

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

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Command Change for MSO-Anchorage

Captain Ronald J. Morris retired from the U.S. Coast Guard and his position as Commanding Officer of the Marine Safety Office in Anchorage recently following a presentation of colors, inspection of troops, reading of the watch, and several other traditions. The Change of Command ceremony also welcomed Captain Mark DeVries in the position.

Executive Director Michael Munger and CIRCAC President Doug Jones attended the event at the Alaska Native Heritage Center and presented Captain Morris with an appreciation gift and a copy of the Council resolution thanking him for his service.

Captain Morris enlisted in the Coast Guard in 1972. His first tour of duty was on the icebreaker *Northwind* followed by a tour at the Air Station Port Angeles, WA before being commissioned in 1975. He served in Portsmouth,

VA; Buffalo, N.Y.; and New Orleans, LA where he attended college at night during his tour, receiving his B.S. in Business Administration and

Management. Later he worked in Yorktown, VA; Juneau; Cleveland, OH; Valdez; and New Orleans, LA where he served as the Western Rivers Coordinator over all or part of 26 states.

Captain DeVries reports to the MSO-Anchorage having completed a two-year tour in the Middle East as the Officer-in-Charge, Maritime Liaison Office Bahrain and Marine Safety Special Assistant to Commander Naval Forces Central Command.

Captain DeVries returns to Anchorage where he previously served as the Executive Officer from 1997-2000. CIRCAC is looking forward to working with Captain

DeVries and his staff to promote safe marine transportation and facility operations in Cook Inlet.



Rear Admiral James C. Olson (right) stands for the Change of Command ceremony for Captains Ronald J. Morris (center) and Mark R. DeVries.

Marine Firefighting Plan Available Online *Kodiak Island Additions Up Next*

The Marine Firefighting and Salvage Plan project assumes that a major marine fire, particularly a vessel fire, may require resources beyond those locally available and that effective response will require resource deployment coordination among a broad range of organizations.

Initially a PROPS Committee project, the manual is now publicly available on the web at http://www.capeintl.com/downloads/Cook_Inlet_MFF_Plan_rev2005.doc.

CIRCAC completed the Cook Inlet plan in late summer 2004 and delivered it to U.S. Coast Guard Captain Ron Morris. The plan will be sent for consideration for the Subarea Plan once it receives official approval.

Like contingency planning, the firefighting manual identifies the means and methods necessary to access federal, state, and local resources. Like GRS, the process is workgroup driven and CIRCAC has

submitted the product to the Cook Inlet Committee for Oil and Hazardous Materials Contingency Plan. CIRCAC expects the plan to be included in the Cook Inlet Subarea Plan.

The firefighting manual provides for a coordinated response by the U.S. Coast Guard and other federal, state, local, and civilian responders to fires onboard vessels or at waterfront facilities. CIRCAC and the workgroup integrated into the manual relevant policies, responsibilities, and procedures for coordination of on-scene responders including community profiles and capabilities, response resources, command and control, initial response and other areas of concern.

The second phase of the project, scheduled for completion in 2005, will address the same concerns for the Kodiak Island Subarea. Cape Decision International will continue as the lead contractor for the project.



910 Highland Ave
Kenai, AK 99611
Tel: 907.283.7222
or 800.652.7222

Shorezone Extends to Kodiak/Afognak

CIRCAC's Director of Science and Research Susan Saupe recently assembled a unique group of scientists, all well known for their work in respective areas of expertise, to collect habitat data in many of the areas bays, coves, and flats around Kodiak.

During low tide series in May and June, the scientists sampled the outer coasts, passes, and bays of Afognak, Shuyak, Kodiak, and Sitkinak Islands for a total of 20 days. The scientists worked in teams to conduct three projects concurrently during the trip: coastal mapping, vessel-based species sampling, and coastal geomorphology data validation.

Shorezone Mapping addresses CIRCAC's Congressional mandates to identify potential sensitive areas and to foster long-term partnerships among industry, government, and local communities to oversee compliance. 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. Through these collaborations, CIRCAC also can better incorporate the concerns of the Council members and the cities, villages, and interest groups they represent.

In recent years, CIRCAC expanded its Shorezone Mapping project that maps coastal habitats and the nearshore along Cook Inlet, the Outer Kenai Coast, and Kodiak Island through collaborations with the National Park Service, Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Other collaborations through public workshops provide a framework for integrating data such as the Center for Alaska Coastal Studies Coastwalk program.

