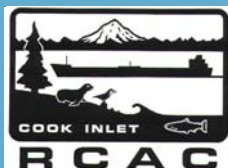


**INSIDE:***CIRCAC  
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## CIRCAC to Co-Host Workshop

### *Physical Oceanography Gathering Set for February*

CIRCAC, the Kachemak Bay Research Reserve, and the Alaska Ocean Observing System (AOOS) will co-host a Cook Inlet Physical Oceanography Workshop February 21-22 in Homer at the new Alaska Islands and Oceans Visitors Center.

The purpose of the workshop is to learn about current research and monitoring in Cook Inlet waters and to help brainstorm ideas for valuable products and services to aid mariners, scientists,

industry, resource managers, educators, and other users of marine resources.

The workshop should allow researchers to better coordinate and integrate physical oceanography monitoring, research, and modeling efforts in the Cook Inlet region; gather ideas for products, tools, and services that can be developed from this research and monitoring; and begin developing the Cook Inlet portion of an AOOS.

*continued on page 4*

## Maritime President Touts Vessel Vetting

Captain Tim Plummer, President of Tesoro Maritime Co., presented his company's vetting process used to evaluate vessels before Tesoro contracts with them for shipping services.

In his position, Capt. Plummer is involved with all downstream maritime operations associated with the refineries in Alaska, Hawaii, Washington, and San Francisco, CA and his primary responsibilities include tanker and barge operations, vetting, oil spill contingency planning, and emergency response.

All of these operational areas carry risk of financial exposure. Additionally, shareholders and community relations depend in part on Tesoro's reputation, according to Capt. Plummer.

He described Tesoro approval process for tankers before they are chartered for any purpose. The

ship must meet all applicable rules, regulations, and acceptable industry practices such as safety, pollution prevention and operational procedures. During the vetting process, both owners and operators must be determined to be reputable and criteria for the ship's safe arrival, moorage, and departure at the facility are met. The three components of the vetting process are: technical

approval, load and discharge port approval, and management approval.

Tesoro provides a questionnaire seeking extensive information about the vessel to the owner. Capt. Plummer and his colleagues review any prior experience with the ship and a SIRE or ship inspection report is obtained. SIRE uses a standard format and certified inspectors. The report is entered into a database accessible on the web. The inspections may be triggered by an

owner or operator change, by a problem with

*continued on page 4*

*"In 2004, the company successfully managed 777 tanker transfers with one teaspoon spilled."*

# GEM Program Needs CIRCAC, Others

Dr. Phil Mundy, until recently the Science Director for the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council (EVOSTC), showcased the Gulf Ecosystem Monitoring (GEM) Program in a presentation to CIRCAC recently. The GEM program was

designed to place changes in oil spill-injured resources in the context of ecosystem changes caused by other human effects and natural forcing. This will be accomplished in part through long-term monitoring of four main habitats in the Gulf of Alaska;

watersheds, nearshore, the Alaska Coastal Current, and offshore. The EVOSTC believes there are many opportunities for collaborating with CIRCAC, according to Dr. Mundy who also recognized CIRCAC's Shorezone Mapping project.

can also use the data to substantiate warming trends. Two other ships of opportunity are collecting temperature and salinity data, which identifies freshwater influences and, with the collection of fluorescence data, can verify satellite-collected data.

Currently, GEM-funded projects are identified through through fiscal year 2007. Among them is a biodiversity census that will be used to assess the status of the intertidal resources damaged during the spill and to make comparisons to programs throughout the North Pacific. There are sites in lower Cook Inlet, Kodiak and Prince William Sound. Overall, there are eight projects underway in the CIRCAC-area that use Trustee Council funding, one of which is the CIRCAC-led project to complete ShoreZone aerial and on-the-ground surveys in Kodiak this summer.



*Dr. Phil Mundy speaks on behalf of the Gulf Ecosystem Monitoring (GEM) program at the recent CIRCAC Board Meeting.*

Dr. Mundy explained that the lion's share of costs for projects are often for vessels, so efforts are made to piggy-back and use vessels of opportunity such as the Tustamena. For one project, researchers mounted instruments on the Alaska ferry to measure temperature, salinity, nitrate and chlorophyll. Also, a cargo vessel out of Anchorage pulls a box through Cook Inlet to provide a continuous plankton report - concentrations of plankton can signal concentrations of feeding fish - and scientists

Dr. Mundy declared that no organization could undertake long term monitoring on this scale alone so GEM operates under three premises: partnering, broad use of information, and public participation. Staying aware of what other organizations are doing illuminates opportunities to work together and make use of all of the resources available. In collaborating with others, the Trustee Council recognizes the need to focus data collections on long-term variables such as temperature and salinity that a variety of user groups may use.

Last, the public process defines needs that keep the program on track. GEM needs the Cook Inlet RCAC and other partners to succeed, he said. ■

## Calendar of Events

- 1/17 **Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday (Office Closed)**
- 1/21 **Alaska Oil Spill Permits, Forms, & Applications Meeting (Time TBA)**
- 1/24-26 **EVOS Trustee Council Marine Science Symposium and Meetings (Anchorage)**
- 2/4 **PROPS Meeting (CIRCAC offices in Kenai, 10 a.m)**
- 2/7-9 **Alaska Forum on the Environment (Anchorage Hilton)**
- 2/21-22 **Physical Oceanography Workshop (Alaska Islands and Oceans Vis. Center in Homer)**

# Collaborations Benefit Research

During a recent presentation to CIRCAC's Board of Directors, CIRCAC's Director of Science and Research Susan Saupe described efforts to work with other organizations to coordinate studies and leverage funds. These collaborators include the Environmental Monitoring Assessment Program, Alaska Oceans Observing System, the Gulf Ecosystem Monitoring program, the National Park Service's Southwest Alaska Network, the Kachemak Bay Research Reserve (KBRR), and the Prince William Sound RCAC.

