecologist, environmental activist, oil industry watchdog, member United Fishermen of Alaska Ott, speaking at a teleconference about oil transportation in Valdez on March 23, 1989; accused the oil industry of playing "Russian roulette" and that it was not a question of "if" an oil spill would occur in Prince William Sound, but "when " Four hours later the Exxon Valdez ran aground

Now. Cordova marine scientist, ecologist, environmental activist, oil industry watchdog, member United Fishermen of Alaska

• Exxon Valdez

Now In the Mediterranean as the Sea River Mediterranean

Judge sides with Exxon over Native damage claims

The Associated Press

ANCHORAGE — A federal judge deciding pretrial issues in the massive Exxon Valdez civil lawsuit has said Alaska Natives may not collect damages for harm to their way of life following the oil spill in 1989.

A plaintiffs' lawyer has said he will appeal once the class-action trial, scheduled for May 2, is over

The suit in U.S District Court in Anchorage has been described as the most complicated of its kind in Alaska history. Experts will testify on marine science, land values and whether there are any lingering effects.

The tanker accident dumped nearly 11 million gallons of oil, the largest spill in U.S history.

Siding with lawyers for Exxon, U S District Judge H. Russel Holland said in a decision Wednesday the company was not liable for ``non-economic'' damages, which could include intangibles such as disruption in traditional sources of food

Villagers in the spill's path were warned not to eat seafood that smelled oily Holland said Natives from Kodiak, Kachemak and Prince William had not suffered greater disruption than avid sport fishermen or committed environmentalists, who also cherished the region

``The Exxon Valdez oil spill was a disaster of major proportions, but it did not deprive Alaska Natives of their culture,'' Holland wrote.

Michael Hausfeld, a Washington, D C , lawyer representing villagers, said Natives may still sue for loss of fish, game and wild plants Hausfeld, who said plaintiffs eventually would appeal, said Holland's ruling was a serious setback

``The major injury to the Alaska Natives was the disruption caused by the damage to the resource,'' Hausfeld said

He said Holland had determined that in their relationship to resources, Alaska Natives were not different than other rural Alaskans. ``We disagree,'' the lawyer said

The suit, which involves an estimated 100,000 plaintiffs including commercial fishermen, Natives and landowners, has been organized in three phases

First, a jury will decide if Exxon acted in a way that makes it liable for punitive damages A second phase will decide what compensation — if any — the oil giant owes, and a third step would set that amount

In a philosophical departure from legal reasoning, the judge noted that incursions by Russians, American whalers and miners have over the centuries influenced Native culture

But, he wrote, a way of life is ``deeply embedded in the mind and heart'' and cannot be changed by catastrophe

``Development of the Prudhoe Bay oil fields, the construction of processing facilities, and the trans-Alaska pipeline on the North Slope of the Brooks Range were, in all probability, a much greater and certainly longer-lasting incursion into Native culture than the Exxon Valdez oil spill, yet the Inupiat have thrived,'' the judge said.

5 years later, improvements made but much still needed

Five years ago today, this city awoke to a long-feared nightmare, as the Exxon Valdez sat aground, oil bubbling from its ruptured hull.

In the years since then, many changes have been made in oil transportation, oversight of the industry, environmental regulations and new safety precautions — all designed to prevent another such disaster.

Certainly, increased scrutiny of Alyeska operations has made life harder on the oil industry in Alaska.

Prevention, after all, is the key.

That is how it should be, as we can't afford another spill disaster. One more spill of that magnitude could mean the end of the oil industry in this state.

All involved in the spill and subsequent cleanup, it is hoped, learned their lessons the hard way, through their actions and in their responses

While there is plenty of blame to go around — virtually nobody escaped the spill unsullied — we all know what happened in that horrible spring of 1989.

Now, in the spring of 1994, it's time to look — not behind — but ahead to where we are going, to what has improved, and to what still needs to be done.

Of course, there is little outward sign of oil now to be found around the Sound, but the effects of the spill are still evident in animal species that have yet to recover; in the hard feelings, hurt and wounds still suffered by the people living in the affected areas; in the continuing questions of how much the spill has caused the recent fishing failures

Though the Exxon Valdez Trustee Council has made some questionable decisions, members are working on viable plans to restore habitat lost or damaged through the spill It will take time and money, but eventually, restoration efforts will take hold

Several things stand out as positive results of the accident

Tankers are now escorted through the Sound by highly trained response crews; the Coast Guard is now installing a new radar system to keep better track of the ships, and Alyeska officials now realize they must work together with the people and communities of Prince William Sound to avoid future problems.

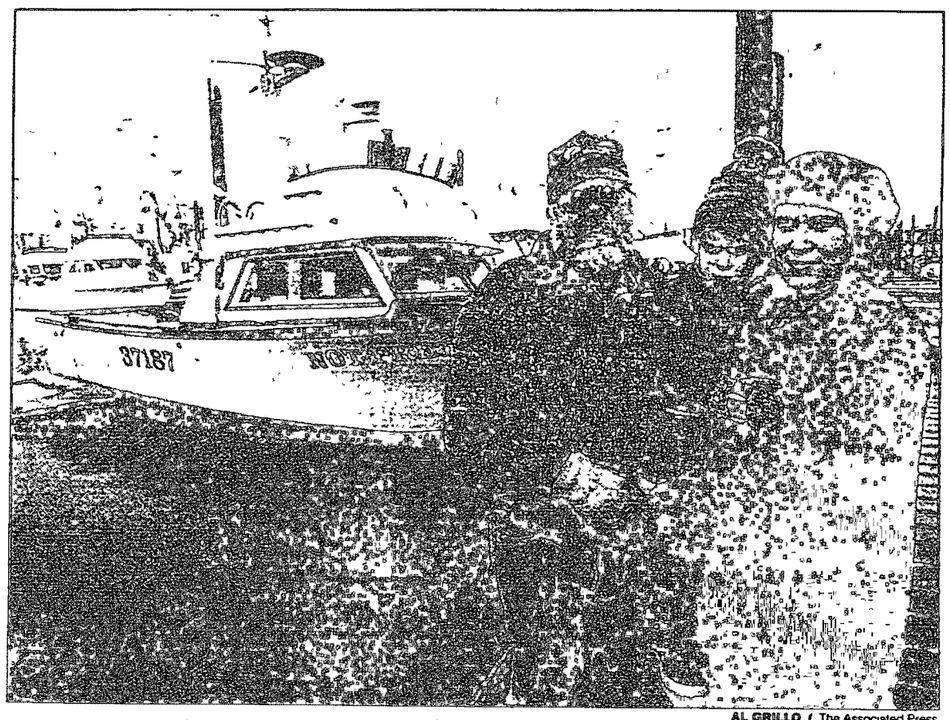
Prevention is the key.

But along with prevention itself must come vigilance, of dedicated Alyeska employees, tanker crews, Coast Guard officials, DEC officials, fishermen, environmentalists and others, all working in conjunction to ensure that complacency does not again sneak in and degrade the safeguards that have been installed

Together, we can do our best to ensure that a tanker wreck 12 years after the oil started flowing will be the only such wreck in the history of the trans-Alaska pipeline system

Cordova not ready to forgive or forget

After a 5-year wait, an angry fishing town's day in court with Exxon approaches



AL GRILLO / The Associated Press

Cordova fisherman R.J. Kopchak, wife Barclay and youngest child, 4-year-old Zeben

By ROSANNE PAGANO
The Associated Press

CORDOVA — Tides and times have been kind to Prince William Sound in the five years since the Exxon Valdez rammed a charted reef, dumping nearly 11 million gallons of crude oil into pristine waters

Storms have scoured Alaska's 1,500 miles of polluted coastline, removing about half the oil embedded in some places Many beaches look clean. Population forecasts for bald eagles are good, though other species remain in serious trouble, especially those that rely on damaged mussel beds for food The tourists are back

"It's behind us," said John Manly, an aide to Gov. Wally Hickel, whose administration won a $900 million settlement from Exxon Corp. in 1991.

But it's not over for the people of Cordova, homeport to Prince William Sound's commercial fishing fleet

Cordova fishermen are among the plaintiffs who filed damage claims in the aftermath of the March 24, 1989, accident. They are only just getting their day in court, and until they do, they will not turn the page on the Exxon Valdez.

They blame the Valdez spill for bad salmon harvests over the past two years. They say they are just hanging on, and that massive Exxon is trying to wait them out, an assertion the company denies.

"It's been a war of attrition," says salmon fisherman R J Kopchak, a former Cordova city councilman whose three-story house overlooks Cordova's dock and forested Orca Bay

☐ WAITING: Cook Inlet fishermen also await oil-spill trial C-2

A typical week's mail, stacked on Kopchak's kitchen table, contains court notices about his lawsuit More papers to sign, more documents to file.

"We know one guy, a fisherman here with a valid claim, who just quit sending in his paperwork. Refuses to do it anymore," Kopchak says as he scans the foggy bay

"The longer Exxon and its attorneys can make it miserable for you, the greater the chance the settlement will be less."

Kopchak is among fishermen who say this summer's salmon season could be his make-or-break year. If the run fails or prices are weak, Kopchak says he may have to polish up his carpentry skills and move his wife and four young children somewhere else.

"I built this castle because I figured I'd live and die here," he says "I really love this place We don't lock our doors, we don't worry about our kids The problem is, what I want to do is fish."

Lawyers for Exxon, one of the world's largest corporations, reject any suggestion that delay was a tactic Complaints have been separated into state and federal class actions, each with separate trial judges, schedules and evidence rules.

The federal suit, scheduled to start May 2, includes 100,000 potential class members. Some estimates put the damages at $1.5 billion or more.

A trial in state Superior Court is scheduled to start June 6 and includes seven towns oiled in the spill's path. The mayors want compensation for municipal services they say were diverted in response to the spill

Other state plaintiffs include 13 Alaska Native corporations, they claim damage to their land and archaeological sites Natives also sued Exxon in federal court over damage to their traditional ways, which depend on the Sound for food

Evidence-gathering for all these actions has consumed the past five years The company said more than 5 million pages of documents have changed hands, nearly 2,000 depositions were taken

A list filed by Exxon names 315 planned witnesses in the federal case Plaintiffs planned to call 270 witnesses in a case scheduled to last all summer Authorities will testify on marine science, land values, fish abundance and — hardest of all — whether there are any lingering effects of the spill.

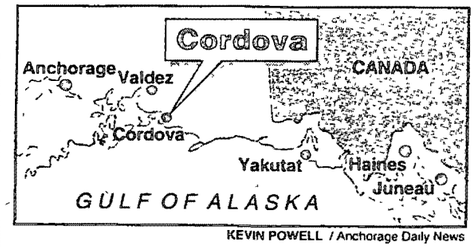
In Cordova, everyone wants an Exxon settlement — even townspeople with no claim pending

"We don't want to be known as the oil-spill town any more," Mayor Margy Johnson said

Seated at a table in the restaurant of her dockside hotel, Johnson points out a pair of sea otters playing in icy waters where, in late February, the fishing fleet is idle. Some Cordovans, hoping for a new image as a tourist town, say the city should adopt a new slogan — "sea otter capital of the world" is mentioned.

Johnson, a can-do businesswoman, wants action.

Until it was abruptly canceled, she was helping organize Cordova's first "Bury the Blues Day" on March 26 The event, complete with a New Orleans-style band parading through town, was aimed at uniting the community But organizers called it



KEVIN POWELL / Anchorage Daily News

Johnson

Weaverling

6I built this castle because I figured I'd live and die here. I really love this place. We don't lock our doors, we don't worry about our kids. The problem is, what I want to do is fish. 9

— R.J Kopchak

off when too many people complained they weren't yet ready to forgive and forget

"For Cordova, the spill was like a death in the family," Johnson says. "I'm appalled that five years later there's still no settlement with Exxon That's like trying to get over a death when you can't read the will "

Kelley Weaverling, a bookstore owner who preceded Johnson as mayor, explained in a recent interview with the Alaska Public Radio Network why it's taking so long for people to get over the spill. He says that now, he finally understands why great hardships and trauma remain with their victims all their lives

"When I was a boy, I used to wonder why my grandparents couldn't get over the Depression And later, why my father and uncles couldn't get over World War II And though I was on a submarine in the Gulf of Tonkin during Vietnam — I was not on the ground — I couldn't see why some of my friends who were ground forces in Vietnam couldn't get over that. And what I understand now, following the Exxon Valdez oil spill, is that these are not things you get over and any effort to do that is counterproductive You need to learn how to live with it, because you'll never put it behind you "

Cordova, a town of nearly 2,600 on the Sound's eastern edge, is reached only by boat or plane. Nearly half the work force is directly employed in fish harvesting or processing. State labor economists reported this month there was "little prospect" that salmon prices would bounce back soon

Employment has receded over the past three years, sales receipts dropped and more than two dozen homes are on the market, the state said

Real estate agent Linden O'Toole — hers among the only families to get out of fishing, remain in Cordova and pursue a new occupation — says she is fielding about as many inquiries from out of state as from Cordovans looking to buy.

O'Toole, who is supporting her fisherman husband and two small children, says earnings from real estate have gone to pay off tens of thousands of dollars in fishing debts.

"I'm hoping for our sake and a lot of people in this town that Exxon will come through with a settlement," she says "They're a huge company. They don't need to hurt families like ours to do business "

In 1990, one year after the spill, the fleet turned in a near-record pink salmon harvest and prices were good

Then, in 1991, prices on the worldwide market collapsed and harvests were dumped back into the sea.

The next two years, for undetermined reasons, the run failed Last year, the Pacific herring season, which typically begins in April and is the fishermen's first cash crop of the year, was cut short in Prince William Sound when schools failed to materialize Some fish were diseased

Last year, frustrated by Exxon's claims that the spill caused no ongoing harm, a mosquito fleet of 65 seiners gave up the dismal pink salmon season to bottle up the Port of Valdez, the end of the trans-Alaska oil pipeline For nearly two days, no tankers could arrive or depart during the protest

"I will never forgive and forget," says 42-year-old Doug Pettit, a Cordova fisherman who since 1987 has run a local heating repair business to tide his family over the winter.

"It's as if someone murdered my daughter," he says. "You can never forgive the person who did that "

Pettit is an oil-spill domino Since fishing has declined, he has worked harder at the heating company But his neighbors are living on savings and hopes for an Exxon settlement, and Pettit

— who also has an Exxon claim pending — said he has gotten lenient on pricing

"It isn't like you tapped a new resource," he says, taking a break one rainy morning as he coaxed heat from the pipes at the fishermen's union hall, in Cordova's downtown.

"You're still working with money from fishing We all share the problem "

Preventing spills best hope

Arco executive urges governments to 'keep the heat on'

By KIM FARARO
Daily News business reporter

Jerry Aspland, an oil-industry executive who commands unusual respect from environmentalists, was speaking to many of the converted Thursday when he said oil-spill prevention deserves more attention and bemoaned the slow progress in spill-cleanup technology

But the Arco Marine president — speaking at a seminar on what has changed since the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill — also took swipes at environmentalists who are reluctant to consider on-water burning or dispersants as spill-fighting tools. He also criticized those who he says are more interested in new gadgets than simple solutions to tanker problems

Among the common-sense remedies he suggested were systematic reviews of tanker practices that might reveal easily correctable weaknesses

As an example, Aspland said he recently learned that tanker crews change shifts at the same time the Coast Guard does Should an accident occur at shift change, he said, too many new people would be trying to figure out what was happening. He suggested the Coast Guard change its shift schedule slightly

Aspland made the comments on the second day of the three-day seminar attended by many government officials, Outside spill specialists and environmental activists

Aspland would have captured the audience's attention just by virtue of his position: head of one of Alaska's major oil shippers But his personality — and reputation — helped

He struck a decisively folksy tone, chatting about his new grandchild and about the many references to him in a newly released book on tanker safety by Eric Nalder Nalder wrote that Aspland "may be to tanker managers what Lee Iacocca is to the automakers He is either a visionary or a hip shooter depending on how you view him "

The book also quotes Aspland as saying government officials who want to prevent oil spills should "Keep the heat on. I mean it. You've got to keep the heat on. Keep asking questions like you are doing I just worry that three years from now nobody will be paying any attention and things will slip back to the way they used to be "

After Thursday's speech, Aspland acknowledged that the oil industry is partly to blame for not moving ahead with new spill technology that could dramatically increase the ability to pick up spilled oil. Arco Marine worked on a design for a super skimmer to augment smaller and less efficient skimmers. But the company was unable to persuade other oil shippers to help finance the new technology. Arco Marine canceled the project in 1990, but officials there said the lack of industry support had nothing to do with that decision.

Aspland said the industry's general reluctance to experiment is simple: "There's no financial incentive."

With so little new cleanup technology, he said, the best way to deal with future oil spills is to make sure they don't happen. When he made that point in his speech, an audience member suggested he testify against proposed state legislation to roll back an oil-industry tax that funds oil-spill prevention programs, among other things. The legislation is being pushed by the oil industry and its supporters in the Alaska Legislature.

Aspland chuckled, then sidestepped the discussion

Afterward, he said one of Arco Marine's key oil-spill prevention programs attempts to alter tanker crews' behavior. The company gathers its crews together to talk about how they think they can do their jobs better and to train them to be more assertive with their superiors — a notion that borders on heresy in mariners' circles

"No one steps up and says, 'You're going the wrong way,'" he said. "The captain isn't God. We're going to teach them that it's OK to ask questions."

Oil-spill trial draws near for fishermen

ADN 3/25/94

The Associated Press

KENAI — The value of an Upper Cook Inlet salmon permit has dropped by two-thirds in the last three years, a plunge attorneys for commercial fishermen blame on the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill.

Five years ago the Exxon Valdez tanker spilled nearly 11 million gallons of oil into Prince William Sound, oil that eventually affected Kodiak, Cook Inlet and Chignik fisheries.

In May, attorney Brian O'Neill will begin the lengthy process of trying to convince a jury that Exxon Corp. and Exxon Shipping Co. owe fishermen in Prince William Sound, Cook Inlet and other spill areas almost $1 billion in compensatory damages.

He also will be asking for an as-yet-undetermined amount in punitive damages.

O'Neill, of the Minnesota firm Faegre and Benson, will be the lead attorney trying the case against Exxon for more than 4,000 salmon and herring permit holders and their deckhands, including 903 Upper Cook Inlet permit holders.

The legal arguments vary for different fisheries, but O'Neill will argue that Upper Cook Inlet fishers are owed damages for three primary reasons:

- The drop in fish prices after the oil spill. O'Neill says Cook Inlet sockeye salmon prices dropped $1 a pound from 1988 to the 1989, 1990 and 1991 seasons.
- The drop in limited-entry permit values after the oil spill. The average value of an Upper Cook Inlet drift gillnet permit has fallen from $210,000 in 1990 to $69,000 today, said Kurt Iverson, an analyst with the state Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission.
- The drop in boat values after the spill. The value of a commercial drift fishing boat has fallen about $25,000.

Review gets some heart

Spill conferees hear plea

By KIM FARARO
Daily News reporter

A fifth-anniversary seminar on the Exxon Valdez oil spill found its emotional center Friday when charter boat captain Stan Stephens took the microphone

ERIK HILL / Daily News file photo
Stan Stephens

Stephens gave an impassioned speech about the real reasons people were gathered in a somewhat stuffy conference room listening to sometimes ponderous papers on such topics as the care of oiled birds The reasons, Stephens

said, were the porpoises that were his constant companions in his early years sailing Prince William Sound The bears on the Sound's shores that cut trails as wide as sidewalks The salmon he swears were so plentiful he didn't have to fish for them; they seemed to jump into his boat

"I just never could have believed that a fairyland like this existed if I had not experienced it," said Stephens, who looks and sounds every bit the ship's captain, with his white beard and gravelly voice

Stephens said he worries the Sound will continue to be threatened by oil spills unless more is done to improve tanker safety. And he warned citizens that reforms instituted after the Exxon Valdez spill could be gutted unless they make their voices heard above the din created by oil-industry lobbyists who flock to Juneau each year for the legislative session

Stephens' speech came on the last day of a three-day seminar sponsored by the Alaska Sea Grant College Program at the University of Alaska Fairbanks The group said about 180 people attended parts of the conference and that participants included representatives of the oil industry, the Coast Guard, government environmental agencies and citizens watchdog groups.

Stephens was there as the head of one of those citizens groups, the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council. And it seemed fitting that his luncheon speech followed by a day one given by Jerry Aspland, the president of Arco Marine

Both men are considered outspoken crusaders for change in the oil-tanker trade Both wield a fair amount of power and can push changes that could profoundly affect Alaska.

Arco Marine is one of Alaska's major shippers, and Aspland has been instrumental in trying to make the company's ships as safe as possible. Among other things, Arco is teaching crews to question their captains when necessary, an almost unheard-of practice aboard most ships.

Stephens' power stems in good part from his position as the head of the influential citizens advisory council, or RCAC The group receives about $2 million a year from the oil industry to act as a watchdog of the tankers that call at Valdez and of Alyeska Pipeline Service Co , the corporation charged with helping protect the Sound from tanker spills

On Friday, Stephens echoed the drumbeat being sounded over the past three days, calling on his fellow citizens to stop the state legislature from cutting an oil-industry tax

The nickel-a-barrel tax, imposed after the Exxon Valdez disaster, helps pay for many environmental protection programs, including those for oil-spill prevention Industry supporters say the money should not be used for such things as the cleanup of non-oil spills, and legislators sympathetic to the oil industry have been pushing to roll back the tax.

