

## 2014 Recertification Application Cook Inlet Regional Citizens Advisory Council

**SECTION 1. Membership: The Cook Inlet RCAC should be broadly representative of the interests of the communities in the geographical area.**

A Board of Directors whose membership is governed by its bylaws manages the affairs of the Cook Inlet Regional Citizens Advisory Council (Cook Inlet RCAC). Member organizations are communities affected by the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill and stakeholder interest groups in the vicinity of the oil facilities as defined in the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (OPA 90). Membership is described in three member classes, Municipal Member, Interest Group, and Agency Member. These organizations appoint or elect, according to their class, individuals to represent them on the Cook Inlet RCAC Board of Directors.

**Cook Inlet RCAC Board of Directors**

<b>Director</b>	<b>Home</b>	<b>Organization/Interest Groups Represented</b>
Molly McCammon	Anchorage	Municipality of Anchorage
Bob Flint	Anchorage	Recreational Interest Groups
Carla Stanley	Homer	City of Homer
Deric Marcorelle	Soldotna	Environmental Interest Groups
Robert Peterkin, II, Vice President	Kenai	Alaska State Chamber of Commerce
John Williams, President	Kenai	City of Kenai
Paul Shadura	Kenai	Commercial Fishing Interest Groups
Rob Lindsey	Kodiak	City of Kodiak
Scott Smiley	Kodiak	Kodiak Island Borough
Walt Sonen	Seldovia	City of Seldovia
Gary Fandrei, Secretary/Treasurer	Kenai	Aquaculture Associations
Michael Opheim	Seldovia	Alaska Natives Interest Groups
Grace Merkes, Parliamentarian	Sterling	Kenai Peninsula Borough

## Section 1: Membership

The following organizations hold ex-officio seats on the Board of Directors:

- Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation
- Alaska Department of Fish & Game
- Alaska Department of Natural Resources – Division of Oil & Gas
- Alaska Department of Natural Resources – State Pipeline Monitoring Office
- Alaska Department of Veterans and Military Affairs – Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management – *seat currently vacant*
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- U.S. Coast Guard
- U.S. Bureau of Land Management – *seat currently vacant*
- U.S. Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (formerly BOEMRE)
- U.S. Forest Service

### **(1a) Membership policies, including the selection and appointment process for the Cook Inlet RCAC and any of its Committees, to ensure full public participation.**

Directors serve at the pleasure of the organizations they represent and Cook Inlet RCAC bylaws require each director be a resident of the State of Alaska, qualified to receive an Alaska Permanent Fund Dividend. Only those directors representing the Interest Groups and Municipal Members (or the Alternate Director, in the absence of a Director) have the right to vote on any matter affecting Cook Inlet RCAC. Directors serve three-year terms. Council Policies #3 and #4 address the eligibility of Interest Groups (**Appendix 1**).

When a Director's term expires, the Municipal Member organization submits in writing the name of the person it wishes to be seated on the board. Certified Interest Group members nominate and elect a representative from among those groups who hold a valid voting membership at the time of the election. Directors are formally seated by a vote of the Directors at the Annual Meeting. Should a director leaves in mid-term, the member organization may appoint a replacement to fill the unexpired term, subject to formal seating by the Board of Directors. A Director who fills a vacancy serves for the unexpired term of his or her predecessor in office. In no case may a vacancy continue for longer than six months or until the next annual meeting of the Council, whichever occurs first.

In April 2014, four seats on the Board of Directors expired – Alaska Native, Environmental, Kodiak Island Borough and Kenai Peninsula Borough. In keeping with Council Policies, the procedure for nomination and election of representatives was initiated with the certified members from the special interest groups in late 2013. In addition, we reached out directly to numerous non-member organizations within those special interest groups, and approved three new Certified members.

## Section 1: Membership

Simultaneously, the Executive Director formally initiated the appointment process with the Mayors of the Boroughs – Mayor Mike Navarre and Mayor Jerrol Friend. Both existing representatives – Grace Merkes from the Kenai Peninsula Borough, and Scott Smiley, Ph.D. from the Kodiak Island Borough – were reappointed by their respective governing bodies to three year terms, providing valuable and growing institutional memory and leadership. In addition, Wayne Ogle was appointed by Mayor Navarre as an Alternate Director representing the Kenai Peninsula Borough.

Six volunteer committees - operating with financial and staff support from Cook Inlet RCAC - assist the Council with its work. Four of them are executive or administrative in nature, and consist entirely of Directors. They are the Executive Committee, Audit Committee, Credentials Committee and Protocol Control Committee.

