

# ALASKA REGIONAL RESPONSE TEAM

## Meeting Summary

**0830 – 1700 Wednesday September 24, 2015  
Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly Chamber  
Soldotna, Alaska**

Sign-in sheets can be viewed [here](#).

The meeting agenda can be viewed [here](#).

Links to meeting presentations are embedded in the summary below.

### Safety Briefing, Introductions, Opening Remarks

Ms. Patricia Bower, the Alaska Regional Response Team (ARRT) coordinator with the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC), welcomed the meeting attendees, gave a safety briefing, and conducted introductions.

The ARRT co-chairs—Mr. Mark Everett, U.S. Coast Guard (USCG); Mr. Chris Field, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA); and Ms. Kristin Ryan, ADEC—welcomed all the attendees to the meeting and offered opening remarks. Mr. Everett thanked Mr. Mike Munger with Cook Inlet Regional Citizens Advisory Council (CIRCAC), who recommended and invited the ARRT to hold a meeting on the Kenai Peninsula.

### Overview of the BP Alaska Shippers Exercise

CDR Joe Lally presented an overview of the [BP Alaska Shippers Exercise](#) in Prince William Sound that will be held next week, September 29 to 30, 2015. This exercise is unique in that the scenario will begin at Hour 48 of the response event. Mr. Everett remarked that ARRT members should anticipate a notification and/or activation to occur as part of this exercise.

### ADEC Spill Prevention & Response Reorganization

Ms. Ryan reviewed the [status of the reorganization](#) to address the reduced agency budget and provided communication regarding industry-led exercises with requested agency participation. The reorganization is complete and positions have been staffed and reassigned. A new organization chart is posted on the ARRT website along with the presentations from this meeting.

The legislature did pass a new fuel tax to fund spill response. This legislation also included directives to ADEC to pursue cost recovery and to improve the drills and exercises schedule to be more cost efficient for both the agency and industry. ADEC is looking at improving prevention by regulating smaller oil and fuel tanks, aligning the volume of fuel or oil tanks regulated by ADEC to be the same volume regulated

by the EPA (1,320 gallons). ADEC is reviewing reciprocal agreements with the State and Canada regarding vessels transiting from Canada's waters and Alaska's waters.

### **Biennial Work Plan Review**

Mr. Everett provided an update on the [2015-2016 ARRT Biennial Work Plan](#). The Biennial Work Plan is available on the ARRT website under "Other Documents." Mr. Everett's presentation—with a detailed status for each of the ARRT goals, priorities, and other projects—is also available on the website with the other meeting presentations.

## **WORKING GROUP/SUBCOMMITTEE/TASK FORCE REPORTS**

### **Unified Plan Steering Committee Update**

CDR Bo Stocklin presented a summary of the current [status of the Steering Committee](#) to guide updates to the Unified Plan. This included an introduction of the Steering Committee membership and the status of the revision to Annex D of the Unified Plan. Annex D addresses the process to update the Unified Plan. The Steering Committee submitted Annex D for both a public and ARRT comment period. The Steering Committee will then complete revisions in response to these comments. The final draft Annex and comment responses will be distributed in fall 2015. The next Unified Plan section to be revised will be the Regional Stakeholder Committee guidance.

### **Food Safety Task Force Update**

Mr. Doug Helton, U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), provided an update on the [status of the ARRT Food Safety Task Force](#). The task force included members from NOAA, U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI), U.S. Forest Service (USFS), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), and ADEC. The task force has completed a draft document that includes the issues to be addressed in a plan specific to food safety. [This document](#) has been posted on the ARRT website under "Other Documents." Unique to Alaska, the task force is committed to addressing multiple types of food sources, including marine mammals, land mammals, and plant-based foods in addition to seafood. Mr. Helton identified several topics to be considered as part of an ARRT food safety plan and potential guidance document. These are listed in his presentation along with the Food Safety Task Force Planning document, available on the ARRT website under "ARRT Meetings."

Mr. Field suggested that the task force and ARRT should consider recommending to the On-Scene Coordinators (OSCs) that food safety information be included in the Subarea Contingency Plans. Dr. Phil Johnson, DOI, recommended that the ARRT consider that a Food Safety Annex be developed and included in the Unified Plan.

### **Dispersant Task Force Update**

CDR Stocklin provided an update on the [status of the work of the Dispersant Working Group \(DWG\)](#). All dispersant plan signatories have given a full legal review and clearance of the Dispersant Use Plan for Alaska. The DWG is currently developing responses to just under 700 comments received during the public comment period and tribal consultation. The comments and draft responses will be distributed to the ARRT in late October/early November. After that, the DWG will address any issues raised by the

ARRT, and then the five signatory action agencies will sign and publish the Annex. This will trigger the 24-month schedule to designate any additional areas to be excluded from pre-authorization areas.

### **Update on Alternative Planning Criteria for Non-Tank Vessels**

CAPT Scott Bornemann updated the ARRT on the status of guidance to review the [Alternative Planning Criteria](#) being developed by USCG District 17. This guidance will be published in the Federal Register for review and commenting. The guidance currently being used was developed by Sector Anchorage and USCG Policy.

