

ALASKA REGIONAL RESPONSE TEAM

Meeting Summary

**0900 – 1700 Thursday September 21, 2017
The Cordova Center
Cordova, AK**

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

A copy of the agenda is available [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

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.

Dr. Nancy Kenner with the University of New Hampshire, Center for Coastal Response Research Center (CRRC) provided a brief synopsis of the CRRC's work, summarized on their website as "State of the Science of Dispersants and Dispersed Oil in Arctic Waters." Three documents have been finalized and are available online at http://crrc.unh.edu/dispersant_science. Two are outstanding, anticipated to be final in December 2017. A final document on human health and food safety is still in progress. The CRRC is leading a workshop in Anchorage on October 24–25, 2017, to discuss Arctic-related potential research and development topics for an upcoming Request for Proposals.

Review of Actions Since Last Meeting and Biennial Work Plan

Mr. Everett reviewed the ARRT's actions and activities since the last meeting, held in Sitka, Alaska, in May 2017. A list of the major events may be found [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 (RCP) instead of the current Subarea Contingency Plans and Unified Plan. He recognized Shannon Miller with ADEC and Lieutenant Commander Matt Hobbie, who have been instrumental in this project.

Mr. Knowles provided an overview of the current and proposed framework, planning committees and workgroups, and planning boundaries and reviewed the requirements of an RCP and ACP as specified in 40 Code of Federal Regulations 300. The Alaska Statewide Planning Committee is currently working to determine the level of effort in terms of hours or dollars to produce the new plans. Slide 8 of the presentation, available [here](#), includes the work completed to date. Slide 9 is a list of the work remaining.

The Alaska Statewide Planning Committee, RCP Workgroup is also working to update the Unified Plan by the end of December 2017. All the updates are administrative, with the exception of an amendment to Annex D, Unified Plan Update Process Flowchart.

Mr. Everett added that the ARRT has also identified other substantive revisions and additions to the Unified Plan. Mr. Knowles responded that the ARRT's current focus is on the administrative changes, but they may then address the other substantive changes to keep the Unified Plan current, as the work on the RCP and ACP progresses.

Mr. Knowles stated that while the area planning boundaries have been established, a map has not been developed. Ms. Berg suggested that the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) may be able to assist with this task.

CAPT Sean MacKenzie with Sector Anchorage reported that they are planning to bring on a reserve officer and contractor to assist with area planning.

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

Science and Technology Committee

Ms. Catherine Berg, NOAA Scientific Support Coordinator, provided an update on the Science and Technology Committee (STC); in particular, the Status of "State of the Science for Dispersant Use in Arctic Waters" project.

Ms. Marcia Combes (EPA) also remarked on the Circumpolar Oil Spill Response Viability Analysis, Technical Report. This report is a study of the viability of 10 potential response actions, including mechanical, dispersant, and in situ burning based on different ocean conditions. This is an Arctic Council Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response Working Group (EPPR) product. The report is available at <https://oaarchive.arctic-council.org/handle/11374/1928>.

Ms. Berg also reviewed the recent study of Buried Oil Detection by Canines in Northern Prince William Sound (K9-SCAT) conducted in May 2017. The study demonstrated that a trained canine can detect and delineate subsurface oil on a beach. However, the study did discover some limitations, such as that the dogs were able to detect oil that was not visible and not actionable for cleanup. The report is available here: <http://www.pws-osri.org/uncategorized/k9-oil-detection-report/>.

Ms. Susan Saupe, with Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council, asked if there is a mechanism for non-member participation in the STC. Mr. Everett responded that, while there are standing members of the STC, they may invite outside experts to advise the STC. Mr. Knowles added

that the change in framework will provide for additional local involvement in these matters with an enhanced Area Committee.

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

Food Safety Task Force Update

Mr. Doug Helton, U.S. Department of Commerce, NOAA, provided an update on the status of the ARRT Food Safety Task. They have produced a summary of existing authorities. They are also supporting and utilizing a \$30,000 grant available to the Oil Spill Recovery Institute (OSRI) to produce a guidance document to identify authorities, protocols, and guidelines and to identify other issues regarding food safety, if approved by the OSRI board on September 22, 2017. The task force is also requesting recommendations for competent consultants to receive the request for proposals for the OSRI project.

Mr. Terada addressed the perception that contaminated food sources are a critical component of incident response and that the social science and public perception issues may diverge from the science of food safety.

Dr. Kenner added that the National Academy of Sciences, National Institutes of Health, and the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences are also looking into oil spills and food safety concerns.

