2003 Annual Report

COOK INLET REGIONAL CITIZENS ADVISORY COUNCIL

Intertidal sea anemone *Dennis Lees*

Kachemak Bay research skiff *Dennis Lees*

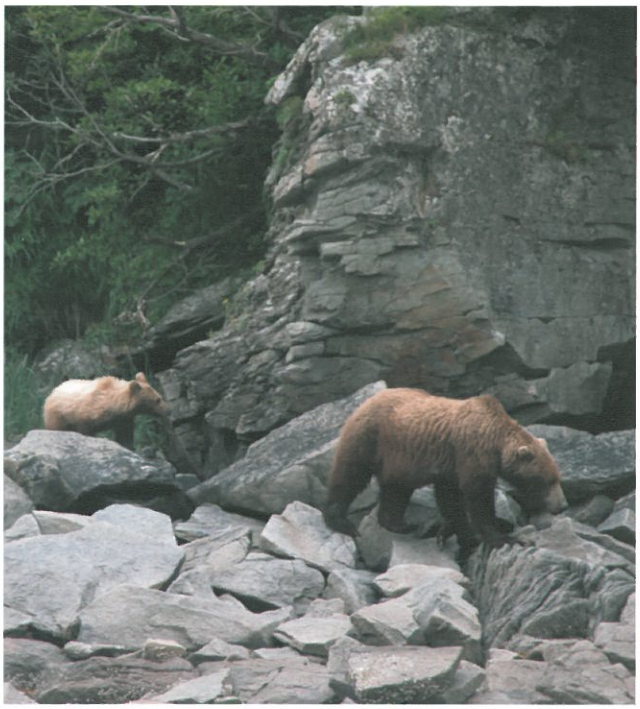
Close up of hermit crab *Dennis Lees*

Aerial survey of an estuary *Mary Morris*

Cook Inlet platform *Susan Saupe*

Intertidal sampling *Alan Fukuyama*

Kamishak Bay reef *Sandra Lindstrom*



Kukak Bay coastal bears *Susan Saupe*

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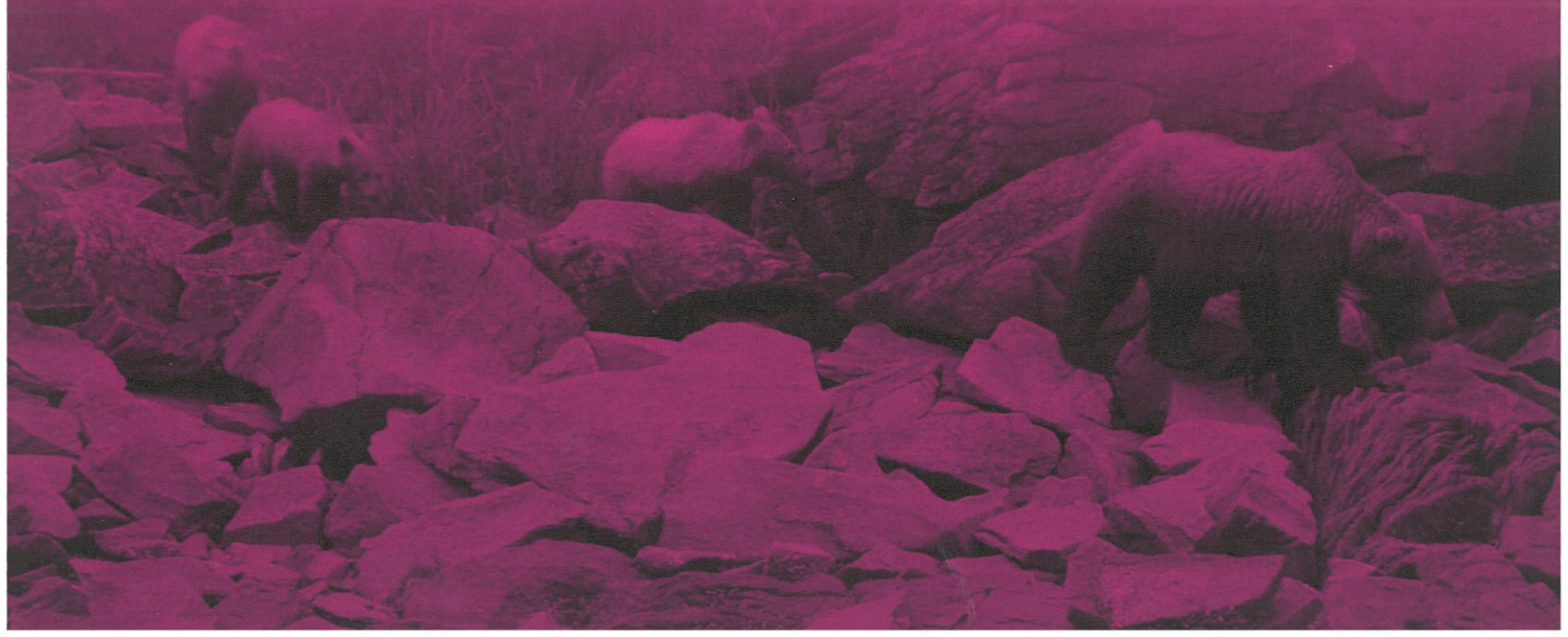
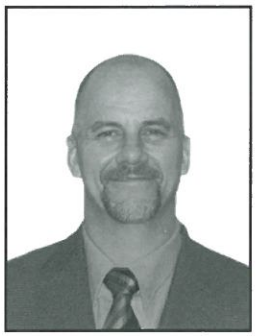
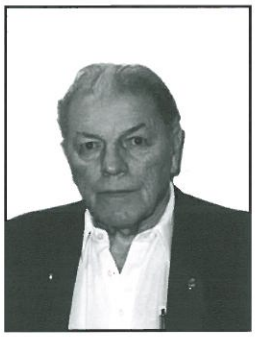