He also took the time to compliment the many people he says have worked tirelessly since the Exxon Valdez wreck to make the Sound safer from spills. The list included such activists as Riki Ott and Rick Steiner and Department of Environmental Conservation official Dan Lawn Stephens told the audience Lawn was wrongly demoted after the spill by an agency too cowardly to deal with someone who talked so straight to both his superiors and to the oil industry

He recounted seeing Lawn hours after the Exxon Valdez, his worries showing in the hollowness of his face He said Lawn had warned his bosses for years the industry wasn't prepared for such a major spill, but in the end, he said, Lawn blamed himself.

"You blame yourself for not doing more," Stephens said "And what did it get him?"

Stephens also complimented Arco's Aspland for his work on tanker safety and former Alyeska president Jim Hermiller for helping create the Regional Citizens' Advisory Council

Stephens ended his speech with a wish list for next 20 years. He wished for Alyeska to do more to cut air pollution from the Valdez tanker terminal, for continued oil-industry funding of spill-cleanup technology, and for 20 years without an oil spill

Hickel, Coast Guard sign pact defining spill duties

The Associated Press

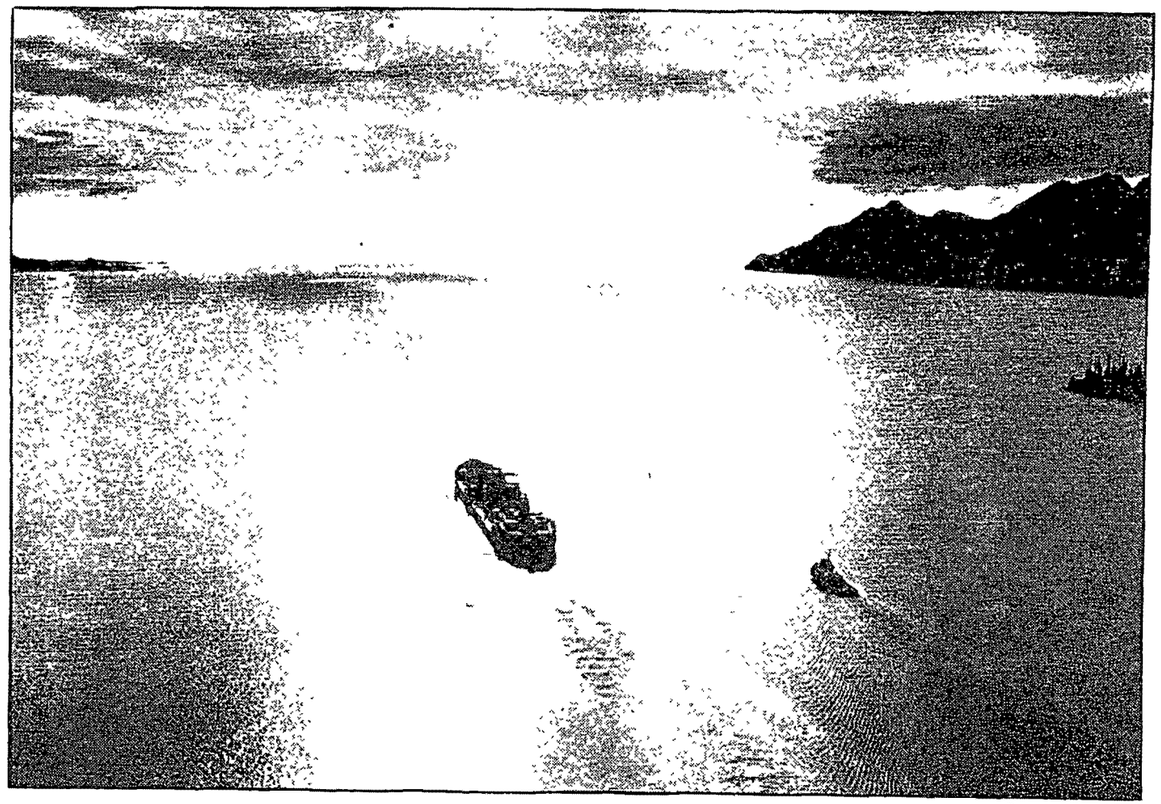
JUNEAU — Gov Wally Hickel and the Alaska commander of the Coast Guard have signed an agreement to set up a joint command during oil spills.

The signing with Rear Adm Roger Rufe came Thursday on the fifth anniversary of the Exxon Valdez oil spill, which dumped nearly 11 million gallons of crude oil into Prince William Sound.

Provisions of the agreement include coordination in spill prevention, planning and response It also would give Alaska access to the $1 billion national oil-spill liability trust fund to help pay state costs of cleaning up oil spills

"One thing we remember most vividly from the Exxon Valdez spill five years ago was the lack of command coordination," Hickel said in a written statement. "It wasn't clear who was in charge of the cleanup efforts"

At sea with a skyscraper full of oil



The Associated Press

An oil tanker heads into Prince William Sound after loading up at the pipeline terminal in Valdez

Five years after Exxon Valdez spill, a look at tankers

By DOUG ESSER
The Associated Press

The biggest machines in the world are oil tankers — three or more football fields long, wide as a 10-lane freeway, tall as a 15-story building, with millions and millions of gallons of crude oil in the basement.

Each ship is part of the economic network that keeps cars, trucks, planes and trains fueled and lubricated

Each one is also a potential environmental disaster, inevitable as an earthquake on a fault line It's not a question of whether one of the 5,000 tankers in the world will run aground, break apart or explode, it's only a matter of when

That's why Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Eric Nalder, who covered the Exxon Valdez spill five years ago, calls his book "Tankers Full of Trouble" (Grove, $24)

In this book, Nalder, a reporter for the Seattle Times, takes a ride on the tanker Arco Anchorage from Valdez, across the stormy North Pacific, through the tricky inland waters of Washington to a refinery near Bellingham. Along the way, he shares with the reader a sense of awe at the industrial vessel, sympathy for overworked crew members, and a detailed account of all the things that can go wrong In 1985, the Arco Anchorage itself ran aground at Port Angeles, Wash , spilling 239,000 gallons of oil

Troubles include owners who save money by skimping on steel in building tankers, inadequate inspections, political pressures on regulators, pilots with better job security than safety records, and crew members as capable as any of us of human error As Exxon Valdez Capt Joseph Hazelwood can attest, an error on an oil tanker can create a big, expensive, career-ending, oily-birds-on-the-evening-news environmental mess

☐ **BOOK:** "Tankers Full of Trouble"
☐ **AUTHOR** Eric Nalder
☐ **PUBLISHER.** Grove
☐ **PRICE** $24

Information on every aspect of the oil tanker industry is incorporated as Nalder describes the 1 200-mile trip across the North Pacific from the end of the Alaska pipeline to the refinery. What might be considered dull details of tanker construction become more compelling when you're in the middle of a Gulf of Alaska storm, waves breaking over the deck, and you can hear the steel groan as the ship bends between the waves.

Nalder is relentlessly pessimistic, as if great ships can only end in great disasters Listening to the metallic complaints of the ship in the storm, he writes, "The noise seems to be one voice grieving the fate of tankers " Yet a tanker like the Arco Anchorage makes the same trip every eight or nine days, safely.

This is a book for general-interest readers, with enough details for people to take an in-depth look at the oil spill issue. Nalder does a particularly good job of profiling tanker crew members and putting a human face onto an industry

There are deadweight tons of information floating in this book It would have been helpful if lists and charts had been included that could present spill and tanker information graphically A map of the route of the Arco Anchorage also would have been nice

When, not if, the next Exxon Valdez occurs, look for Nalder on network TV shows saying, "I knew this was going to happen "

At last

Timing's right for consensus on how to spend settlement money

Last week's fifth anniversary of the oil spill brought some welcome news: The Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Council is close to coming out with a comprehensive plan on how to spend what remains of Exxon's $900 million civil settlement.

Granted, the plan isn't going to please everybody. This being Alaska, passions run high over how the money should — and should not — be spent.

There are those who want to protect habitat by buying private lands and those who vehemently oppose putting any more of Alaska into public hands. Some want money for hatcheries and some argue that hatcheries may be more the problem in Prince William Sound than the solution. Advocates support — and critics oppose — putting the settlement into a reserve fund or into research, restoration or recreation.

Alaskans already have criticized the trustees for being too slow to come up with a plan and too quick to spend almost a third of the settlement, much of it on research and on reimbursing the state and federal governments for oil cleanup costs Communities affected by the spill fear the remaining $650 million will disappear before the area's ecosystem and economy are fully restored

Not all the problems from the spill will be solved, unfortunately. Not all can be But some good can come from the settlement.

Environmentalists may get only half the money they want for habitat, but the lands the trustee council ranks as its top priorities would be well worth protecting. These include Native inholdings in the Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge and Kenai Fjords National Park and various parcels in Prince William Sound.

For those diehard Alaskans who oppose putting more land under public protection, consider this: Buying land in the Kodiak refuge and in Kenai Fjords consolidates already established parks and preserves; it doesn't create new ones The landowners are willing sellers. And the acquisitions would be not just pretty parks but scientific and economic investments, since protecting critical habitat is key to keeping the North Pacific diverse and productive.

As for other decisions, the trustees are bound to both please and disappoint. In January they gave more money to Prince William Sound fisheries than some critics thought wise, but no doubt less than the fisheries wanted. They set funds aside for future research in spite of arguments that the money's needed now. But they did not reserve as much as Gov. Wally Hickel had originally wanted for an endowment. They pleased research advocates and the governor by funding the university-run marine science institute in Seward while disappointing critics who see the funding as pork or believe research money could be better spent elsewhere.

In other words, they sought compromise and consensus, goals that are dimly regarded in some circles but necessary to a process where three trustees are appointed by Gov. Hickel and three by President Bill Clinton and all six must agree on every decision.

Gov Hickel deserves the credit (or, this being Alaska, the blame) for negotiating the settlement in the first place. While he hasn't said whether he will pursue another term as governor, he may have only a few months left to see his settlement bear fruit

Given the governor's rapport with Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt — the most influential of the three federal trustees and himself an advocate of consensus — now is the time to agree on a plan.

Kodiak buyback

A good use for the oil spill settlement

Using money from the Exxon Valdez oil spill settlement to buy private inholdings in the Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge is one proposal among many before the state and federal trustee council overseeing the settlement But it's an idea that has attracted a broad range of backers, from the Native corporations that hold title to the land to fishermen, scientists environmentalists and the National Rifle Association, to name a few What makes this proposal so widely supported?

First, the Kodiak refuge meets the requirements the trustees set for using settlement money to acquire habitat. Land under consideration is rated on how badly the area was affected by the oil spill and how important the habitat is for affected species Had the refuge not received such a high score, it would not be considered at all

But buying back land within the refuge is also a way to solve a problem older than the oil spill The 1971 Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act established Kodiak village corporations and directed them to choose nearby lands as part of their settlement The lands nearby, however, had been set aside as a wildlife refuge in 1941 by President Franklin Roosevelt

So here was a classic Catch-22 The three corporations were told to develop their lands for the economic good of their shareholders, but the refuge regulations prohibit development that would harm bear and other wildlife habitat

The Native corporations could challenge these restrictions in court and possibly win The question is, what would they really win? Development would come at the expense of land now used for subsistence. Kodiak bears and other wildlife would lose valuable habitat The public would lose access to a world-renowned wildlife preserve

So instead, the Native corporations have sought to trade or sell their lands. But years of negotiations failed to turn up either suitable lands to trade or money to buy the inholdings Until now The federal government, which appoints half the six-member trustee council, has listed the Kodiak refuge, along with inholdings in Kenai Fjords National Park, as top priorities for land acquisition

Should the entire trustee council approve the Kodiak buyback (all decisions must be unanimous), this doesn't mean all the money from the oil spill settlement will go to habitat protection As an editorial in Sunday's paper pointed out, the trustees appear to be working toward a comprehensive plan that will parcel out funding to research, restoration, fisheries, a university-backed sea-life study center in Seward and a reserve account to meet future needs. Many of these proposals are state priorities

Nor will the bulk of any money eventually allocated for habitat acquisition necessarily go to the Kodiak inholdings, something the Kodiak village corporations should keep in mind when they determine, in the next few months, the asking price for their lands. There is simply not enough money to do everything, and the price has to be reasonable or the Native corporations will need to line up conservation groups or other outside funding sources to contribute

Finally, using oil spill settlement money to buy inholdings doesn't mean the Kodiak village corporations — and therefore future generations — will lose all their ties to the land About half the acreage Natives own on Kodiak is being offered for sale, and only on the condition that rights to subsistence hunt and gather will be maintained

The Kodiak buyback, then, is a no-lose proposal, except maybe for those Alaskans who are diehard opponents of putting one iota more of Alaska into public hands And even they would have a hard time arguing against consolidating what is already a publicly protected refuge Using some of the oil spill settlement to protect this extraordinary habitat would be a fitting settlement of the state's worst environmental accident

Spill story to air on TV

A new hour-long television show called "Turning Point" will feature issues surrounding the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill as one of its segments, according to producer Peter Bull

The ABC program will reenact the night of the spill, show clean-up efforts in the wake of the spill, and review tanker safety issues, Bull said.

Though filming was conducted in Cordova, local fishermen will mostly be portrayed while participating in last summer's tanker blockade, he said.

The show will air before a class action lawsuit goes to trial in early May, Bull said.

Report: Exxon studies biased

By Sören Wuerth
The Cordova Times

Studies Exxon conducted on the effect 11 million gallons of crude oil spilled in Prince William Sound had on natural resources are biased and flawed, according to a report released Sunday by a local scientist

By comparing government research with Exxon's findings, Riki Ott, a commercial fisherman who earned her degrees in marine pollution, found the oil company had underestimated injury to the ecosystem, while exaggerating recovery

The 60-page report, titled "Sound Truth: Exxon's Manipulation of Science and the Significance of the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill," also suggests oil continues to pollute the environment, points out the spill's impact on communities, and it lists recommendations for regulatory changes

"Something went very wrong with the 'science' in the aftermath of the Exxon Valdez ...," Ott wrote in her report. " . Government and Exxon research findings were touted as 'science' and were forced up on the scientific community to be treated as 'science.'"

After the 1989 oil spill, Exxon, along with state and federal agencies began to scrutinize the effect oil had on the marine and coastal environments The oil fouled more than 10,000 square miles of ocean surface and the

crude washed up on at least 1,500 miles of shoreline

In analyzing 20 government and 12 Exxon reports, the Greenpeace-funded paper examines, among other things, how experiments were designed and carried out, statistics that were used; and how conclusions were drawn

Ott found differences between methods used by the oil company and government agencies to do such things as sample data, collect information and define oil exposure

"Results of the two separate data sets paint starkly contrasting pictures of injury to and recovery of the Prince William Sound ecosystem

In general, government studies show long-term damage in a variety of species and delayed ecosystem recovery, while Exxon studies conclude there is virtually no long-term damage and that there is a rapid ecosystem recovery," wrote Ott Ott was out-of-state and could not be reached for comment.


Riki Ott

Ott also accuses Exxon scientists of misrepresenting data or reporting it selectively

For example, while the government presented raw data of studies on Pacific herring, Exxon failed to release its raw data, making it impossible for other scientists to verify the oil company's results, according to Ott.

Restoration efforts are obscured by Exxon's attempts to conceal information using legality issues, Ott summarizes.

"It is imperative that the scientific community, Congress and the state and federal governments, take steps to improve the quality of science that becomes part of the public domain, particularly studies undertaken in the aftermath of an oil spill," Ott says

She recommends:

- Oil spill response, damage and restoration research should be reviewed by other scientists before anything is published. Different groups should also be allowed to bid on scientific projects
- Laws should force researchers to agree on a plan and restrict them from publicizing, or using in court, studies that do not conform to certain procedures
- Baseline studies, funded by various agencies, should be conducted by governments and the public. A baseline monitoring program should be finished before state and federal oil lease sales
- The state Department of Fish and Game should create a position for an "Alaska State Trustee for Natural Resources."
- Authors writing reports for the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council should disburse their papers to the scientific community for peer review

"The public has a right-to-know the full environmental impacts of industrial accidents that damage public resources," Ott wrote. "Without this information, received in a timely manner, the public is ill-prepared to press for social changes needed to prevent oil spills in the first place."

Exxon spokesman Les Rogers said his company has no comment due to pending litigation

A class action lawsuit against Exxon by commercial fishermen, Natives, landowners and others is scheduled for trial May 2 in U.S District Court in Anchorage

6/9/6 (Item 2 from file: 707)
07579043
FIVE YEARS AFTER THE EXXON VALDEZ IS MOMENTUM FOR SAFETY FADING? NATION'S WORST OIL SPILL WAS COSTLY, BUT SO ARE MANY REFORMS
Seattle Times (SE) - Sunday March 20, 1994
By: BILL DIETRICH
Edition: FINAL Section: NEWS Page: A1
Word Count: 1,792

TEXT:
Sometimes society learns from its mistakes. Five years after the Exxon Valdez spilled 11 million gallons of oil into Alaska's Prince William Sound, a host of reforms have been made that should ensure that particular accident won't be repeated.

From alcohol breath tests to tug escorts, from stockpiled cleanup equipment to oil-spill drills, industry and government have taken corrective measures.

Yet sometimes society can also forget its past. Five years after that middle-of-the-night collision with Bligh Reef on Good Friday, March 24, 1989 - the worst oil spill in U.S. history - there are signs that state legislators in Washington and Alaska and officials in the U.S. Coast Guard are relaxing their reformist stance. Examples:

-- The Coast Guard has yet to adopt regulations implementing about two-thirds of the changes mandated by Congress in its Oil Pollution Act of 1990. Among them is a requirement that tug escorts for tankers be extended from Port Angeles to the western end of the Strait of Juan de Fuca. The Coast Guard has argued that deciding what kind of tug and towing packages to require is complex, but Washington's congressional delegation wants action.

The agency has also declined to enforce safety regulations on tankers passing through U.S. waters in the Strait of Juan de Fuca en route to Canada, angering Gov. Mike Lowry.

"We are talking about a delay of more than 1,000 days since Congress passed" the law, said a December letter drafted by U.S. Rep. Jolene Unsoeld and signed by the state's congressional delegation to Transportation Secretary Federico Pena.

-- Washington's Legislature stripped staff support this spring from the citizens' Marine Oversight Board it set up after the spill to watchdog tanker safety here. A bill by Rep. Nancy Rust, D-Seattle, to continue support never made it out of committee this session.

The Oversight Board was not simply abolished, as 49 other boards were this spring, but the cut of $200,000 means its findings probably will not be printed and distributed to the media and public.

"The Legislature stepped up to the mark three years ago and passed a pretty good law but hasn't done a good job of funding it," said Naki Stevens, an Oversight Board member who represents People for Puget Sound. By comparison, a counterpart in Alaska has a budget of $2 million and a staff of 14.

One problem is that the maritime industry didn't like the critical report the Oversight Board issued in 1992. "It's like shooting the messenger instead of addressing the problem," said Fred Felleman of the Washington Environmental Council, which monitors the board.

-- Oil lobbyists in Juneau are pressing Alaska's Legislature to modify a 5-cent-a-barrel tax levied after the spill, arguing it has been misspent on questionable items such as a new state ferry. They want at least part of the tax to be devoted to completing a $50 million emergency response fund, and then they want that part of the tax dropped. The result could cut money for state regulators who police the industry. "The scary part of this is how it symbolizes how short memories are," said Patty Ginsburg, spokeswoman for the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens Advisory Council.

-- The oil industry has made impressive strides in stationing new oil-spill cleanup equipment on Puget Sound but has resisted proposals it relocate its new 208-foot high-seas skimmer from Everett to Port Angeles or station a tug at Neah Bay to rescue tankers that lose power in the Strait of Juan de Fuca or off Washington's coast.

Critics also charge the industry has put its money into cleanup instead of prevention, even though the best equipment can only recover about 15 percent of a major spill.

-- America's appetite for oil remains unchanged, with oil imports reaching 49.5 percent of domestic consumption last year. Jack Doyle, senior analyst for Friends of the Earth, recently completed a study that estimated the U.S. petroleum industry loses a volume of oil from evaporation, leakage and waste each year equivalent to more than 1,000 Exxon Valdez oil spills.

Risk remains

The continued risk of shipping oil was illustrated this month when a tanker and container ship collided in Turkey's Bosporus Strait, spilling 16 million gallons.

Last year there were 25 major tanker oil spills worldwide, killing 26 and dumping 37.9 million gallons of oil. That's actually an improvement over four of the previous five years.

"Overall, we're getting better," said consultant Arthur McKenzie of the Tanker Advisory Center in New York, noting that the total continues a very erratic improving trend.

But, he added, the U.S. tanker fleet that plies Alaska and Washington is aging and mediocre. In quality it averages well behind the flag fleets of Australia, Japan, Panama and Liberia, he said.

In Alaska, the empty tanker Overseas Ohio struck an iceberg in Prince William Sound on Jan. 2, sustaining significant damage. On Feb. 17, the Overseas Washington lost power and drifted in Cook Inlet, near Anchorage.

