

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

CIRCAC Workshop a Success

Physical Oceanography Gathering Showcases Projects

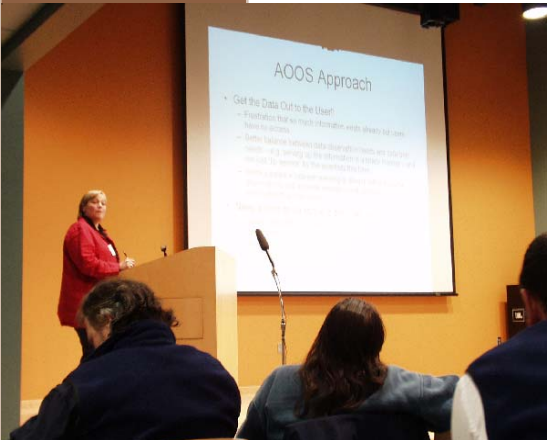
Nearly 100 participants joined CIRCAC, the Kachemak Bay Research Reserve, and the Alaska Ocean Observing System (AOOS) for the recent Cook Inlet Physical Oceanography Workshop in Homer at the new Alaska Islands and Oceans Visitors Center.

The workshop proved a good setting for researchers to better coordinate and integrate physical oceanography monitoring, research, and modeling efforts in the Cook Inlet region and begin developing the Cook Inlet portion of an AOOS.

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.

Guest speakers came from as far away as the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in southern California to share information on new technology and systems for data collection, observation, and modeling. Dr. James Schumacher of Two Crow Environmental is compiling the final proceedings for the event.

Speakers and sessions focused on current research and monitoring in Cook Inlet waters and generating ideas for valuable products and services to aid mariners, scientists, industry, resource managers, educators, and other users of marine resources.



Director of Science and Research Susan Saupe speaks on the Alaska Ocean Observing System at the recent physical oceanography workshop in Homer.

XTO Energy Presents Pipeline Info

Shane Alexander, an XTO manager for processing, treatment plants, and pipeline installations for Louisiana and West Texas recently spoke to CIRCAC's committee on prevention, operations, safety, and response regarding some of their company's Cook Inlet infrastructure.

will not be put back in service. The second line to Dillon is also being abandoned and both lines will be left in place.

Lines sometimes come under stress from vortex shedding when long spans of unsupported pipeline vibrate due to tidal current. Those running parallel to the current flow do not experience wash-out, but those running to the beach, perpendicular to the current, do. Last year XTO used side-scan sonar to identify spans greater than 50 feet and divers placed sandbags in those areas to provide support.

Cook Inlet is a unique operating environment with its currents, tides, and cold temperatures. The water also has a high oxygen content, making it more corrosive. Pipes are insulated, have external coating, and are also often covered with sandbags or buried to protect them from the harsh elements.

Locally, XTO operates two platforms and three pipelines in Cook Inlet - one pipeline between platforms "C" and "A" and two pipelines between Platform "A" and the beach. The process has begun to clean and abandon the pipeline between Platform "C" and Platform "Dillon." Mr. Alexander said that XTO will be involved in the oversight of the pipeline.

He also noted that the pipeline could be "pigged," a process of clearing the line of residual oil, but the top side at Platform "C" cannot be smart-pigged which would involve machinery to inspect the pipe from the inside.

He said that he expects corrosion inhibitors will be put in the filtered sea water that will likely be used to flush the line. Once the line is abandoned it



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CIRCAC Project Developments

GRS Gears Up in Kodiak

The Kodiak Geographic Response Strategies (GRS) Workgroup held its first meeting March 15th in Kodiak at the Fisheries Science Center. The workgroup identified sites in the Kodiak region for physical site surveys and identified five zones (north, south, east, west, and mainland) for GRS development. With 166 sites already included in the site selection matrix, the workgroup determined that by breaking the region into the various zones they can manage the task and focus on high priority locations within each zone. A map of the zones can be seen at <http://www.state.ak.us/dec/spar/perp/grs/ki/home.htm>.

The workgroup is asking for public input by May 2, 2005 on sites in the North and West zones. Specifically, they would like to know if additional sites should be considered and which sites are most important/sensitive and should be given the highest priority for protection. Public involvement is essential to ensure that the sites selected and the strategies developed reflect the environmental protection priorities of local communities, stakeholders, and resource users. The workgroup welcomes public input to ensure that everyone with a stake in Kodiak is made aware of GRS and their importance during an oil spill response. Those with local knowledge or who would like more information about GRS please contact CIRCAC.

Coastal Surveys and Mapping

Another CIRCAC project taking place in the Kodiak Island region this year is a ShoreZone coastal mapping project for Kodiak and surrounding islands. CIRCAC received funds through a proposal to the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council to conduct aerial and vessel surveys in May and June. These surveys and

the subsequent mapping of the biophysical information obtained during the surveys will complete a project initiated in 2002. Dr. John Harper of Coastal and Ocean Resources, Inc. (CORI) will lead the aerial surveys from a helicopter flown by Kodiak pilot Tom Walters and will provide the final ShoreZone database.