### **ARRT Cultural Resources Committee**

Dr. Johnson provided an update on the status of the ARRT Cultural Resources Committee. The committee has not met since the last ARRT meeting.

### **ARRT Wildlife Protection Committee**

Dr. Johnson also provided an update on the status of the ARRT Wildlife Protection Committee. The committee has not met since the last ARRT meeting.

### **Science and Technology Committee**

Ms. Marcia Combes, EPA, provided an update on the status of the Science and Technology Committee (STC). All positions have been filled and she introduced the committee members. She expects the STC will extend membership to both the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The upcoming focus of the STC will be the state of science on dispersant use. The next STC meeting will be in October.

### **Endangered Species Act Compliance Task Force**

Ms. Combes informed the ARRT on the status of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) Consultation on the Unified Plan. Formal ESA Section 7 Consultation was completed and the document is considered to be in compliance. The next steps for the task force include determining and prioritizing work in response to the reasonable and prudent measures identified by the National Marine Fisheries Service.

### **National Response Team, National Environmental Compliance Subcommittee**

Ms. Combes provided an overview of the National Response Team, National Environmental Compliance Subcommittee. This subcommittee was formed in response to potential lawsuits regarding ESA Section 7 compliance for Area Plans throughout the country. The subcommittee is tasked with preparing guidance to clarify the issues related to implementation of the Memorandum of Agreement between the USCG, EPA, DOI, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service and National Ocean Service; the definition of federal action; and under which thresholds consultation is required for pre-spill planning.

### **ON-SCENE COORDINATOR REPORTS**

#### **Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation**

Mr. John Kotula, [On-Scene Coordinator \(OSC\) with ADEC](#), reviewed the recent cases and responses of ADEC. He addressed some of the decisions that had to be made by the agency, particularly decisions on requests to discharge large volumes of oil and fish to the environment. He also spoke on next week's

BP tanker exercise in Valdez as well as the new strategies of ADEC's Drill and Exercise program. These strategies include involving multiple responsible parties and also fully implementing lessons learned so that the same issues do not need to be exercised in drills repeatedly.

#### **U.S. Coast Guard Western Alaska Captain of the Port (COTP) Zone**

CAPT Paul Albertson and LT Todd Bagetis, [USCG Sector Anchorage](#), reviewed the recent spill responses and lessons learned in Western Alaska. LT Bagetis highlighted the problem of a small light sheen that rapidly dissipated in Resurrection Bay, at Seward, Alaska (approximately 150 yards off the Waterfront Park). The source and product are unknown and there is a potential that the source/product may have resulted from the Good Friday Earthquake in 1964. He requested each agency or department commence an internal review of historical information, reports, memoranda of understanding, agreements, and the fate of potential rail cars in that area or other potential pollution sources that "may" be the root cause of this incident in order to support response actions. Please provide all information to LT Bagetis at [Todd.J.Bagetis@uscg.mil](mailto:Todd.J.Bagetis@uscg.mil) or 907-428-4205 by November 15, 2015. If you have questions, do not hesitate to contact him directly.

LCDR Matt Mitchell spoke about the oil spill response exercises in Nome and the Northwest Arctic Subarea Planning meeting in Kotzebue, Alaska, as well as upcoming drills and training.

#### **U.S. Coast Guard Prince William Sound COTP Zone**

CDR Joe Lally, [MSU Valdez](#), made a presentation on spills and responses in Prince William Sound since May 2015. He provided an overview of planning efforts, training, and exercises. The industry-led PREP exercise will be held in Cordova in conjunction with the PWS Subarea Committee Meeting in February 2016.

#### **U.S. Coast Guard Southeast COTP Zone**

CAPT Shannan Greene, [USCG Sector Juneau](#), made a presentation on spill responses and notable lessons learned and workgroups, trainings, exercises, and meetings held in Southeast Alaska. She highlighted the challenges of a Dixon Entrance trans-boundary (Alaska-British Columbia) incident and efforts to address these issues. She also briefed the ARRT on a current effort to improve vessel response plan compliance, which has resulted in an improvement from 96% non-compliance in April to 0% non-compliance in August.

#### **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency**

Mr. Matt Carr, [OSC with the EPA](#), provided an overview of the recent and upcoming activities of the Alaska OSCs, including drills and Spill Prevention, Containment, and Countermeasures (SPCC) and Facility Response Plan (FRP) inspections. He briefed the ARRT on the upcoming crude oil production at Blue Crest near Stariski Creek on the Kenai Peninsula, with the company intending to transport crude oil to Nikiski via truck haulers. He also provided a summary of outreach to trucking companies regarding truck rollovers and clean-up costs and consequences.

## **GENERAL DISCUSSION TOPICS & SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS**

### **Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement Oversight of Shell's Chukchi Sea Exploration**

Mr. Kevin Pendergrast presented on the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement's (BSEE's) oversight of [Shell's 2015 exploration activities in the Chukchi Sea](#). This included a summary of Shell's activities and BSEE's oil spill preparedness activities.

