

"Promoting environmentally safe marine transportation and facility operations in Cook Inlet."

CIRCAC Pursues Water Data

Hydrographic Surveys and Buoy Tracking Assist Researchers

CIRCAC identified water current data collections in Cook Inlet as a high priority for our long term goals and to address those goals, our organization has been working with university researchers and

stations along each transect. These samples provide information on the influences of freshwater from the Alaska Coastal Current and the upper Cook Inlet rivers.

The salinity of seawater in different areas or depths can set up density-driven currents that can be important for determining "net" currents, or the longer-term transport of surface or sub-surface water masses vs. the shorter-term tidally influenced currents. This information is vital to understanding potential transport of oil spills or other pollutants. These currents also influence the transport of nutrients, food, and larvae for marine food webs.

Dr. Pegau coordinated the hydrographic surveys with the ADF&G annual survey along the Anchor Point transect (Transect 3 in adjacent figure) to obtain daily CTD profiles at stations along this transect during the entire month of July. Such partnering maximizes limited funding for projects such as these.

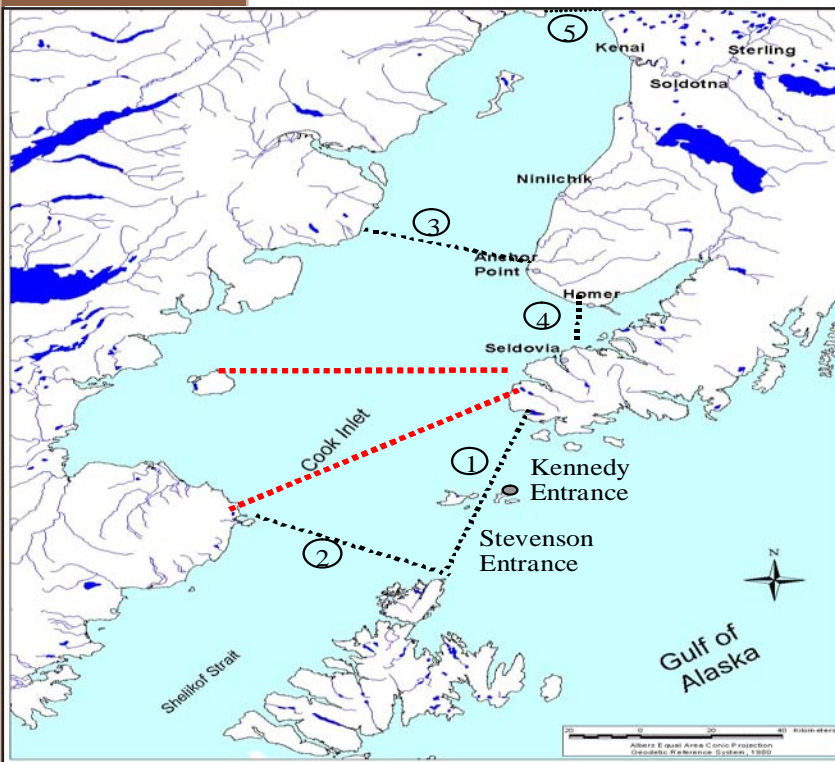
CIRCAC staff also submitted a proposal to the Coastal Marine Institute in October to expand this study to include the red lines shown in the adjacent figure to estimate better the influx of the Alaska Coastal current.

Additional sampling took place at a series of stations occupied by NOAA-deployed Acoustic Doppler Current Profilers in lower Cook Inlet to compare the water column characteristics with the direct measurements of currents.

Drifter Buoy Tracking

CIRCAC continued to work with Dr. Mark Johnson on an MMS-funded project titled "Water and Ice dynamics in Cook Inlet," and purchased an additional 15 drogued buoys and four un-drogued buoys. A drogue uses an underwater sail or parachute-shaped device to create resistance to seawater movement at depth. Drogues suspended at depths from buoys help determine the set and drift of currents at these depths by tracking the movements they give the surface buoy. The buoys beam a signal to satellites so researchers can track them over time.

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A Map of recent sampling transects where researchers collected data on the influences of fresh water from the Alaska Coastal Current.

other agencies to employ various tools and data collection methods and to ensure coordination among researchers. Activities in summer and fall 2005 included hydrographic surveys, satellite drifter buoy tracking, CODAR deployments, and other initiatives to improve understanding of Cook Inlet hydrography and habitat.