In Washington, the tanker Arco Anchorage spilled 239,000 gallons off Port Angeles in 1985, the barge Nestucca lost 231,000 gallons on the coast three months before the Exxon Valdez, and the Japanese processor ship Tenyo Maru sank with 368,000 gallons aboard on July 22, 1991.

Just one month after the Exxon Valdez spill, the tanker Exxon Philadelphia lost power in the Strait of Juan de Fuca and drifted for several hours before rescue. And last year that same ship, renamed the SeaRiver Philadelphia, suffered an explosion of its exhaust-gas cooling system when docked at Anacortes.

When Seattle Times staff reporter Eric Nalder rode the Arco Anchorage from Alaska to Washington in 1992, he witnessed several mishaps, including a fire in the engine room as the ship negotiated narrow Rosario Strait in the San Juan Islands. Nalder's new book, "Tankers Full of Trouble," is excerpted in today's Pacific magazine.

Spill's impact is continuing

Public outrage over the Exxon Valdez spill clearly rattled the industry.

The spill contaminated 1,548 miles of Alaska shoreline, the oil drifting as much as 600 miles from Bligh Reef.

The spill is believed to have killed as many as 300,000 birds, including more than 200 bald eagles, as many as 5,500 sea otters, 300 harbor seals and 13 killer whales. It inflicted unquantified but significant damage to salmon and herring eggs, clams and intertidal organisms.

Its impact continues. Oil still lingers on some beaches, said Jim Gibeout, a University of Texas geologist hired by Alaska to survey the damage.

"There are still sites out there that are considerably oiled," he said.

But he added that both human cleanup and natural degradation have reduced the damage each year.

The salmon and herring fisheries in Prince William Sound have collapsed, amid hot debate over the spill's role.

While otters are bouncing back, seals and harlequin ducks are showing little evidence of recovery.

Exxon has spent more than $3.5 billion in response to the spill, the company says.

That amount includes a $100 million criminal settlement to the federal government, a $25 million fine, a $900 million civil settlement with the federal government, $300 million in voluntary claim settlements with individuals such as fishermen, and about $2.2 billion cleaning up the spill and repairing the Exxon Valdez.

That total will likely grow.

Unsettled civil suits may finally come to federal court beginning May 2 and to Alaska state court June 6. They involve as many as 100,000 potential class-action suit members, 5 million pages of documents and potential damages of $1.5 billion or more.

About a third of the $900 million civil settlement has been eaten up by cleanup-related administrative costs, research and monitoring. Much of the remainder may be spent on more than 200,000 acres to protect timberlands critical to adjacent marine waters from logging or development. $46 million has been spent on 64,000 such acres to date.

Tanker reforms requiring double hulls were passed by Congress in 1990 but don't begin to phase in until next year; all tankers won't come under the provision until 2010. By that time, Alaska's oil fields may be near exhaustion anyway, so no new U.S.-flag tankers may be built.

No double-hulled tankers have yet been started in U.S. shipyards. Worldwide, 932 of approximately 3,400 tankers have either a double bottom, double side or double hull, according to McKenzie at the Tanker Advisory Center.

Still undone: the tough reforms

In sum,, the easiest reforms - tug escorts, the stockpiling of cleanup equipment, navigational improvements and better spill-response planning - have been accomplished.

The toughest reforms - better ships, bigger and better-trained crews, and clear consensus on controversial solutions such as burning spilled oil or using chemical dispersants - have not.

Experts disagree on how much progress that represents, with a conference scheduled in Anchorage this week to debate that question.

"It's not wonderful, but it's better," McKenzie said.

"Five years later the risks have not diminished significantly," countered Ed Wenk, professor emeritus of engineering at the University of Washington and a former member of the Marine Oversight Commission.

"My sense of improvement is in the area of response to spills," said Barbara Herman, administrator of Washington's Office of Marine Safety, set up in 1991 in response to the spills. Still lagging, she said, is spill prevention.

"We need better information on what causes oil spills," Herman said.

"I'd rather have an old ship with a vigilant crew than a new ship with a non-vigilant crew," said Jerry Aspland, president of Arco Marine.

"We're definitely better off than in 1989," said Larry Dietrich, who oversees spill preparation for Alaska's Department of Environmental Conservation. "The question is whether we're backsliding."

"Could the Exxon Valdez spill happen again? I don't think so," said Ginsburg of the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens Advisory Council. "Could a major spill happen again? Of course."

CAPTION:
PHOTO
1) NATALIE FOBES: YEARS AFTER THE SPILL, CREWS TEST NEW CLEANUP TECHNIQUES ON STILL-OILED BEACHES ALONG PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND.

2) TOM REESE / SEATTLE TIMES: ON PUGET SOUND FOR A TRAINING SESSION, KEN SCHACHT HELPS DEPLOY A HIGH-SEAS OIL-RECOVERY BOOM FROM THE STERN OF THE WASHINGTON RESPONDER LAST WEEK. THE 208-FOOT SKIMMER IS TO BE USED TO PUMP SPILLED OIL FROM THE SOUND AND NEARBY WATERS.

3) TOM REESE / SEATTLE TIMES: THE WASHINGTON RESPONDER IS BASED AT EVERETT, THE SITE OF A NEW REGIONAL OIL-SPILL CLEANUP CENTER. THE OIL INDUSTRY HAS SET UP FIVE SUCH SITES AROUND THE NATION.

4) TOM REESE / SEATTLE TIMES: BARRY KEVAN OVERSEES THE DEPLOYMENT OF A HIGH-SEAS OIL-RECOVERY BOOM WHILE TRAINING HIS CREW ABOARD THE WASHINGTON RESPONDER ON PUGET SOUND LAST WEEK. THE SHIP IS STATIONED AT EVERETT.

DESCRIPTORS: FIVE YEARS AFTER THE EXXON VALDEZ; EXXON VALDEZ OIL SPILL; SUBJECT: OIL (PETROLEUM); ACCIDENTS AND SAFETY; SHIPS; ALASKA

6/9/5 (Item 1 from file: 707)
07579084
WHAT'S BETTER, WHAT'S NOT IN OIL SHIPPING
Seattle Times (SE) - Sunday March 20, 1994
By: BILL DIETRICH
Edition: FINAL Section: NEWS Page: A16
Word Count: 1,288

TEXT:
Here's a brief look at reforms and lingering problems since the 1989 oil spill from the Exxon Valdez in Alaska's Prince William Sound:

Reforms in Washington

-- Everett has become the home of one of five new regional oil-spill cleanup centers the oil industry has set up around the United States to stockpile spill equipment, which together is costing about $1 billion. Stationed in Everett is the 208-foot Washington Responder, a skimmer capable of operating in ocean conditions. A companion vessel is being based in Astoria, and spill cleanup equipment is also stored at Port Angeles and Bellingham.

-- Coordination has improved among the Coast Guard, state Department of Ecology and private contractors in spill-response drills.

-- The crews of about 180 commercial fishing boats have been trained to aid in spill response.

-- Arco and British Petroleum have contracted with Foss Maritime for two new $11 million "tractor tugs" to escort their ships. The tugs have twice the power of previous craft and greater stability, and the oil companies are arguing that one of them is superior to two conventional tugs.

-- Puget Sound had long enjoyed a Vessel Traffic Safety System to direct ship traffic, a limit of 125,000 deadweight tons on the size of tankers allowed east of Port Angeles, and a required tug escort east of that point for tankers of more than 40,000 tons. That was supplemented after the Exxon Valdez spill by an 11-mph speed limit in Rosario Strait. But the speed limit is voluntary. And about a dozen small foreign-flag tankers have taken advantage of a legal loophole to reduce their cargo by as little as one ton to come under the 40,000-ton limit and escape the $10,000 cost of tug escort.

-- The Office of Marine Safety and the Marine Oversight Commission, financed by a new 5-cent-per-barrel tax on imported oil, have provided new scrutiny. The Legislature this year provided money for inspectors to check vessel safety in the Columbia River.

Problems in Washington

-- The Washington Responder's base in Everett puts it as much as 12 hours from spills in the Strait of Juan de Fuca or on the coast. "That

vessel should be based in Port Angeles," argues the Washington Environmental Council's Fred Felleman. "The regulations and improvements are always for Port Angeles east. I'm looking forward to the date when the state treats its waters even-handedly." There are no escort tugs, pilots, or towing capability for waters west of Port Angeles.

-- Most tanker accidents are caused by human error, and that has received relatively little attention. "I do not believe we have made any inroads in my industry in the selection and training of shipboard personnel," said Jerry Aspland, the unusually outspoken and reformist head of Arco Marine who serves on the Oversight Board. While the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 prohibits crew members from working more than 15 hours in a 24-hour shift, crew size and weariness remain an issue.

-- Lawmakers in Washington passed one of the toughest tanker regulatory laws in the nation, but a tax on oil has not brought in the revenue expected to enforce it, and the anti-tax and anti-regulatory mood of the public has left politicians with little incentive to revisit the issue.

Reforms in Alaska

The Exxon Valdez disaster came from a string of errors. Crew members drank shortly before departure. The pilot left the ship before it passed Bligh Reef. The Coast Guard was changing watches and not watching the radar during the collision. Capt. Joseph Hazelwood ordered the tanker to leave the shipping lanes to avoid ice and then went below, leaving a relatively inexperienced third mate and a helmsman of marginal ability in charge. Some changes since then:

-- All tanker captains take alcohol Breathalyzer tests an hour before departure. Crew members suspected of drinking are also tested. Those registering 0.04 percent or greater are denied access to their ship and terminal.

-- Bligh Reef is now marked by a buoy light.

-- Tankers can no longer leave the shipping lanes, and if a laden tanker shifts to another lane to avoid ice, tankers coming the other way must wait for it to pass.

-- Coast Guard radar and radio have been improved and staffing beefed up, with a new system this summer expected to extend surveillance of tankers all the way outside Prince William Sound.

-- Pilots now stay aboard past Bligh Reef.

-- The Exxon Valdez had no escort; all loaded tankers now are accompanied through Prince William Sound by a tug and an Escort Response Vessel carrying boom and oil skimmers. Since a Jan. 2 mishap between an empty tanker and an iceberg, tankers also get a tug ice escort if ice is present.

-- The oil industry finances regional citizen advisory councils in Prince William Sound and Cook Inlet to watchdog its activities.

-- A 5-cent-per-barrel tax provides money for ongoing state regulation and is supposed to eventually fill a $50 million state contingency fund.

-- The crews of more than 300 fishing boats have received training in responding to spills.

-- Spill-containment boom is stockpiled at five Prince William Sound fish hatcheries.

-- Barges are stockpiled to hold as much as 20 million gallons of skimmed oil and water. When the Exxon Valdez spill occurred, there was no place to put skimmed oil in the first three days, and cleanup halted.

Problems in Alaska

-- While laden tankers now have escorts, some require as much as three hours to deploy towing lines if they lose power and start drifting. Additionally, existing tugs may be unable to control a tanker in high wind and waves.

-- Declining oil revenues have financially pinched Alaska's state government and eroded support for pouring a lot of money into tanker inspection and spill prevention. "Legislation proposed this year is a real serious challenge to keeping the gains we made in 1989," said Patty Ginsburg, spokeswoman for Prince William Sound's Regional Citizens Advisory Council.

-- Temporary weather stations installed in Prince William Sound to help spill-cleanup ships have since been removed by the federal government, reducing the information available to tanker captains.

-- Little has been done to improve spill preparation on the southern Kenai Peninsula or Kodiak Island, even though the Exxon Valdez spill extended that far.

National reforms made

-- Congress has ordered that tankers visiting U.S. waters convert to double hulls on a phased schedule, based on ship age, that begins in 1995 and ends in 2010 for Alaska and Washington, 2015 for the Gulf Coast.

-- The oil industry has been required to create a $1 billion oil-spill liability trust fund.

-- Congress has clarified who can be in charge during a spill, as well as fiscal liability and means to calculate compensation.

Problems nationally, internationally

-- The Coast Guard has yet to write regulations implementing about two-thirds of the changes Congress mandated, including issues such as tug escort, crew size and international enforcement.

-- No double-hulled ships have been started to replace the aging fleet plying the waters between Alaska and Washington.

-- Congress has yet to ratify new international agreements improving tanker safety.

-- Tankers internationally are still being built with too little steel and reinforcement, leading to cracks and spills.

-- The world tanker fleet has the surplus capacity to operate with empty wing tanks or lowered oil levels to reduce the chance of spills and still transport oil, but there are no regulations forcing shippers to do so.

CAPTION:
PHOTO
NATALIE FOBES: TWO ALYESKA ESCORT TUGS FOLLOW AN OIL TANKER OUT OF THE MOUTH OF PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND AND INTO THE GULF OF ALASKA. THE TUGS ARE EQUIPPED TO CONTAIN AN OIL SPILL THE SIZE OF THE EXXON VALDEZ.

DESCRIPTORS: FIVE YEARS AFTER THE EXXON VALDEZ; EXXON VALDEZ OIL SPILL; SUBJECT: OIL (PETROLEUM); ACCIDENTS AND SAFETY; SHIPS; ALASKA

6/9/10 (Item 1 from file: 723)
07580150
NOT ALL STAINS FROM THE EXXON VALDEZ HAVE FADED
Wichita Eagle (WE) - SUNDAY, March 20, 1994
By: Rosanne Pagano, Associated Press
Edition: City Edition Section: Sunday Section Page: 2d
Word Count: 1,138

TEXT:
CORDOVA, Alaska Tides and times have been kind to Prince William Sound in the five years since the Exxon Valdez rammed a charted reef, dumping nearly 11 million gallons of crude oil into pristine waters.

Storms have scoured Alaska's 1,500 miles of polluted coastline, removing about half the oil embedded in some places. Many beaches look clean. Population forecasts for bald eagles are good. The tourists are back.

''It's behind us,'' said John Manly, an aide to Gov. Walter Hickel, whose administration won a $900 million settlement from Exxon Corp. in 1991.

But it's not over for the people of Cordova, home port to Prince William Sound's commercial fishing fleet.

Cordova fishermen are among the plaintiffs who filed damage claims in the wake of the March 24, 1989, accident. They are just getting their day in court, and until they do, they will not turn the page on the Exxon Valdez.

They blame the Valdez spill for bad salmon harvests over the past two years. They say they are just hanging on and that massive Exxon is trying to wait them out, an assertion the company denies.

''It's been a war of attrition,'' says salmon fisherman R.J. Kopchak, a former Cordova City Council member whose three-story house overlooks Cordova's dock and forested Orca Bay.

A typical week's mail, stacked on Kopchak's kitchen table, contains court notices about his lawsuit: More papers to sign, more documents to file.

''We know one guy, a fisherman here with a valid claim, who just quit sending in his paperwork. Refuses to do it anymore,'' Kopchak says as he scans the foggy bay.
''The longer Exxon and its attorneys can make it miserable for you, the greater the chance the settlement will be less.''

Kopchak is among fishermen who say this summer's salmon season could be his make-or-break year. If the run fails or prices are weak, Kopchak says he may have to polish up his carpentry skills and move his wife and four young children somewhere else.

''I built this castle because I figured I'd live and die here,'' he

says. ''I really love this place. We don't lock our doors, we don't worry about our kids. The problem is, what I want to do is fish.''

Lawyers for Exxon, the world's largest corporation, reject any suggestion that delay has been a tactic. Complaints have been separated into state and federal class actions, each with separate trial judges, schedules and evidence rules.

The federal lawsuit, scheduled to start May 2, includes 100,000 potential class members. Some estimates put the damages at $1.5 billion or more.

A trial in state Superior Court is scheduled to start June 6 and includes seven towns oiled in the spill's path. The mayors want compensation for municipal services they say were diverted in response to the spill.

Other state plaintiffs include 13 Alaska Native corporations; they claim damage to their land and archaeological sites. Natives also sued Exxon in federal court over damage to their traditional ways, which depend on the sound for food.

Evidence-gathering for all these actions has consumed the past five years. The company said more than 5 million pages of documents have changed hands; nearly 2,000 depositions were taken.

A list filed by Exxon names 315 planned witnesses in the federal case. Plaintiffs planned to call 270 witnesses in a case scheduled to last all summer. Authorities will testify on marine science, land values, fish abundance and hardest of all whether there are any lingering effects of the spill.

In Cordova, everyone wants an Exxon settlement even townspeople with no claim pending.

''We don't want to be known as the oil spill town any more,'' Mayor Margy Johnson said.

Seated at a table in the restaurant of her dockside hotel, Johnson points out a pair of sea otters playing in icy waters where, in late February, the fishing fleet is idle. Some Cordovans, hoping for a new image as a tourist town, say the city should adopt a new slogan. The Sea Otter Capital of the World is mentioned.

Johnson, a can-do businesswoman, wants action.

Until it was abruptly canceled this week, she was helping organize Cordova's first ''Bury the Blues Day'' on March 26. The event, complete with a New Orleans-style band parading through town, was aimed at uniting the community. But organizers called it off when too many people complained they weren't yet ready to forgive and forget.

''For Cordova, the spill was like a death in the family,'' Johnson says. ''I'm appalled that five years later there's still no settlement with Exxon. That's like trying to get over a death when you can't read the

will.''

Cordova, a town of nearly 2,600 on the sound's eastern edge, is reached only by boat or plane. Nearly half the work force is directly employed in fish harvesting or processing. State labor economists reported this month there was little prospect that salmon prices would bounce back soon.

Employment has receded over the past three years, sales receipts dropped and more than two dozen homes are on the market, the state said.

Real estate agent Linden O'Toole among the only families to get out of fishing, remain in Cordova and pursue a new occupation says she is fielding about as many inquiries from out of state as from Cordovans looking to buy.

O'Toole, who is supporting her fisherman husband and two small children, says earnings from real estate have gone to pay off tens of thousands of dollars in fishing debts.

In 1990, one year after the spill, the fleet turned in a near-record pink salmon harvest and prices were good. Then, in 1991, prices on the worldwide market collapsed, and harvests were dumped back into the sea.

The next two years, for undetermined reasons, the run failed. Last year, the Pacific herring season, which typically begins in April and is the fishermen's first cash crop of the year, was cut short in Prince William Sound when schools failed to materialize. Some fish were diseased.

Last year, frustrated by Exxon's claims that the spill caused no ongoing harm, a mosquito fleet of 65 seiners gave up the dismal pink salmon season to bottle up the Port of Valdez, terminus of the trans-Alaska oil pipeline. For nearly two days, no tankers could arrive or depart during the protest.

''I will never forgive and forget,'' says 42-year-old Doug Pettit, a Cordova fisherman who since 1987 has run a local heating repair business to tide his family over the winter.

CAPTION:
PHOTO: Cordova is home port to half the commercial fishing fleet in Prince William Sound off the Alaskan coast. Residents there say the oil company is trying to bleed them dry in their legal fight over damages inflicted by the spill. (ALASKA)
Associated Press
MAP: Exxon Valdez legacy
Associated Press

2/9/4
07581055
VALDEZ CLEANUP IS SKIN-DEEP
USA Today (US) - TUESDAY March 22, 1994
By: Rae Tyson
Edition: FINAL Section: NEWS Page: 03A
Word Count: 1,239

MEMO:
NOTES: THE NATION
Five years ago, the Exxon Valdez bled 11 million gallons of crude into Alaska's pristine waters. Today, the USA's worst oil spill is still being felt
See info box at end of text
See sidebar: 03A

TEXT:
VALDEZ, Alaska - VALDEZ, Alaska - In picturesque Prince William Sound, the serenity of a wintry March day seems to belie that anything catastrophic ever happened here.

Fishing boats bob gently in teal-blue waters. Beaches look clean. Otters play.

But five years ago Thursday, in a setting as pristine as any in the USA, 11 million gallons of Alaska crude oil poured from a gash in the hull of the Exxon Valdez. And most experts say the nation's worst spill was - and is - an ecological and sociological nightmare.

More than 70% of the spilled oil remains camouflaged in the ecosystem, so devastating flora and fauna that a complete recovery could take decades.

The once-vital pink salmon industry is on its knees, reeling from back-to-back bad catches and near bankruptcy.

For villagers, the effect on a centuries-old subsistence lifestyle has been profound, affecting nothing less than "the quality of our culture," says Gail Evanoff of Chenega Bay. 'Ecological disaster'

The drama began shortly after midnight on March 24, 1989, when Exxon Valdez Capt. Joseph Hazelwood radioed the Coast Guard. "Evidentally, we are leaking some oil," he said.

Just hours after departing the Alyeska pipeline terminal in Valdez, the off-course tanker ran aground on Bligh Reef, puncturing the vessel's steel skin and unleashing an ocean of crude.

The environmental toll - exacerbated by a lackluster initial cleanup response - was staggering: The waters of Prince William Sound turned dark brown. Nearly 1,500 miles of beaches were fouled; fish hatcheries were rendered lifeless by the oily poison.

Hundreds of thousands of ducks, bald eagles, murres, terns and other sea

birds died. So did scores of sea otters, seals and whales.

"It was the most significant ecological disaster ever in North America," says Jim Ayers, director of the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council, which is now overseeing cleanup and research.