### **Science Action Network**

Mr. Everett and Dr. Nancy Kinner presented on the Science Action Network (SAN). The ARRT was approached to be a pilot region for the SAN. Dr. Kinner provided a general description of the SAN. The SAN was created as a result of the Deepwater Horizon response to facilitate collaboration with and dissemination of information from academic scientists prior to and potentially during a major spill response. This proposal to initiate a SAN is still under consideration by the ARRT co-chairs.

Mr. Field remarked that there are already some mechanisms and structures in place to facilitate information provided to OSCs, such as the STC. Dr. Kinner agreed that the STC may be the appropriate avenue for linking the SAN to the OSCs. She also emphasized the value to addressing some response-related issues prior to a response and that the purpose of this SAN is to fill these needs and not only to provide real-time information during a response. Mr. Helton suggested that the SAN be used to assist in providing guidance and information on the issues before the Food Safety Task Force.

### **National Strike Force Coordination Center Update**

Mr. James Snyder, USCG National Strike Force (NSF) Coordination Center, provided an overview of the [NSF Coordination Center and the Strike Teams](#). In his presentation, he included a summary of recent changes at the NSF and a summary of the Marine Environmental Response Preparedness Department, NSP Area Specialist Program, and Response Resource Database (RRI).

### **Lessons Learned from the Prince William Sound Exercise and Activation Calls**

Mr. Cecil McNutt offered a presentation on the [Prince William Sound Exercise and ARRT Activation](#) and the lessons learned from this exercise on August 7 and 11, 2015. During the notification process, 100% of ARRT members received a notification; however, responses to the notification varied from 20% to 60% of members.

### **Arctic Council Issues Update**

Mr. Everett updated the ARRT on the issues before the Arctic Council. The Arctic Council workgroup most directly related to the ARRT is the Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response Working Group (EPPR). One of the initiatives of the EPPR is Small Community Prevention, Preparedness, and Response to oil spills. The EPPR will host a scoping session with representatives from small arctic communities in Anchorage October 7 to 9, 2015. BSEE, under the direction of the EPPR, is initiating the development of a database of international response equipment.

## **Executive Order 13689 and Arctic Executive Steering Committee Status**

Mr. Everett spoke on Executive Order (EO) 13689 and the Arctic Executive Steering Committee. The committee has been established, as well as a number of task forces, including the task forces assigned to improve arctic oil spill prevention and response.

The NRT has considered creating an arctic subcommittee. This proposal has been tabled, with an ARRT recommendation to focus on the tasks already assigned.

## **CONCLUDING COMMENTS AND REMARKS**

Non-member meeting attendees were given the opportunity to offer public comments. Four people requested to make a comment. The comments included the following:

- Tom Lakosh (by telephone): Concerns regarding ocean qualified oil spill response organizations and the lack of appropriate equipment for Alaska's conditions;
- Dr. John French: Concerns over adverse effects of dispersant use;
- Mark Swanson (PWSRCAC): Proposed amendments to Annex D, in particular the formation of the Steering Committee; and
- Matt Melton (Alaska Chadux Corp.): Current equipment and vessels of opportunity held or potentially utilized by Alaska Chadux Corporation.

Mr. Field provided an overview of the annual strategy session, occurring tomorrow, Friday, September 25, 2015, in Anchorage, Alaska. The results of the meeting will be reflected in the Biennial Work Plan. He also spoke on the importance of downstream notification, an issue which was a concern after the Gold Creek Mine release in Colorado. The EPA Administrator issued a requirement for all of the RRTs to review notification procedures. Mr. Field reviewed the Cook Inlet Subarea Plan for these procedures and found that the procedures were robust and appropriately redundant.

Representatives of the ARRT member agencies and the OSCs offered closing comments and remarks. The co-chairs closed the meeting by making their final remarks. The co-chairs expressed their appreciation for the attendees' participation and the meeting was adjourned.

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## **Upcoming Meetings**

- January 27, 2016 (Anchorage, AK)
- May 25, 2016 (Kodiak, AK)
- September 28, 2016 (Nome, AK)

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## **Follow-up Subjects & Assignment of Tasks**

- None Identified
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Participant Summary:

### Member Agencies Attendance

Member Agency	Present	Not Present
Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation	●	
Department of Agriculture	●	
Department of Commerce	●	
Department of Defense	●	
Department of Energy		●
Department of Health and Human Services		●
Department of Interior	●	
Department of Justice		●
Department of Labor		●
Department of Transportation		●
Environmental Protection Agency	●	
Federal Emergency Management Agency	●	
General Services Agency		●
U.S. Coast Guard	●	

### Non-member Organizations in Attendance

- 1-Call Alaska Resolve
- Alaska Chadux Corporation
- Alaska Clean Seas
- Alaska Incident Response
- Alaska Sealife Center
- BP Alaska
- Cook Inlet RCAC
- Galant Marine
- Kenai Peninsula Borough, Emergency Management
- Kenaitze Tribe (a federally-recognized tribe)
- PESA
- Prince William Sound RCAC
- University of New Hampshire for the Science Action Network
- U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Administration, Office of Pipeline Safety (*not a ARRT member; DOT ARRT membership is held by the FAA*)