Two others are comprised of Directors as well as members of the broader public. Cook Inlet RCAC recruits Public Member participants annually or as needed using advertisements and press releases in the Cook Inlet/Kodiak region. These committees and its members are as follows:

The **Prevention, Response, Operations and Safety (PROPS) Committee** and **Environmental Monitoring Committee (EMC)** are structured to address specific requirements outlined in sections 5002(e) and (f) of OPA 90. Committee meetings are advertised and open to the public. Membership on each committee consists of at least three voting representatives from the Board of Directors and 6-8 voting public members.

Public members serve staggered three-year terms and are seated by the Council at its Annual Meeting (April 25, 2014 in Kenai). Vacancies are advertised in local newspapers of wide distribution, via social media, our website and monthly electronic newsletter, in public meetings (e.g. Chambers of Commerce) and in local community calendars. These positions are all served on a volunteer basis; out-of-pocket meeting expenses, within guidelines set by policy, are reimbursed. To be considered for appointment, members of the public must submit a letter of interest and resume.

Notifications are sent to current Committee members whose terms are expiring. Committee members wishing to be reappointed must submit a letter of intent and an updated resume. All applications are reviewed first at the committee level; individual(s) are selected from the candidates, and then forwarded to the Council for final approval at the Council's Annual Meeting. Interim appointments are made on an "as needed" basis by the Council, at regularly scheduled meetings. Director level committee assignments and public member committee appointments are made each year at the Council's Annual Meeting. Each Committee also has provisions for participation from non-voting Council members, ex-officio members and affiliates.

During this period, the Council has been fortunate to have recruited and seated three new public members on both PROPS and EMC, while retaining several others through reappointment.

Section 1: Membership

<b>PROPS: Prevention, Response, Operations &amp; Safety Committee</b> <i>(new public members in italics)</i>	
<b>Committee Member</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Deric Marcorelle	Council – Environmental Interest Group
Grace Merkes	Council – Kenai Peninsula Borough
Bob Flint – Chair	Council – Recreational Interest Groups
Carla Stanley	Council – City of Homer
Michael Opheim	Council – Alaska Natives Interest Group
Rob Lindsey	Council – City of Kodiak
John Williams	Council – City of Kenai
Jan Hansen	Public – Sterling
Bill Osborn	Public – Kenai [resigned 4/14]
Scott Hamann	Public – Kenai
Doug Jones	Public – Anchorage [resigned 4/14]
Robert Favretto – Vice Chair	Public – Kenai
Ted Moore	Public – Eagle River
John Bauer	Public – Anchorage
Steve Lufkin	Public – Anchorage
<i>Robert Reges</i>	<i>Public – Anchorage</i>
<i>Jim McHale</i>	<i>Public – Soldotna</i>

At the 2014 Annual Meeting, new PROPS Committee assignments were made; Director Walt Sonen will begin his term near the end of this recertification period.

<b>EMC: Environmental Monitoring Committee</b> <i>(new public members in italics)</i>	
<b>Committee Member</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Scott Smiley	Council – Kodiak Island Borough
Carla Stanley – Vice Chair	Council – City of Homer
Bob Flint	Council – Recreational Interest Groups
Michael Opheim	Council – Alaska Natives
Molly McCammon - Chair	Council – Municipality of Anchorage
Deric Marcorelle	Council – Environmental Interest Groups
Craig Valentine	Public – Anchorage
Kashif Ahmed Naser	Public – Palmer
Steve Hunt	Public – Eagle River
Dan Urban	Public – Kodiak
Paul Blanche	Public – Anchorage
Richard Prentki	Public – Anchorage
Ted Rockwell	Public – Anchorage
Trenten Dodson	Public – Kodiak

The **Audit Committee** is charged with assisting the Board of Directors and Executive Director in fulfilling its oversight responsibilities by: reviewing the financial reports and

## Section 1: Membership

other financial information provided by Cook Inlet RCAC staff and the accountant(s); the systems of internal controls regarding finance, accounting, legal compliance and business conduct that have been established; and auditing, accounting and financial reporting processes. Working with legal counsel, this committee also reviews and updates Council and Personnel Policies and by-laws on an ongoing basis. The Audit Committee consists entirely of Directors. In 2013, amendments were made to Council Policies governing Interest Group Selection (#4) and Alternate Council Members (#7). In addition, new Council Policies were developed to guide the staff on records management (#15) and to ensure protection of whistleblowers (#16). These are included in this application for review (**Appendix 2**). During this certification period, the Council has complied with reporting requirements of the Internal Revenue Service and the State of Alaska's non-profit and business certifications established by the Department of Labor and Workforce Development and Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development.

In mid-February of 2014, the Council's independent financial auditors conducted the annual field audit of our 2013 financial operations. The auditors raised no significant concerns during the exit interview; their final report and letter of findings to the Board of Directors is expected in May of 2014. The report covering 2012 operations was received after our 2013 recertification application was submitted, and is included in this submittal (**Appendix 3**).

