



**ANNUAL REPORT  
ALASKA REGIONAL RESPONSE TEAM (ARRT)  
CY 2011**

**Executive Summary**

**Period of Report: 01 Jan 2011 to 31 Dec 2011.**

- I. **Challenges:** ARRT workload increased significantly in 2011. Some of this was due to the numerous reviews of NRT policy changes (e.g., Subsea Dispersant Guidelines) resulting from decisions/actions subsequent to the Macondo/DEEPWATER HORIZON SONS. The following additional workload resulted from decisions/actions associated with Shell's OCS exploratory drilling in the Arctic:
  - July 2011 - President issues Executive Order 13580 forming an Interagency Workgroup to Coordinate among Agencies with roles in the Domestic Energy Development and Permitting Sector, let by the Deputy Secretary of DOI.
  - September 2011 - EPA approves air permits for OCS drilling in the Chukchi, which increased momentum for OCS drilling preparedness and planning
  - November 2011 - the Deputy-level IAWG started issuing questions to the ARRT Co-Chairs for answers regarding the status and quality of preparedness and Planning in the Arctic.
- II. **Lessons Learned** – Chartering an interagency (i.e., federal action agencies and Services) team approach to completing ESA Section 7 consultation requirements *ex post facto* for established plans is an efficient means to tackle the requirement.
- III. **Best Practices** - An institutionalized process that was derived from a lesson learned and can be applied to other situations or incidents: As other RRTs face scrutiny from environmental advocacy groups re. ESA Section 7 on their plans, using the interagency approach described above should be considered a BMP.



**Period of Report: 01 Jan 2011 to 31 Dec 2011.**

## **I. MAJOR ACTIVITIES**

### **A. Major/Noteworthy Response Activities:**

Tug ARIES Sinking: On June 26, 2011, the tug ARIES sank in approximately 300 feet of water 95 miles east of St. Paul Island with approximately 29,000 gallons of diesel fuel onboard. All personnel onboard were able to evacuate to the deck barge which remained attached to the sunken tug. The NOAA SSC was asked to provide a spill trajectory and evaporation model for the fuel onboard. Tug personnel reported a large release of red dyed diesel fuel upon the sinking which quickly dissipated. The deck barge was recovered without incident.

Japan Earthquake: On March 11, 2011, a magnitude 9.0 earthquake struck off Japan's coastline in the Tohoku region. The earthquake triggered powerful tsunami waves that reached heights of up to 40.5 metres (133 ft). The resulting tsunami damaged 3 of 7 reactors at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant complex. A large amount of radioactive material was released. The ARRT was activated to advise members on any potential threats of radiation impact and current monitoring activities occurring in Alaska to monitor for potential radiation.

Alyeska Pipeline Service Company (APSC) Pump Station 1, Release to Secondary Containment: On January 8, 2011, APSC employees discovered crude oil inside the basement of the booster pump building at Pump Station 1. Approximately 12,997 gallons of crude oil leaked from a 26 inch, concrete-encased discharge pipe. The leak led to a winter shutdown of the Trans Alaska Pipeline System (TAPS). North Slope oil producers had to significantly reduce oil production and initiate freeze protection procedures for wells, pipelines and other infrastructure during the shutdown. The EPA FOSC established a Unified Command with the ADEC and RP. A unified command post was also established. The Alaska RRT was activated for informational briefings to ease the intense demands for information from ARRT members by top level leadership. Additional information can be found at:

[http://dec.alaska.gov/spar/perp/response/sum\\_fy11/110108301/110108301\\_index.htm](http://dec.alaska.gov/spar/perp/response/sum_fy11/110108301/110108301_index.htm)

Other Response Activities: Overall 25 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\\_fy11.htm](http://dec.alaska.gov/spar/perp/response/sr_fy11.htm) (under Active Response and FY11/12).



## **B. Alaska RRT Meetings/Incident Specific Activation:**

Meeting: Administration Session – February 23, 2011 in Anchorage: USCG-coordinated; 45 participants signed in. 12 of 14 ARRT member agencies attended. The morning activities included presentations by both Cook Inlet and Prince William Sound Regional Citizens Advisory Councils (RCAC), the formation of an Endangered Species Consultation (ESA) Workgroup to conduct a formal ESA consultation for the Unified Plan, a review and finalization of the draft Biennial Work Plan (BWP), and discussions on the EPA/NRT request for dispersant usage letter.

Meeting: Semi-Annual Public Session – February 24, 2011 in Anchorage: USCG-coordinated. 49 participants signed in, estimated 65 people in attendance based on available seats. 13 of 14 Alaska RRT member agencies attended. Special presentation given on the following topics: USCG approach to DWH lessons learned; USCG Alternative Planning Criteria for Western Alaska; Marine Firefighting & Salvage Regulation for Alaska; Results of UAF Research on toxicity and Biodegradation Rates of Dispersed Oil in Arctic Water; Advancing Aerial Surveillance Capability for Oil Spill response in Alaska. In addition, the Alaska RRT BWP was approved by the Alaska RRT.

Activation: The Alaska RRT was activated two times in CY 2011. See major activities above for specifics.

Meeting: Administration Session – August 30, 2011 in Valdez: USCG coordinated. 28 persons signed in. 11 of 14 Alaska RRT member agencies attended. This working session reviewed BWP and discussed any issues with work plan; received brief on status of ESA consultation work group and discussed a potential statewide area planning committee. ARRT members attended a tour of the TAPS Valdez Marine Terminal and the Valdez Emergency Operations Center (VEOC).

