

“The mission of the Council is to represent the citizens of Cook Inlet in promoting environmentally safe marine transportation and oil facility operations in Cook Inlet”

Board Member Tour Chevron Facilities

Chevron hosted the Council in a tour of their facilities at Trading Bay and the Platform Bruce. The tour was aimed at educating the group on the oil separation procedures and safety protocols employed by Chevron during production.

After a brief struggle with dry suits and emergency floatation gear, the group boarded an ERA operated helicopter at the OSK heliport and departed for Trading Bay. Upon arrival, a comprehensive facility safety video was viewed followed by a safety briefing.



Loren Smagge, Senior Operator for Chevron, explains the first stage of the oil separation process at the Trading Bay facility

The tour began with a brief explanation of the process to separate oil and grease from produced water. Senior Operator Loren Smagge, showed the group a schematic diagram of the facility and went through each stage of separation. Following the presentation, the group visited of each water treatment facility including the central control center. The tour ended in the facilities laboratory where Mr. Smagge showed water samples from each phase of separation and demonstrated the procedures for the tests performed to insure effluent water meets compliance. After a quick lunch, everyone squeezed back into the dry suits and boarded the helicopter for a trip to the Platform Bruce.

Once at the Platform another safety briefing specific to the platform was given by Platform Foreman Allen Dorman. Mr. Dorman further explained the re-injection process of drill cuttings and fluids which are sent over from the Bruce's sister platform the Anna. The group was also given a comprehensive tour of the platform from control room to sewage treatment facility.

Council representatives were collectively impressed by the organization and cleanliness of the forty-year old facility. “They (Chevron) have a very good safety program and I was especially pleased to see the strict adherence to the safety procedures and polices by all of Chevron's employees,” commented Council member Gary Fandrei.

Cook Inlet RCAC sincerely appreciates Chevron's efforts organizing this tour and educating the public on oil facility operation.

Membership Call to Native Alaskan and Environmental Groups

Four seats on Cook Inlet RCAC's 13 – member Board of Directors will expire March 28, 2008. The seats represent: Alaska Natives, Environmental, Kodiak Island Borough, and Kenai Peninsula Borough. In addition the Commercial Fishing Organizations need to elect a representative for the newly vacated seat.

The two municipal seats are appointed by their respective mayor or city council and serve for three years. The two seats representing Alaska Native and Environmental interest groups will be elected to a three year term. The Commercial Fishing Organization representative will be elected to finish the final year of the current three year term (this term will expire in 2009)

If your native or environmental organization maintains an interest in issues regarding environmentally safe marine transportation and oil facilities operations in Cook Inlet and Kodiak, please contact Karen Delaney at 907-283-7222 for information about a membership application. Membership is free and all applications must be submitted before December 28, 2007. Cook Inlet RCAC will solicit nominations for a representative from member groups and ballots will be mailed January 29, 2008.

Dodson Joins Council Staff



Trenten Dodson, former senior biologist for the Cook Inlet Aquaculture Association, recently joined the RCAC staff as the new Director of Public Outreach following Stephen Howell's departure for a public relations position with Walsh Sheppard, a public relations and advertising agency in Anchorage.

Mr. Dodson formerly held the Commercial Fishing Interests seat on the Council and served on both the Environmental Monitoring and Protocol committees. Prior to moving to Alaska in 2001, Mr. Dodson was an environmental engineering technician and a teacher.

“Being associated with RCAC prior to joining the staff has really helped with the transition,” explained Mr. Dodson.; “I understand our priorities and I'm really excited to share all the great work the RCAC is doing for our region.”

Council Objects to EPA Discharge Permit

This year the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a new National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit for discharges into Cook Inlet from platforms and onshore facilities. Cook Inlet RCAC sharply criticized the EPA for inadequately addressing public comments regarding the new permit that proposes standards allowing an increase in potential pollutant load from area oil facilities.

Though the permit has gone into effect, several environmental, Alaska native, and commercial fishing organizations have brought suit against the EPA for issuance of the permit. The permit replaces one that went into effect in 1999.

“The way EPA has the discharge permit written right now, facilities could significantly increase the pollutant load to Cook Inlet and that is totally unacceptable,” said Cook Inlet RCAC Executive Director Michael Munger. “Many of our constituents depend on a clean Cook Inlet for their way of life and, as written, this permit would be a step backwards for the environment.”

Cook Inlet RCAC first reviewed the draft permit in spring of 2006 and submitted 25 pages of detailed comments recommending changes. That May, the Cook Inlet RCAC Board of Directors passed a resolution opposing the permit and supporting the goal of zero discharge.

Unfortunately, the final permit did not adequately address a number of significant public comments or ignored them altogether. Cook Inlet RCAC also identified important changes between the draft and final permit that were not subject to public review.

Drill fluids, cuttings, and produced water are major components of discharges from platforms and onshore facilities. Re-injection, long thought too onerous or ineffective, has proven feasible for some of the operators and could clearly reduce the amount of contaminants in the Inlet.

“EPA should have used its permitting and regulatory authority to reduce contaminant loads during this renewal process and we’re extremely disappointed with the permit as it reads now,” commented Mr. Munger.