Message from the President & Executive Director



Mike Munger



Glen Glenzer

In a world of cutting-edge technology and multi-million dollar tankers, citizen participation continues to be one of the most effective oil spill prevention tools available. Whether they are helping design oil spill response plans, sponsoring water quality studies, or advocating for stronger prevention measures, Cook Inlet citizens are making a difference in the safe transportation and production of oil. For the last 13 years, the Cook Inlet Regional Citizens Advisory Council has represented the interests of citizens from Anchorage to Kodiak in an effort to keep the waters of Cook Inlet free from oil pollution.

Cooperation and dynamic change seemed to be the operative words in 2003. Following Jim Carter's retirement as Executive Director, then-Director of Operations Michael Munger took the reins. Subsequently, Terrance Bryant joined the staff in the operations position. Longtime secretary Kelly Rose also retired from her position at RCAC heading for warmer weather in the Lower 48.

Staff reinforced the cooperative atmosphere that has become the cornerstone of many of its projects. As a result, the Geographic Response Strategies program added dozens of sites in northern and southwestern Cook Inlet protecting habitat important to fisheries and wildlife and ultimately, citizens. Cook Inlet RCAC used a similar cooperative framework to launch its Marine Firefighting project whose purpose is to identify resources and deficiencies in the area. Shorezone mapping continued around Kodiak Island and in the northern Cook Inlet providing nearshore habitat data for those areas. Oceanographers working with Cook Inlet RCAC enhanced their understanding of how Cook Inlet water moves and how various physical forces influence that movement.

Since 1990, Cook Inlet RCAC has seen improvements in oil spill prevention and response measures for the region. Today, there are double-hull tankers working in Cook Inlet; navigational charts are much improved; the vessel inspection process is more rigorous; marine pilots are tested on a regular basis; site-specific oil response strategies are in place to protect some of our most sensitive habitat; and Cook Inlet RCAC has been a leader in monitoring the waters of the Inlet for signs of pollution from oil industry activities.

The success of Cook Inlet RCAC can be traced to citizen participation and the cooperative spirit in each of our projects. Each municipality, borough, and interest group represented on the Board of Directors is actively involved in the decisions that lead to safer oil transportation and production. When everyone comes together and works toward a common goal, the result is an environmentally sound Cook Inlet for future generations of Alaskans.

Mission & Goals

"Our mission is to represent the citizens of Cook Inlet in promoting environmentally safe marine transportation and oil facility operations in Cook Inlet."

The mission statement of the Cook Inlet RCAC is a reflection of the mandates spelled out by Congress when it passed the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (OPA 90). This federal law made sweeping changes to the way oil is produced and transported in the United States.

Thanks in large part to the efforts of then-United States Senator and current Alaska Governor Frank Murkowski, there is a section in OPA 90 that creates two citizen oversight councils; one for Prince William Sound and one for Cook Inlet. Congress established the councils to ensure that citizens, the oil industry, and government agencies would work together as partners to prevent oil spills in Alaska's pristine waters.

Cook Inlet RCAC represents citizens from Kodiak Island, the Kenai Peninsula, and the Municipality of Anchorage. All of these citizens have a stake in keeping the waters of Cook Inlet free from pollution. With that goal in mind, the Cook Inlet RCAC has spent the last twelve years working on several different fronts to accomplish the goal of an environmentally sound Cook Inlet.