Exxon, which declined USA TODAY's request for comment, eventually paid $1 billion in fines to settle state and federal lawsuits, and spent another $2.2 billion on a cleanup that extended through the summer of 1991. Because of that remedial effort, an airplane ride over the sound today reveals little visible evidence that a spill ever took place.

"The amazing thing is, it really doesn't look bad," says biologist Riki Ott of United Fishermen of Alaska. Turn over rocks tofind oil

But appearances can be deceiving.
"Those beaches are supposed to be clean, but all you have to do to find oil is turn over a few rocks," says Dave Cobb business manager of Valdez Hatchery, which stocks the sound with pink salmon. "It's down there."

Cobb's sentiment is echoed across the sound, particularly in towns dependent on the ecosystem for survival.

In the native villages of Chenega Bay and Tatitlek, an entire way of life has been disrupted. Mussel beds are still heavily oiled, which means that sealife feeding on the mussels are ingesting oil - making villagers afraid to eat them.

And residents say both seal and deer populations are down, forcing hunters to travel greater and greater distances to find enough food to live.

"More often than not, we are coming back empty-handed," says Ed Gregorioff of Tatitlek.

Native villages aren't the only communities still recovering.

In the fishing town of Cordova, many blame the spill for a dramatic decline in the annual pink salmon harvest - the economic lifeblood of the sound.

Residents are on edge: Banks have repossessed 70 fishing boats in the past two years and many worry they're next. It's "living day to day for many of us," says Heather McCarty of Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corp.

Fishermen also complain that civil lawsuits they've filed against Exxon for damages are still pending. The first of several trials is set to begin in May.

The spill "hurt this community two ways - in its pocket and in its soul," says Ott.

Though Exxon won't comment, the company has produced brochures and posters praising the thoroughness of its cleanup. The literature also says

the salmon decline wasn't caused by spilled oil - a contention disputed by an array of independent scientists.

Says Ayers: "There is environmental damage and it exists today despite Exxon's public relations efforts." Oil's still in the food chain

But there is good news here, too.

The past five years have brought a host of safety changes to reduce the risk of another major spill, and the Coast Guard has installed new radar, imposed tougher foul weather restrictions and added staff at its Valdez headquarters.

"If they had in place then what they have in place now," says Valdez Mayor John Harris, "the effects of that spill would have been minimal."

And some bird species - most notably the bald eagle - already are on the road to recovery. Though as many as 900 bald eagles died, scientists say egg laying had returned to normal the year after the spill.

"We think they are well on the way to recovery," says Karen Oakley, a U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service scientist.

Still, for other birds, such as the harlequin duck, which feeds on oil-tainted shellfish, recovery may not begin until mussel beds are cleaned later this year.

"There is still oil out there and there is still oil in the food chain," says David Cline of the Alaska Audubon Society.

Says Oakley: "Unfortunately, we are dealing with a lot of unknowns." Alaska's habitat still suffers Much of the visible damage caused by the Exxon Valdez oil spill has been dealt with, but five years after the supertanker dumped almost 11 million gallons of crude oil into the waters of Prince William Sound, there are indications that it may take years for the region's wildlife and habitat to return to normal. Mussel beds still trapping oil Mussel beds weren't cleaned. Now, animals that feed on mussels are showing poor recovery rates. This summer, workers will remove as much oily sediment as possible: 1. Mussels attach themselves to rock, sediment below, forming a protective mat over the oily sediment 2. Fast-moving water is blocked and does not flush oil out 3. Oxygen, which dries oil, does not reach sediment 4. Oil stays trapped in sand. Wildlife still recovering The devastation to wildlife was so widespread that scientists say a complete recovery could easily extend into the next century. To help preserve habitat, a portion of the fine paid by Exxon will be used to buy sensitive habitat near the Sound.

	Deaths from spill	Pre-spill population	Years for recovery
Murres	300,000	12,000,000	50-120
Marbled murelets	12,000	Unknown	Unknown
Sea otter	5,500	150,000	15-40
Pigeon guillemots	3,000	14,600	Unknown
Harlequin ducks	1,000	2,000	10-50
Bald eagle	430	27,000	4-6
Harbor seals	300	5,000	Unknown
Killer whales	13	140	10-20

Salmon catch decline Despite record salmon harvests in the years just after the spill, the past few seasons have produced dismal catches in the Prince William Sound. Exxon denies responsibility, but the declines haven't been duplicated elsewhere in Alaska. Sound catches compared with the Southeast fishing area.

'93 Prince William Sound 5,760 Southeast area 57,260

CAPTION:
GRAPHIC,b/w,Cliff Vancura,USA TODAY,Source: Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council,Alaska Department of Fish and Game(Diagram,Chart,Map,Alaska,Line graph)
PHOTO,b/w,Al Grillo, Alaska Stock Images
PHOTO,b/w,Jim Jager,Anchorage Daily News

DESCRIPTORS: PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND; EXXON VALDEZ; OIL SPILL; SUBJECT TERMS: ALASKA; ENVIRONMENT; WILDLIFE; OIL; PROFILE

2/9/5
07581052
CAPTAIN AND SHIP STILL IN BUSINESS
USA Today (US) - TUESDAY March 22, 1994
By: Paul Hoversten
Edition: FINAL Section: NEWS Page: 03A
Word Count: 212

MEMO:
NOTES: THE NATION
See main story: 03A

TEXT:
Joseph Hazelwood, former captain of the ill-fated Exxon Valdez, is keeping involved in maritime work.

His current job: maritime consultant for a New York City law firm.

"He still has his (sea) license, so he could go back at any time," says lawyer Michael Chalos, a former classmate who headed Hazelwood's defense in Alaskan courts and who now employs him.

Hazelwood, 47, was acquitted of charges he was drunk and reckless in the Exxon Valdez incident; he was not at the wheel of the ship at the time. The National Transportation Safety Board later found his intoxication was partly to blame.

Hazelwood was convicted of a lesser charge of "negligent discharge of oil." He was fined $50,000 and ordered to spend 1,000 hours helping clean up Prince William Sound. His sentence was suspended pending appeal.

Hazelwood's former ship also has undergone some changes. Now named SeaRiver Mediterranean, it operates mostly in the Mediterranean Sea. It is still owned by Exxon.

It returned to North American waters this month for the first time in five years. But controversy continues to follow.

At a March 1 stop in Freeport, Bahamas, environmental protesters painted "Exxon Valdez" on its hull as it unloaded U.S.-bound oil.

CAPTION:
PHOTO,b/w,Nick Ut,AP

DESCRIPTORS: JOSEPH HAZELWOOD; OIL SPILL; EXXON VALDEZ; AGE; SUBJECT TERMS: ALASKA; OIL; SHIP

4/9/2 (Item 2 from file: 715)
07583006
EXXON VALDEZ: WHAT LESSONS?
Christian Science Monitor (CH) - Thursday, March 24, 1994
By: Brad Knickerbocker, Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor
Edition: All Section: THE U. S., NATIONAL Page: 3
Word Count: 1,023

MEMO:
SERIES: Exxon Valdez. Part 1 of a series. Only article appearing today.

TEXT:
ASHLAND, ORE. - IN the five years since the Exxon Valdez ran aground dumping 11 million gallons of crude oil into Alaska's Prince William Sound, the lessons of the largest oil spill in United States history have been slow in coming and even slower in implementation.

* Congress passed landmark legislation to prevent oil pollution by regulating tanker design and operation, but some important regulations still are not in force. European Union countries have yet to complete tanker-safety legislation.

* A new generation of safer, sturdier tankers has begun to come out of shipyards, but it will be years before the current aging fleet is fully replaced.

* Some wildlife species have begun to recover from the mess that killed many Alaskan animals, but other species of birds, mammals, and fish still are not showing signs of recovery.

* The 791-mile Trans-Alaska Pipeline, which carries 1.7 million barrels of oil a day from Prudhoe Bay on the North Slope to Valdez, has been the subject of several critical government reports citing serious maintenance and management problems.

* The United Nations Framework Convention on Climage Change, a 167-nation treaty aimed at limiting carbon-producing energy sources including oil, went into force Monday, and the Clinton administration is more aggressively pursuing energy efficiency and renewable energy sources than its predecessors. But industrialized societies still have a great oil thirst.

Following the Exxon spill, the Oil Pollution Act (OPA) was passed in 1990. It requires that all new tankers ordered after June 1990 and calling on US ports have double hulls. By 2015, all single-hulled tankers visiting US ports - 95 percent of the current total - must be phased out. Law passed after Exxon spill

OPA also requires tugboat escorts for tankers in particularly challenging areas like Prince William Sound and Puget Sound. The law calls for improved vessel-monitoring services - radios and radars - in port areas, and it requires firms that own oil tankers and other facilities to develop plans for how they will respond to spills.

Under OPA, the US Coast Guard is to recommend which environmentally sensitive areas should be designated ''tanker-free.'' And the law also requires that tanker owners and operators demonstrate the financial ability - either through company assets or insurance - to pay for any oil spill they might be responsible for.

While many regulations have been issued, many more are still working their way through the bureaucratic process of government hearings and public input. Most of the emphasis has been on the oil-spill-response plans - including such things as pre-positioning equipment.

But critics say federal agencies - particularly the Coast Guard - have been slower to work toward stopping spills in the first place. ''On the prevention side, we see the government really dragging its feet,'' says Sarah Chasis, a Natural Resources Defense Council attorney and director of its coastal program. ''In our book, the key is prevention.''

For example, regulations mandating tug escorts in navigationally tricky areas have yet to be issued. In December, the Washington State congressional delegation complained to US Transportation Secretary Federico Pena about the lack of such escorts in Puget Sound.

''We believe the Coast Guard should set forth immediately a timetable for enforcement of the escort provision,'' they wrote. ''Tug escorts provide an invaluable insurance policy against the type of devastating accidents like the Exxon Valdez.''

In response, Coast Guard Commandant J. William Kime said such issues are ''more complex than [they] would first appear.'' This is undoubtedly true, particularly since some safety issues involve overlapping state-federal jurisdictions.

''To be fair, the Coast Guard has had to take on a huge set of regulations that they have not been funded for,'' says Pam Miller of the Wilderness Society. ''They have put out dozens of regulations, and they're understaffed.''

Issuing regulations and enforcing them are two different things, however, and this is particularly difficult given that much of the oil-shipping activity is international.

In response to a British government inquiry following the January 1993 Braer tanker spill off the Shetland Islands, the British Petroleum Company wrote: ''Many recent international incidents have been because of a failure both to police standards and to carry out laid-down procedures. The failure to enforce existing regulations, a shortage of well-trained officers and crews, and poor maintenance are all fundamental to this problem.''

The 1989 oil spill in Prince William Sound impacted about 1,500 miles of shoreline. A restoration plan, issued last November by the Exxon Valdez Trustee Council, was set up to allocate the $1 billion settlement between Exxon, the US government, and the state of Alaska. It noted a number of natural resources not recovering: common murres, pigeon guillemots, harlequin ducks, marbled murrelets, harbor seals, sea otters, Pacific

herring, pink salmon, Kenai River sockeye salmon, the intertidal ecosystem, and the subtidal ecosystem. Some positive results seen

While environmentalists are frustrated by what they see as the lack of action on regulating oil tankers and also reducing oil consumption, they do see some positive results of the Exxon Valdez oil spill. Pressure to open up the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil exploration has subsided, and proposals in both the House and Senate would designate the area as wilderness. The trustee council has used some of the money to purchase 66,000 acres of coastal rain-forest habitat.

Still, the threat of other tanker accidents persists. In January, the Overseas Ohio struck an iceberg approaching Valdez. It was empty, so there was no spill.

As for the ship that collided with Bligh Reef on March 24, 1989, Exxon gave it a new name - ''SeaRiver Mediterranean'' - and sent it out of the media glare to sail the Mediterranean Sea. Recently, it made its first trip back to the Bahamas. There, Greenpeace activists painted on its hull the warning: ''Stop Me Before I Spill Again.''

CAPTION:
PHOTO: AERIAL VIEW OF PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND: The 1989 oil spill in Prince William Sound impacted about 1,500 miles of shoreline. A restoration plan issued last November noted that several species are not recovering, such as harbor seals, sea otters, and pink salmon., SCOTT ARMSTRONG/FILE

6/9/4 (Item 1 from file: 640)
07583122
PREVENTING OIL SPILLS
San Francisco Chronicle (SF) - THURSDAY, March 24, 1994
By: Rich Hayes
Edition: FINAL Section: Editorial Page: A23
Word Count: 354

MEMO:
OPEN FORUM
Rich Hayes is the national chair of the Sierra Club Global Warming Campaign Steering Committee. He lives in the Bay Area.

TEXT:
FIVE YEARS ago today, the Exxon Valdez ran aground in Alaska's pristine Prince William Sound. Some 11 million gallons of oil ran into the sea and onto the beaches. Damages were assessed in excess of $1 billion.

Petrochemical residues that have worked their way into the food web of this coastal ecosystem could cause even more damage.

As long as Americans continue our prodigious consumption of petroleum fuels, there is the potential for future disasters like that of the Exxon Valdez. Fortunately, we can take steps toward reducing our oil dependency.

One such important step is to increase substantially the miles-per-gallon fuel standards for our cars and light trucks. Raising these standards from the current 27.5 miles per gallon to a readily achievable goal of 45 miles per gallon by 2005 would save the United States more than 3 million barrels of oil each day.

That's enough to fill nearly 1,000 supertankers like the Exxon Valdez each year.

There no longer is any excuse for half-way measures regarding oil consumption. With higher auto fuel economy standards we will breathe cleaner air, save money, slash our need for oil imports and reduce the pressure to drill in every corner of the globe.

Current engineering studies show that increased auto fuel standards can be met easily with a combination of improved engines, better tires and transmissions, strong, light-weight materials and aerodynamic design, all of which are available today. This can be accomplished, too, without compromising safety or affordability.

In the next few weeks, President Clinton will be appointing a task force of auto makers, environmentalists and others to recommend action for implementing his campaign pledge of support for strong measures to increase automotive fuel economy.

In doing so, the president has a chance to demonstrate leadership on an issue of national and global import. Strong automotive fuel standards will help us avoid tragedies like the Exxon Valdez. They also are simply good policy. There is no reason to delay.

DESCRIPTORS: PETROLEUM; ACCIDENTS; WATER POLLUTION; ENVIRONMENT; GASOLINE; AUTO SMOG; AIR POLLUTION; SHIPPING; POLICY; US; EXXON VALDEZ (SHIP)

4/9/1 (Item 1 from file: 715)
07584002
COURTS TO JUDGE IMPACT OF EXXON VALDEZ OIL SPILL
Christian Science Monitor (CH) - Friday, March 25, 1994
By: Yereth Rosen, Special to The Christian Science Monitor
Edition: All Section: THE U. S., NATIONAL Page: 2
Word Count: 701

MEMO:
SERIES: Exxon Valdez. Part 2 of a series. Only article appearing today.

TEXT:
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA - FIVE years after the Exxon Valdez oil spill, salmon and herring are scarce, puny, and have apparent genetic defects. Alaskan native Americans swear Prince William Sound shores are silent - barren of seals and other animals that comprise much of their diet. Scientists say at least 10 times as many birds died after the spill as in any other. They've documented mutations, diseases, reproductive failures, and wildlife declines.

Whether these conditions are tied to the 11 million-gallon spill - and whether Exxon should compensate for them after spending $2 billion-plus on cleanup and pledging $1.025 billion over 10 years in a 1991 settlement with federal and state governments - rides on a court duel of scientists.

Trials start in federal and state courts May 2 and June 6 on lawsuits filed by fishermen, native Americans, coastal residents, towns, and others seeking compensation. Attorneys claim no settlement talks are under way.

Translating field-test results into court awards may be difficult. ''The jury will hear two completely different stories. Establishing a strictly scientific link between the spill and the damages is variable,'' said Bob Spies, chief scientist for the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council, the federal-state panel overseeing government civil spill damages.

Exxon says the environment is blossoming, citing a 1990 record salmon harvest and its own studies. ''We have seen that the Sound is essentially oil-free, and the biological resources and habitats have returned to what we've called the range or natural variation,'' spokesman Dennis Stanczuk said.

But new data released this week by government scientists shows chronic biological problems and ripple effects that may cause ecological imbalance. ''Already this catastrophe ... has rewritten the book on the effects of oil in temperate marine ecosystems,'' said Chuck Meachum of the state Department of Fish and Game. An explosion of sea urchins, for example, the apparent result of a lack of predators like sea otters, may overgraze the environment, said Charles Peterson of the University of North Carolina's Institute of Marine Sciences.

IN the fishing town of Cordova, trial anticipation is keen. ''In this case ... it's more like a murder, if you will, and the perpetrator has yet to go to trail,'' said former Mayor Kelley Weaverling. Many people are ''very adamantly ready to take out a hatchet and go for Exxon,'' said

environmental activist Riki Ott. ''Hundreds of millions of dollars of scientific studies have found it to be the most biologically, socially, and economically disruptive spill in history.''

Exxon acknowledges the fishermen's economic problems, but blames other factors like world salmon markets. ''These current hardships ... are more likely resulting from any number of factors,'' Mr. Stanczuk said. Some fishing claims should be excluded from the trial because the state closed some areas after the tanker grounded, Exxon argued.

Exxon failed to persuade United States District Court Judge Russel Holland to drop those complaints, but did get him to throw out claims of cannery workers and seafood processors, tender operators, and wholesalers. He ruled that maritime law provides that, except for commercial fishermen, only those whose personal property has been harmed can recover economic damages for spills. That ruling, on appeal, helps explain plaintiff attorneys' attempts to move all cases to state court, believed to be more favorable.

Litigation resolution may bring little peace to wars over how trustees should spend government settlement money. Environmentalists want government purchases and preservation of native-owned land to preclude coastal clear-cutting. Development boosters want fishery restocking and tourism boosts like docks and an aquarium.

There's a move in the Legislature to loosen environmental controls on the oil industry.

The economic squeeze on North Slope oil producers from low prices may be a disaster, contends Joe Green, who's campaigning against a 5-cent-a-barrel state tax imposed after the spill to generate money for environmental-protection programs. ''The unfortunate truth is the margin of profit up there is extremely low.''

CAPTION:
PHOTO: EMPTY NETTERS: Fishing boats blocked tanker traffic to the Alyeska Pipeline Terminal in Valdez, Alaska, last August. Fishermen complained about a second year of poor salmon runs, which they blamed on the Exxon oil spill., REUTERS/FILE

1/9/1
07586126
RETURN TO ALASKA
Sun Sentinel (FL) - SUNDAY, March 27, 1994
Edition: ALL Section: OUTLOOK Page: 6F
Word Count: 732

TEXT:
There is little visible sign of the disaster that befell Alaska's Prince William Sound five years ago. On March 24, 1989, the oil tanker Exxon Valdez rammed a reef and dumped nearly 11 million gallons of crude oil into the pristine waters. Since then, storms have scoured the polluted coastline, removing about half the oil embedded in some places. Many beaches look clean. The tourists are back. But harbor seals, sea otters, pink salmon, Pacific herring and several kinds of birds show "little or no sign" of recovery, the state of Alaska says. Here is an update:

THE ACCIDENT:

-Exxon Valdez rammed reef, dumping nearly 10.8 million gallons of crude oil.

-1,500 miles of coastline polluted

-Cleanup cost: $2.5 billion.

Breakdown of oil spilled:

20 percent evaporated.

50 percent degraded on beaches, in water and in tidal sediments.

12 percent in deep sedinents

3 percent on shores

8 percent removed by skimmers

6 percent recovered from sand or sediment

PACIFIC HERRING: The fishing season, which begins in April, was cut short last year in Prince William Sound when schools failed to materialize. Some fish were diseased. The small fish are a key link in the sound's food chain.

MUSSEL BEDS: A lingering concern. Reservoirs of oil remain trapped beneath dense beds of mussel colonies. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration biologists found high concentrations of hydrocarbons in the flesh of mussels a year after the spill, suggesting they were still taking up oil from the environment. Experts are particularly concerned because mussels are prime food for harlequin ducks and sea otters.

KILLER WHALES: Between 1988 and 1990, 13 disappeared from a pod that summers in Prince William Sound. A pod that size normally loses 1 or 2

members annually. State scientists say the group is growing again.

BALD EAGLES: Estimates say between 300-1,000 bald eagles died in the spill. The eagle population is coming back as newcomers take over existing nesting sites.

HARBOR SEALS: Dead seals sink, so it is difficult to gauge spill-related mortality, but it is estimated the spill killed 300-350 harbor seals. The overall population was down from 13,000 in 1975 to 2,500 in 1991. Scientists also have data indicating mortality rates of seal pups born in affected regions the year of the spill have doubled or tripled. Also, autopsies performed on 28 seals found lesions on the brains of seals exposed to oil. The lesions could cause sensory confusion, disorienting seals and drowning them, biologists say.

COMMON MURRES: An estimated 10 million nest in Alaska. One million were in the path of spill. Their breeding grounds are near the Barren Islands, Chiswell Islands and other islets in the Gulf of Alaska. Oil from the spill encircled the islands, devastating the population. Breeding in colonies affected by spill has ceased.

HARLEQUIN DUCKS: Half of those living in oiled regions were killed. Most survivors have failed to breed every year since the spill.