The first of the project components, coastal mapping, extended Shorezone Mapping to Kodiak using aerial surveys. Dr. John Harper of Coastal and Ocean Resources, Inc. (CORI) led the aerial surveys. Another team conducted vessel-based species sampling of algae and invertebrates for numerous habitats, exposures, and substrates within the Kodiak Island Archipelago's nearshore environment. A third component of the trip looked closely at the coastal geomorphology to validate what scientists have seen from the aerial mapping surveys. Dr. Carl Schoch conducted this portion of the survey relying on his extensive geomorphological experience in Alaska.

Dr. Sandra Lindstrom is creating a detailed list of algae species collected from the various habitats and Dr. Alan Fukuyama is creating a similar list for invertebrates.

Mandy Lindeberg of NOAA is participating in the fieldwork because she will be leading a similar

project including aerial and ground shore surveys in Southeast Alaska. NOAA and others are mapping Southeast Alaska up to Icy Bay near Yakutat later



this summer using Shorezone methods.

In exchange for travel to Kodiak and accommodations on the research vessel, a photographer specializing in intertidal photography spent 10 days on the vessel. Donna McCoy's images have been provided to CIRCAC and will be used for public education.

Permit Project Moves Forward

Oil spills are paperwork intensive events and sometimes the process can slow a response. CIRCAC initiated the Alaska Oil Spill Permits, Forms, and Applications Project to identify the forms and permits required to carry out an effective spill response.

Our objectives are aimed at revising state permits as needed, removing redundant permit requirements, and centralizing all permits in an easily searched computer-based organization system made accessible through the Internet and also distributed on CD-ROM. CIRCAC ultimately expects the product to be included in the Alaska Federal/State Preparedness Plan for Response to Oil and Hazardous Substance Discharges/Releases Unified Plan.

Director of Public Outreach Stephen Howell and John Kwietniak of Tesoro have presented the project at Alaska Regional Response Team meeting Anchorage and the Local Emergency Planning Committee meeting in Kodiak to make users aware of the advantages. Representatives will also present information on the project at the Pacific State/BC Task Force meeting July 27 in Anchorage.

Intertidal filter feeding worm found during Kodiak area Shorezone Mapping ground surveys. Photo by Donna McCoy.

Board Member Profile: Grace Merkes

The *Council Briefs* highlights Grace Merkes in the second of a series of Board Member Profiles,

Since 1998, Ms. Merkes has served on the CIRCAC Board of Directors representing the Kenai Peninsula Borough. An active parliamentarian, Ms. Merkes has served on several committees and has



*CIRCAC Board
Member Grace
Merkes represents the
Kenai Peninsula
Borough.*

chaired the Environmental Monitoring Committee for the past two years. Her work on the RCAC improves navigational safety and oil facility operations in Cook Inlet.

Ms. Merkes is a recent recipient of the First Lady's Volunteer Award for 2005 for her life of public service to her community and state. A mother of 8 children and a member of one of Sterling, Alaska's homesteading families, she is a tireless volunteer and advocate for the youth and families of her community. Her decades of hard work have manifest in many projects that improve the quality of life for the area's residents.

Ms. Merkes devotes her energies to a number of organizations. She continues to serve on the Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly where she has for the past 14 years. Her work has helped the borough prioritize through challenging budgets as well as during significant community growth. She has been an advocate for small communities within the borough, identifying projects important to those communities and incorporating them in legislative requests for funding. Prior to her tenure on the Assembly, she was a member of the KPB Planning Commission.

Over the last 10 years, Ms. Merkes has been one of the catalysts within the Sterling Community Club, spearheading drives to build a hockey rink, ball field, and playground for children. She is currently developing funding sources to build a community center that would house a local museum, library, community meeting rooms, and would provide a new home for the local Head Start, an organization she helped found. Ms. Merkes corralled

service agencies in 2000 to demonstrate the need for Head Start services. She organized meetings and cooperated with RuralCap to garner the necessary grant funding. Sterling Head Start now serves 40 local children and has 10 employees, a testament to her insight and commitment to community development.

In recent years, Governor Frank Murkowski appointed Ms. Merkes to the State of Alaska's Human Rights Commission where she serves as Vice President. As a VISTA volunteer, Ms. Merkes taught basic computing skills, created a self-help library, and helped architect the Sterling Community Action Plan to guide development in her area. Her work with Love, Inc., a group of churches that coordinates services to people in need, quietly touched the lives of many families and individuals in the Central Peninsula region. Ms. Merkes still finds the time to help people one-on-one as she volunteers for the local gymnastics club, the senior center, and Sterling Head Start where she is known as "Gramma Grace."

