

ALASKA REGIONAL RESPONSE TEAM

Meeting Summary

**0900 – 1700 Wednesday May 24, 2017
Westmark Sitka Hotel
Sitka, AK**

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

Copies of the presentations and handouts are available on the Alaska Regional Response Team website, under ARRT Meetings. <http://alaskarrt.org>

Safety Briefing, Introductions, Opening Remarks

Ms. Patricia Bower, the Alaska Regional Response Team (ARRT) coordinator with Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) and Mr. Nick Knowles, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Alaska Regional Response Team (ARRT) coordinator, welcomed the meeting attendees, and conducted introductions. The ARRT co-chairs—Mr. Mark Everett, U.S. Coast Guard (USCG); Mr. Calvin Terada, (EPA); and Ms. Kristin Ryan, Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC)—welcomed all the attendees to the meeting and offered opening remarks.

Review of Actions Since Last Meeting and Biennial Work Plan

Mr. Everett reviewed the actions and activities since the last meeting, held in Fairbanks, Alaska, in January 2017. A list of the major events is available [here](#).

Working Group, Subcommittee, and Task Force Reports

Area Contingency Plan/Regional Contingency Plan Task Force Update

Mr. Knowles presented a summary of the proposal to reorganize how contingency planning is structured in Alaska to develop Area Contingency Plans (ACPs) and a Regional Contingency Plan instead of the current Subarea Contingency Plans (SCPs) and Unified Plan. He provided an overview of the current and proposed framework, planning committees, and workgroups. He reviewed the work completed thus far, and the work remaining. The USCG issued guidance in February that directed that only one federal on-scene coordinator (FOSC) could sign an ACP (not a USCG FOSC and an EPA FOSC), and that the USCG ACP's planning boundaries needed to reflect a single coastal area, unique to a single Captain of the Port (COTP) zone. Further work is on hold, pending the establishment of planning area boundaries. Once this is complete, the planning committee will stand-up and begin work on the remaining steps to draft and promulgate new plans. The planning committee will be composed of government agency planners and will work to ensure consistency across all area plans.

Mr. Everett continued the presentation, addressing the USCG ACP revitalization goals. The following goals will specifically impact Alaska plans:

- Plans should be standardized and consistent with all plan contents across the nation;
- Plans should be tactically useful rather than a warehouse of policy;
- Area committees should be robust and inclusive;
- Separate plans should be established for coastal and inland zones; and
- While plans cannot be joint plans, joint planning remains encouraged.

Copies of their presentations are available [here](#) and [here](#).

Dispersant Use Policy Implementation and Dispersant Avoidance Area Identification Update

Mr. Everett, LCDR Matt Hobbie, USCG Sector Anchorage, and LT Jason Scott, USCG Marine Safety Unit (MSU) Valdez, presented an overview of the effort to identify dispersant avoidance areas. The purpose of this effort is to identify areas within the pre-authorization zone that should be excluded from pre-authorization. Avoidance areas need to be identified by January 27, 2018, or the pre-authorization zone for that subarea will revert to case-by-case approval of the use of dispersants. A public outreach process was conducted during the fall 2016 and winter 2017. The technical committee, chaired by Dr. Philip Johnson (USDOJ), has held five meetings since January 2017. A comment and response matrix has been prepared, and they are on track to complete the process by the deadline.

Mr. Terada inquired whether the work group has adequate resources to update the five subarea contingency plans (SCPs) with dispersant preauthorization areas. LCDR Hobbie responded that the dispersant preauthorization avoidance areas will be incorporated into the SCPs as an addendum and will not require a full SCP update and that they had adequate resources to accomplish this task.

Area industries also have until January 2018 to have resources in Alaska to comply with the Dispersant Use Authorization plan. Plan-holders of vessels in non-innocent passage carrying crude oil must be capable of applying dispersant and must conduct environmental monitoring at the direction of the FOSC. Thus far, only one plan-holder has submitted any queries to Mr. Everett regarding dispersant compliance.

A copy of the presentation is available [here](#).

Science and Technology Committee

Ms. Catherine Berg, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Scientific Support Coordinator, provided an update on and overview of the National Response Team Response Action Matrix for federal Endangered Species Act Section 7 Consultation. The purpose of this project is to develop a common understanding between the EPA and USCG, National Marine Fisheries Service, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on the proposed spill response activities and their potential impacts on threatened and endangered species.

Ms. Berg also provided an overview of the science related to response to the Platform A gas leak in Cook Inlet. The ALOHA hazard modeling program was used to develop a plume model, but was not very accurate. The USCG issued notice to mariners to avoid the area within 1,000 yards of the leak. The natural resource trustees identified resources at risk—in particular, beluga whales.

She also addressed some of the lessons learned from the response. This was a response without an FOSC or Unified Command, and it was difficult for federal trust agencies to integrate and communicate with the response coordinators. There was also some confusion regarding whether a notice to mariners was an avoidance area or implied a restricted area. This confusion delayed the use of some response vessels operating within the avoidance area.

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. Membership in the committee needs to be confirmed, and new members recruited as appropriate. Additional Historic Properties Specialists need to be identified and trained. Dr. Johnson will work with the State Historic Preservation Officer, co-chair of the Cultural Resources Committee, to fill vacancies and provide training.

ARRT Wildlife Protection Committee

Dr. Johnson also provided an update on the status of the ARRT Wildlife Protection Committee. Membership in the committee needs to be confirmed, and new members recruited as appropriate. The committee will need to update some of the wildlife protection plans, including Annex G (wildlife protection guidelines) of the Unified Plan, and two guidance documents that are part of the Canada-United States Joint Marine Pollution Contingency Plan, Dixon Entrance Annex (CANUSDIX). Dr. Johnson has been in coordination with his counterpart in the Canadian government.