GUILLEMOTS: 20,000 carcasses were collected after the spill. Biologists estimate the death toll as high as 300,000. Nesting behavior has changed. Birds have been laying eggs on average 45 days late. With fewer pairs of adults at colonies, eggs and chicks are more vulnerable to predators.

SEA OTTERS: Researchers estimate 4,000 otters were killed by the spill as oil clogged their fur, destroying insulation against the cold. Numbers remained low in 1990 and 1991.

PINK SALMON: Alaska biologists say as many as 213 streams were contaminated. 1.6 million fish that hatched in 1989 were lost. The number of dead eggs increased in 1991 and 1992. 40 percent of eggs laid in oiled streams died, twice as many as in clean streams.

THE COST: Exxon settled criminal and civil-damage complaints filed by U.S. and state governments for $1.025 billion. Exxon still faces damage claims of more than $2 billion from fishermen, native Americans, communities, business owners and others.

SOURCES: National Geographic, January 1990; The Associated Press; Science News, Feb. 13, 20, 1993; New Scientist, Feb. 13, 1993; Christian Science Monitor, Aug. 26, 1993; New York Times, Feb. 6, 1993.

CAPTION:
DRAWING, CHART, MAP

Staff graphic/DEAN WEINLAUB
Drawing: (color) Bald eagle

Drawing: (color) Guillemot
Drawing: (color) Mussels
Drawing: (color) Pink Salmon
Drawing: (color) Harbor seal
Drawing: (color) Killer whale
Drawing: (color) Sea otter
Drawing: (color) Pacific herring
Drawing: (color) Common murre
Drawing: (color) Harlequin duck
Map: (color) Prince William Sound
Map: (color) Alaska
Chart: (color) Breakdown of oil spill

DESCRIPTORS: SCIENCE PAGE; ACCIDENT OIL SPILL; FIVE YEARS LATER; EFFECTS

6/9/9 (Item 1 from file: 716)
07587179
SAVING THE PLANET GET BACK TO EARTH Environmentalists frequently cling to false premises
Daily News of Los Angeles (LA) - SUNDAY March 27, 1994
By: Christopher D. Stone
Edition: Valley Section: VIEWPOINT Page: V1
Word Count: 2,441

MEMO:
Christopher D. Stone is a longtime law professor at the University of Southern California. This is from the preface of his book, "The Gnat is Older Than Man: Global Environment and Human Agenda." It is reprinted from the USC Trojan Family Magazine. The first of two parts.

TEXT:
In March 1988, a giant oil tanker, the Exxon Valdez, ran onto a reef in Prince William Sound, Alaska, fouling thousands of miles of sea and beach with nearly 10 million gallons of crude oil. While the ship was veering toward this fate, its captain was down in his cabin, his "judgment," on one account, "impaired by alcohol." The helm had been assigned to a third mate, who was unlicensed to pilot the channel. The lookout was not on the bow.

The ship was crammed with state-of-the-art navigational equipment, including a depth alarm that was not working. The ship's steering had been entrusted to its Sperry Marine SRP-2000 automatic pilot, a device normally reserved for the open seas; as the ship plowed closer to the reef, no one thought to turn it off despite three warning lights indicating it was on. An override switch would easily have taken it out of operation.

The National Traffic Safety Board was to fault the Coast Guard for failing to have tracked the ship long enough on its radar, and to have warned it back onto course by radio. Indeed, it may have been, as much as anything else, a misplaced faith in the capacity of high technology to compensate for human error that lulled the Valdez to ruin.

And, of course, the tragedy does not end there. In disregard of good advice, much of the effort to clean the beaches of oil was entrusted to steam and hot-water washing. The effects of the hot water on the food chain are believed to have been far more destructive than had the oil simply been left in place. Much of the teeming vital "lower life" was buried, smothered and cooked.

In its way, the wreck of the Exxon Valdez and the impairment of the Alaskan environment is a parable for our planet. Everyone on board has something else to do, other than worry about where the whole thing, our Earth, is heading. Those nominally in charge have their hands full just reviewing the legion of little day-to-day chores that must be done: the terrestrial counterparts of getting the brass polished, the boilers stoked, the mess served. We hope that those who are supposed to be steering know what they are doing. Or perhaps some imminent breakthrough in technology will rescue us from the deficit of human wisdom on the bridge. But nothing calms the uneasy feeling that the whole earthly vessel is adrift, uncaptained, and in peril.

What can be done?

I began composing my new book, "The Gnat Is Older than Man," in the spring of 1988, in the wake, as it were, of the Valdez incident. I was determined to write a book that did more than just sound another warning of impending doom; I wanted to offer some solutions. But the intervening five years furnished a boon of false starts. Some of the proposals I had planned to make when I embarked, such as that we institute a system of environmental guardianships and establish a global commons trust fund, I came to hold more firmly. But many of my first notions turned out to be wrong or had to be recast.

Among them:

The global environmental crisis will bring us all together.

One of the themes with which I began was that we could regard the environmental crisis as others had regarded the threat of nuclear destruction. "Pollution has . . . become a binding force among nations," one oceans expert had proclaimed. Another international lawyer had echoed this hope in the Israeli Law Review in 1977 - that in the face of the environmental challenge, "The overriding law of human solidarity is bound to cut through narrow ideas of national sovereignty."

I am still attracted to this vision of an environment-driven global harmony, but I am increasinglIy uncertain. The sometimes rancorous Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992 highlighted terrible and growing conflicts among nations that common threats to the environment only complicate and intensify. At worst, rather than rouse us into global solidarity, the environmental crisis simply may provide more things to fight about.

I quickly found that one could not write a book about the environment that did not confront the political and philosophical dimensions of the underlying tensions between nations, particularly the rich and the poor.

Global problems require global solutions.

Many of the problems we face transcend national boundaries. A molecule of carbon dioxide emitted into the atmosphere in Warsaw has the same effect on the Earth's heat blanket as a molecule released in Rio. Tearing up the Antarctic, or using the oceans as a dumping ground for radioactive wastes, deprives all the world's peoples of a share of their common heritage.

It is natural to suppose that what we need are global solutions: great global Earth Summits, multinational treaties, a Global Environmental Fund, perhaps even a Global Environmental Agency modeled after our own Environmental Protection Agency, but with Earth-spanning powers of investigation and command.

Now, I am not so sure. Many problems, even those as apparently "global" as climate change and biodiversity, lend themselves to a wider variety of bilateral and unilateral responses than one is first inclined to assume. A noble inclination for global cooperation should not distract us from more modestly scaled and realistically achievable local undertakings.

Our problems all stem from Human Greed (or from the Judeo-Christian ethic, or population, or capitalism).

I have become less persuaded that any of the invariably cited spiritual failings of humankind - or even all of them together - do justice to the rich complexity of our predicaments.

Genesis, it is charged, suffused the Judeo-Christian tradition with a manly scent thatI has welded environmentalists and feminists into a common affront ("ecofeminism"), the one repulsed that Eve should be nothing but "his helpmeet"; the other that nature should be nothing but his meal. There is, indeed, plenty of homocentrism in the Bible. But anyone who looks at history can see that preclassical and non-Western civilizations were making a mess of their environments long before there was a Bible to guide them. Primitive peoples are popularly heroized for their "harmony" with nature, but one couldn't tell that to the various large North American mammals, such as the woolly mammoth, who went into decline shortly after homo sapiens, spear but no Environmental Protection Act in hand, appeared on the continent.

As for greed, it is true that the Western standard of living, to which just about the entire world is aspiring (I am not sure it is illuminating to call that "greed"), brings with it a lot of bad baggage and shameful levels of waste. But we should not be blind to how much degradation springs from ignorance, need and even devotion: How else to explain the desertification that comes from people just trying to scratch from already overtaxed soil a marginal life for their families?

Not that I dismiss the spiritual and ethical dimensions. Far from it. But if the world is going to be changed, it is going to be changed by people who can get past talking up a reform of the human spirit and lessons to be learned from Buddhism, and put in the effort required to understand fisheries quotas, pollution taxes, trade barriers, and what the International Court of Justice can and cannot do.

In the same vein, while population growth has put dreadful pressures on local environments in many parts of the world, the link to environmental degradation is not straightforward. Most of the serious, globe-spanning maladies are the byproduct of industrialization in "First World" nations that display low or even negative rates of population growth.

In other words, population curbs would relievIe some of the pressures on the environment, but even if population levels off, some of the most serious environmental problems, such as toxic and nuclear wastes, will deepen with the spread of industrialization.

Prevention is the best remedy.

We are instructed from childhood that it is better to be safe than sorry, that a stitch in time saves nine, that you cannot put the toothpaste back in the tube.

All of these homilies make a considerable amount of sense - in law as in life. Traditional legal remedies do not provide any relief until after

the world has changed in ways we do not like. With the benefit of hindsight, when we think we know why something went wrong, we guiltily imagine that some measure we could have required in advance would have averted the whole disaster: better radar or sonar instrumentation, better hiring policies, stronger or redundant hulls, and so forth.

On the other hand, the problem with preventive regulations is that they carry the risk of over-regulation. They are deployed in advance, when we do not know which ship on which route is fated to crash from what causes; yet each mandate is destined to apply across the board to an entire class of ships and sea lanes, raising costs even on the many voyages that could have been plied without incident.

Put otherwise, an ounce of prevention may be worth a pound of cure; but by the same quaint token, to pay a pound in prevention to get only an ounce of cure is a distinctly bad buy. And even while I come out favoring increased reliance on preventive arrangements in circumstances where there are real cost benefits or special reasons to favor a "premium" for risk avoidance, the question whether to lean toward prevention or cure is not one that can be answered in generalities.

The Earth is going to hell in a climate-changing basket.

When I started writing, I was swayed by a barrage of news stories to believe that we were veering toward a global-warming crisis that would batter our shores with mighty typhooIns, parch the world's grain lands and melt the icecaps.

For most of humankind, this is bad news. But for an academic author, it offered some possibility of cutting my losses. Books about the end of the world (or even history, ideology, nature, or just of the booming stock market, for that matter) I am told sell. I thought I would join in the growing chorus, or commerce, emphasizing what international law might contribute to starve off doom.

While I pressed ahead to write the doleful text, I dispatched a student researcher to cull the scientific literature to trail me with the supportive footnotes. (That is how it is done.) In this spirit, having recited in a draft the popular menace that the polar icecaps were ready to melt on us and so on, I waited for the authoritative backing to materialize in memos.

I waited in vain. The deeper into the better authorities we fished, the vaguer and more qualified the projections we landed. One view (now, I believe, the prevailing one) turned out to be that global warming, rather than melting the icecaps and thereby raising sea level, would more likely thicken them, thus to some extent counteracting higher seas caused by anticipated thermal expansion of the waters.

(While this sounds counterintuitive, the seas, like most anything else, would be expected to expand when heated, and therefore rise. As for the icecaps, on the one hand, they are so cold that an additional 10 or 15 degrees would do little to melt them; on the other hand, more global warmth would trigger more evaporation and precipitation, the net effect of which is to transfer a certain volume of water out of the oceans to be stored on the polar caps in the form of snow.)

And it wasn't just the ice-sheet data that were being blown out of proportion. Over the space of the few years that I have been following the research developments, all of the original, highly publicized projections of climate-change variables have without exception crept back to much more modest levels than in the orIiginal scare stories.

This recalled to mind a nagging memory. In the mid-1970s I had been one of a bevy of academics recruited by the U.S. government as foot soldiers in the Energy War, charged with figuring out how to deal with the well-publicized fact that the world was "running out of oil" - had, in fact, only 20 years' supply left. Invariably, the closer I got to people who knew what they were talking about, the more doubtful the crisis appeared. Indeed, we now know that even though world consumption has gone up in the past 20 years, further discoveries and advances in oilfield operations had pushed proved reserves worldwide from 640 billion barrels in 1977 to a record 1 trillion barrels by mid-1992 - a 40-year inventory, virtually higher than at any time since record-keeping began in the 1930s.

Yet in the 1970s the plan to save America from empty wells was moving ahead of the facts with such momentum that we were at the brink of forcing the economy to convert from oil to coal (in which the United States was well endowed) at immense expense in terms of economic dislocation, dirty air, and, we can say in retrospect, greenhouse complications.

The deja vu troubled me. Global warming was not to be dismissed. But I had been burned once.

To summarize my position on this complex issue, I do not regard the dangers of global warming as trivial, but it seems quite clear that people are being misled to regard the perils of climate chance as overshadowing all other environmental problems. Before Rio, it was proclaimed that a climate change convention was the highest priority on the agenda. (This insistence led to diplomatic tussles that in turn undid efforts to reach agreements on other matters such as biodiversity and forests.) When U.S. resistance to accepting toothy constraints on carbon emissions undermined agreement, environmentalists proclaimed the meeting a failure and, identifying a willingness to expend trillions of dollars to prevent a peril that may never eventuate with "caring foIr the environment," denounced the United States for not caring.

I find it very distressing for so much of the environmental movement to hitch its wagon to climate change. To do so risks eventually discrediting the movement; it distracts energies away from much more significant issues, and it aggravates misunderstanding among the nations of the world.

CAPTION:
PHOTO

Photo

DESCRIPTORS: ENVIRONMENT; SERIES; MISTAKE

6/9/3 (Item 1 from file: 630)
02210867 37703
Exxon Valdez Stays as Symbol of Tanker Risks
Its name has changed but it still carries oil in a fragile single hull. Little has been done, critics say, to implement landmark 1990 protection law.

Los Angeles Times (LT) - TUESDAY March 29, 1994
By: MELISSA HEALY; TIMES STAFF WRITER
Edition: Home Edition Page: 5 Pt. A Col. 1
Word Count: 766

TEXT:

WASHINGTON - When a 987-foot tanker once known as the Exxon Valdez slipped into a harbor in the Bahamas a month ago, it was sporting a rebuilt hull, a new coat of paint and a new name--the SeaRiver Mediterranean.

Much about the ship had changed since it struck Bligh Reef five years ago and spilled 11 million gallons of crude oil into Alaska's Prince William Sound. But to the Greenpeace activists who met the ship with noisy protest in the Bahamas, little was different. It was the same old single-hulled ship carrying the same old cargo of oil, bearing the same old risks of environmental disaster.

Five years after the nation's worst oil spill, environmental and maritime experts said the repainted Exxon tanker is emblematic of U.S. policy toward oil spills: In some ways, much has changed. And in some ways, little is different.

What has changed, primarily, are state and federal laws governing the design and operations of all ships operating in U.S. waters. The most significant law, the Oil Pollution Act of 1990, was passed a year after the Exxon spill to create a sea change in oil-spill prevention and response.

The Coast Guard is carrying out the Oil Pollution Act and contends that the changes are well under way. But critics in the environmental community accuse the Coast Guard and its masters at the Transportation Department of foot-dragging and charge that the changes called for by law are stalled.

The Oil Pollution Act called for significant new capabilities in fighting spills at ports around the United States. It required that ports and ship owners operating in U.S. waters put together plans for responding to spills.

It stiffened liability laws, increasing eight-fold the costs for which the owner of a tanker could be held liable and, in some cases, providing for unlimited liability. It established a 5-cents-a-barrel tax on crude oil to build a $1-billion cleanup trust fund.

And it set forth a timetable, running from 1995 to 2015, for requiring new, safer double hulls on large new cargo carriers operating in U.S. waters.

So far, the Coast Guard has created three new oil pollution strike teams and a National Strike Force Coordination Center in Elizabeth City, N.J. The Coast Guard has identified 19 ports where oil-spill equipment should be based and has virtually finished putting that equipment in place. In a spill of diesel fuel off Puerto Rico in January, several of those sites provided the necessary equipment.

The provisions of the 1990 law that increase potential liability also appear to have brought improvements in tanker safety. Ship owners and operators facing the prospect of greater liability concede they have paid more attention to the conditions of their equipment and the safety of their operations.

"I think it's fair to say the liability was another piece to crystallize our thoughts," about spill prevention, said Art Stephen, external affairs adviser for SeaRiver Maritime Inc., a wholly owned affiliate of Exxon Corp. and owner of the Exxon Valdez.

Experts on all sides of the debate agree. And because little oil is ever recovered from spills, even in the most favorable circumstances, prevention is a critical element of efforts to reduce the environmental impact of oil transportation.

Finally, the Exxon Valdez disaster had a powerful impact on coastal communities potentially affected by tanker traffic, galvanizing citizen watchdog groups. In the communities fouled by the Exxon Valdez, the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens Advisory Council--with a full-time staff paid with funds furnished by Exxon and other oil companies--has become a powerful, independent voice in ensuring safe operations.

Still, much today remains the same since the Exxon Valdez lurched onto Bligh Reef on March 24, 1989. Today, 95% of the vessels hauling oil in U.S. waters have a single hull, which can be easily breached in a grounding or collision. And a required plan to increase the safety of operating those ships, at least two years overdue already, is not expected to be complete for another year.

Earlier this year, the Coast Guard unveiled a plan to make single-hulled ships safer, but it was quickly withdrawn after an engineering firm determined that the plan actually could worsen a spill.

"We've been very concerned about the Coast Guard's lack of competence and diligence in doing this," said Sarah Chasis, a senior attorney at the Natural Resources Defense Council in New York.

Watchdogs like NRDC also worry that four years after the passage of the Oil Pollution Act, the Coast Guard has yet to identify environmentally sensitive shipping routes that should be free of oil tankers, as the law required.

CAPTION:
Photo: Exxon Valdez, shown five years ago during Alaskan spill, has been named the SeaRiver Mediterranean. It still plies its trade and draws Greenpeace protests.
Los Angeles Times
DESCRIPTORS: EXXON VALDEZ (SHIP); OIL SPILLS; POLLUTION CONTROL; SHIP ACCIDENTS; DESIGN

3/9/1
00608843 DIALOG File 655: BNA DAILY NEWS
BNA CORPORATE COUNSEL DAILY (Copr.) BNA, Inc.
March 31, 1994

Environment
FEDERAL JUDGE IN ALASKA PARES CLAIMS
AGAINST EXXON AS "VALDEZ" TRIAL DATES NEAR

WASHINGTON (BNA) -- Nearly five years to the day after the Exxon Valdez disaster in Alaska's Prince William Sound, a federal court rejected claims by Alaskan natives for cultural damages and by commercial fishermen for lost market value (In re Exxon Valdez, No. A89-0095-CV(HRH), 3/23/94).

In five separate orders, Judge H. Russel Holland of the U.S. District Court for the District of Alaska dismissed numerous non-economic damages claims resulting from the March 1989 tanker spill, which poured some 11 million gallons of oil into Alaskan waterways.

Holland barred some 4,000 native Alaskans from pursuing claims for psychological, religious, and cultural injury to their "subsistence way of life." While there is no doubt Alaskan natives have been affected seriously by the spill, their cultural decline started long before the entry of oil companies into Alaska, he said, referring to the intrusion of Russians, American whalers, miners, and the U.S. government.

In dismissing the claims, Holland said: "Even catastrophic cultural impacts cannot change what is in the mind or the heart unless we lose the will to pursue a given way of life. If (and we think this is not the case) the Native culture was in such distress that the Exxon Valdez oil spill sapped the will of the Native peoples to carry on their way of life, then a Native subsistence lifestyle was already lost before March 24, 1989."

Holland also rejected as too remote claims by thousands of fishermen for reduced permit value, as well as stigma claims by several fisheries. To recover damages a fishery must have closed entirely because of the accident, he held.

14,000 Plaintiffs Continue $3 Billion Suit

The rulings keep alive economic damage, physical injury, and property damage claims by some 14,000 individuals and businesses seeking some $3 billion. According to agreement of the parties, the May 2 trial in federal court will proceed over three months in three successive phases: liability, compensatory damages, and punitive damages. Plaintiffs are Alaskan natives, a commercial fishing class, and various property owners other than native corporations, which are established under federal law.

A state court trial for claims by native corporations and Alaskan municipalities is planned for June 6, and will proceed in two phases: liability and compensatory damages. In a previous order, Holland reserved for federal court disposition all litigation involving punitive damages against Exxon and its subsidiaries, according to plaintiffs' attorney Gary Mason. Claims by the U.S. and Alaska governments were settled for more than

$1 billion in 1991.

1927 High Court Ruling Cited

Holland cited the U.S. Supreme Court's 1927 ruling in Robins Dry Dock & Repair Co. v. Flint (275 U.S. 303) for the proposition that maritime plaintiffs must show direct harm to recover economic losses. Although the ruling did not address non-economic damages claims, such as injury to cultural identity caused by diminished fishing grounds and wildlife, it generally barred claims that are too remote, he said.

The order specifically rejected the plaintiffs' nuisance claims. Holland explained that the Alaskan natives, as private individuals, were unable to show that they suffered from a specific injury "different in kind from that suffered by the general public." The court said that the right to hunt, share fish and game, and commune with family and friends is shared by all Alaskans. Although the Alaskan natives may practice subsistence living to a greater degree than the general public, a difference in intensity is irrelevant under nuisance law.

The nuisance claims also failed because the Alaskan natives could not claim possessory interest in the land allegedly burdened by Exxon's actions. Title to the submerged land is owned by Alaska and the United States, Holland said, noting that native corporations that own onshore land remain as plaintiffs. Additionally, the native Alaskans will benefit from the 1991 settlement that provided $1.025 billion to restore and rehabilitate the land and water affected by the spill, he said.