During the past year, Cook Inlet RCAC board and staff have worked hard to refine our goals through the strategic planning process. A few of those priorities and goals are:

- Maximize the collection of pre-impact data prior to any catastrophic inputs of hydrocarbons
- Maximize the availability of pre-impact data, both spatially, and temporally, to increase our ability to detect change
- Make data accessible to resource agencies, the public and other organizations.
- Acquire shoreline habitat data
- Develop a marine firefighting plan for Cook Inlet
- Facilitate the development of an oil spill response system that achieves the best available protection for the Cook Inlet region
- Evaluate the adequacy of unified, subarea, and industry contingency plans through response drills
- Improve citizen understanding of current topics relevant to the Cook Inlet RCAC mission and mandates

Cook Inlet RCAC has been a strong voice for citizens since 1990 and that voice will continue to be heard in the years ahead.

Membership & Organization

The organization of the Cook Inlet Regional Citizens Advisory Council is outlined in the Oil Pollution Act of 1990. The thirteen-member Board of Directors represents various municipalities, cities, boroughs, and special interest groups to ensure broad representation of all citizens within the Cook Inlet region. The Act also calls for the inclusion of several non-voting Ex-Officio members, representing various state and federal agencies.

OPA 90 requires the Council to establish committees to accomplish its mandates. To that end, Council directors and public members comprise the Environmental Monitoring Committee (EMC), the Prevention, Response, Operations, and Safety Committee (PROPS), and the Protocol Committee for the purpose of assisting the Council in meeting its obligations.

Board of Director Seats

Municipality of Anchorage
City of Homer
City of Kenai
City of Kodiak
City of Seldovia Kenai Peninsula Borough
Kodiak Island Borough
Alaska Native Groups
Aquaculture Associations
Environmental Interest Groups
Commercial Fishing Groups
Recreational Groups
State Chamber of Commerce

Ex-Officio Members

Captain Ronald Morris
United States Coast Guard
Gary Lehnhausen
U.S. Forest Service
Joe Dygas
Bureau of Land Management
John Whitney
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
Matt Carr
Environmental Protection Agency
Richard T. Prentki, Ph.D.
Minerals Management Service
Robert LaPointe
Alaska Division of Emergency Services
William J. Hutmacher
Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation
Tom Bucceri
Alaska Department of Natural Resources

Environmental Monitoring Committee

Council members:
Doug Jones, chair
Glen Glenzer
Grace Merkes
James Showalter

Public members:
David Raskin
Craig Valentine
Dora Dushkin
Merritt Mitchell
Steve Hackett
Steve Hunt
Lani Kai Eggertsen-Goff
Elizabeth Chilton

Prevention, Response, Operations, and Safety Committee

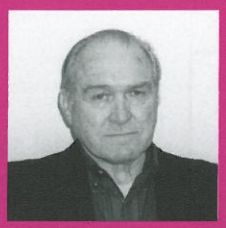
Council members:
Doug Jones, chair
Glen Glenzer
June Reuling
Mary Jacobs
Paul Shadura

Public members:
Bob Baker
Jerry Brookman
Barry Eldridge
Joe Gabriel, P.E.
Carol Kvasnikoff
Bill Osborn

Board of Directors

Glen Glenzer
Municipality of Anchorage
President

June Reuling
City of Seldovia
Vice-President



John Douglas
City of Kenai
Treasurer/Secretary

Paul Shadura
Commercial fishing
interest groups

Doug Jones
Recreational
interest groups

James Showalter
Alaska Native organizations

Grace Merkes
Kenai Peninsula
Borough

Rob Lindsey
City of Kodiak

Jim Hornaday
City of Homer

John French
Aquaculture associations

Mary Jacobs
Kodiak Island
Borough

Bob Shavelson
Environmental
interest groups

Robert Peterkin II
State Chamber of Commerce

Staff

Karen Williams
Assistant Executive Director

Terrance Bryant
Director of Operations

Susan Saupe
Director of Science
and Research

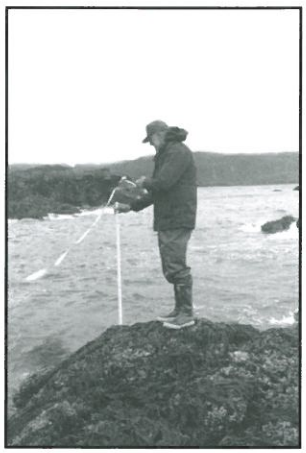
Stephen Howell
Director of Public Outreach

Bethany Mercurio
Secretary

Projects

Coastal Mapping

Cook Inlet RCAC expanded its Shorezone Mapping program by adding partners and developing user tools. Shorezone is a coastal mapping method that provides information on shoreline geology and biological habitats. After conducting the pilot in 2001, we expanded the program to include Kamishak and Kachemak Bays, the rest of Cook Inlet, and much of the outer Kenai Peninsula coast.



2003 ShoreZone field work included on-the-ground work and aerial surveys. Dr. Alan Bennett of the National Park Service takes beach measurements.

In 2003, we collaborated on numerous Shorezone projects: with the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council (EVOSTC) to map portions of Kodiak Island; with the Kachemak Bay Research Reserve to collect detailed intertidal data within Kachemak Bay; and with Dr. Alan Bennett of the National Park Service to collect Shorezone data along the Katmai National Park coastline in 2003.