Food Safety Task Force Update

Mr. Doug Helton, U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC), NOAA, provided an update on the status of the ARRT Food Safety Task. The Oil Spill Recovery Institute (OSRI) has \$25,000 available to work on task force projects, pending a request by the ARRT.

On-Scene Coordinator Reports

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Mr. Knowles presented on behalf of the EPA FOSCs a summary of the BP Flow Station 1, Drill Site 2, Well Site #3 release and response at Prudhoe Bay in April 2017. A copy of his presentation is available [here](#).

U.S. Coast Guard Southeast COTP Zone

CAPT Shannon Greene, USCG Sector Juneau, made a presentation on spill responses in Southeast Alaska. She highlighted the response to the groundings of the Tug Sampson Mariner and Tug Ocean Eagle, and the sinking of the Tug Powhatan. She also reviewed the tribal outreach activities in Southeast Alaska as well as upcoming events. A copy of her presentation is available [here](#).

U.S. Coast Guard Prince William Sound COTP Zone

CDR Joe Lally, MSU Valdez, reviewed the spills and responses in Prince William Sound since January 2017. Responses of particular note was a sulfuric acid release at the Valdez Marine Terminal. MSU Valdez has participated in several exercises this year. He also reviewed recent upcoming Subarea Committee meetings and activities, and regional trainings and exercises. A copy of his presentation is available [here](#).

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

CAPT Paul Albertson, USCG Sector Anchorage, reviewed the recent spill responses and lessons learned in Western Alaska. Responses of particular note were the Kaktovik tank release, Fishing Vessel (F/V) Elizabeth Taylor, M/V Ecofaith, and the Anna Platform in Cook Inlet. He also reviewed recent outreach and drills, planning activities and initiatives. A copy of his presentation is available [here](#).

Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation

Mr. Graham Wood, ADEC, reviewed the recent cases and responses of ADEC. He addressed the Kaktovik response, BP Prudhoe Bay Well #3 response, Anna Platform response, F/V Predator grounding, and Tug Powhatan sinking. Currently, ADEC has an open public scoping period regarding Noncrude Tank Vessel Contingency Plans. ADEC is also currently engaged in a process to improve response exercises, with final guidance expected by the end of 2017. A copy of his presentation is available [here](#).

General Discussion Topics and Special Presentations

Pacific strike team capabilities

MSTC Thomas Watts presented on the USCG Pacific Strike Team (PST) capabilities, including recent responses the PST has assisted on in the Pacific region. A copy of his presentation is available [here](#).

Review of oil surrogates application and approval process

Mr. Jeremy Robida, with the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens Advisory Council (PWSRCAC), presented on an ongoing PWSRCAC project to identify appropriate surrogates for oil in spill response exercises. A copy of his presentation is available [here](#).

A discussion of the appropriate next steps by the ARRT followed the presentation. Mr. Everett and Mr. Terada expressed that they did not feel that the ARRT had the authority to grant permission or a permit the use of surrogates. Mr. Terada did not think the EPA was likely to issue a permit for the use of a surrogates.

Southeast Alaska Petroleum Response Organization (SEAPRO) Overview

Mr. Dave Owings, General Manager with SEAPRO, presented an overview on the capabilities of SEAPRO in Southeast Alaska. A copy of his presentation is available [here](#); additional information is available on the website <http://www.seapro.org>.

Concluding Comments and Remarks

Non-member meeting attendees were given the opportunity to offer public comments. One person requested to make a comment, which was as follows:

- The Cook Inlet Regional Citizens Advisory Council supports the ARRT meetings being held in areas throughout the state, but would like for ARRT to look into ways to make remote, virtual participation more viable.

Representatives of the ARRT member agencies and the on-scene coordinators offered closing comments and remarks.

Upcoming Meetings

- Fall 2017 in Cordova (September 20-21st),

Follow-up Subjects & Assignment of Tasks

- ARRT Members – Start internal discussion to identify a vision for the roles of the Alaska Statewide Planning Committee and ARRT under the proposed AK Area Planning paradigm.
- STC – Find time to brief the OSC’s on the use of the ESA S7 emergency consultation Action Matrix and work with response agencies to identify a process for notifying resource agencies when federal jurisdiction to respond may not exist due to CERCLA/OPA exemptions.
- Cultural Resources Committee – Determine deadline for membership on the committee or establish a recruitment strategy, and identify government cultural resource specialists who may be able to support response under PRFA authority.
- Wildlife Protection Committee – Determine deadline for membership on the committee and/or establish a recruitment strategy.
- OSC’s – Work with ARRT leadership to identify ways to make OSC reports more germane to ARRT functions and equities. Reports should focus on best management practices and identification of areas where OSC’s may benefit from ARRT support/attention.
- ARRT Leadership – Follow up with PWSRCAC with a definitive posture regarding use of surrogates for oil spill response training.
- ARRT Leadership – Explore options for increased remote participation in ARRT meetings by members and stakeholders. Relay findings to same.

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 State		●
Department of Transportation		●
Environmental Protection Agency	●	

Federal Emergency Management Agency ●

General Services Agency ●

U.S. Coast Guard ●

Non-member Organizations in Attendance

Alaska Chadux Corporation

Prince William Sound RCAC

Cook Inlet RCAC

State of Alaska, Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management

State of Alaska, Department of Natural Resources

DOI, Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement

DOC, NOAA, National Weather Service

DHS, Chemical Facilities Antiterrorism Center (confirm name)

SEAPRO

Global Diving and Salvage

State of Alaska, Alaska Marine Highway System