Lost Value Of Oil Exploration Rights

Another ruling rejected as remote a claim by the Old Harbor Native Corp. that sought damages for lost value of oil exploration rights it was in the process of selling at the time of the Valdez disaster. Again citing Robins Dry Dock, Holland held that Old Harbor failed to prove that economic loss resulted from a direct physical harm.

In earlier rulings, Holland dismissed claims against Exxon by seafood processors, cannery workers, fish wholesalers, sportsmen, and environmentalists.

9/9/1
0469962 94-23263
Starting a new year -- And finishing a first decade
Gerhart, Clifford
Alaska Business Monthly (Anchorage, AK, US), v10 n1 s1 p20
PUBL DATE: 940100
JOURNAL CODE: ABM
DOC TYPE: Journal article
DATELINE: Anchorage, AK, US WORD COUNT: 1,977

TEXT:

Alaska is a great place to be a business journalist. The Great Land's vast resources, its bustling cities and empty landscapes, its booms and busts, and its colorful characters supply endless story ideas.

Alaska Business Monthly has covered all these angles since its inception, and it has been a rich and rewarding experience. We salute the industries, the businesses and individuals who make Alaska such a dynamic state, and we thank you, our readers, for your continued support and enthusiasm for our magazine.

We presented the premier issue of Alaska Business Monthly in January, 1985. According to Paul Laird, our first editor, it seemed like a good idea at the time, despite the recent demise of its predecessor, Alaska Business & Industry. As it turned out, 1985 was hardly a propitious moment to be launching a new business of any kind in Alaska, but the new publication has weathered more than a few economic storms.

Carol Smith, our current company president, was there at the founding and says, "We just felt that there was a need out there for in-depth reporting on business subjects that wasn't being met."

Looking back over Alaska Business Monthly's first decade, it's instructive to note the things that have changed --and the things that haven't.

Take that premier issue, for example. One story, "Life Without Wien in the Bush," focused on change--the results of the passing of what had been Alaska's strongest bush airline and a pillar of the business community.

But our cover featured Dan Cuddy, then chairman of First National Bank of Anchorage. Though Mr. Cuddy has turned over day-to-day operations of the bank to son David Cuddy and daughter Betsy Lawer, he remains a powerful presence at First National.

In that first year, ABM covered explosive growth in the Matanuska-Susitna Valley, Anchorage's newspaper war and the founding of the Alaska Railroad--all important changes for the state. But other issues remain the same today: The timber industry was in trouble and Alaska was trying to build a high-tech computer industry. And the retail business was heating up in Anchorage with the opening of Costco, with people asking, "What do the retailers know that we don't?"

Back then in 1985, we published our first New 49ers list, a compilation that our readers have consistently looked forward to as one of our most interesting and informative pieces. That year, Carr-Gottstein topped the list, a feat the grocery chain would frequently accomplish until last year, when sale to outside interests moved it to our corporate 100 list.

Since the magazine's inception, a lot of companies have changed hands, merged or gone out of business. Arctic Slope Regional Corp., which has placed No. 2 for the last two years, weighed in at No. 13. Of the top five New 49ers from 1985, only two made the list last year, a remarkable measure of the currents that sweep the state's economy.

One project that Alaska Business Monthly has co-sponsored along with Junior Achievement of Alaska since it began in 1987 is the Alaska Business Hall of Fame. We're proud to be part of an effort that teaches young people about what personal initiative in the free enterprise system can do, and we believe that the personal stories of Alaska business legends such as Walter Hickel, "Mudhole" Smith and Larry Carr do more to teach the spirit of entrepreneurism than any number of MBA classes.

Over the years, ABM has covered a lot of stories--stories that, taken together, are a history of the state's economy. In those wonderful days before the Exxon Valdez oil spill, we called the fight to open ANWR "Bambi vs. Godzilla," but predicted that telling who was Bambi and who was Godzilla would be difficult.

In January 1987, we ran the story, "The Incredible Shrinking Project," concerning Yukon Pacific's efforts to build a natural gas pipeline from the North Slope. So far, the project remains on the drawing boards (along with several other similar plans).

In 1989, Alaska Business Monthly began its annual November coverage of the Native corporations. Over the years, we have tracked the growth of these unique Alaska companies. Some have been successful beyond anyone's expectations; others have had to fight back bankruptcy. The success of Native corporations is not just interesting for Alaskans--some say these hybrid enterprises could be models for the rest of the country and the world.

Of course, in March 1989, the Exxon Valdez spilled some 11 million gallons of oil into Prince William Sound. Looking back, it's surprising how many ABM stories this event influenced: the spill itself, fishing, individual companies such as Veco International, the rise of an international Alaska-based environmental industry and the fight to open ANWR, to name a few. Exxon and Prince William Sound fishermen still are contesting the effect of the spill, and the money is not yet finished circulating through the economy. It's amazing how much effect a careless moment had on the Alaska economy.

And over the years, Alaska Business Monthly faithfully (and, we think, accurately) reported the opportunities and challenges, the victories and defeats, of Alaska's industries: How the oil companies have met the inevitable decline of Prudhoe Bay with new discoveries on the North Slope and in Cook Inlet, and with new technology. The booms and busts in fishing.

Timber and mining's on-again-off-again fortunes. The seemingly endless stream of record-breaking years for the tourism industry.

Alaska Business Monthly has charted the proliferation of regulations affecting business, particularly resource-development industries such as mining, timber and oil. A host of federally-mandated edicts on clean air and water, wetlands and hazardous materials have become crucial to the Alaska business person.

At ABM we have done our best to keep our readers up-to-date on what the regulations are, how they are affecting business, and how to comply most cost-effectively.

We have also brought to our readers the struggles of smaller companies and industries--the continuing efforts to make a "Silicon Tundra," new ventures in manufacturing and new services, ingenious attempts to add value to our timber and fishing, and some uniquely Alaskan ventures such as Chris Kiana's Eskimo Yo-Yo, featured this month in a new column called "Wild & Crazy Alaskans."

And during our first decade we won our share of awards for stories on timber, fishing, air transport, business development, privatization and individual businesses and entrepreneurs. Our first year, Alaska Business Monthly won two first place prizes from the Alaska Press Club. Many more were to follow.

The next year, another ABM story, "Privatization and the State of Alaska, Inc.," took an Alaska Press Club first, and in 1987, we won two more, for "Best Reporting" and "Best Feature." And in 1988, ABM won more first place awards for stories about the bailout of Alaska Mutual Bank and United Bank of Alaska (sort of takes you back, doesn't it?) and "Greenhouse Effect," an intriguing story on how the effects of climatic warming might cool down the Alaska economy.

In the 1990s, the Alaska Press Women awarded a first prize for our personality profile of John Kelsey of Valdez Dock Co. that appeared in the January Alaska Business Hall of Fame section and for stories on Alaska-East Asia trade, international trade and growth in Alaska tourism.

In addition, ABM has won many more awards over the years for layout and illustration, editing and headline writing. Honors have come from the Alaska Press Club, Alaska Women's Press Club and from the Western Publications Association.

In its 10th anniversary year, Alaska Business Monthly continues its tradition of providing in-depth stories and useful information for our readers.

Last year, as a complement to our New 49ers Alaskan-owned, Alaska-based company listing, we established The Corporate 100, which provides vital information on the 100 largest organizations doing business in the state. Readers have told us that business directories are helpful, so we included more in 1993.

And we created "Inside Alaska Industry" to bring business news items from all aspects of the economy and all regions of the state to our

readers.

We hope our coverage of Alaska's business people has served not just as a source of information but as inspiration for those who are just starting.

The personal accounts of men and women who have built great enterprises, such as this month's Junior Achievement Hall of Fame laureates, serve as examples of the frontier entrepreneur spirit that still burns bright in Alaska. Alaska Business Monthly was founded to serve those men and women who dream concretely, who have a goal and a plan to get there.

Once again, thanks to all our readers and advertisers; we hope you have enjoyed reading our magazine as much as we have enjoyed publishing it. We thank you for your continued support, and we hope to be here for many decades to come.

TME FLIES WHEN YOU'RE HAVING FUN

A retrospective of the early days of Alaska Business Monthly? Sure. At my age, I'm lucky if I remember that yesterday's socks go in the clothes hamper and not in the refrigerator.

There are a few distinct memories, though. Like how Alaska Business Monthly (ABM) always seemed to go in lockstep with the state's economic fortunes. Intoxicated with the possibilities in the early days in late '84-'85, mired in uncertainty in the wake of the oil price collapse a year later.

Mid-1984. Alaska Business Industry Magazine, which had changed hands less than a year before, collapsed leaving Bob Dixon, the editor, and me, his sidekick, with big ideas and no apparent means of sustaining our mortgage payments.

Now I suspect that many of the 11 who originally invested in ABM would have a different version of how it happened but by early September 1984, we were sitting at a conference table in a law office on N Street, signing a stock subscription agreement to launch Alaska Business Monthly. Half debt, half equity, and at least a half dozen different agendas for investing ... the least of which was a return. That was a foregone conclusion.

Which explains why those painstaking monthly board meetings seemed to focus on everything but income and out-go. How many pages? What kind of paper? How much color? Shouldn't the articles be shorter? Longer? Who would be featured on the cover?

The debates surely paid off, for by the end of '87, fully half of the entrepreneurs and their companies featured on the cover during the magazine's first year were out of business. Seems everyone in Alaska was too preoccupied with what would happen when Prudhoe Bay began its inevitable decline to consider the possibility of oil prices collapsing in the meantime. Imagine that.

Incredibly, ABM was actually flirting with profitability by the end of

its first year, albeit in a creative-accounting, never-mind-the-cash-flow, about-to-fall-off-the-oil-price-cliff-along-with-the-rest-of-the-economy sort of way. One of the main reasons was the "New 49ers," the first effort to identify the top Alaskan-owned, Alaska-based companies.

ABM survived months of red ink and attained (paper) profitability a few years later. About the time I left ... no connection. Lots has changed since then. Now the main topics at ABM board meetings are things like printing costs, ad sales, subscription levels and the like. There's someone overseeing the business aspects of the magazine on a full-time basis, and Alaska Business Publishing Co. has made a foray into directory publishing.

Our bulbous state government has changed, too, and what happened to the Alaskan economy in the mid-'80s could never happen again. We don't fret over Prudhoe's decline anymore, because we've found the answer: Instead of wasting time and effort worrying, just ignore the gap between revenues and spending, break the piggybank and hope for the best. Now if that ain't a decade of progress ...

Paul Laird, now an executive at BP Exploration (Alaska) Inc., Anchorage, was a founding director of Alaska Business Monthly and served as its first editor from January 1985 to May 1988.

SPECIAL FEATURE: Photo
COMPANY NAMES: Alaska Business Publishing Co Inc, Anchorage, AK, US, SIC:2721,

CLASSIFICATION CODES: 8690 (Publishing industry)

DESCRIPTORS: Publishing industry; Corporate profiles; Special events; Pacific

Transcript of National Public Radio syndicated radio program "Living on Earth," Broadcast in Anchorage on 3/14/94, and in Juneau on Thursday 3/10/94.

Radio Program: KTOO
Living on Earth
Exxon Valdez Spill 5th Anniversary Special

Steve Kerwood - Five years ago this month, a supertanker, Exxon Valdez, hit a ledge in Alaska's Prince William Sound and dumped 11 million gallons of crude oil into the sea. Within days, 1200 miles of coastline had been ravaged. Thousands of birds and other animals had been killed and the spill had permanently imprinted itself in American culture as one of our most infamous unnatural disasters. Today, we examine the legacy of the worst oil spill in U.S. history from several prospectives. In our first report, Steve Heimel of the Alaska Public Radio Network examines the long-term impact on the ecology of Prince William Sound.

Steve Heimel - Talk to a hundred people who know Prince William Sound and you'll hear about a hundred Prince William Sounds. It is so large that if you are in a sailboat, you have to plan on a trip of more than a week if you want to see more than a small part of it. If you are a kayaker like Ray Kimisa, every cove is or was its own adventure.

Ray Kimisa - It's unique. No other place in the world is like it. It's wonderful and beautiful but I've seen changes. Everybody can tell you that the otter population has declined. You use to see rafts of 40 to 60 otters at a time just laying together as the tide goes out and they'd be floating together in the fog, and they would look like a mass of dead trees until they'd float right up on you. But those are gone. You don't see those rafts of otters anymore. When the tide would come in against the glacier, there'd be hundreds of seals piled up on the ice. Those seals aren't there like they use to be in the numbers. Use to have a lot of porpoise, and I don't see them anymore.

Steve Heimel - Anyone who knew Prince William Sound before the oil spill says it's different now. While logging plans and a booming fishery had already begun to change the Sound in 1989, the black wave of death from the tanker brought a transformation unlike anything anyone could imagine. Whipped by the storm into ribbons of toxic foam, the oil killed masses of animals outright and many more by its lingering effects. Government researchers estimate, for instance, that the sea otter population, where the oil hit, went down by 35% in two years. Other marine mammals also suffered, as well as huge numbers of sea birds. The oil killed cormorants, gulls, kittiwakes, marbled murrelets, but above all murres. Far more than half the animals killed were murres--a diving bird that lives in dense colonies. Hundreds of thousands of murres were killed and while many survived--in some colonies, not enough to hold the group together to breed. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologist, Vernon Bird.

Vernon Bird - There seems to be safety in numbers. A big cluster of murres seem to be able to defend against say a gull or raven probably better than a single murre could, and they will sometime abandon their egg--make it real susceptible to gull predation but once

everybody's layed, the birds that are incubating tend to sit real tight even if an airplane flies over lots of times or a predator.

Steve Heimel - Murre colonies in the Barren Islands south of Prince William Sound in the Gulf of Alaska had near complete reproductive failure for at least two years. That's the government view. Scientists hired by the Exxon Corporation to research the same issue saw it very differently. Biologist, John Weens, calls the idea that any colonies were in danger an exaggeration.

John Weens - That really wasn't the case at all, and those statements were really very premature. They came before any kind of carefully planned studies had been conducted.

Steve Heimel - Counts done by an Exxon-funded researcher in 1991 showed murres to be at about the same densities as ever in the stressed colonies. Government scientists say that report is flawed but in any event after looking at the latest surveys, Vernon Bird concedes that common murres are now out of danger. The dispute over the murres illustrates a chronic problem with research on the spill's impacts. From the very beginning, it's been a big money game. The prospect of huge court judgments sent scientist out to look for damage or to look for proof of no damage. In 1991, Exxon settled the state and federal governments' court cases for $900 million dollars but scientific damage assessments will still be critical to claims due to be taken to trial this summer by fishermen, Natives and others. But now research money is getting scare again. The Trustee Council of six federal and state agency heads set up to administer the $900 million dollar settlement has cut off a lot of research so it would have more money to invest in restoring and protecting the environment that sustains the wildlife that survives--buying up habitat threatened by logging and minimizing the impact of growing public use of the spill environment. Bob Spies is the Trustees' chief scientific advisor.

Bob Spies - I know we spent over a $100 million dollars in scientific studies. That's a tremendous amount of resources, and I am not sure that the will is there to keep pursuing these things--pursuing these questions.

Steve Heimel - Still it appears that some of the research was shut down prematurely. The number of harlequin ducks, animals who spend their whole life cycle in the kinds of intertidal areas where the oil was trapped, fell unexpectedly last year after the Council decided to stop funding annual duck surveys. Also last year, the herring run came back severely impaired by disease and in small numbers. This after the Trustees had decided no herring damage could be connected to the spill, and it told scientists to close down their study. Now correlations are being shown between herring damage and the spill. The run of pink salmon, the big money fish in Prince William Sound, crashed disastrously last summer as well. Fishermen strongly believe the spill is responsible although the links that scientist can make are tenuous. Head scientist, Bob Spies, and the Trustees now say they are all in favor of continuing to pay to investigate those links. For those who draw their livelihoods from Prince William Sound, the five years since the spill have been economically

turbulent. There was massive spending in a clean-up effort and two years of very good fishing but now the fishing has crashed, and tour operators worry that fifth anniversary publicity about the spill will make the public think Prince William Sound is a waste land. Sail charter operator, Nancy Lethcoe, says it's nowhere near that simple.

Nancy Lethcoe - The spill was an overwhelming traumatic impact on the Sound but also on us. Whereas, when our charter guests come, they don't have the memories and they don't have the knowledge, and they have pure enjoyment of what they see. So the Sound is very, very much alive and living for them, and for us it's recovering and as it's recovering, we're recovering.

Steve Heimel - In Alaska for Living on Earth, I'm Steve Heimel.

Steve Kerwood - Five years after the Exxon Valdez disaster, those who live close to Alaska's southern coastline are still contending with oil in their environment. Not long ago, a Native fisherman picked up a lump of oil tar the size of a basketball. Many of the region's Native people known as the Chugach Aliiuts have been slowly recovering from the economic, social and culture disruption of the spill. But as producer, Susan Kerness, found in a visit to several Native villages, the recovery masked some profound changes in their way of life.

Susan Kerness - This small hamlet, the island of Chenega Bay in Prince William Sound, resembles an unpaved suburban neighborhood. The basic transportation is a modified dune buggy and the closest store is a $100 plane ride away. For the Chugach Aliiuts who live here, both their survival and cultural identity depend on harvesting and sharing food from the ocean, but that changed suddenly on Good Friday 1989.

Phil Totemoff - Before the oil spill, you could see right out to the rocks out there. There use to be seals on those rocks on low tide just about on every low tide, but now there's nothing--nothing at all.

Susan Kerness - Phil Totemoff is a Chugach Aliiut elder who's lived in Prince William Sound all his life. In his younger days, he divided his time between subsistence fishing and commercial fishing. That was when he lived in old Chenega before another Good Friday disaster, the 1964 earthquake and tidal wave, destroyed his entire village 25 years earlier. The black sludge that coated new Chenega's subsistence beaches five days after the tanker ran aground gave Totemoff a disturbingly familiar feeling.

Phil Totemoff - I survived the 1964 earthquake, you know, and it just reminds me a little bit more of what happened during the '64 earthquake after I'd seen all that oil.

Susan Kerness - Chenega Bay residents still hunt seals and ducks but they aren't finding as many as they did before 1989, and they have to travel farther to get them. So for many here, it's becoming too expensive to put Native food on their tables. The oil took a week

longer to foul the shores of Nanwalek, about two hundred miles southwest of Chenega Bay but it brought similar problems. Sally Ash grew up in Nanwalek and now teaches village kids sikpiak, their Native language. She was living in Anchorage in 1989 and when she realized the magnitude of the disaster, she rushed home to be with her family and to help clean her beaches. She found Nanwalek a very different place than she left.

Sally Ash - It seemed so weird to come home to this quiet little village. It use to be quiet, and now all of sudden all kinds of people are coming in. I mean, you couldn't really keep track, you know. It was just so noisy.

Susan Kerness - Her village of less than 200 had been invaded by dozens of clean-up workers. She says they took over Nanwalek's community hall, usurping the authority of the tribal council. Ash says the influx of outsiders combined with a sudden infusion of cash into a largely non-cash economy turned her community's social and economic structure on its head.

Sally Ash - We are not use to probably having money all at once. I think it caused a lot of people to start drinking again. That was the sad part and then not doing your subsistence that summer we missed out on a whole summer of no food, and things seemed just kind of out of control or something.

Gail Evanoff - I always say Mother Nature is mad. She doesn't know how to deal with this.

Susan Kerness - Today the crowds and the money are gone. What remains now is the oil. Chenega Corporation vice president, Gail Evanoff, gets angry when she hears scientist say that the human role in the clean up is over, and the best way to treat subsurface oil on shorelines is to allow Alaska's winter storms to scour them clean. She and other Native leaders are demanding that money from an Exxon out-of-court settlement be used for further beach clean up and monitoring.

Gail Evanoff - You and I know water and oil do not mix. When it's in the sediments, it's there to stay unless it's removed.

Susan Kerness - It almost doesn't matter whether it will take more human effort or natural wave action to heal the ecosystem. The fact is village residents like Phil Totemoff no longer trust the environment they've relied on for centuries.

Phil Totemoff - A lot of times when I get my food like seal and set it on the table, I could visualize that oil that I seen, and sometimes it makes me sick.

Susan Kerness - Still the shock waves from the Exxon Valdez disaster haven't been all bad. Port Graham village chief, Eleanor McMullen, says the spill revived interest in the old ways. Ways that she grew up learning from her grandmother.

Eleanor McMullen - The Exxon disaster revived a lot of Native cultural things--dance, song, building of the kayak, the language, and people have built on it.

Susan Kerness - But whether the children playing today in Chenega Bay will experience their subsistence culture as part of daily life or just as something they do on the weekends remains to be seen. Larry Evanoff is the mayor of Chenega Bay.

Larry Evanoff - I think we lost a generation of folks here. These young ones that are coming up now, they don't know how to hunt. Yeah, we try to take them out and tell them the way it use to be and what it was and how plentiful it was. That part of it is gone.

Susan Kerness - Like many adults who lived through both Good Friday disasters in Prince William Sound, Evanoff isn't so sure his village can bounce back a second time.

Larry Evanoff - We fell off the horse before. We got up and got back on. When we're going to get our lifestyle back--who knows. I might not see it in my lifetime.

