



ARRT Annual Report 2015

ANNUAL REPORT ALASKA REGIONAL RESPONSE TEAM (ARRT) CY 2015

Period of Report: 01 Jan 2015 to 31 Dec 2015.

I. **Introduction:** The Alaska Regional Response Team (ARRT) marked several important milestones in 2015:

- a. Completion of ESA Section 7 formal consultation with the Services on the Alaska Unified Plan at a programmatic level
- b. Completion of Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) analysis under Magnusson-Stevens Fisheries Conservation & Management Act (MSA) for the Alaska Unified Plan
- c. Completion of the Dispersant Use Plan for Alaska (including a new Preauthorization Plan), expected to be signed into effect in January 2016.

II. **Challenges:** Some of ARRT's current challenges include:

ESA Implementation: Formal consultation with the Services on the Alaska Unified Plan resulted in numerous Conservation Recommendations and Reasonable and Prudent Measures (with implementing Terms and Conditions). EPA and USCG agreed during formal consultation to provide implementation updates in the ARRT Annual Report. New content has been added for that purpose.

ARRT Dispersant Use Plan for Alaska Implementation: A required provision of the new *Dispersant Use Plan for Alaska* is a 24-month window for OSCs to develop dispersant use areas to be avoided within the Preauthorization Area. This will take considerable effort at the subarea level, supported by the ARRT.

Arctic Emphasis: Continue USCG and EPA efforts (in coordination with the State of Alaska) to keep up with quickly evolving concerns and workload associated with Arctic warming, international Arctic policy development, and human activities in the Arctic.

Tribal Engagement: Continue efforts to reach out and enhance tribal involvement in Area Planning and ARRT meetings, complicated by vast geographic distances and large number (229) of federally-recognized tribes and 12 regional tribal corporations.

Area Planning: Staffing and resourcing the management of 10 subarea committees continues to be a challenge facing the ARRT. Options are being considered.

III. **Lessons Learned:** N/A



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III. Best Practices:

- a. The ARRT uses a Biennial Work Plan (BWP), updated annually, to track and prioritize tasks. See www.alaskarrt.org for a copy of the current BWP.

I. MAJOR ACTIVITIES

A. Major/Noteworthy Response Activities:

F/V Savannah Ray Grounding Kodiak, AK: On 17 February 2015, the vessel ran aground with 25,000 pounds of cod while enroute to Kodiak AK to off-load. Before the vessel could be refloated, the hull was severely damaged during stormy weather and declared a total loss. While the ARRT was not activated, several member agencies were involved as the vessel grounded in designated stellar sea lion and sea otter critical habitat. And while the pollution threat was mitigated in March, the vessel was not removed from the grounding location until October, and debris cleanup was not completed until early November 2015. Additional information can be found at:



http://dec.alaska.gov/spar/PPR/response/sum_fy15/150216201/150216201_index.htm

Jarvis Power Plant Diesel Tank 1: On 15 August, 2015, approximately 30,000 gallons of diesel fuel was discharged into the secondary containment of the Jarvis power plant owned and operated by the City of Sitka, AK. Due to a faulty discharge valve, approximately 2,500 gallons was discharged into the city's rainwater runoff drainage system impacting Indian River and Sitka Sound. While the ARRT was not activated, the incident was adjacent to Totem Park, a national historic park operated by the National Park Service; the only classified Oil Sill Removal Organization (OSRO) (SEAPRO) declined to respond as the city was not one of their members; and the original discharge occurred within EPA jurisdiction (primary/secondary containment within an EPA regulated facility). The USCG (DRAT) responded with personnel and equipment along with ADEC personnel. No EPA personnel were involved. Additional information can be found at:



http://dec.alaska.gov/spar/PPR/response/sum_fy16/150815101/150815101_index.htm



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Other Response Activities: Overall, 17 additional response summaries were completed and posted on the State of Alaska website for other significant spills. A complete list of all response activities is online at ADECs website:

http://dec.alaska.gov/spar/perp/response/sr_active.htm (under Active Response and FY15/16).

B. Alaska RRT Meetings/Incident Specific Activation:

Meeting: Tri-Annual ARRT Public Session – January 2015 in Juneau, AK: USCG-coordinated. Nine Alaska RRT member agencies attended. 50 participants signed in. The meeting was held in conjunction with the Southeast Alaska Area committee meeting. Meeting summaries along with presentations can be viewed on line at the ARRT website: <http://alaskarrt.org/files/Full%20Final%20Notes.pdf> (Summary notes).