In doing so, EMC is fulfilling the following OPA 90 mandates: 1) to monitor the environmental impacts of operations in Cook Inlet; 2) to study wind and water currents and other environmental factors in the vicinity of terminals facilities which will affect the ability to respond to, contain and clean up an oil spill (including factors such as shoreline habitat, oil fates and effects and sediment load); and 3) to identify highly sensitive areas which might require specific protection in an oil spill.

EMC will also be working with the University of Alaska to develop the CODAR system, with KBRR and NOAA to deploy Acoustic Doppler Current Profilers, and is using Kenai Peninsula Borough and University of Alaska's Coastal Marine Institute funding for hydrographic surveys conducted by Drs. Steve Okkonen and Scott Pegau. Also, CIRCAC is supporting satellite drifter work by Mark Johnson of UAF. All of these pieces of observational data will help improve modeling efforts.

As described above, CIRCAC, AOOS and KBRR are co-sponsoring the Physical Oceanography Workshop where they will present a user needs analysis. CIRCAC's Physical Oceanography, Nearshore Habitat, and Source and Background Contaminants programs overlap with goals of the GEM program. Numerous funding sources have contributed to the vast Shorezone Mapping project completed to date and the database can be used

in a variety of ways. This past summer, CIRCAC participated on a Prince William Sound RCAC-funded ShoreZone survey in western Prince William Sound. The Environmental Monitoring and Assessment Program (EMAP), which uses the sediment quality triad approach, dovetails well with Watershed Source Metals and Background Hydrocarbon Studies that have been sponsored by CIRCAC.

The National Park Service Southwest Area Network is established to do monitoring and inventory work, and CIRCAC is working with them both through the ShoreZone and the Arctic Relict projects. A Ballast Water and Non-Indigenous Species project is being developed in cooperation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife.

Ms. Saupe concluded that it has been these collaborations that have created opportunities for CIRCAC's science program to grow and improve our abilities to fulfill our OPA 90 mandates. ■

## Marine Firefighting and Salvage Update

Building upon the success of the Cook Inlet Marine Firefighting and Salvage project, CIRCAC turned to Kodiak for phase two of this project. CIRCAC completed the Cook Inlet plan in late summer 2004 and delivered it to USCG Capt. Ron Morris. The plan will be sent for consideration for the Sub-Area plan once it receives official approval. Dave Ely with Cape Decision International will continue as the lead contractor for the project. ■



*Asst. Executive Director Karen Williams (right) presents Liz Chilton an award for EMC Committee Volunteer of the Year for her work on environmental monitoring issues.*

## Physical Oceanography Workshop - *continued*

AOOS is the Alaska component of a growing national network of integrated ocean observing systems that will improve our ability to rapidly detect changes in marine ecosystems and living resources, and predict future changes and their consequences for the public good.

Researchers, data collectors/monitors, modelers, and all users of Cook Inlet should find interest in the workshop. Organizers have noted that the information is especially appropriate

for oil, gas and mining industry representatives, marine navigators, fishermen, community planners, and those involved with recreation, tourism, and search and rescue operations. Sessions planned include observational and research data collection; numerical modeling; identifying products and tools for users; setting priorities for data collections and others.

Those interested in the workshop or its topics can assist organizers by completing the survey on-line at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=56235779751>. For information about the workshop call Susan Saupe at CIRCAC's offices or, to register, contact Misty Ott at [mistyott@nprb.org](mailto:mistyott@nprb.org) or 907-644-6700 by February 1, 2005. ■



*Executive Director Michael Munger (left) presents Council President Doug Jones an award for PROPS Committee Volunteer of the Year for his work on oil spill prevention and response issues.*

## Vessel Vetting Program - *continued*

the vessel, or because it has not been inspected recently.

Tesoro also reviews the tanker's history with the U.S. Coast Guard and searches an international database for more detail. The database of port state inspections lists deficiencies or detentions. It focuses on safety related information with the goal of reducing sub-standard shipping. The U.S. Coast Guard and other international groups maintain the data. A further reference is the Port State Information Exchange which contains key documents and a summary of all Coast Guard contacts with over 400,000 vessels.

Using these tools, Tesoro can identify problem ships before contracting with them. If after these reviews Tesoro needs more information, they request it and they may choose to inspect the vessel. Following these reviews Tesoro may reject a vessel or may request more information. The company keeps a list of vessels that are

unacceptable for their consideration. Although there is commercial pressure to "do deals," Capt. Plummer maintains he is not pressured to use a vessel he is not comfortable with.

Once a vessel is accepted into the system, it is still screened when it arrives at the facility to verify its condition based on the vetting process. The screening is documented for future reference. Even communication issues are considered. The time-chartered ships are inspected and audited annually. Tesoro also closely tracks the vetting/inspection status results of other west coast companies.



*Capt. Tim Plummer*

All of Tesoro's chartered vessels are double-hulled, the vetting group team all have Master's licenses and extensive experience, and according to Capt. Plummer, that results in fewer incidents. In 2004, the company successfully managed 777 tanker transfers (134 in Alaska) with one teaspoon spilled. In 2003, they had one minor sheen and in 2002 there were no spills at all. ■



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