Hydrographic Surveys

During the summer of 2005, CIRCAC conducted monthly hydrographic surveys along five transects at the "boundaries" of Cook Inlet (see black lines in figure above). CIRCAC worked with Drs. Scott Pegau of the Kachemak Bay Research Reserve and Steve Okkonen of the University of Alaska Fairbanks to collect temperature, salinity, dissolved oxygen, and transmissivity data through the water column at



Projects Advance Science *(continued)*

CODAR Deployments by NOAA

CIRCAC staff has been working with researchers from NOAA's National Ocean Service to review their recent deployment of a surface ocean current radar in central Cook Inlet. NOAA provided a summary of their deployment results and will make the processed data available to oceanographic modelers such as Mark Johnson of UAF when approved for release by their agency.

All of these programs together, if carefully integrated and communicated between and among researchers, modelers, and user-groups, can help us provide the best tools for predicting water movement in Cook Inlet and, thus, oil spill and underwater plume trajectories.

Coastal Mapping

During low tide series in May and June, a unique group of scientists, all well known for their work in respective areas of expertise, sampled the outer coasts, passes, and bays of Kodiak and the surrounding islands for a total of 20 days. The scientists worked in teams to conduct three projects concurrently during the trip: coastal mapping using helicopters, vessel-based species sampling, and coastal geomorphology data validation.

Collectively, these coastal mapping efforts address CIRCAC's congressional mandates to identify potential sensitive areas and to foster long-term partnerships among industry, government, and local communities. By working with state and federal agencies, universities, and the stakeholder interest groups in Cook Inlet, CIRCAC accomplishes more scientific objectives than by working alone.

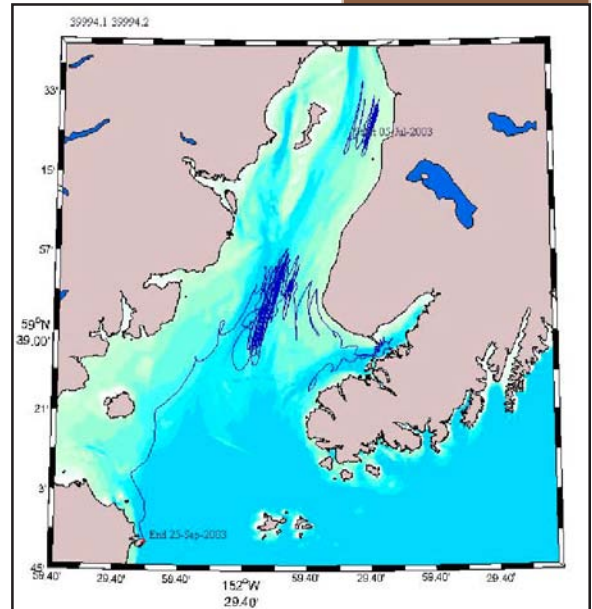
Dr. John Harper of Coastal and Ocean Resources, Inc. (CORI) led the aerial surveys with Neil Boreky, also of CORI, and Mary Morris of Archipelago Marine Research. CIRCAC completed aerial surveys of Kodiak, Afognak, Shuyak, Sitkinak, Tugidik,

Sitkilidak, Marmot, Spruce, Raspberry, and many other smaller islands. Researchers conducted most surveys by helicopter but used a fixed wing for Tugidik and Marmot islands to meet permit requirements due to their sensitivities as marine mammal pupping and haulout areas. CIRCAC worked with Dr. Kate Wynn of the University of Alaska's Marine Advisory Program to perform the work under her existing permit.

During the same tide series, Ms. Saupe led a vessel-based shore-station survey throughout the islands. The team sampled at 112 sites for species assemblage data and at over 160 sites for biophysical verification surveys. Her team including NMFS and OSRI participants as well as expert algae and invertebrate taxonomists to conduct the shore-station and verification work.

Researchers documented two examples of major range extension for the kelp *Macrocystis integrifolia* on Afognak and Kodiak Islands. This kelp has not been previously documented in the area as attached kelp, although reports of potential drift specimens have been collected historically.

The new beds were documented first from the helicopter and for the largest bed on Afognak Island, CIRCAC mapped the extent of the bed using a skiff and GPS and completed photo documentation and collections for taxonomic verification.