For the Katmai project, Dr. John Harper from Coastal and Ocean Resources, Inc (CORI) and Mary Morris from Archipelago Marine Research, Ltd flew aerial surveys while Director of Science and Research Susan Saupe led an intertidal survey of coastal beach invertebrates and algae. Her team included CORI and Archipelago researchers and incorporated the expert taxonomic advice of contractors Dennis Lees and Dr. Sandra Lindstrom, and Mandy Lindeberg of the National Marine Fisheries Service's Auke Bay Laboratory.

The sampling teams saw hundreds of bears during the surveys, many feeding in the intertidal areas digging for clams and turning over large rocks for small intertidal fish. For this and our other Shorezone surveys, specialists are filing data in a detailed database that will provide information for researchers as well as for public education. The database will provide access to digital photos and descriptions of shoreline types, invertebrates, and seaweeds.

Cook Inlet RCAC also participated in a coastal habitat mapping workshop sponsored by the EVOSTC office as presenters and as workshop facilitators. Over 30 people representing industry, state and federal agencies, and other non-profit organizations resolved that Shorezone should be adopted as a mapping tool for all of Alaska and that efforts should be made to ensure strong coordination among the Shorezone mapping areas sponsored by various groups. As a result of these recommendations, the EVOSTC has included Shorezone mapping as a priority for the entire Gulf Ecosystem Monitoring area.

Savannah Lewis

Fire on F/V Keta in Seldovia harbor

Marine Firefighting

One of the most ambitious projects of 2003, the Marine Firefighting Manual got under weigh last fall. Each year, marine fires claim lives and valuable property in Alaska and release harmful pollutants into the air and water.

Because marine fires are infrequent, sometimes occur far from services, and require special training to address, fighting one can be an especially difficult and dangerous task. Our goals in the project are to:

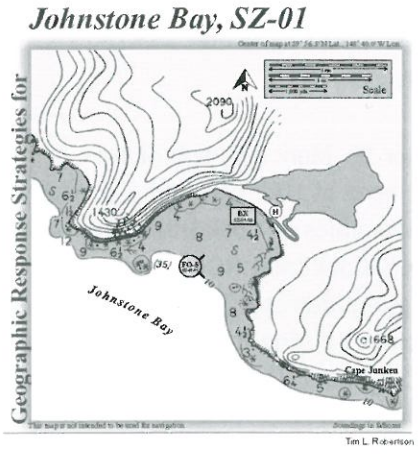
- identify resources and expertise
- identify deficiencies in response capability
- provide an incident command checklist for response
- indentify regional, national, and international marine firefighting capabilities

To achieve these goals, we assembled a workgroup modeled after the successful GRS process using an expert to facilitate the meetings a group decision making. Two subgroups also formed, one to explore a firewire towline issue while a second locates and identifies anchorages in Cook Inlet. Though many resources exist throughout the region, there has been no inclusive document for use in an incident and no list of resources that may need to come from outside the area. The workgroup determined that a database with contact and equipment information may help address this issue.

Geographic Response Strategies

One of our flagship projects, Geographic Response Strategies (GRS) have been designed for over 125 locations in and around Cook Inlet. These spill response strategies provide important information about a site and what might be done to protect it during a spill. In 2003, the GRS Workgroups continued plans for sites in the Northern and Southwestern Cook Inlet zones. Each of these zones raised special considerations and a public outreach plan helped ensure that interested parties such as military bases, native organizations, and wildlife managers had opportunities to contribute.

The GRS project's success is a direct result of partnerships and consensus. As interested parties have explored the best ways to protect a salmon stream, bear habitat, or bird rookery, they have also had the generous financial support of the Kenai Peninsula Borough as a foundation. This support has enabled planners to begin assessing the Southeastern Cook Inlet Zone which extends from Flat Island to Nuka Passage around the southern tip of the Chugach range. Cook Inlet RCAC expects to complete the initial rounds of site design for that area by mid-year.



Tim L. Robertson

A sample of a Geographic Response Strategies map developed to assist spill responders in protecting highly sensitive habitat like salmon spawning streams.