<b>Audit Committee</b>	
<b>Committee Member</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Gary Fandrei - Chair	Aquaculture Associations
John Williams	City of Kenai
Grace Merkes	Kenai Peninsula Borough
Robert Peterkin, II	Alaska State Chamber of Commerce

At the 2014 Annual Meeting, new Audit Committee assignments were made; Director Molly McCammon will begin her term near the end of this recertification period.

The **Credentials Committee** is charged with ensuring that the Council has balanced geographic and interest groups representation pursuant to Section 5002 (d)(2)(A) of OPA 90. The Committee certifies special interest groups for eligibility to vote in the election of five of the six special interest group Council members (Alaska Native, Recreation, Commercial Fishing, Environmental, and Aquaculture). This committee also oversees and certifies the annual election process for those interest group representatives. The Credentials Committee consists entirely of Directors.

<b>Credentials Committee</b>	
<b>Committee Member</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Gary Fandrei	Aquaculture Associations
Grace Merkes	Kenai Peninsula Borough
Robert Peterkin, II - Chair	Alaska State Chamber of Commerce
Paul Shadura	Commercial Fishing

## Section 1: Membership

At the 2014 Annual Meeting, new Credentials Committee assignments were made; Director Michael Opheim will begin his term near the end of this recertification period.

The **Protocol Control Committee** is charged with reviewing, evaluating, and providing comments on contingency plans, legislative, and regulatory development, and with periodically monitoring drills that test contingency plans. The committee routinely addresses issues that require a timely response due to time-sensitive deadlines. This committee meets on an “as needed” basis. The Protocol Control Committee consists entirely of Directors.

<b>Protocol Committee</b>	
<b>Committee Member</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Robert Peterkin, II - Chair	Alaska State Chamber of Commerce
Bob Flint	Recreational Interest Groups
John Williams	City of Kenai
Rob Lindsey	City of Kodiak
Deric Marcorelle	Environmental Interest Groups
Grace Merkes	Kenai Peninsula Borough
Paul Shadura	Commercial Fishing Groups

The **Executive Committee** is composed of five Council members selected each year at the Annual Meeting. Membership is established in the by-laws and consists of the three Council officers (President, Vice-President, and Secretary/Treasurer) and two at-large Council members. Officers are selected each year at the Annual Meeting by a majority vote. This committee meets on a monthly basis to transact Council business between Council meetings.

<b>Executive Committee</b>	
<b>Committee Member</b>	<b>Affiliate</b>
John Williams – President/Chair	City of Kenai
Grace Merkes	Kenai Peninsula Borough
Gary Fandrei – Secretary/Treasurer	Aquaculture Associations
Bob Flint	Recreation Interest Groups
Robert Peterkin, II – Vice President	Alaska State Chamber of Commerce

At the 2014 Annual Meeting, new Executive Committee assignments were made; Director Deric Marcorelle will begin his term near the end of this recertification period.

Section 1: Membership

**(1b) Opportunities provided for interest groups to participate.**

Cook Inlet RCAC actively recruits non-member organizations for five of the Board of Director’s six interest group seats on a tri-annual basis, to coincide with the expiration of each seat’s three-year term, and as a condition of voting eligibility. However applications would be accepted and reviewed by the Credentials Committee at any time. Organizations from an extensive list of non-member interest groups are sent a letter requesting their participation as a Certified member. Responding organizations are authenticated as to meeting the criteria outlined in Council Policy #3, and if approved are added as a Certified member organization, allowing them to participate in our election process by nominating and voting for their respective Interest Group representative.

In 2014, three stakeholder organizations responded to our outreach, applied and have been accepted as Certified Members. From the Environmental interest groups, Great Land Trust and the Anchorage Waterways Council – both from Anchorage – have been accepted. The Native Village of Eklutna has joined the ranks of certified Alaska Native organizations.

**(i) Local commercial fishing industry organizations whose members depend on the fisheries resource of the waters in the vicinity of the terminal facilities:**

<b>Commercial Fishing Organizations</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Location</b>
Alaska Whitefish Trawlers Association	Kodiak
Alaska Groundfish Data Bank	Kodiak
Kenai Peninsula Fishermen’s Association	Soldotna
North Pacific Fisheries Association	Homer
Northern District Setnetters Association	Anchorage
United Cook Inlet Drift Association	Soldotna

**(ii) Aquaculture associations in the vicinity of the terminal facilities:**

<b>Aquaculture Associations</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Location</b>
Cook Inlet Aquaculture Association	Kenai
Kodiak Regional Aquaculture Association	Kodiak

**(iii) Alaska Native Corporations and other Alaska Native organizations whose members reside in the vicinity of the terminal facilities:**

<b>Alaska Native Organizations (<i>new members in italics</i>)</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Location</b>
Cook Inlet Region, Inc.	Anchorage