A satellite-tracked drifting buoy trackline shows a combination of tidal current movement as well as net movement of the buoys in Cook Inlet. The buoys were released in Fall 2003.

CIRCAC Membership Forms Due

Five seats on CIRCAC's 13-member Board of Directors will expire February 24, 2006 and either the incumbent or a newly elected volunteer will fill those seats for the new term. The seats represent: Commercial Fishing Organizations, Aquaculture Associations, and the cities of Homer, Kodiak, and Kenai individually.

The three municipal seats are appointed by their respective mayor or city council and serve for three years. The two seats representing interest groups are elected by the member groups in that category. Groups whose focus is either in either commercial fishing or aquaculture should contact CIRCAC no

later than November 30 to apply for membership for this election cycle. CIRCAC will solicit nominations from member groups for the two interest group seats and ballots will be mailed January 6, 2006.

If your commercial fishing or aquaculture organization maintains an interest in issues regarding environmentally safe marine transportation and oil facilities operations in Cook Inlet and Kodiak, please contact CIRCAC at 907.283.7222 and speak to a staff member about an application for membership. Membership is free. CIRCAC's Board of Directors serve as volunteers and receive no compensation. For more information please contact our offices.

Board Member Profile: James Showalter

The *Council Briefs* highlights James Showalter in the fourth of a series of Board Member Profiles.

Before Kenai had many roads, before the landing strip moved from the beach to the site of the old NAPA building, James Showalter and his family made a living in the area mostly off the land and sea. His family's fishing site just north of the first trap (an earlier method of beach site fishing) provided his introduction to a way of life he maintains in some respects today.

"We always got by and had a little extra," Mr. Showalter said of commercial fishing and growing up in the Kenai area over the past 50 years.

It's through this lens of a lifetime in the area that Mr. Showalter views his role as the Alaska Native Organizations along Cook Inlet as their representative on the CIRCAC Board of Directors.

Growing up in what is now Old Town, Mr. Showalter often visited the Kenai Commercial store which occupied the building across from Boy Scout Park that now houses a law office. The business belonged to the family of another current board member, Doug Jones, who originally encouraged Mr. Showalter to consider volunteering for CIRCAC.

The Sterling Highway didn't punch through the mountains to Kenai until the 1940s and prior to that, Mr. Showalter and his family would often catch a ride aboard a fish tender headed to Anchorage. Modern medical care sometimes came to the area by way of ship as well. According to Mr. Showalter, the U.S.S. Hope, a Navy hospital ship that made voyages to the South Pacific during WWII, would stop near Salamatof Processors and word of mouth would quickly spread.

He also recalled the local landmark watering hole, Kenai Joe's, at a time when the bar was in the back and the front room was reserved for roller skating and meetings.

"We had these little keys that you had to use to

clamp the skates to your shoes. That key was very important."

In the late 1950s, Mr. Showalter enlisted in the Navy, and after boot camp in San Diego, California, he spent much of his remaining time aboard the U.S.S. Hancock, an aircraft carrier with over 5000 personnel based out of Alameda on San Francisco Bay. He commented that he'd been very happy to return to home and told others at the time that if anyone wanted to find him, he'd be in Kenai, Alaska.

He found work in Swanson River oil field during a period of dramatic change.

"There were people all over, bars going wild, lots of home construction," he said.

Mr. Showalter built his home on Longmere Lake since the location was closer to work and at the time had only a dozen or so other residents. He rode the wave of construction and oil field work as a millwright at the Valdez TransAlaska Pipeline Terminal, on various North Slope jobs, and on the new addition at Unocal, among other projects.

In addition to his work on the CIRCAC Board of Directors and its Environmental Monitoring Committee, Mr. Showalter has been active in Alaska Native politics and tribal work. He has participated over the years with the Alaska Native Intertribal Council, Beluga Commission, National Congress of American Indians, and the Federal Subsistence Advisory Board. Mr. Showalter is also a member of the Peninsula Food Bank Board of Directors.

DR&R Report on Web

CIRCAC has published a white paper concerning the Dismantlement, Removal and Restoration (DR&R) of platforms and facilities located within Cook Inlet. The report is available at: www.circac.org in two files. One file, the smaller of the two, contains the report itself. The second file contains images of the supporting documents such as agreements between the state and the operators and leaseholders.



CIRCAC Board Member James Showalter represents the Alaska Native Organizations.