Meeting: Tri-Annual ARRT Public Session – May 2015 in Anchorage, AK: EPA coordinated. Seven Alaska RRT member agencies attended. 45 participants signed in. The meeting was held in conjunction with the Cook Inlet Area committee meeting. Meeting summaries can be viewed on line at the ARRT website: <http://alaskarrt.org/files/Meeting%20Summary%20FIN.pdf> (Summary notes).

Meeting: Tri-Annual ARRT Public Session – September, 2015 in Soldotna AK: ADEC coordinated. Eight Alaska RRT member agencies attended. 47 persons signed in. The meeting was held in conjunction with the Cook Inlet Area committee meeting. Meeting summaries can be viewed on line at the ARRT website: [http://alaskarrt.org/Files/2015%20Sept%20ARRT%20Meeting%20\(12072015NK\).pdf](http://alaskarrt.org/Files/2015%20Sept%20ARRT%20Meeting%20(12072015NK).pdf) (Summary notes).

Annual Leadership Summit September, 2015 in Anchorage, AK: Members reviewed projects and action completed during the year, proposed actions for the coming year and amended the ARRT Biennial work plan to reflect proposed actions. The work plan is located at: <http://alaskarrt.org/Documents.aspx?f=9>.

Activation: The Alaska RRT was not activated for any responses in CY 2015. However, the Alaska RRT did participate in two major exercises where activation was tested. The first exercise was part of Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE) preparedness exercise for planned exploratory drilling operations involving Shell in the Chukchi Sea. The second activation was the annual TAPS tanker exercise held in Prince William Sound.



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C. Working Group Updates:

Science and Technology Committee (STC): The STC held two meetings (Oct and Dec) this year. The purpose of these meetings was to begin to establish our working priorities for the next two years. In addition Lori Verbrugge was named the DOI representative and Catherine Berg was named the STC coordinator. The STC charter is available at: <http://alaskarrt.org/Documents.aspx?f=9>.

Wildlife Protection Committee (WPC): The WPC did not meet this year. The WPC charter is available at: <http://alaskarrt.org/files/ARRT%20Wildlife%20Protection%20Committee%20Charter%20approved%202-23-12.pdf>.

Cultural Resources Committee (CRC): The CRC did not meet this year. The CRC charter is available at: <http://alaskarrt.org/files/ARRT%20Cultural%20Resources%20Committee%20Charter%20-%20approved%2010-17-12.pdf>.

Endangered Species Act (ESA) Section 7 Compliance Task Force: The ESA Workgroup completed consultation with the Services under Section 7 of the ESA. The Unified Plan is now in compliance with ESA. The Biological Assessment (BA) and related documents can be viewed at: <http://alaskarrt.org/Documents.aspx?f=9>.

Dispersant Task Force: The *ARRT Dispersant Use Plan for Alaska* (including Preauthorization Plan) has been completed. Required notifications will be finalized, signed and posted in the Federal Register in 2016.

Unified Plan Update Committee (UPUC): During 2015, the Unified Plan Update Committee (UPUC) held monthly teleconferences. It refined Annex D of the Unified Plan, and shepherded it through several rounds of comments. The New Annex D will be adopted by the ARRT at the January 2016 meeting. The UPUC is currently working with the OSC workgroup to refine the Regional Stakeholder Committee Guidance.

II. GENERAL PREPAREDNESS AND CONTINGENCY PLANNING

A. Training: USCG District Response Advisory Team (DRAT) conducted 15 First Responder Operations Level HAZWOPER training classes for over 345 USCG personnel and qualified 6 new USCG HAZWOPER Instructors.

DRAT coordinated 8 ICS classes -3 in Juneau, 4 in Valdez and 1 in Kodiak, AK. ICS classes coordinated were; ICS-300 (3), ICS-339 (2), ICS-400 (2), and ICS-320 (1).





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B. Exercises/Workshops:

Annual TAPS TANKER Exercise in Prince William Sound: British Petroleum (BP) hosted the annual exercise in Oct 2015. The start time for this exercise was at hour +48. To facilitate the later startex, the Unified Command (UC) held two focus meetings in July and August which involved the ARRT in preparation for the main portion of the exercise in Oct. The ARRT conducted several incident specific activations to discuss the possible use of dispersants and as part of the planning leading up to the exercise. An estimated 350 people participated. The after-action report (AAR) will be available at <http://alaskarrt.org/Documents.aspx?f=10> (once released by USCG est. Jan 2016).