Section 1: Membership

Kenai Natives Association, Inc.	Kenai
Kenaitze Indian Tribe	Kenai
Nanwalek IRA Council	Nanwalek
Natives of Kodiak, Inc.	Kodiak
Ninilchik Natives Association	Ninilchik
Port Graham Village Council	Port Graham
Port Graham Corporation	Port Graham
Seldovia Native Association	Seldovia
Seldovia Village Tribe	Seldovia
Sun'ag Tribe of Kodiak	Kodiak
<i>Native Village of Eklutna</i>	<i>Chugiak</i>

**(iv) Environmental organizations whose members reside in the vicinity of Cook Inlet, Kodiak or the terminal facilities:**

<b>Environmental Organizations (<i>new members in italics</i>)</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Location</b>
Kenai Watershed Forum	Soldotna
Kodiak Audubon Society	Kodiak
National Parks Conservation Association	Anchorage
National Wildlife Federation	Anchorage
Re-Group	Soldotna
Alaska Center for the Environment	Anchorage
Alaska Marine Conservation Council	Anchorage
Cook Inletkeeper	Homer
Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies	Homer
Kachemak Bay Conservation Society	Homer
<i>Great Land Trust</i>	<i>Anchorage</i>
<i>Anchorage Waterways Council</i>	<i>Anchorage</i>

**(v) Recreational organizations whose members reside in or use the vicinity of the terminal facilities:**

<b>Recreational Organizations</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Location</b>
Alaska Charter Association	Homer
Alaska Sportfishing Association	Anchorage
Deep Creek Charter Boat Association	Ninilchik
Kenai River Sportfishing Association	Soldotna
Kenai River Professional Guide Association	Soldotna



Section 1: Membership

**(vi) The Alaska State Chamber of Commerce or other organization, representing the locally based tourism industry:**

<b>Tourism</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Location</b>
Alaska State Chamber of Commerce	Anchorage

**(1c) The extent to which meetings are publicized in the media and are accessible to members of the general public.**

Cook Inlet RCAC publicizes board and committee meetings through press releases and advertisements in local newspapers in the region. The Council also advertises meetings through public service announcements on community calendars to encourage attendance from all regional citizens. In addition, we utilize our monthly e-newsletter *The Cook Inlet Navigator*, our website [www.circac.org](http://www.circac.org), and social media outlets to not only promote our meetings but to also provide links to meeting documents. All meetings, except executive sessions when used, are open to the public. All visitors including industry, government, designated stakeholder groups, the media or the general public are invited to attend and comment at these meetings. Three Board of Directors meetings are held each year – one in Kenai, one in Anchorage, and the third rotated among the more remote communities in Cook Inlet RCAC’s Area of Concern. We feel this enhances participation from all stakeholders and board members. For example:

<b>Board of Directors Meeting Schedule</b>	
<b>Year</b>	<b>Locations</b>
2011	Kenai, Seldovia, Anchorage
2012	Kenai, Homer, Anchorage
2013	Kenai, Homer, Anchorage
2014	Kenai, Kodiak, Anchorage
2015	Kenai, TBA, Anchorage

## **SECTION 2. Communication: Establishing communications with industry and government.**

Cook Inlet RCAC maintains open, cooperative communications with government and industry to improve our efforts toward safer oil transportation and facility operations in our area. Cook Inlet RCAC has been very successful using a workgroup approach, whereby all interested parties come to the table to address issues and determine a cooperative plan for attaining goals.

In an effort to better communicate our programs to funding sources, research partners, industry and government, Cook Inlet RCAC has developed a Strategic Plan, adopted in 2009 and updated in 2012 (**Appendix 4**). The plan allows Cook Inlet RCAC to better coordinate its OPA 90 mandates, research efforts, and partnerships as the document lays out specific program purposes, goals, strategies, and outcomes.

Cook Inlet RCAC regularly provides industry, government agencies and elected officials with information and updates on all Council activities. Below are some examples of outreach media and activities conducted or planned by the Director of Public Outreach, board members, and staff during the current recertification period (1 September 2013 to 31 August 2014):

### Website ([www.circac.org](http://www.circac.org))

We overhauled our website beginning in May 2013 to make it searchable, interactive, and able to accommodate social media, such as Twitter, Facebook, and Flickr. The new site, which was unveiled in January 2014, reflects the full depth and breadth of our program work and was built with Search Engine Optimization (SEO), WordPress, and Google Analytics to improve its effectiveness and flexibility for updates. We are developing an interactive map of exploration facilities, infrastructure and platforms in Cook Inlet to give our users a better picture of Cook Inlet industrial activities.