During the same low tide series, CIRCAC's Susan Saupe will lead vessel surveys to collect information about the shoreline morphology and biological habitat. Participants will include specialists in Alaskan invertebrates and algae, Drs. Alan Fukuyama and Sandra Lindstrom.

In-kind participation by Mandy Lindeberg of NOAA's Habitat Division and Carl Schoch of the Oil Spill Recovery Institute (OSRI) show the strong support by other organizations for these data. Mary Morris of Archipelago Marine Research, Ltd. will participate on the helicopter and vessel and currently leads a project for CIRCAC to develop a coastal biological database for all of our ShoreZone vessel work to date. After a competitive bidding process, the team selected a Kodiak charter vessel, the *Island C.* for their work around the entire Kodiak Island archipelago.

Permit and GRIN Projects Grow

The Alaska Oil Spill Permits, Forms, and Applications Project moved a step closer to completion as the workgroup ran through each of the forms, tested links, and discussed options for increasing the initial information page.

Tesoro representative John Kwietniak gave a progress update of the progress at the Alaska Regional Response Team (ARRT) meeting in Anchorage recently. CIRCAC expects the draft

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Calendar of Events

April 15	PROPS Meeting, 10 a.m. in Kenai
April 27-28	VOSS Drill in Kachemak Bay area, Homer
May 4	Kodiak GRS Meeting in Kodiak
May 6	CIRCAC Quarterly Meeting, 9 a.m. in Homer
May 12-13	PWSRCAC Quarterly Meeting in Valdez
June 13	Kodiak Marine Firefighting Meeting in Kodiak
June 15	U.S. Coast Guard Change of Command for Captain Morris

CIRCAC Welcomes New Board Member

Jim Hornaday of Homer recently appointed Carla Stanley, also of Homer, to fill his seat on the Council. Though board members don't typically appoint their replacements, Mr. Hornaday left the Council after he was elected Mayor of Homer – the city official responsible for selecting the CIRCAC representative.



*New Board Member
Carla Stanley who
replaces Jim
Hornaday as the
representative for the
City of Homer.*

Mr. Hornaday has served on the Council for 9 years and will continue as Ms. Stanley's alternate. His replacement brings to the Council a long career in the marine sciences. Arriving in Alaska by way of Pennsylvania and Colorado in the late 1960s,

Ms. Stanley began teaching marine science, art, and other subjects at Kenai Junior High. She later taught at both Soldotna and Skyview high schools before retiring to Homer in 1997.

Ms. Stanley has remained active in the marine science community over the years writing curriculum, serving as the Alaska Director for the Northwest Association of Marine Science

Educators, and both working and volunteering for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Her efforts there are in some ways an extension of her work

"The marine environment is very precious to me."

that dates back to the Exxon Valdez. After the spill, Ms. Stanley led an Alaska Department of Fish and Game team that tracked commercially caught King Salmon during summers.

"The marine environment is very precious to me," commented Ms. Stanley. "Keeping it clean and safe is important."

Ms. Stanley noticed similarities in the goals and missions of CIRCAC and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Her selection to the Council seemed a natural fit, she said. In addition to her marine science experience, Ms. Stanley is also an EMT2 with the Homer Volunteer Fire Department and mother of two. Her sons work on the North Slope and in Arizona. Her husband, Wayne, is a jailer for the City of Homer following a career that included security work on the Slope.

Board Changes Meeting Schedule

The CIRCAC Board of Directors decided at its annual meeting in March to change from quarterly meetings to three times per year. They established the target months as May, October, and February for the first year of the new schedule.

Traditionally, the Council held a December meeting in Anchorage. The Council considered the cost and timing of the winter meeting in its decision.

"We were exploring different ways to maximize our staff's time and the Council's limited funding," commented Executive Director Michael Munger. "A lot of staff time goes into preparing for a full Council meeting. This schedule should produce better results in the long run."

The Council also elected officers for the coming year. They are as follows: Doug Jones, president; June Reuling, vice president; and John Douglas, secretary/treasurer. Grace Merkes volunteered again to act as parliamentarian. All had served the previous year in the same capacities.

Permit and GRIN

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product may be tested during a late spring 2005 drill. Discussions are underway to use the product in the Prince William Sound area-wide drill to be held during the third quarter of this year.

At the same ARRT meeting, Director of Public Outreach Steve Howell introduced a new CIRCAC project, the Geographic Response Information Network, or GRIN. Using hypertext markup language (HTML) or a similar format, GRIN will display information useful to initial responders at a spill.

Locations of meeting places, supply contacts, local officials, and basic medical contact information is a sample of the logistical and safety details included in the GRIN. CIRCAC and its contractors, Nuka Research, expect the final product to be both web-available and portable on disc for use in the field.



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