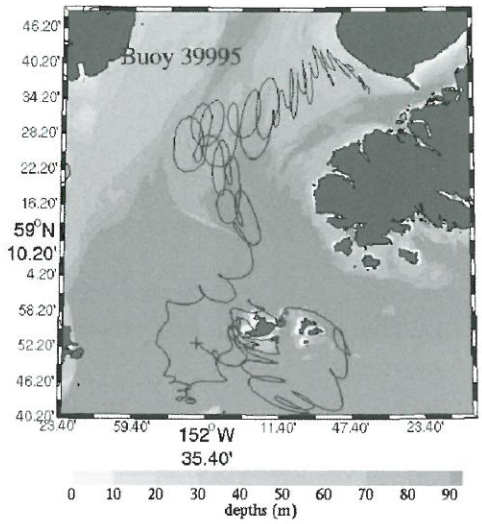
Physical Oceanography

Cook Inlet RCAC recognizes that a need exists to better understand physical oceanography and water currents in Cook Inlet. We established the collection of these data in Cook Inlet as a high priority and in 2003 sponsored and collaborated on projects with university researchers and other agencies using various collection tools and methods:

- Coastal Marine Institute (CMI) and Cook Inlet RCAC co-funded a study titled "Observations of hydrography in central Cook Inlet, Alaska, during diurnal and semi-diurnal tidal cycles." Dr. Steve Okkonen of the University of Alaska Fairbanks collected temperature and salinity data along transects crossing central Cook Inlet. These data will provide information on the changing water characteristics that influence and drive the net flow of water in Cook Inlet. Dr. Okkonen conducted a related project in 2002 coordinating a strong educational component with Cook Inlet RCAC's Director of Public Outreach Steve Howell. In 2003, CMI published the following final report of the study:

  Okkonen, S. R. and S. S. Howell. 2003. Measurements of Temperature, Salinity and Circulation in Cook Inlet, Alaska. Final Report. OCS Study MMS 2003-036, University of Alaska Coastal Marine Institute, University of Alaska Fairbanks and USDOI, MMS, Alaska OCS Region, 28 p.

- Physical Oceanographer Dr. Mark Johnson of the Institute of Marine Science at UAF directed a project titled "Water and Ice dynamics in Cook Inlet." For this MMS-sponsored project, Cook Inlet RCAC provided funding for purchasing and deploying satellite drifters. These buoys were deployed during the summer and fall in central and lower Cook Inlet. CISPRI, Dr. Okkonen, and the Kachemak Bay Research Reserve were all instrumental in working with Dr. Johnson to deploy and collect these buoys. The data collected by following the path of these drifting buoys will be combined with data from other sources to evaluate, in part, how well the tidal rips in Cook Inlet are simulated with models.



Satellite-tracked drifting buoy path that shows a combination of tidal cureent movement as well as the net movement of the buoys out of Cook Inlet. The buoy was released just west of the Homer spit in fall 2003.

- Working with Dr. Scott Pegau at the Kachemak Bay Research Reserve, Cook Inlet RCAC is developing a project to better define the oceanic conditions at the "boundaries" of Cook Inlet. The goal is to better understand the seasonal changes in temperature and salinity data throughout the water column, at the entrances and exits to Cook Inlet in the south, and in the major fresh water plumes entering upper Cook Inlet to the north.

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. Cook Inlet RCAC received funds in 2003 from the Kenai Peninsula Borough to plan a Cook Inlet physical oceanography coordination workshop that will take place in spring 2004.

Best Available Technology

Cook Inlet RCAC continues to work with the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) in determining the best manner to proceed with the appraisal of best available technologies (BAT) for oil spill prevention and response in Alaska. The BAT steering committee expects to the conference to convene during 2004.

Spill Drills

Cook Inlet RCAC continued monitoring spills and submitted comments to the various companies conducting. The largest drill of the year, a Tesoro-led exercise, addressed a catastrophic scenario spilling 23,000 barrels of North Slope Crude off the Kodiak coast. Board Members Rob Lindsey and Mary Jacobs, and Board-alternate Tanya Weth participated in a Kodiak-based field command center that coordinated with the Incident Command Center in Nikiski. During these drills, Cook Inlet RCAC staff and volunteers also have the opportunity to refine communication protocols and divide responsibilities.

Ballast Water / Non-Indigenous Species

Based on concerns for potential invasions of Aquatic Non-Indigenous Species (ANS) into Cook Inlet's marine environment, Cook Inlet RCAC sponsored a report to look at the volumes and locations of ballast water discharges into Cook Inlet:

> *Robertson, T. and L. Crews. 2003. Gross Estimate of Ballast Water Discharges into Cook Inlet, Alaska. Final Report to Cook Inlet Regional Citizens Advisory Council, Kenai, AK.*

Cook Inlet RCAC also submitted detailed comments on a USCG proposed rulemaking for a mandatory ballast water exchange program for the U.S.