### Electronic Newsletter: *Cook Inlet Navigator*

Cook Inlet RCAC staff publishes an electronic newsletter called *Cook Inlet Navigator*, and now distributes it monthly, rather than quarterly, to several hundred recipients, including legislative and congressional delegations (**Appendix 5**). The newsletter is often a source of stories for media, and has served to heighten the visibility of the organization and the work we're doing in the community. The "open rate" has been a consistent 30 percent, higher than average for non-profit newsletters, and we continue to get new subscribers each month. In fact, the March 2014 newsletter achieved a 36 percent open rate.

### Annual Report

The Council publishes an annual report to improve communication with the public, industry and government. This report is an annual summary of the activities and projects

## Section 2: Communication

undertaken or completed by the Council and the Committees during the year. Cook Inlet RCAC distributes the report widely through the mail as well as at meetings and public outreach events. An electronic version of the report is also emailed and posted on our website for download. The 2012 and 2013 Annual Reports were distributed to relevant government agencies and companies that are involved in Cook Inlet RCAC issues, as well as state and national legislators, mayors and village leaders within the Cook Inlet region, local chambers, libraries, school districts, and many other entities. Copies of the Annual Report are also distributed at special events and during community visits.

### **(Appendix 6)**

#### Social Media

We have become more social media savvy and have activated Facebook, Twitter and Flickr accounts for the organization. These tools allow us to communicate more quickly with our stakeholders; in the event of a major oil spill incident they will be crucial to our staying ahead of the news and to engaging concerned citizens who could be impacted, or who may have important information to share with us to aid in the response.

#### Directors Synopsis

We continue to prepare this report after each Board meeting to provide directors with a summary of key information or actions coming out of the meetings to share with their constituent special interest groups. **(Appendix 7)**

#### Participation Information

This year, Cook Inlet RCAC is updating its informational brochure. These brochures are distributed to many other organizations and at several special events including the International Oil Spill Conference, Kodiak ComFish, Clean Pacific, Pacific Marine Expo, Alaska Science Symposium, and many others. We will also utilize them for stakeholder outreach. **(Appendix 8)**

#### Advertisement

We have purchased print ads in the Kenai and Homer Chambers of Commerce Visitor Guides, and the Alaska Visitors Guide published by the *Anchorage Daily News*. These local publications enjoy wide distribution throughout our area of responsibility, and help with positive branding. **(Appendix 9)**

#### Community Visits/Presentations

Cook Inlet RCAC staff has provided presentations to numerous local governments and community groups, including the Kenai Historical Society, Kenai Chamber of Commerce and the Kenai Peninsula Fishermen's Association. Presentations of research results were given marine symposia in Anchorage and Kodiak, and to industry and oil spill response organizations in Nikiski.

## Section 2: Communication

Since our last recertification application was submitted, we have held four board meetings – in Homer, Kenai (2) and Anchorage. We arranged for in-depth presentations from a wide variety of organizations: Buccaneer Alaska, Hilcorp Alaska, the Port of Anchorage, Tesoro Alaska, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, Cook Inlet Spill Prevention and Response, Inc., Cook Inlet Energy, Alaska LNG Partnership, the U.S. Coast Guard, and Alaska Legislators. These presentations were promoted in advance, and copies are available online at [www.circac.org](http://www.circac.org).

Further, the PROPS Committee received presentations from Furie Operating Alaska, Buccaneer Alaska and Alaska Chadux. In addition, committee members toured the *T/V Overseas Martinez* at the KPL Dock, and toured the XTO Energy facility – both in Nikiski. Presentations to the EMC were received from the Environmental Protection Agency (NPDES Program); National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA); Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC); Hilcorp Alaska; and Alaska Ocean Observing System (AOOS).

We continue to work to find new and better ways to engage, involve and inform our stakeholders and the public to fortify the importance of protecting Cook Inlet's waters, resources, and wildlife. During this recertification period, we participated or exhibited in the following conferences, workshops or expos, some of which are described in greater detail elsewhere:

- Staff led training in ShoreZone and the Cook Inlet Response Tool for industry partners (Tesoro, Hilcorp) and Cook Inlet's oil spill response organization, Cook Inlet Spill Prevention and Response, Inc. (CISPRI). More training sessions are planned.
- Regional Response Team Meetings – Staff regularly attends the Alaska Regional Response Team (ARRT) meetings to observe and monitor agency activities, and participates as a member of the Science and Technology workgroup, attending meetings (e.g. – Dispersant Working Group).
- Navigational Safety Committee Meeting – Staff regularly attends this annual meeting along with the U.S. Coast Guard and marine transportation interests to discuss winter navigation rules for Cook Inlet.
- Cook Inlet Navigational Risk Assessment Meetings – staff regularly attends meetings of the Management Team and Advisory Panel.
- 2013 Arctic Cold Regions Oil Pipeline Conference – Our Director of Operations attended the Arctic/Cold Regions Oil Pipeline Conference held in Anchorage. While the title indicates oil pipelines, there was equal focus on gas pipelines.