National Preparedness for Response Exercise Program (PREP) Exercises:

- One Government-led PREP full scale exercise occurred in the Southeast Alaska FOSC zone. The ARRT did not participate in this exercise. The after-action report (ARR) is available at <http://alaskarrt.org/Documents.aspx?f=10>
- PREP Government Initiated Unannounced Drills (GIUs). USCG COTPs initiated: ten (10) of ten (10) required annual unannounced drills. 0 of 4 at Sector Anchorage, 4 of 4 at Sector Juneau and 0 of 2 at MSU Valdez. BSEE initiated one unannounced drill during Shell's drilling operations. EPA did not initiate any unannounced drills in the Alaska Region.
- PREP Equipment Deployment Exercises: Equipment deployments occurred throughout Alaska. Types are listed below:
 - Aerial Dispersant Delivery System (ADDS) training exercises. The USCG Air Station Kodiak air crews participated in an ADDS deployment this year in Kodiak. Participants included USCG and Alyeska SERVS.
 - Spilled Oil Recovery System (SORS) training exercises. Two (2) of four (4) SORS training exercises occurred in Sitka and Cordova, AK. Homer and Kodiak, AK did not have any SORS exercises this year.
 - Vessel of Opportunity Skimming System (VOSS) training exercise: No VOSS training exercise were conducted in Ketchikan, AK this year due to limited availability of the CGC ANTHONY PETIT.
 - Pre-Staged Oil Spill Response Equipment deployments. One (1) USCG led equipment deployment exercise occurred in Sitka, AK, one of the eighteen (18) pre-staged sites throughout Alaska.





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- USCGD17 DRAT Remote equipment sites visited. The USCGD17 DRAT owns 51 containers containing near shore boom and oil spill response equipment in 18 cities for use by community first responders. 47 containers in 15 cities were visited by USCG members. At each site routine maintenance and inventory of all contents was conducted. Training with community responders was conducted in Sitka AK this year.
- USCGD17 DRAT, PAC Strike Team and Sector Anchorage conducted a joint oil spill equipment deployment in Kotzebue, AK with local tribal responders and U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) Fish & Wildlife Service personnel from the adjacent National Wildlife Refuge.

C. Federal, State, and Local Planning and Coordination Efforts:

Alaska Subarea Contingency Plans (SCPs): ADEC, Coast Guard and EPA coordinated. Stated goal: complete two (2) of ten (10) Subarea Contingency Plan (SCP) updates every year.

Both the Aleutians and the Interior SCP were completed in 2015. All SCPs can be seen at: <http://dec.alaska.gov/spar/perp/plan.htm>

III. ESA ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT

Background: The Biological Opinions (BiOps) issued (February and May 2015) by the Services subsequent to formal consultation on the *Alaska Federal/State Preparedness Plan for Response to Oil & Hazardous Substance Discharges* (Unified Plan) under section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) contain Conservation Recommendations (USFWS, pp. 121-123; NMFS, p. 151) and Reasonable and Prudent Measures (NMFS, pp. 147-150). Conservation Recommendations are discretionary agency activities to minimize or avoid adverse effects of a proposed action on listed species or critical habitat, to help implement recovery plans, or to develop information. Reasonable and Prudent Measures (RPM): are nondiscretionary actions mandated by the Services to minimize the amount or extent of incidental takes. The action agencies understand their obligation to honor the terms of the formal consultation and, in accordance with section 7(a)(1), to use their authorities and execute their missions in a manner which furthers the purposes of ESA and conserves and benefits listed species and critical habitat.

Proposed Activities: The collective Conservation Recommendations and RPMs (and implementing Terms and Conditions) are broad-based, relying on awareness and prioritization by numerous organizational components of the action agencies and, to some degree the ARRT as a whole. As such they will be:



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- a. Reviewed with and by members of the Alaska Regional Response Team and the Federal On-Scene Coordinators during the January 2016 ARRT meeting (the first mandatory full membership meeting of the ARRT since delivery of the BiOps);
- b. Shared with relevant planning and response personnel from the FOSCs' respective staffs in a variety of fora including policy training and the ramp-up effort to establish dispersant use areas to be avoided;
- c. Organized and assigned for follow-up action by the relevant offices/individuals; and
- d. Included as new policy guidance, where applicable, in the Unified Plan.

Updates on these activities will be provided as an element of the ARRT's Annual Report on an ongoing basis.

IV. PERSONNEL CHANGES/ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES

New Rep	Organization	Date	Departed Rep
Rona Rathod	State Department's Office of Ocean and Polar Affairs	July	Robert Mearkle
Rhonda S. Kaetzel	USPHS --ATSDR	September	Sven E. Rodenbeck
Jonathan Burby	State Department's Office of Ocean and Polar Affairs		Marc Zlomek
Michael Fleming	DOT --FAA	February	N/A
Lori Verbrugge	DOI rep for the STC	Oct	N/A

V. ISSUES OR OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS REQUIRING NRT ATTENTION

Issue: N/A