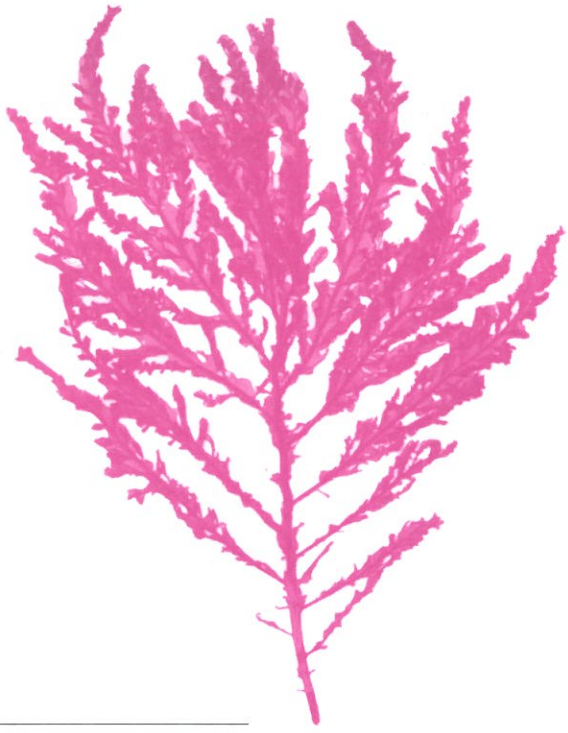
A Tesoro response team addresses a tabletop spill drill scenario at CISPRI.

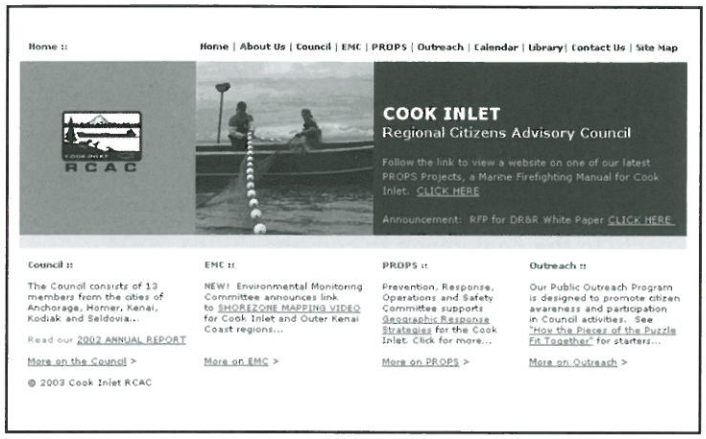
Environmental Monitoring and Assessment

Cook Inlet RCAC continues to participate as a partner in developing Alaska's National Coastal Assessment (NCA), an EPA effort to conduct an environmental assessment program along the nation's entire coastline. We also provided the scientific lead for sampling along the southcentral Alaska coast in 2002 and are providing data analyses, interpretation, and reporting.

In addition, Cook Inlet RCAC will continue to work with the lead agency, the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation to expand the assessment to include other Alaskan coastlines. Cook Inlet RCAC funded the analyses of contaminants in archived fish tissue samples collected from the trawls. These data will be coordinated into the national NCA database.

Several other partnerships and opportunities are being enhanced to continue evaluating Cook Inlet's intertidal invertebrate and algal communities. For example, we are developing a plan to investigate potential isolated populations of invertebrates along the lower west side of Cook Inlet that have more similarities to the Bering Sea or Arctic than to organisms found in the rest of Cook Inlet or northern Gulf of Alaska.





The recently redesigned home page for www.circac.org is shown with improved navigation, colorful graphics, and links to new sections

Electronic Outreach

In early 2003, Cook Inlet RCAC re-launched its web site, www.circac.org. The redesign conveys a modern look and feel, light, intuitive, and cohesive. The site provide the audience a simplified experience using easy to read type, reorganized content, and improved navigation.

Cook Inlet RCAC staff worked with Anchorage design firm Cary King Designs to overhaul the site using the latest technology. As a result, staff can now make changes quickly and easily from our office in Kenai without jeopardizing the site's architecture. Cook Inlet continues to update information previously available including history, and industry and project overviews. Some of the new features include an events calendar, a document library, and links to member organizations' web sites.

During the second phase of development, staff and designers will consider database integration, document, photo and video library enhancements, and site search capabilities.

Contingency Plan Review

The Protocol Committee, comprised of five members of the Board of Directors, deals with issues related to state and federal issues with time-sensitive comment periods. Cook Inlet RCAC has a mandate in the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 to review contingency plans, the action plan a responsible party would take to address a spill, for the regulated crude oil industry in Cook Inlet. Representing the public's interest, Cook Inlet RCAC works with state agencies and industry during plan review to reinforce their importance to protecting the Cook Inlet's productive waters.