## Section 2: Communication

The agenda topics and discussions seemed aimed at potential new operators to provide them with guidance for installation and operation of facilities and pipelines in the arctic. Some of the sessions were very technical in nature describing methods for pipeline design, trenching, river crossings, tundra restoration and risk analysis.

- International Oil and Gas Compact Commission (IOGCC) – Executive Director serves as Chair of the Environment and Safety Committee of the IOGCC, a Congressionally-formed Commission.
- Kenai Peninsula Fishermen’s Association Annual Meeting – Director of Science and Research presented information about our scientific research and the Director of Public Outreach shared additional information about the Council and distributed annual reports, fact sheets and Coastal Impressions booklets.
- Alaska Oil Spill Symposium – Staff attended the first Alaska Oil Spill Symposium held in Fairbanks. The symposium was sponsored by the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation and the University of Alaska – Fairbanks. In addition to presentations and posters by speakers from the research community, the regulatory and response communities in attendance also described their information needs and decision processes.
- Chambers of Commerce Luncheons – The Director of Public Outreach was the keynote speaker of a Kenai Chamber meeting, and gave an overview of the Council’s work and recent activities. Cook Inlet RCAC is a member in good standing of four local chambers and the state Chamber, and staff regularly attends chamber meetings in Kenai, Soldotna, Anchorage and Homer as topics warrant.
- Community Organizations – The Council has joined local civic organizations and regularly participates in their activities. Such groups include Rotary International and local and state Chambers of Commerce.
- Industry Outlook Forum – In 2014, staff attended the forum dedicated to the economic vitality of the oil, gas and mining industries and local and borough governments. We have also presented and exhibited in previous years.
- ComFish Expo in Kodiak – Cook Inlet RCAC staff participates in ComFish each year with an information display booth at this annual commercial fishing conference and exhibit in Kodiak – the only one held in the State of Alaska.

## Section 2: Communication

- Alaska Marine Science Symposium – Cook Inlet RCAC staff and contractors attended the Alaska Marine Science Symposium (AMSS) to present scientific data with partners on our Cook Inlet beluga whale study results and the use of ShoreZone and the Cook Inlet Response Tool on-line data portal for emergency planning and response. We also exhibited our information booth at this annual event.
- Kodiak Marine Science Symposium – Research results from Cook Inlet RCAC-sponsored studies were presented by our Director of Science and Research at the Kodiak Area Marine Science Symposium.
- Industry Appreciation Day – Staff operates an information booth at this annual Kenai community event recognizing Cook Inlet’s oil and gas and fishing industries.
- International Oil Spill Conference (IOSC) – Directors, public committee members and staff will attend the May 2014 conference in Savannah, GA. While there, they will attend and participate in breakout sessions offering opportunities to hear about new and ongoing research and updates to spill prevention and monitoring tools, spill recovery technology and response technologies and practices. The opportunity provides Cook Inlet RCAC an avenue to interact with an international audience and to demonstrate the success of the RCAC model in the Cook Inlet and Kodiak regions.
- Clean Gulf Conference – Council Director attended the conference to primarily learn about dispersants use to better understand how dispersants might be used in oil spill response in Alaska and Cook Inlet conditions.
- AOOS/Gulf Watch Alaska – Staff participated in this workshop on community-based environmental monitoring in lower Cook Inlet.
- Pacific Marine Expo – Cook Inlet RCAC staff typically attends this annual event every year, operating an information display booth and distributing materials about the Council and its projects.
- Alaska Support Industry Alliance Meetings – Cook Inlet RCAC staff regularly attends luncheon meetings whenever Cook Inlet crude oil or related topics are presented by regional operators.
- Kenai Peninsula Borough Cook Inlet Beluga Whale Symposium – Our science director presented our final report: *Assessment of the Prey Availability and Oil-Related Contaminants in Winter Habitat of Cook Inlet Beluga Whales - Trawl Surveys and Laboratory Analyses (2012-2013)*. (**Appendix 10**)

## Section 2: Communication

- National Marine Fisheries Service Cook Inlet Beluga Whale Conference – Cook Inlet RCAC Science Director presented our final report: *Assessment of the Prey Availability and Oil-Related Contaminants in Winter Habitat of Cook Inlet Beluga Whales - Trawl Surveys and Laboratory Analyses (2012-2013)*.
- Gulf of Mexico Oil Spill & Ecosystem Conference – Staff attended this conference to see research results from some of the most recent research related to hydrocarbon degradation and toxicity, as well as research associated with the dispersants Corexit 9500 and 9527.
- Hilcorp Public Meeting – Staff attended this forum held in Ninilchik in June 2013. The company presented the conclusion and demobilization of seismic work done in the area. Company representatives reported that the work had been completed in January and that all of the field equipment had been retrieved. They displayed maps showing the locations of their leased areas where seismic work had occurred.
- Oil Spill Recovery Institute (OSRI) – Cook Inlet RCAC Science Director serves as a member of the OSRI Advisory Board and their Workplan Committee.
- Alaska Forum on the Environment – Staff attended several of the program sessions of this annual conference in Anchorage. We have supported this event in the past as both an exhibitor and presenter.