Meeting: Semi-annual Public Session – August 31, 2011 in Valdez: USCG coordinated. 59 persons signed in. 12 of 14 Alaska RRT member agencies attended. Special presentations given on the following topics: EPA Emergency Response Teams, Valdez Fire Department Hazmat Responses and the University of Alaska, Fairbanks (UAF) proposal for a International Arctic Research Center for the Study of Oil in Ice.

## **C. Committee and Working Group Updates:**

Science and Technology Committee (STC): The Science and Technology Committee (STC) Tri-Chairs met 03 Feb 2011 in Anchorage. The STC put the Dispersants Work Group on hold pending finalization and clarification of the NRT Subsea Dispersant Application and Monitoring guidelines.



Endangered Species Act (ESA) Unified Plan Consultation Workgroup (ESA Workgroup): The co-chairs of the ARRT formed an ESA Workgroup to bring the Alaska Unified Plan into compliance with ESA Section 7 requirements. The workgroup met numerous times in 2011 to develop a workgroup charter and strategy for completing the consultation process. The USCG selected and funded a contractor to prepare the Biological Assessment (BA). The BA is scheduled to take approximately 12-18 months to complete. The ESA Workgroup plans to complete the entire project within the next 24 months.

Statewide (HazMat) Response Workgroup: ADEC-coordinated. The work group continued to meet on a quarterly basis during the calendar year. Additional information is online at the DEC/SPAR website: <http://www.dec.state.ak.us/spar/perp/hazmat.htm>.

## II. GENERAL PREPAREDNESS AND CONTINGENCY PLANNING

**A. Training:** USCG District Response Advisory Team (DRAT) conducted First Responder Operations Level HAZWOPER training for over 400 personnel. Personnel were made up of USCG, USFWS, NPS, and local Harbor Master employees.

### **B. Exercises/Workshops:**

North Slope Mutual Aid Drill (August 2011): This year's drill was hosted by ConocoPhillips Alaska Inc. and consisted of a 16 inch production line failure in the Colville River Delta. The drill's primary focus was to shift the Incident Command Post from Alpine to Kuparuk as per the Contingency Response Plan.

National Preparedness for Response Exercise Program (PREP) Exercises.

- No Industry led PREP full scale Exercises occurred in Alaska. Sector Anchorage requested and received a waiver from USCG headquarters.
- PREP Government Initiated Unannounced Drills (GIUs). USCG COTPs initiated: three (3) of ten (10) required annual unannounced drills.
- PREP Equipment Deployments Exercise: Equipment deployments occurred throughout CGD17. Type listed below:
  - Alaska Aerial Dispersant Delivery System (ADDS) Deployments in Kodiak, AK.
  - Spilled Oil Recovery System (SORS) training exercises. Four (4) SORS training exercises occurred in Dutch Harbor, Sitka, Cordova, and Kodiak AK.



- Vessel of Opportunity Skimming System (VOSS) training exercise: One (1) VOSS training exercise occurred in Ketchikan, AK.
- Pre-Staged Oil Spill Response Equipment. One (1) deployment exercise occurred in Juneau, AK of the seventeen (17) pre-staged cites throughout Alaska. 200 ft of harbor boom was deployed by Station Juneau small boat.

### **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 Plan updates every year. Working Group (WG) completed and published Change-2 to the Kodiak SCP. Planning meetings held for the following SCPs Southeast Alaska, Bristol Bay, Northwest Arctic, North Slope and Western Alaska. The Northwest Arctic and North Slope subareas have the highest priority due to proposed offshore oil and gas development in these areas. The goal is to see these two SCPs approved in early 2012. In addition, updates to the SEAK SCP have started.

#### Potential Places of Refuge (PPOR) Guidelines.

- Southeast Alaska subarea: ADEC and Coast Guard coordinated. Project completed. Detailed information on the PPOR guidelines and process can be accessed at: <http://www.dec.state.ak.us/spar/perp/index.htm> (under special projects).
- Northwest Arctic subarea: ADEC coordinated. ADEC contractor completed development of PPOR. Funding for this project was through the federal Coastal Impact Assistance Program administered by the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement (BOEMRE). PPORs can be accessed at: <http://dec.alaska.gov/spar/perp/outreach/index.htm> under section H.

Geographic Response Strategies (GRS): ADEC coordinated. ADEC contractor completed development of GRS for Northwest Arctic subarea. Funding for this project is through the federal Coastal Impact Assistance Program. PPORs can be accessed at: <http://dec.alaska.gov/spar/perp/outreach/index.htm> under section G.

Emergency Towing Systems (ETS): ADEC coordinated with the Coast Guard on a demonstration exercise of the Southeast ETS package during May of 2011.

Northwest Arctic Alaska Consensus Ecological Risk Assessment (CERA): USCG District 17 and FOSC for Western Alaska coordinated a USCG HQ funded CERA to determine perceived environmental impacts of various oil spill response methods in the Bering Straits and Kotzebue Sound.



**D. Major Best Practices from Responses, Trainings, Exercises/ Workshops and Other RRT Activities. N/A**

**III. PERSONNEL CHANGES/ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES**

<b>New Rep</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Departed Rep</b>
Mr. Nicholas Knowles	EPA Alaska Office	June 2011	Ms. Michelle Sherwood
Ms. Marcia Combes	EPA ARRT Liaison		N/A
Mr. Calvin Terada	EPA Alt co-chair	July 2011	Mr. Wally Moon

The Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE) has agreed to participate in ARRT activities as a non-voting DOI member.

**IV. ISSUES OR OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS REQUIRING NRT ATTENTION**

**Issue:** ARRT letter to NRT dated September 10, 2009 requesting the NRT re-evaluate the 1995 guidance containing recommended limits for short term exposure to particulate matter (PM) and potential impacts to safe distances in guidance for In Situ Burning as an alternative countermeasure. Still pending.