Calendar of Events

November 24-25	Holiday, CIRCAC Offices Closed
November 27-30	NEIA Oil Spill Conference, St. Johns, NL, Canada
December 1	CISPRI Annual Meeting, Nikiski
December 7	CIRCAC PROPS Committee Meeting, Kenai
December 7-8	ASTM F-25 Committee Meeting, Dallas, TX
December 23/26	Holiday, CIRCAC Offices Closed



Jack-up May Be Headed for Inlet

With predicted shortages of natural gas in the Cook Inlet market and declining oil production, federal, state, and local officials have begun to pin their hopes on new sources to maintain production and refining capacities in the region. Their focus remains on several prospects under consideration as well as the possibility of a spur line from the proposed North Slope natural gas line. The start of several of those prospects has depended in part on the availability of a jack-up platform in the region.

A new venture has reportedly formed to bring a jack-up to the area in search of a giant field.

Escopeta Oil, a Houston-based independent, is partnering with Centurion, a South African gold mining company, to explore the Kitchen area east of the Middle Ground Shoal near where XTO Energy is currently doing development work on the reserves they purchased from Shell.

According to recent reports, federal officials suggest that only a small percentage of the recoverable oil in Cook Inlet has been identified and

significant reserves remain in the basin. Those familiar with the industry in Alaska witnessed a shift in exploration from the Inlet to the North Slope after the major discoveries there. As a result, the industry in the Inlet changed their focus to development of known reserves and away from exploration.

The new venture hopes to use newer technology to find the large gas and oil deposits that the Department of Energy believes still exist in Cook Inlet. Escopeta and Centurion are predicting that Kitchen and the nearby area may hold 8.2 trillion cubic feet of gas and over 1.4 billion barrels of oil. Additionally, the company is hoping to offset some of the cost of moving a jack-up to Cook Inlet by drilling wells for other companies in the area that require a jack-up but would likely not justify the cost of bringing one here.

Estimates range between \$10-20 million to bring a jack-up to the area and officials have commented in news reports that they expect to locate one for delivery next summer.

Panel Reviews Citizen Participation Models

Citizens and their role in the transportation of oil was the topic of an afternoon panel discussion at the 8th World Wilderness Congress held in Anchorage. The annual conference is held in cities around the world and draws international participation from those involved in issues affecting wildlife and habitat. Prince William Sound RCAC sponsored the panel discussion that featured eight speakers working on various aspects of safe oil transportation.

Director of Public Outreach Steve Howell represented CIRCAC alongside Mike Cooper of the recently formed Washington State Oil Spill Advisory Council; John Devens of PWSRCAC; Lois Epstein of Cook Inlet Keeper; Ann Rothe of Halcyon Research; Professor Rick Steiner of the University of Alaska Marine Advisory Program; Naki Stevens of People for Puget Sound; and Jonathan Wills who has extensive experience with the Shetland Oil Terminal Environmental Advisory Group and the Sullom Voe Association in the Shetland Islands, UK, groups whose structure influenced the RCAC model.

Mr. Wills also gave an overview of the system of oversight in the Shetlands and distinguished it from its Alaska progeny in several areas. He noted that while the system in the Shetlands has been largely successful, its structure as a corporation with one eye trained on the terminal's profitability can diminish its effectiveness at preventative measures. The cost of such measures are sometimes viewed in industries as an unnecessary drag on profits; however, Mr. Wills commented that those measures

prevent even costlier incidents that both impact profits and the environment.

Panelists discussed the various models that currently exist for citizen involvement and the effectiveness of an organization, the panel noted, hinged on the participation of informed citizens; that those involved aware of the problems and able to help craft solutions.

CISPRI Changing Vessels

CISPRI announced recently that they will replace the response and towing vessel, *Seabulk Montana*, with the *Seabulk Nevada*. The latter completed its drydock in Louisiana in preparation for the trip to Alaska.

The two vessels will meet in Seward where crane, communications, and other equipment can be transferred to the *Seabulk Nevada*. The existing crew in Alaska will also transfer to the new vessel. Doing so will ensure the personnel is familiar with the Inlet and its dangers.

CISPRI has stated that it will contract with a temporary vessel for the period that both *Seabulk* vessels will be out of Cook Inlet. CIRCAC personnel will tour the replacement vessel after it arrives in mid-December.

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