ARRT Cultural Resources Committee

Dr. Phillip Johnson, U.S. Department of Interior (DOI), 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, with new members recruited as appropriate. Additional Historic Properties Specialists need to be identified and trained, with guidance by State Historic Preservation Officer. Not much progress has been made in building up this team to date.

Unified Plan, Annex M Historic Properties Protection Guidelines does not require any updates at this time, but expected national-level changes may need to be addressed in the future.

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, with new members recruited as appropriate. They are also working to establish an advisory committee consisting of a bird rehabilitation specialist, oil spill response organization representative, and representatives from industry, EPA, and USCG. They hope to have an advisory committee meeting in November or December 2017. The committee has also identified some necessary updates to the Unified Plan, Annex M Wildlife Protection Guidelines, primarily inclusion of new forms and updates to contact information.

Ms. Berg added that U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service recently held Section 7 Endangered Species Act training for USCG Sector Anchorage Incident Management staff.

On-Scene Coordinator Reports

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

CAPT Phillip Thorne, USCG Sector Juneau, gave a presentation on spill responses in Southeast Alaska. He highlighted the response to the groundings of the F/V Confidence near Sitka, Alaska. A unique element of this response was the removal and disposal of 70,000 pounds of salmon outside of Sitka Sound, conducted in consultation with and/or with approvals from the EPA, DOI, and ADEC. USCG Sector Juneau recently collaborated with the Sitka Tribe and other trustee agencies to test the Geographic Response Strategy (GRS) at Pirate Cove near Sitka, Alaska. This test determined that an alternative strategy to that specified in the published GRS may be more successful and viable, and they will be working with ADEC to revise the GRS with this information. A copy of his presentation is available [here](#).

U.S. Coast Guard Prince William Sound COTP Zone

CDR Michael Franklin, Marine Safety Unit (MSU) Valdez, reviewed the spills and responses in Prince William Sound since January 2017. MSU Valdez has participated in several exercises this year, including a security exercise with the Alaska Marine Highway System, Valdez Marine Terminal (VMT) Exercise, CGC Sycamore Spilled Oil Recovery System Deployment, and a Government Initiated Unannounced Exercise at the VMT. He also reviewed recent upcoming Subarea Committee meetings and activities, and regional trainings and exercises. MSU Valdez is currently responding to a 200-gallon crude spill at the VMT.

Mr. Everett remarked that MSU Valdez has requested support for the Arctic Eagle exercise (February 20–27, 2018) and requested that ARRT members mark this on their calendars to improve participation.

CDR Franklin also requested that the ARRT support a statewide effort to assess Potential Places of Refuge (PPOR), expanding on the study recently conducted in Prince William Sound testing the viability of three PPOR locations, which found that two were not viable PPOR sites.

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

U.S. Coast Guard Western Alaska COTP Zone

CAPT Sean MacKenzie, USCG Sector Anchorage, reviewed the recent responses and lessons learned in Western Alaska. Responses of particular note were the M/V Laura Maersk and the use of the Emergency Towing System and the derelict World War II Barge YNg-15 in Prudhoe Bay. For the barge response, per a recommendation from the Endangered Species Act consultation, the USCG hired bear guards but discovered after the response that BP bear guards would have been available for the response. Another significant response was the F/V Akutan, a vessel in distress with an imminent pollution threat. The vessel is currently anchored in Dutch Harbor with the pollution threat resolved, but the fate of the vessel is undetermined. He also reviewed recent preparedness exercises and planning activities and initiatives. The Dispersant Pre-authorization Avoidance Area Development Technical Committee is currently reviewing public comments and is on track to meet the January 2018 deadline.

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

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Mr. Bob Whittier, EPA, presented on the EPA's response to the F/V Akutan ammonia release. He also reviewed the primary preparedness and prevention activities, including the Kenai Vulnerability Assessment and planned GRS development for the Kenai Road System, facility inspections, oil spill response training for locals and tribes, and exercise participation.

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

Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation

Mr. Graham Wood, ADEC, reviewed the recent cases and responses managed by ADEC. Currently, ADEC is working on a project at the Miller Salvage Yard, in Fairbanks, Alaska—a site with multiple hazardous materials, including some ongoing releases. They have hired NRC Alaska to begin site characterization and initial response steps and will be working with ADEC Contaminated Sites and the EPA on this site. He highlighted the M/V Laura Mearsk and an arson-related release that also coincided with a criminal investigation, requiring coordination with Alaska State Troopers. ADEC is considering scaling the requirements for Noncrude Tank Vessel Contingency Plans. They are expecting to complete an Oil Spill Exercise Design and Evaluation Guidance Manual by end of 2017. Registration of existing Class 2 Facilities is due September 22, 2017. More information on this new requirement is available at: <http://dec.alaska.gov/spar/ppr/class2facilities.htm>.