Susan Kerness - For Living on Earth, I'm Susan Kerness in Chenega Bay, Alaska.

Steve Kerwood - There are certain historical events that sear themselves into our minds so thoroughly that we never forget where we were and how we felt when we heard the news. For many Alaskans including commentator, Nancy Lord, the wreck of the Exxon Valdez was one of them.

Nancy Lord - Five years ago Easter weekend, I was home from an out-of-town job. The weather had turned toward mud-softened spring, and all was right with the world. Good Friday morning my radio clicked on right into the middle of the news--a tanker hemorrhaging oil in Prince William Sound impaled on a reef I had never even heard of. That morning I felt only a numbing defeat that all the promises in the world hadn't kept us safe from the big spill. Little did I suspect the magnitude of the horrors that would follow. Otters scratching out their eyes. Pyres of burning bird carcasses. The incomprehensible activity of thousands of people hand wiping individual rocks. The corporate lying and bureaucratic dithering. Never, never could I have imagine that that unleashed oil would spread and multiple and eventually wash up on our own beach in sticky globs 400 miles from the grounding. EVOS, the Exxon Valdez oil spill acronym that became a word, was our wake up call. Those of us in the oil's path learned very quickly about the vulnerability of the marine life we had so long taken for granted. Clearly, we couldn't depend on the oil industry or the government nor could we rely on experts, those scientists who insisted the oil would never leave the Sound and couldn't possibly sink. We learned to trust ourselves--our own eyes and experience, to listen to one another and accept the collective knowledge of those who best knew and most valued what was at risk. No longer was it just conservationists crying the alarms. Commercial fishermen, subsistence users, city mayors, everyone saw the connections between environmental health and economic health. We joined together in common purpose and continued to work together as never before--

educating, advocating, litigating, insisting on habitat and resource protection, and that's good because the work still to be done is nearly overwhelming and often painfully discouraging. Five years after EVOS, open any newspaper. In the one before me, I read that another fully-loaded tanker lost power in Cook Inlet. It's lucky the anchor held because there still aren't any escort tugs in this part of Alaska. At about the same time, a thousand gallons of fuel spilled into Port Valdez when barge tanks overflowed during loading, and in the state capitol, lawmakers under the heady influence of oil industry campaign contributions were busy undoing protective laws adopted in the EVOS aftermath. That's right. That's happening as I speak. Apparently, not everyone woke up. Some just rolled over and went back to sleep.

Steve Kerwood - Commentator, Nancy Lord, is a writer who lives in Homer, Alaska. What do you think about the Exxon Valdez disaster? Give us a call at 1-800-218-9988 or write to Living on Earth at Box 639, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 02238. The immediate wake of the Exxon Valdez tragedy did make some national changes. In 1990, Congress passed the Oil Pollution Prevention Act, which among other things requires double hulls on new tankers and rapid response teams to be on constant stand-by alert for spills. Late last year such teams passed their first real test when workers quickly contained a 100,000 gallon spill just off some of Puerto Rico's most famous beaches. But for some, the threat of massive oil spills has changed little. Eric Naulder, a Pulitzer prize-winning reporter for The Seattle Times, has ridden a supertanker out of Valdez and written a book about his experience. He says better clean-up capacity isn't really the answer.

Eric Naulder - The improvement of clean-up capacity--the building of more skimmers--it's kind of a futile gesture because once you get about a million gallons of oil in the water, there's almost nothing you can do to control it.

Steve Heimel - If the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 had been enforced before the Exxon Valdez set sail on that fateful day, would the outcome have been any different?

Eric Naulder - I don't think so. No. The ship itself would have today, as it still has today, had only a single hull. The ship actually hit the rocks with such force, a double hull, which is required in this act, might not have made a difference anyway. There isn't really anything in the regulation that would have changed the way the crew operates.

Steve Heimel - I spent a good while going through your book, and I came away from this that you must have the opinion that really no tanker really is safe enough. Is that a far assessment?

Eric Naulder - It's a fair assessment. I mean anytime you are carrying that much oil. In this case, the ship I was aboard was carrying 35 million gallons of oil. Other tankers carry much more than that. You've got a potential for accidents or spills or major spills. You know, as I say in the book, a world that guzzles 30 thousand gallons of oil a second, makes no peace with any shoreline, including our own. I think between the time of the

Exxon Valdez accident in March of 1989 and the ride that I took aboard an oil tanker for this book which was in January of 1992, worldwide there were some 84 tankers that spilled large amounts of oil--a total of 65 million gallons of oil. In sounding as pessimistic as I do here, it's not to say we can't do better. In fact, there are many, many things we can do that would go much farther in preventing spills.

Steve Heimel - Alright give us some examples, please.

Eric Naulder - Well, I think one of the most important is to take a look at and make changes in the way we operate these ships. A vast majority of accidents at least involve or begin with human error. The crews of these vessels ought to be checked out by regulators on the vessel they are operating--just the way they do with airplane crews. That doesn't happen in the world of ships. I think also the ships need to be better built. Starting just after World War II, the owners of these oil tankers built larger ships with proportionately less steel, and frankly they were fragile ships. You really learn something, and I did on this vessel. When you ride an oil tanker into the teeth of a 70 mile-an-hour wind and into 40-foot seas, you think that you're on a vessel being 900 to 1000 feet long that is very powerful that is not vulnerable to nature until you meet something like that. As you stand on the bridge, you can see the ship bending--bending like a twig up and down against the force of these waves, and the sound of the ship groaning is a terrible, terrible sound. I mean, you literally can hear the ship in pain, all of the joints grinding. I tell the story of one ship that was hammered by a 90-foot wave and cracked down the side, spilling nearly a million gallons of oil into the Gulf of Alaska. This happens all the time, and the industry literally watched this happen for decades and continued to reduce the steel in these ships, and nobody really paid attention to the carnage until recently when they are starting to do studies and saying, "Hey, wait a minute. These ships seem to be breaking apart in the waves. Maybe we'd better build them a little differently." But the rules are still not good enough.

Steve Heimel - Eric Naulder is a reporter for The Seattle Times and author of the new book, Tankers Full of Trouble. Thanks very much for talking with us.

Eric Naulder - Well thank you very much. I've enjoyed it.

Steve Kerwood - And for this week, that's Living on Earth. Our program is produced and edited by Peter Thompson and directed by Debra Stavrough. The coordinating producer is George Holmsy and our production team includes Kim Mobaluski, Chris Page, Jan Nunley, Jessica Balamira, Eve Stewart and engineer, Laurie Zaria. Special thanks this week to member stations, KBBI in Homer, Alaska and KUOW in Seattle. Our theme music was composed by Michael Aaron. Living on Earth is a project of the World Media Foundation in cooperation with the Public Media Foundation and WBUR-Boston. I'm Steve Kerwood, executive producer.

Major funding for Living on Earth comes from the Pugh Charitable Trusts for reporting on

the national and global environment; all natural Stoney Field Farm Yogurt--whether supporting worthwhile causes or producing healthy foods, Stoney Field's goal is to make you feel good inside; the W. Alton Jones Foundation; and the National Science Foundation. Funding also comes from the George Gund Foundation and the Great Lakes Protection Fund.

This is NPR. National Public Radio.

RTw 03/08 2105 STEVEN SEAGAL FILM TOO SLICK FOR ESKIMOS AND OIL ...

STEVEN SEAGAL FILM TOO SLICK FOR ESKIMOS AND OIL COMPANIES
By Andrea Orr

LOS ANGELES, March 9 (Reuter) - Oil companies and native Americans are dismayed by the way they are depicted in "On Deadly Ground," Steven Seagal's new action adventure film about one man's quest to save the environment.

Many have not seen the movie, since there are no theatres in the remote oil-producing region of northern Alaska where it takes place, but they did witness the filming and in some cases offered cultural advice.

They say the whole premise of an evil oil industry exploiting gentle natives who prefer dog sleds to automobiles is wrong.

"Oil provides 80 percent of Alaska's tax base. We have a huge sewer problem and other health problems here and oil gives us the wealth and stability to to deal with these things and lead healthy lives," said Bobbi Quintavell, director of the Arctic Slope Native Association.

Alaskans have not forgotten the 1989 Exxon Valdez tanker spill, which devastated the wildlife and wilderness around Prince William Sound.

They admit there is a continuing struggle to preserve the environment and the native culture as companies aggressively develop the most oil-rich state in the U.S.

"But there is a general attitude that we can save natural resources and still have limited oil development," said Elise Patkotak of the North Slope Borough's publication office.

"On Deadly Ground" opts for a more simple picture of good versus evil. Seagal plays a firefighter who takes the law into his own hands when he learns the giant oil company he works for is using faulty equipment to build an oil rig.

Fearing the substandard work will cause an oil spill, Seagal sets out to destroy the whole project, but not before knocking out eight oil workers in a violent barroom brawl and offering preachy comments about the greedy white man.

He later miraculously survives a murder attempt and convalesces in an Eskimo village, where people coexist harmoniously with nature.

Michael Caine plays the chairman of the fictional company Aegis Oil, who is as villanous as Seagal is righteous, dispatching henchmen to torture and kill a whistle-blower.

Caine's character has no appreciation for the spectacular wilderness around him; he can not even stand beside two caribou during a public relations campaign designed to appease environmentalists without complaining about the stench.

The film was number one at the box office recently and then dropped to second spot -- with a 47 percent decline in business -- but has been less popular among critics.

The Los Angeles Times called the plot "simplicity itself" and The Anchorage Daily News quoted several Eskimos complaining about the way their culture was presented. One said the costumes were more appropriate for "Dances with Wolves," the 1990 film about Plains Indians in South Dakoka.

Most oil executives say they have no interest in seeing the film and hope the reviews will help to discredit it.

"People with knowledge of what's going on in Alaska won't be swayed by things put in the movie just to make it dramatic," said Paul Laird, a spokesman for British Petroleum in Anchorage.

Oil companies vigorously defend their environmental performance in Alaska and say the Valdez disaster was one sorry exception to an otherwise exemplary record of producing oil without significantly interfering with the environment.

"Without being able to speak first-hand about the movie, I do know what goes on in Alaska and I can say the oil industry has been extremely responsible," said Russ Luigs, chairman of the offshore drilling company Global Marine. "If you talk to Alaskans they'll tell you we've been well received there."

But Pamela Miller, a biologist with Greenpeace in Anchorage, argues that oil companies regularly contaminate the environment, abandon toxic waste sites and leak oil into the ground.

And she said the problem is not confined to oil-producing regions like Alaska.

"The whole cycle of oil is very deadly," she said, referring to a host of dangers ranging from tanker spills to pollution emitted by refineries and cars, which many scientists believe is contributing to global warming.

Miller said she was not crazy about "On Deadly Ground" but thought it had a valuable message that might reach a group of people who have not been reached by other means.

The movie departs from the typical action adventure format with its final scene, in which Seagal launches into a deadly serious diatribe about deteriorating air quality and other health problems caused by oil.

"I thought the violence was gratuitous and the plot oversimplified the natives' way of life, but an essence of truth was represented," Miller said.

"I don't see how anyone could listen to the last speech and not be moved by it." REUTER

APn 03/20 0000 Spill-Skipper

By The Associated Press

The man who was the focus of the inquiry into the Exxon Valdez spill is still fighting his conviction in the case.

Former Exxon skipper Joseph Hazelwood was convicted in 1990 of illegally discharging oil, a misdemeanor, but acquitted of more serious counts of operating a vessel while intoxicated.

Hazelwood has appealed his conviction and his sentence to clean oily rocks; his case is pending with the state appeals court.

APn 03/20 0000 Sound's Status ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP) -- Two more conferences are scheduled in Anchorage this week to coincide with the fifth anniversary of the Exxon Valdez spill, already the most scrutinized disaster of its kind.

A three-day meeting beginning Wednesday concentrates on oil-spill prevention in the wake of the Prince William Sound spill. A second meeting, the day before will look at projects to restore the environment.

Other scientific sessions over the past year have pitted Exxon's optimistic findings regarding the damage caused by the spill against more guarded forecasts produced by government agencies.

Numerous reports have detailed the damage: Harbor seals, sea otters, pink salmon, Pacific herring and several kinds of birds -- including common murres and harlequin ducks -- show "little or no sign" of recovery in Prince William Sound, the state says.

Herring losses are significant, experts say, since the small fish are targeted by commercial fishermen and are a key link in the sound's food chain. Meanwhile, survey teams at Sleepy Bay last year reported oil floating to the surface after chemical treatment.

Pete Peterson, a University of North Carolina marine scientist, said the sound's mussel beds are a lingering concern. Mussel colonies act like armor, shielding any oil trapped under the beds. Peterson says trapped oil may contribute to chronic, low-grade pollution that could do damage over time. Experts are particularly concerned about birds that eat the mussels.

Other species proved nature's resilience. Thirteen killer whales disappeared from a Prince William Sound pod between 1988 and 1990; state scientists say that group is growing again.

As many as 300 bald eagles died in the spill. Five years later, a draft plan for Prince William Sound restoration notes that eagles already may have recovered, along with some populations of black oyster catchers and sockeye salmon near Kodiak.
End Adv for Sunday, March 20

APn 03/20 0000 Spill Anniversary Copyright, 1994. The Associated Press. All rights reserved. By ROSANNE PAGANO Associated Press Writer

CORDOVA, Alaska (AP) -- Tides and times have been kind to Prince William Sound in the five years since the Exxon Valdez rammed a charted reef, dumping nearly 11 million gallons of crude oil into pristine waters.

Storms have scoured Alaska's 1,500 miles of polluted coastline, removing about half the oil embedded in some places. Many beaches look clean. Population forecasts for bald eagles are good. The tourists are back. #"It's behind us," said John Manly, an aide to Gov. Walter J. Hickel, whose administration won a $900 million settlement from Exxon Corp. in 1991.

But it's not over for the people of Cordova, homeport to Prince William Sound's commercial fishing fleet.

Cordova fishermen are among the plaintiffs who filed damage claims in the wake of the March 24, 1989 accident. They are only just getting their day in court, and until they do, they will not turn the page on the Exxon Valdez.

They blame the Valdez spill for bad salmon harvests over the past two years. They say they are just hanging on, and that massive Exxon is trying to wait them out, an assertion the company denies.

"It's been a war of attrition," says salmon fisherman R.J. Kopchak, a former Cordova city councilman whose three-story house overlooks Cordova's dock and forested Orca Bay.

A typical week's mail, stacked on Kopchak's kitchen table, contains court notices about his lawsuit: More papers to sign, more documents to file.

"We know one guy, a fisherman here with a valid claim, who just quit sending in his paperwork. Refuses to do it anymore," Kopchak says as he scans tne foggy bay.

"The longer Exxon and its attorneys can make it miserable for you, the greater the chance the settlement will be less."

Kopchak is among fishermen who say this summer's salmon season could be his make-or-break year. If the run fails or prices are weak, Kopchak says he may have to polish up his carpentry skills and move his wife and four young children somewhere else. #"I built this castle because I figured I'd live and die here," he says. "I really love this place. We don't lock our doors, we don't worry about our kids. The problem is, what I want to do is fish."

Lawyers for Exxon, the world's largest corporation, reject any suggestion that delay was a tactic. Complaints have been separated into state and federal class actions, each with separate trial judges, schedules and evidence rules.

The federal suit, scheduled to start May 2, includes 100,000 potential class members. Some estimates put the damages at $1.5 billion or more.

A trial in state Superior Court is scheduled to start June 6 and includes seven towns oiled in the spill's path. The mayors want compensation for municipal services they say were diverted in response to the spill.

Other state plaintiffs include 13 Alaska Native corporations; they claim damage to their land and archaeological sites. Natives also sued Exxon in federal court over damage to their traditional ways, which depend on the sound for food.

Evidence-gathering for all these actions has consumed the past five years. The company said more than 5 million pages of documents have changed hands; nearly 2,000 depositions were taken.

A list filed by Exxon names 315 planned witnesses in the federal case. Plaintiffs planned to call 270 witnesses in a case scheduled to last all summer. Authorities will testify on marine science, land values, fish abundance and -- hardest of all -- whether there are any lingering effects of the spill.

In Cordova, everyone wants an Exxon settlement -- even townspeople with no claim pending. #"We don't want to be known as the oil spill town any more," Mayor Margie Johnson said.

Seated at a table in the restaurant of her dockside hotel, Johnson points out a pair of sea otters playing in icy waters where, in late February, the fishing fleet is idle. Some Cordovans, hoping for a new image as a tourist town, say the city should adopt a new slogan -- "sea otter capital of the world" is mentioned.

Johnson, a can-do businesswoman, wants action. She is helping organize Cordova's first "Bury the Blues Day" on March 26, complete with a local New Orleans-style band and a homemade casket paraded through city streets.

Townspeople were encouraged to write out their oil-spill worries, put them in the casket and close the lid, once and for all. Plans call for the casket to be burned. (The party was scheduled on a Saturday after the spill anniversary, so schoolchildren could participate.)

"This event is not for everyone," Johnson says. "But for Cordova, the spill really was like a death in the family. I'm appalled that five years later there's still no settlement with Exxon. That's like trying to get over a death when you can't read the will."

Cordova, a town of nearly 2,600 on the sound's eastern edge, is reached only by boat or plane. Nearly half the work force is directly employed in fish harvesting or processing. State labor economists reported this month there was "little prospect" that salmon prices would bounce back soon.

Employment has receded over the past three years, sales receipts dropped and more than two dozen homes are on the market, the state said.

Real estate agent Linden O'Toole -- among the only families to get out of fishing, remain in Cordova and pursue a new occupation -- says she is fielding about as many inquiries from out of state as from Cordovans looking to buy.

O'Toole, who is supporting her fisherman husband and two small children, says earnings from real estate have gone to pay off tens of thousands of dollars in fishing debts.

"I'm hoping for our sake and a lot of people in this town that Exxon will come through with a settlement," she says. "They're a huge company. They don't need to hurt families like ours to do business."

In 1990, one year after the spill, the fleet turned in a near-record pink salmon harvest and prices were good. Then, in 1991, prices on the worldwide market collapsed and harvests were dumped back into the sea.

The next two years, for undetermined reasons, the run failed. Last year, the Pacific herring season, which typically begins in April and is the fishermen's first

cash crop of the year, was cut short in Prince William Sound when schools failed to materialize. Some fish were diseased.

Last year, frustrated by Exxon's claims that the spill caused no ongoing harm, a mosquito fleet of 65 seiners gave up the dismal pink salmon season to bottle up the Port of Valdez, terminus of the trans-Alaska oil pipeline. For nearly two days, no tankers could arrive or depart during the protest.

"I will never forgive and forget," says 42-year-old Doug Pettit, a Cordova fisherman who since 1987 has run a local heating repair business to tide his family over the winter.

"It's as if someone murdered my daughter," he says. "You can never forgive the person who did that." #Pettit is an oil-spill domino. Since fishing has declined, he has worked harder at the heating company. But his neighbors are living on savings and hopes for an Exxon settlement, and Pettit -- who also has an Exxon claim pending -- said he has gotten lenient on pricing.

"It isn't like you tapped a new resource," he says, taking a break one rainy morning as he coaxed heat from the pipes at the fishermen's union hall, in Cordova's downtown.

"You're still working with money from fishing. We all share the problem."
End Adv for Sunday, March 20

APn 03/19 1212 Spill Anniversary - 2nd version, CDV party canceled
 By ROSANNE PAGANO Associated Press Writer

CORDOVA, Alaska (AP) -- Tides and times have been kind to Prince William Sound in the five years since the Exxon Valdez rammed a charted reef, dumping nearly 11 million gallons of crude oil into pristine waters.

Storms have scoured Alaska's 1,500 miles of polluted coastline, removing about half the oil embedded in some places. Many beaches look clean. Population forecasts for bald eagles are good. The tourists are back. #"It's behind us," said John Manly, an aide to Gov. Walter J. Hickel, whose administration won a $900 million settlement from Exxon Corp. in 1991.

But it's not over for the people of Cordova, homeport to Prince William Sound's commercial fishing fleet.

Cordova fishermen are among the plaintiffs who filed damage claims in the wake of the March 24, 1989 accident. They are only just getting their day in court, and until they do, they will not turn the page on the Exxon Valdez.

They blame the Valdez spill for bad salmon harvests over the past two years. They say they are just hanging on, and that massive Exxon is trying to wait them out, an assertion the company denies.

"It's been a war of attrition," says salmon fisherman R.J. Kopchak, a former Cordova city councilman whose three-story house overlooks Cordova's dock and forested Orca Bay.

A typical week's mail, stacked on Kopchak's kitchen table, contains court notices about his lawsuit: More papers to sign, more documents to file.

"We know one guy, a fisherman here with a valid claim, who just quit sending in his paperwork. Refuses to do it anymore," Kopchak says as he scans the foggy bay.

"The longer Exxon and its attorneys can make it miserable for you, the greater the chance the settlement will be less."

Kopchak is among fishermen who say this summer's salmon season could be his make-or-break year. If the run fails or prices are weak, Kopchak says he may have to polish up his carpentry skills and move his wife and four young children somewhere else. #"I built this castle because I figured I'd live and die here," he says. "I really love this place. We don't lock our doors, we don't worry about our kids. The problem is, what I want to do is fish."