Munger Appointed to IOGCC's Environmental/Safety Committee

CIRCAC Executive Director Michael Munger was recently appointed by Alaska Governor Frank Murkowski to a committee within the Interstate Oil and Gas Compact Commission. The IOGCC, which held its midyear meeting in Anchorage, is an organization of states which promotes conservation and efficient recovery of domestic oil and natural gas resources while protecting health, safety and the environment. Gov. Murkowski currently chairs the commission.

The committee on which Mr. Munger will serve, the Environmental and Safety Committee, is a national forum for such oil and gas issues and gathers information on legislative, regulatory, and technological developments

More information on the IOGCC, can be found at <http://www.iogcc.state.ok.us>.

Calendar of Events

July 16	Alaska Oceans Festival, Anchorage
July 27	Pacific States/BC Task Force Meeting, Anchorage
July 27	Kenai Peninsula Borough LEPC Meeting, Soldotna
August 27	Industry Appreciation Day, Kenai
September 5	Labor Day Holiday, CIRCAC office closed
September 14	Kenai Peninsula Borough LEPC Meeting, Soldotna
September 15-16	Prince William Sound RCAC Directors Meeting, Seward



CIRCAC Attends AMOP & IOSC

CIRCAC Director of Operations Terrance Bryant and Assistant Executive Director Karen Williams attended the annual Arctic and Marine Oil Spill Program (AMOP) held by Environment Canada. The technical conference often highlights new developments in oil spill response in cold climates.

During this year's conference, Mr. Bryant presented the Alaska Oil Spill Permits, Forms and Applications project. The CIRCAC-initiated and co-authored white paper is designed to streamline the permitting process in Unified Command with the goal of decreasing response times.

CIRCAC Director of Public Outreach Stephen Howell, Board Member Rob Lindsey, and PROPS Committee Member Barry Eldridge attended the 2005 International Oil Spill Conference (IOSC). Representatives from other area organizations also attended including Nuka Research, Tesoro Alaska, Alaska Chadux, CISPRI, and Prince William Sound RCAC.



Director of Public Outreach Stephen Howell visits with an attendee at the International Oil Spill Conference recently.

Three CIRCAC staff members served on IOSC paper review committees to evaluate submitted papers relating to oil spill prevention and clean-up technologies.

Council Publishes Report on Dismantlement, Removal, and Restoration of Platforms

Declining production and lack of information in Cook Inlet led CIRCAC to develop a white paper concerning the Dismantlement, Removal and Restoration (DR&R) of platforms and facilities located within Cook Inlet. At its May meeting, the Board of Directors approved the final draft for publication.

The final report includes a map of all facilities and associated pipeline infrastructure, a dossier on each offshore facility in Cook Inlet describing its site topography and geography, age, production status, lease stipulations, ownership history, and DR&R status. CIRCAC also summarized relevant Alaska attorney general opinions regarding liability as part of the report.

The project manifest from concerns that no single source of information existed to assist CIRCAC and its constituent groups in understanding the complexities of DR&R. The white paper reviewed current state and federal regulations and suggested a course of action; reviewed current lease stipulations and regulations to establish jurisdictional authority for DR&R; and identified the permitting process for removal and summary of potential significant impacts of infrastructure dismantlement, removal and restoration.

Comment Period Opens on CIRCAC Recertification

The Coast Guard announced the opening of the comment period for the annual CIRCAC application for recertification. Public comments on our application must reach the Seventeenth Coast Guard District on or before August 12, 2005.

CIRCAC and the Coast Guard encourage interested parties to submit written data, views, or arguments. Owners and operators of oil terminal facilities and crude oil tankers calling at terminal facilities, and fishing, aquacultural, recreational and environmental citizens groups, are all requested to comment. Anyone submitting comments should include his/her name and address, identify the notice (CGD17-05-009), the specific section of the document to which each comment applies, and give the reason for each comment.

The Coast Guard asks that all comments and attachments be submitted in an unbound format no larger than 8.5 x 11 inches, suitable for copying and electronic filing. Those wanting acknowledgment of receipt of comments should enclose stamped, self-addressed postcards or envelopes.

In recent years, the Coast Guard changed its policy on recertification procedures requiring applications to provide comprehensive information every three years. For the two years in between, applicants submit information describing substantive changes to the information provided at the previous triennial recertification.

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