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

General Discussion Topics and Special Presentations

Oil Spill Recovery Institute and Emergent Technologies

Mr. Scott Pegau presented on the work of OSRI and some of the new technology research projects, particularly oil under/in ice detection; the use of canines to detect subsurface oil; and the use of skimmers and boom in ice. Copies of all OSRI reports and the videos shown during the presentation are available on their website: <http://www.pws-osri.org/>. A copy of his presentation is available [here](#).

Marine Spill Calculator

CAPT John Capliss presented on the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement's (BSEE) Response Calculators and User Manuals. BSEE has developed three estimated recovery potential tools and a recovery system evaluation tool. Captain Capliss provided an overview of how to use these tools, which are available online at <https://www.bsee.gov/what-we-do/oil-spill-preparedness/response-system-planning-calculators>. A copy of his presentation is available [here](#).

Ms. Ryan asked what the reaction from industry has been regarding the results produced by these calculators, as they affect (increase) the amount of recovery equipment necessary. CAPT Capliss replied that industry plan holders have recognized that they may need to increase their equipment capacity. However, in many cases, this may not be necessary since many use oil spill response organizations with more equipment capability and capacity than is required of plan holders.

Feedback Session for Upcoming ARRT Meetings

Mr. Knowles led a discussion on future meeting subjects, summarized as follows:

- Unified Plan updates and revisions.
- Review of ARRT Charter (Working groups, frequency of meetings).
- Policy review on how ARRT works with federally recognized tribes.
- The Biennial Work Plan and its usefulness.
- What is process for communication between ARRT-STC and On-Scene Coordinators? What is the flow chart for communication?
- Follow-up on the State of Science of Dispersant Use in the Arctic.
- Case histories on Akutan and other derelict vessel issues.
- Federal Emergency Management Agency Coordination and Disaster Response and the ARRT.
- Considerations and lessons learned regarding drones and air space in response.

Future use of Web-Conference Technology: Mr. Marc Randolph summarized the results of the use of Adobe Connect to facilitate web-conferencing of ARRT. This test was fairly successful, and he recommends an expanded beta test for the January meeting in Anchorage.

Public Comments

One member of the public offered comments. Mr. Steve Russell stated that he appreciated the GoToMeeting format and the audio version of the teleconference, noting that this was an improvement from previous meetings. He had two questions: 1) Annex F of the Unified Plan requires pre-authorized SMART teams or use of USCG Strike Teams for pre-authorization for the use of dispersants. Will the ARRT be making an effort to identify these teams, or will it be left to the federal OSCs? 2) Has a determination been made that the area planning boundaries meet the state master plans? What has the State Emergency Response Commission's involvement/engagement been so far? Responses: 1) Mr. Terada recommended that the ARRT address the SMART teams issue at a future meeting. 2) Ms. Ryan replied that the new plan framework does meet requirements for a master plan and they are working on involving and notifying the SERC.

Concluding Comments and Remarks

Representatives of the ARRT member agencies and the OSCs offered closing comments and remarks, and the meeting adjourned at 1630.

Upcoming Meetings

- ARRT Leadership Summit, videoconference, Fall 2017 (Date TBD)
- Alaska Statewide Planning Committee, January 30, 2018, Anchorage, Alaska BP Energy Center
- ARRT Meeting, January 31 2018, Anchorage Alaska, BP Energy Center
- ARRT Leadership Summit meeting, February 1, 2018, Anchorage, Alaska (Location TBD)

Follow-up Subjects and Assignment of Tasks

- Co-chairs requested the request that STC review their charter to assess if and how they can be more inclusive of non-member interested parties or subject-matter experts. As part of this review, the STC should consider whether it is appropriate for the new Area Committees to have their own STCs to enhance inclusivity.
- EPA will request U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service to provide Section 7 training for EPA OSCs and response staff.
- Co-chairs requested that the STC evaluate the PPOR criteria and compare these to the new methodology used for the Prince William Sound Study—and report findings at the next ARRT meeting.
- Coordinators will post STC reports on the ARRT website.

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
Coastal Response Research Center, University of New Hampshire
Cook Inlet Regional Citizens' Advisory Council (RCAC)
Conoco Phillips
Endeavor (formerly Tesoro)

Hilcorp Alaska
Integrity Environmental
Native Village of Eyak
Oil Spill Recovery Institute
Prince William Sound RCAC
Shoreside Petroleum, Cordova
State of Alaska, Department of Fish and Game
U.S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement
U.S. Department of Transportation, Pipelines and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration
U.S. Forest Service, Chugach National Forest