Lawyers for Exxon, the world's largest corporation, reject any suggestion that delay was a tactic. Complaints have been separated into state and federal class actions, each with separate trial judges, schedules and evidence rules.

The federal suit, scheduled to start May 2, includes 100,000 potential class members. Some estimates put the damages at $1.5 billion or more.

A trial in state Superior Court is scheduled to start June 6 and includes seven towns oiled in the spill's path. The mayors want compensation for municipal services they say were diverted in response to the spill.

Other state plaintiffs include 13 Alaska Native corporations; they claim damage to their land and archaeological sites. Natives also sued Exxon in federal court over damage to their traditional ways, which depend on the sound for food.

Evidence-gathering for all these actions has consumed the past five years. The company said more than 5 million pages of documents have changed hands; nearly 2,000 depositions were taken.

A list filed by Exxon names 315 planned witnesses in the federal case. Plaintiffs planned to call 270 witnesses in a case scheduled to last all summer. Authorities will testify on marine science, land values, fish abundance and -- hardest of all -- whether there are any lingering effects of the spill.

In Cordova, everyone wants an Exxon settlement -- even townspeople with no claim pending. #"We don't want to be known as the oil spill town any more," Mayor Margy Johnson said.

Seated at a table in the restaurant of her dockside hotel, Johnson points out a pair of sea otters playing in icy waters where, in late February, the fishing fleet is idle. Some Cordovans, hoping for a new image as a tourist town, say the city should adopt a new slogan -- "sea otter capital of the world" is mentioned.

Johnson, a can-do businesswoman, wants action.

Until it was abruptly canceled this week, she was helping organize Cordova's first "Bury the Blues Day" on March 26. The event, complete with a New Orleans-style band parading through town, was aimed at uniting the community. But organizers called it off when too many people complained they weren't yet ready to forgive and forget. #"For Cordova, the spill was like a death in the family," Johnson says. "I'm appalled that five years later there's still no settlement with Exxon. That's like trying to get over a death when you can't read the will."

Cordova, a town of nearly 2,600 on the sound's eastern edge, is reached only by boat or plane. Nearly half the work force is directly employed in fish harvesting or processing. State labor economists reported this month there was "little prospect" that salmon prices would bounce back soon.

Employment has receded over the past three years, sales receipts dropped and more than two dozen homes are on the market, the state said.

Real estate agent Linden O'Toole -- among the only families to get out of fishing, remain in Cordova and pursue a new occupation -- says she is fielding

about as many inquiries from out of state as from Cordovans looking to buy. #O'Toole, who is supporting her fisherman husband and two small children, says earnings from real estate have gone to pay off tens of thousands of dollars in fishing debts.

"I'm hoping for our sake and a lot of people in this town that Exxon will come through with a settlement," she says. "They're a huge company. They don't need to hurt families like ours to do business."

In 1990, one year after the spill, the fleet turned in a near-record pink salmon harvest and prices were good. Then, in 1991, prices on the worldwide market collapsed and harvests were dumped back into the sea.

The next two years, for undetermined reasons, the run failed. Last year, the Pacific herring season, which typically begins in April and is the fishermen's first cash crop of the year, was cut short in Prince William Sound when schools failed to materialize. Some fish were diseased.

Last year, frustrated by Exxon's claims that the spill caused no ongoing harm, a mosquito fleet of 65 seiners gave up the dismal pink salmon season to bottle up the Port of Valdez, terminus of the trans-Alaska oil pipeline. For nearly two days, no tankers could arrive or depart during the protest.

"I will never forgive and forget," says 42-year-old Doug Pettit, a Cordova fisherman who since 1987 has run a local heating repair business to tide his family over the winter.

"It's as if someone murdered my daughter," he says. "You can never forgive the person who did that."

Pettit is an oil-spill domino. Since fishing has declined, he has worked harder at the heating company. But his neighbors are living on savings and hopes for an Exxon settlement, and Pettit -- who also has an Exxon claim pending -- said he has gotten lenient on pricing.

"It isn't like you tapped a new resource," he says, taking a break one rainy morning as he coaxed heat from the pipes at the fishermen's union hall, in Cordova's downtown.

"You're still working with money from fishing. We all share the problem."

 By DOUG ESSER Associated Press Writer

The biggest machines in the world are oil tankers -- three or more football fields long, wide as a 10-lane freeway, tall as a 15-story building with millions and millions of gallons of crude oil in the basement.

Each ship is part of the economic network that keeps cars, trucks, planes and trains fueled and lubricated.

Each one is also a potential environmental disaster, inevitable as an earthquake on a fault line: It's not a question of whether one of the 5,000 tankers in the world will run aground, break apart or explode; it's only a matter of when.

That's why Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Eric Nalder, who covered the Exxon Valdez spill five years ago, calls his book "Tankers Full of Trouble" (Grove, $24).

In this book, Nalder, a reporter for the Seattle Times, takes a ride on the tanker Arco Anchorage from Valdez, Alaska, across the stormy North Pacific,

through the tricky inland waters of Washington to a refinery near Bellingham. Along the way, he shares with the reader a sense of awe at the industrial vessel, sympathy for overworked crew members, and a detailed account of all the things that can go wrong. In 1985, the Arco Anchorage itself ran aground at Port Angeles, Wash., spilling 239,000 gallons of oil.

Troubles include owners who save money by skimping on steel in building tankers, inadequate inspections, political pressures on regulators, pilots with better job security than safety records, and crew members as capable as any of us of human error. As Exxon Valdez Capt. Joseph Hazelwood can attest, an error on an oil tanker can create a big, expensive, career-ending, oily-birds-on-the-evening-news environmental mess.

Information on every aspect of the oil tanker industry is smoothly incorporated as Nalder describes the 1,200-mile trip across the Northern Pacific from the end of the Alaska pipeline to the refinery. What might be considered dull details of tanker construction become more compelling when you're in the middle of a Gulf of Alaska storm, waves breaking over the deck, and you can hear the steel groan as the ship bends between the waves.

Nalder is relentlessly pessimistic, as if great ships can only end in great disasters. Listening to the metallic complaints of the ship in the storm, he writes, "The noise seems to be one voice grieving the fate of tankers." Yet a tanker like the Arco Anchorage makes the same trip every eight or nine days, safely.

This is a readable book for general interest readers, with enough details for people to take an in-depth look at the oil spill issue. Nalder does a particularly good job of profiling tanker crew members, putting a human face onto an industry.

There are deadweight tons of information floating in this book. It would have been helpful if lists and charts had been included that could present spill and tanker information graphically. A map of the route of the Arco Anchorage also would have been nice.

There is no doubt Nalder has all the information and its relevance in his head. This book establishes him as an expert on tankers and their troubles.

When, not if, the next Exxon Valdez occurs, look for Nalder on network TV shows, saying, "I knew this was going to happen."

1 APn 03/25 1244 BRF--Britain-Oil Tanker
2 UPwe 03/24 1804 Environmentalists: New laws could prevent massive s...
3 UPwe 03/24 1714 advisory-tanker spill
4 RTw 03/23 2010 DIVISIONS REMAIN FIVE YEARS AFTER EXXON SPILL
5 UPn 03/23 1750 Greenpeace says Exxon hid spill's environmental toll
6 RTw 03/23 0620 REUTER BUSINESS NEWS HIGHLIGHTS 1100 GMT, ...
7 RTf 03/23 0309 BC-ENVIRONMENT-SPILL
8 RTw 03/23 0311 DIVISIONS REMAIN FIVE YEARS AFTER EXXON SPILL

APn 03/25 1244 BRF--Britain-Oil Tanker

EDINBURGH, Scotland (AP) -- The captain and owners of the tanker Braer will not face criminal charges for the ship running aground and spilling oil in the Shetland Islands last year, the Crown Office said Friday.

The Braer, carrying more than 24 million gallons of oil, lost power and rammed shore during a hurricane on Jan. 5, 1993. It caused the world's 12th largest oil spill.

The oil killed at least 1,549 birds, coated crops and livestock, contaminated some salmon farms and temporarily closed fishing grounds. But there was less damage than initially feared because rough weather quickly dispersed the Norwegian light crude.

The government's Marine Accident Investigation Branch blamed the disaster on the tanker's Greek captain, Alexandros Gelis. It also faulted aspects of the tanker's design and criticized the Coast Guard for not responding immediately to the captain's distress calls.

Friday's decision by the Crown Office, which handles prosecutions in Scotland, does not bar civil suits over the spill. It was more than twice the size of the 1989 Exxon Valdez disaster in Alaska, the worst oil tanker accident in U.S. history.

UPwe 03/24 1804
Environmentalists: New laws could prevent massive spill in California

SAN FRANCISCO (UPI) -- An environmental group Thursday asked federal and state maritime officials to adopt a series of new laws that would help prevent an oil spill disaster similar to that of the Exxon Valdez off the Northern California coast.

The Center for Marine Conservation scolded state and federal officials at a news conference overlooking San Francisco Bay for not completing tanker traffic studies ordered in the wake of the Exxon disaster in Prince William Sound, Alaska.

The group said because of the lack of an official plan, it conducted its own study and developed 10 recommendations for improving safety in the waters off the Golden Gate Bridge.

"Five years after the Exxon Valdez disaster, California's north coast remains vulnerable, with all ingredients for a catastrophic oil spill right at our doorstep," said Richard Townsend, co-author of the center's report and

recommendations. "Yet neither state nor the federal government has devised traffic plans for oil tankers and other large vessels to reduce the risks to our coast."

The group found that more than 1,000 tankers a year enter the San Francisco Bay, many passing very closely to the Farallon Islands and the San Mateo coastline.

"Our proposal to revise the vessel traffic lanes outside the Golden Gate Bridge will increase the distance between incoming oil tankers and our shoreline and offshore islands," said Marci Glazer, the report's other co-author.

Among the recommendations were to force tankers to cruise at least 50 miles off the Califomia coastline when traveling to their destinations, to create a single set of approach lanes to the San Francisco Bay and stationing of properly equipped emergency response vessels in the Bay.

Currently, those vessels are stationed about 100 miles to the south at Big Sur.

The group also called on the U.S. Coast Guard to improve its ability to gather reports on near misses so that data can be analyzed to adjust safety standards.

Using current Coast Guard data, the group found from 1989-91 there was one sinking, 27 groundings, three collisions, seven rammings and 17 near misses in the waters off the San Francisco Bay.

UPwe 03/24 1714 advisory-tankerspill
Editors: On the fifth anniversary of the Exxon Valdez oil spill in Prince William Sound in Alaska, an environmental group has asked federal and state shipping officials to adopt a series of new laws that would help prevent a similar disaster off the Northern California coast. UPI will move a story. Contact: Marci Glazer at 415-391-6204.
UPI San Francisco

RTw 03/23 2010 DIVISIONS REMAIN FIVE YEARS AFTER EXXON SPILL
(Eds: adds details from scientist's new reports)
By Yereth Rosen
ANCHORAGE, Alaska, March 23 (Reuter) - Five years after the Exxon Valdez tanker spilled 11 million gallons (42 million liters) of crude oil into Prince William Sound, scientists say the impact on the environment will be felt for decades.

"Already this catastrophe, in one of the nation's most pristine environments, has rewritten the book on the effects of oil in temperate marine ecosystems," said Chuck Meacham, deputy commissioner of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

He and other officials spoke on Wednesday at a conference marking the fifth anniversary of the March 24, 1989, spill, which has caused an ecological transformation in the pristine waters of the sound, scientists said.

The scientists' conclusions are not universally accepted.

"There was a spill, and there were certainly some animals killed. But I think of a disaster as Los Angeles, where you had earthquake damage in the

billions and you had death of humans," said State Representative Joe Green, a Republican.

"We look at Prince William Sound today and it's corrected itself," he said.

Government scientists say otherwise. They believe it will take some species decades to recover from the spill.

Within a few months after the tanker went aground on a reef, the spill had killed thousands of marine mammals such as sea otters and seals as well as an estimated 300,000 to 645,000 birds, at least 10 times the total killed in any other oil spill, government scientists say.

Salmon and herring runs in the sound have been so poor that fishermen staged a blockade at the Valdez oil terminal last August to call attention to their plight.

New research suggests biological problems have compounded in the past year, with creatures like sea otters and octopuses being replaced by a sea-urchin population explosion and green-algae blooms.

Surveys from 1993 show that oil in mussel beds and in mussel tissue had not significantly degraded from the previous year, said Stanley Rice of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

"If we're going to wait for nature to clean up these particular soft sediments, it's going to take quite a while. It might take more than my lifetime," Rice said.

Oiled mussels are believed to be a factor in the faltering populations of harlequin ducks and other species.

Also in the past year, Meacham said, scientists found what they now believe is a spill-linked genetic problem in Prince William Sound pink salmon, the mainstay of the commercial fishing industry there.

Laboratory tests found that eggs laid by salmon returning to streams that had been oiled suffered die-offs far more than did eggs from salmon spawning in streams that had escaped the oil, Meacham said.

But some species, such as bald eagles, appear to be recovering well. And Exxon has cited the record salmon run of 1990 as evidence that the environment there has recovered.

"Based on the research that we've done out here, we have seen that the sound is essentially oil-free and the biological resources and habitats have returned to what we've called the range of natural variation," Exxon spokesman Dennis Stanczuk said.

He dismissed alternative conclusions. "A lot of those folks, as you know, are litigants, and it's in their interest to make things in the sound look worse than they really are," the Exxon spokesman said.

Although Exxon in 1991 settled legal claims with the federal and state governments for $1.025 billion to be paid over 10 years, it still faces lawsuits filed by thousands of fishermen, Alaska Natives and others. REUTER

UPn 03/23 1750 Greenpeace says Exxon hid spill's environmental toll

WASHINGTON, March 23 (UPI) -- To mark the fifth anniversary of the Exxon Valdez oil spill in Alaska, an environmental group Wednesday accused Exxon Corp. of covering up the extent of ecological damage caused by the spill.

"Exxon consistently designed its studies to underestimate injury and overstate recovery," said Dr. Riki Ott of Greenpeace. "The results and conclusions are not supported by the data."

In a report, "Sound Truth," Ott criticized research by Exxon and the government, calling the methodology flawed and inaccurate.

"Because Exxon's studies were designed to support their position of minimal long-term effects, Exxon's data contribute little to understanding of overall effects of the Exxon Valdez oil spill on the ecosystem," Ott wrote.

The report also said that government data "are not without faults, the central one being that many of the studies were designed to assess injury and to quantify recovery, i.e., the studies assumed resources were injured by the spill."

Exxon spokesman Dennis Stanczuk dismissed the findings, adding that a class-action suit brought by Native Alaskans and fishermen might have prompted the study's release. A trial is scheduled to begin May 2.

"Some individuals and groups experienced difficult economic conditions unconnected to the spill," he said.

"Many of these groups are plaintiffs in the suit against Exxon. They have a strong interest in linking their current hardships to the spill."

Greenpeace denied the report's release, scheduled for Thursday, was timed in any way to the suit. However, Ott did discuss her report at a press conference Tuesday, where she called for governmental action at the state and federal level.

Greenpeace also used the Valdez anniversary to address the issue of global warming. Dr. Jeremy Leggett, climate change expert for the group, presented a record of climatic events matching predictions of leading global warming models.

"If we burn the vast stores of oil left in the planet's reservoirs, we will not be able to stop the climate change locomotive barreling down the tracks," he said.

But Dr. John Christy, an atmospheric science professor with the University of Alabama in Huntsville, says government satellites show no increase in global temperature. Christy has been recording monthly planet temperature readings for the past 16 years.

"The models do predict global warming, but the real data have not verified the models," he said. "What do you want to go with, fact or theory?" RTw

03/23 0620 REUTER BUSINESS NEWS HIGHLIGHTS 1100 GMT, ...REUTER BUSINESS NEWS HIGHLIGHTS 1100 GMT, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 23

ANCHORAGE, Alaska - Five years after the Exxon Valdez spilled 11 million gallons (41 million liters) of crude oil into Prince William Sound, Exxon is still involved in legal proceedings.

RTf 03/23 0309 BC-ENVIRONMENT-SPILL DIVISIONS REMAIN FIVE YEARS AFTER EXXON SPILL
(Eds: Also moved to general news desks)
By Yereth Rosen
ANCHORAGE, Alaska (Reuter) - Five years after the Exxon Valdez spilled 11 million gallons of crude oil into Prince William Sound, Alaskans are divided about the environmental impact of the event.

To some, the March 24, 1989, spill was one of the world's worst environmental disasters, a crisis that spread grief to Alaska coastal communities along its 1,500-mile path.

"Hundreds of millions of dollars of scientific studies have found it to be the most biologically, socially and economically disruptive spill in history, period," said Riki Ott, a fisherman, scientist and environmental activist from the Prince William Sound town of Cordova.

To others, it was a mere transportation accident that has been exploited by environmental groups.

"There was a spill, and there were certainly some animals killed. But I think of a disaster as Los Angeles, where you had earthquake damage in the billions and you had death of humans," said State Representative Joe Green, who has referred to the Exxon spill as a "so-called disaster."

"We look at Prince William Sound today and it's corrected itself," said the Anchorage Republican.

Government scientists say otherwise. They believe it will take some species decades to recover from the spill, if they ever do.

Within a few months after the tanker went aground on a reef, the spill had killed thousands of marine mammals such as sea otters and seals as well as an estimated 300,000 to 645,000 birds, at least 10 times the total killed in any other oil spill, government scientists say.

Salmon and herring runs in the sound have been so poor that fishermen staged a blockade at the Valdez oil terminal last August to call attention to their plight.

But some species, such as bald eagles, appear to be recovering well. And Exxon has cited the record salmon run of 1990 as evidence that the environment there has recovered.

"Based on the research that we've done out here, we have seen that the sound is essentially oil-free and the biological resources and habitats have returned to what we've called the range of natural variation," Exxon spokesman Dennis Stanczuk said.

He dismissed alternative conclusions. "A lot of those folks, as you know, are litigants, and it's in their interest to make things in the sound look worse than they really are," the Exxon spokesman said.

Although Exxon in 1991 settled legal claims with the federal and state governments for $1.025 billion to be paid over 10 years, it still faces lawsuits filed by thousands of fishermen, Alaska Natives and others.

Trials are set to start in U.S. District Court in Anchorage on May 2 and in state court on June 6. Lawyers have said they believe they can prove some $3 billion in direct damages, and are seeking billions more in punitive damages.

The memory of the spill continues to influence political battles in the state and helped halt a Cook Inlet oil lease sale earlier this year.

"If we are able to prevent more oil development from happening in frontier areas of Alaska, then we have learned something," said Dorothy Smith REUTER

RTw 03/23 0311 DIVISIONS REMAIN FIVE YEARS AFTER EXXON SPILL
By Yereth Rosen
ANCHORAGE, Alaska, March 23 (Reuter) - Five years after the Exxon Valdez spilled 11 million gallons (41 million liters) of crude oil into Prince William Sound, Alaskans are divided about the environmental impact of the event.

To some, the March 24, 1989, spill was one of the world's worst environmental disasters, a crisis that spread grief to Alaska coastal communities along its 1,500-mile (2,419-km) path.

"Hundreds of millions of dollars of scientific studies have found it to be the most biologically, socially and economically disruptive spill in history, period," said Riki Ott, a fisherman, scientist and environmental activist from the Prince William Sound town of Cordova.

To others, it was a mere transportation accident that has been exploited by environmental groups.

"There was a spill, and there were certainly some animals killed. But I think of a disaster as Los Angeles, where you had earthquake damage in the billions and you had death of humans," said State Representative Joe Green, who has referred to the Exxon spill as a "so-called disaster."

"We look at Prince William Sound today and it's corrected itself," said the Anchorage Republican.

Government scientists say otherwise. They believe it will take some species decades to recover from the spill, if they ever do.

Within a few months after the tanker went aground on a reef, the spill had killed thousands of marine mammals such as sea otters and seals as well as an estimated 300,000 to 645,000 birds, at least 10 times the total killed in any other oil spill, government scientists say.

Salmon and herring runs in the sound have been so poor that fishermen staged a blockade at the Valdez oil terminal last August to call attention to their plight.

But some species, such as bald eagles, appear to be recovering well. And Exxon has cited the record salmon run of 1990 as evidence that the environment there has recovered.

"Based on the research that we've done out here, we have seen that the sound is essentially oil-free and the biological resources and habitats have returned to what we've called the range of natural variation," Exxon spokesman Dennis Stanczuk said.

He dismissed alternative conclusions. "A lot of those folks, as you know, are litigants, and it's in their interest to make things in the sound look worse than they really are," the Exxon spokesman said.

Although Exxon in 1991 settled legal claims with the federal and state governments for $1.025 billion to be paid over 10 years, it still faces lawsuits filed by thousands of fishermen, Alaska Natives and others.

Trials are set to start in U.S. District Court in Anchorage on May 2 and in state court on June 6. Lawyers have said they believe they can prove some $3 billion in direct damages, and are seeking billions more in punitive damages.

The memory of the spill continues to influence political battles in the state and helped halt a Cook Inlet oil lease sale earlier this year.

"If we are able to prevent more oil development from happening in frontier areas of Alaska, then we have learned something," said Dorothy Smith Childers of Greenpeace. REUTER