Contingency Plan Holders

- State of Alaska Unified Plan: Cook Inlet Subarea plan
- Tesoro Alaska Petroleum Co: Tesoro Alaska Kenai Refinery and Pipeline
- Tesoro Alaska Petroleum Co: Tesoro Cook Inlet Vessel Operations
- Conoco/Phillips Alaska Inc: Phillips Tyonek Platform Drilling Program
- Conoco/Phillips Alaska Inc: Cook Inlet Exploration Plan
- Marathon Oil Company: Beaver Creek Production Facility
- XTO Energy: Cook Inlet Shoals Middle Ground Shoal Facility
- Cook Inlet Pipeline Co.: Drift River Facility
- Kenai Pipe Line Co: Facility Response Plan
- Unocal: UNOCAL Cook Inlet Production Facilities
- Unocal: Cook Inlet Vessel Plan
- CISPRI: CISPRI Technical Manual

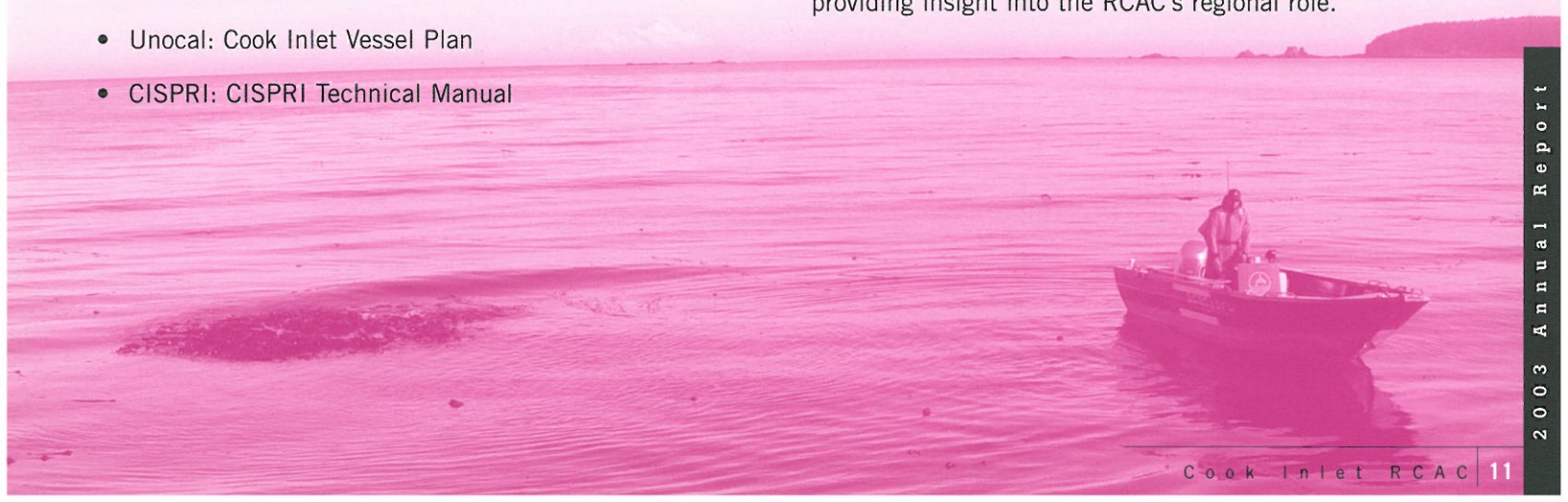
Presentations

Each year, Cook Inlet RCAC presents information in communities and at conferences around the region. On several occasions in 2003, the parties came to Cook Inlet RCAC looking for insight into the role citizens play in protecting the Inlet. Russian delegations from Sakhalin and Petropovlosk came to understand the structure of the RCAC and how local and federal agencies are included in the decision-making process. A selectman (similar to a city councilman) from Maine sought information on the RCAC function as a consensus builder and advisor. One of Cook Inlet's largest players, Conoco/Phillips, is proposing an LNG re-gasification plant in the selectman's coastal community of Harpswell and Cook Inlet RCAC was one of several stops in his tour.

Cook Inlet RCAC Director of Public Outreach Steve Howell also spoke at Rotary, Chamber of Commerce meetings, and the Coastal Marine Institute (Fairbanks) and hosted booths at the North American Association of Environmental Education Conference (Anchorage), Alaska Forum on the Environment (Anchorage), International Oil Spill Conference (B.C., Canada), and ComFish (Kodiak).

Director of Science and Research Susan Saupe presented Alaska's National Coastal Assessment at the Alaska Forum on the Environment (Anchorage). Ms. Saupe also presented the Alaska Shorezone Mapping program at the National Estuarine Research Federation (Seattle).

Cook Inlet RCAC continued to host schools from the region and visitors facilitating tours of industry facilities and providing insight into the RCAC's regional role.



Volunteer of the Year Awards

Overall Volunteer of the Year
John Douglas – City of Kenai representative

Board Member of the Year
Paul Shadura – Commercial Fishing representative

EMC Member of the Year
Lani Eggertson-Goff

Protocol Member of the Year
Robert Peterkin III

PROPS Member of the Year
Jerry Brookman

Assistant Executive Director Karen Williams *(right)* presents Board Member John Douglas with the award for Overall Volunteer of the Year. His granddaughter, Cybele Douglas of Rio De Janeiro, Brazil accompanied Mr. Douglas.

Retiring Executive Director James E. Carter, Sr. receives an award from Prince William Sound RCAC Deputy Director Marilyn Leland

Pressed algae specimen *Sandra Lindstrom*

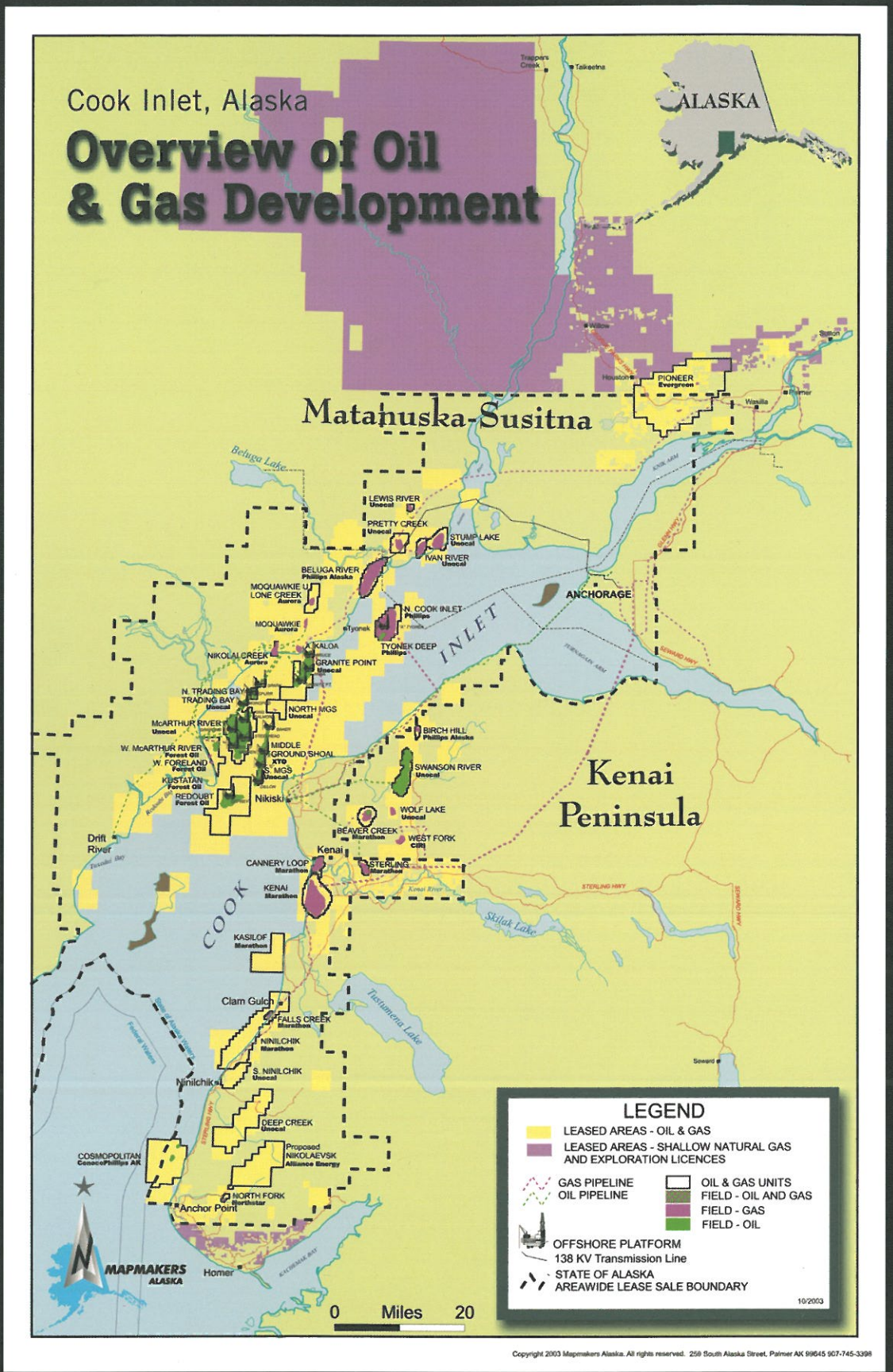
Intertidal biologist Alan Fukuyama collects algae data *Susan Saupe*

Broken ice spill drill *Terrance Bryant*

Students collecting water data *Steve Howell*

Dense Port Graham algae bed *Mandy Lindeberg*

Researchers at Amalik Bay in Katmai National Park *Susan Saupe*



COOK INLET RCAC

Cook Inlet Regional Citizens Advisory Council

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Charter Funding Companies

Cook Inlet Pipeline Company • Forest Oil • Marathon Oil Company • Phillips Petroleum
Tesoro Alaska/Kenai Pipeline Company • Unocal • XTO Energy