**(2a) How Cook Inlet RCAC works with industry and government to establish and employ communications protocols for reviewing policies, projects and release of information relating to the operation and maintenance of the oil terminal facilities and crude oil tankers which affect or may affect the environment in the vicinity of the respective terminals.**

- The Management Team of the Cook Inlet Navigational Risk Assessment process is establishing a Harbor Safety Committee, a high priority recommendation made by the Advisory Panel
- Two Council Directors and one staff person sit on ASTM F20 and F25 Committees
- Contingency Plan reviews – see Section 5, part a
- Volunteer pipeline reports – see Section 4, part a
- Reports on tanker operations at docks – see Section 5, part f
- Board tour of Alyeska Pipeline Operations Control Center in Anchorage
- Tour of KPL terminal and Tesoro facility for staff and PROPS committee
- Tour of XTO Energy facility for staff and PROPS committee
- Presentation to PROPS committee by NOAA Ice Forecaster

## Section 2: Communication

- PROPS committee toured Navy Supervisor of Salvage facility
- Develop and deliver training sessions for industry staff on the use of CIRT
- Solicit presentations from industry to address PROPS Committee and Council about exploration, production, and marine operations in Cook Inlet.
- Buccaneer Alaska Operations updates
- Furie Operating Alaska update
- Presentation by Alaska Chadux
- Tour of OSRO facility at Cook Inlet Spill Prevention & Response
- See “Special Events” listed above

**(2b) The extent to which Cook Inlet RCAC participates in discussions with industry and government concerning permits, plans and site-specific regulations governing the activities and actions of the facilities which affect or may affect the environment in the vicinity of the terminal facilities and of crude oil tankers calling at those facilities.**

- Staff continues to work with industry to obtain Discharge Monitoring Report (DMR) data for integration into our DMR database project.
- Executive Director serves as the Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) representative to the Alaska Global Air Permit Policy Development work group for temporary oil and gas drill rigs.
- We work with agency personnel at EPA and ADEC to remain up-to-date on issues related to the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) and Alaska Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (APDES) permitting activities for oil and gas exploration, development and production facilities in state and federal waters of Cook Inlet.
- Cook Inlet RCAC continues to work with database developers to provide access to our hydrocarbon data, such as the hundreds of samples analyzed during a project led by our Director of Science and Research for an Integrated Cook Inlet Environmental Monitoring and Assessment Program (ICIEMAP). These data were integrated by industry contractors for their NPDES permit-required study on hydrocarbon fate and transport in Cook Inlet and will soon be provided on-line in a map-based data portal in partnership with AOOS.
- Cook Inlet RCAC continues its long term leadership in research specific to the Inlet population of beluga whale. That tradition began with a research partnership with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) on Beluga Whale Issues (designation of Cook Inlet beluga whale critical habitat (76 FR 20180, April, 2011)), and during the development of a research program sponsored by the Kenai Peninsula Borough to address data gaps identified in the Cook Inlet Beluga Conservation Plan.



## Section 2: Communication

That dedication continued in 2013 with the completion of the field research, and lab analysis, and 2014 final report of the Beluga Whale Winter Prey Research, in partnership with Mote Marine Lab, Alaska Department of Fish & Game, and the Kenai Peninsula Borough.

### **(2c) The extent to which the Cook Inlet RCAC works to build cooperation rather than confrontation with industry and government by:**

By staying aware of each other's activities, Cook Inlet RCAC, industry, and government representatives are better able to find consensus on difficult issues and opportunities for innovation. Below are a few examples:

- Staff participates at the Alaska Regional Response Team (ARRT) meetings and serves on the ARRT Science and Technology workgroup.
- Staff attended the Arctic/Cold Regions Oil Pipeline Conference held in Anchorage. While the Title indicates oil pipelines, there was equal focus on gas pipelines. The agenda topics and discussions seemed aimed at potential new operators to provide them with guidance for installation and operation of facilities and pipelines in the arctic. Some of the sessions were very technical in nature describing methods for pipeline design, trenching, river crossings, tundra restoration and risk analysis.
- Staff attended a Hilcorp public meeting held in Ninilchik in June 2013. The subject for the meeting was the conclusion and demobilization of seismic work done by Hilcorp. Company representatives reported that the work had been completed in January and that all of the field equipment had been retrieved. They displayed maps showing the locations of their leased areas where seismic work had occurred. The public attendance was "fair"; however their focus was mainly on the seismic work that had been done by other companies. Hilcorp was unable to address the work performed by those other firms.
- Spill Drills and Training (see Section 4, part b for details).
- Participates in the maritime industry/Coast Guard/ADEC annual Cook Inlet Navigation Safety meetings in Kenai.
- Close working relationships with the U. S. Coast Guard Sector Anchorage and the Coast Guard Marine Safety Detachment in Homer provide a conduit for exchange of information and documents related to specific issues about the environmentally safe operation of the facilities and tankers in Cook Inlet.
- Elected officials, representatives from local, state and federal governments and industry attend, and frequently are invited to participate in board and committee meetings by making presentations. Cook Inlet RCAC provides materials such as agendas, meeting packets, work plans and background information by e-mail and website postings prior to those meetings.

## Section 2: Communication

- Cook Inlet RCAC’s Board provides Ex-Officio seats for eleven (11) state and federal government agencies, including the United States Coast Guard, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation. Nine of these seats are currently filled.
- The Executive Director of Cook Inlet RCAC and the Charter Funding Companies’ representatives meet regularly to discuss relations between the organizations.
- Cook Inlet RCAC staff interacts regularly with officials of the production, refining, and shipping companies operating in Cook Inlet, and executives of these companies frequently visit the Council's Kenai office on an informal basis.
- Cook Inlet RCAC helped create the Cook Inlet Navigational Risk Assessment process, and the Executive Director serves on the Management Team, along with the Coast Guard and Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, and attends all of the Management Team and Advisory Panel meetings. The Advisory Panel consists of representatives of stakeholder organizations, including marine transportation, port managers, environmental, pilots, and others.

### **(i) Working with industry and government to develop spill prevention and contingency plans, staff...:**

- Reviews and provides comment on industry contingency plans – see Section 5, part b.
- Participates at the Alaska Regional Response Team (ARRT) meetings and on the ARRT Science and Technology workgroup.
- Works with the Kodiak Places of Refuge workgroup and the Geographic Response Strategies workgroup.
- Participates in the Sub-Area Committees and related working groups led by ADEC.
- Attends all Cook Inlet Navigational Safety Committee meetings.

### **(ii) Coordinates study projects, policies, and legislative or regulatory recommendations, staff...:**

- Developed preliminary comments on the “Proposed Rule: Assessment Framework and Organizational Restatement Regarding Preemption for Certain Regulations Issued by the Coast Guard” at the direction of the Council’s Protocol Committee. Additional comments are being prepared for submittal under the extended public comment period.
- Works closely with agency and industry for logistical support of the physical oceanography program and in developing a Cook Inlet Ocean Observing System as a component of the Alaska Ocean Observing System. Recent efforts have been to deploy a SNOTEL remote, telemetered weather station in Kamishak Bay, an area lacking in available real-time weather data. Data from this area, especially real-time wind data, are instrumental to developing accurate atmospheric wind

## Section 2: Communication

and oceanic current and wave models, which, in turn, are necessary for predicting oil spill trajectories in southern Cook Inlet. This station was deployed in summer 2012, with Cook Inlet RCAC providing annual maintenance through contracts with the US Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

- Along with Directors, will attend two ADEC-sponsored workshops in late May 2014 in Anchorage and Homer on APDES permit regulations.
- Continues to work with industry to compile Discharge Monitoring Reports (DMRs) submitted by industry to EPA and ADEC as a requirement of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit for oil industry discharges to Cook Inlet.
- Works with the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center (SERC) and the National Ballast Water Information Clearinghouse to compile and maintain a ballast water catalog for Cook Inlet, documenting ballast water sources, treatments, and discharge volumes and locations.
- Participates on the Alaska ShoreZone Workgroup which is comprised of numerous state and federal agencies, oil spill response organizations, and other organizations. Coordinates aerial and on-the-ground surveys to ensure uniformity of data.
- Participates as a research advisor to the Kachemak Bay Research Reserve which is a program sponsored by NOAA and administered by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.
- Participates as Member at Large on the Oil Spill Recovery Institute's (OSRI) Advisory Board, which sponsors oil spill research in Alaska.
- Developed and continues to expand the Cook Inlet Ice Forecasting Network in coordination with industry and the NOAA National Weather Forecast's Ice Forecasting Office.
- Worked with Alaska Congressional delegation for Cook Inlet Navigational Risk Assessment.
- Worked with ADEC and AOGCC to develop a coordinated review of Well Blowout Contingency Plans to become a component of the Oil Discharge Prevention and Contingency Plan review process.
- Executive Director serves as Chair of the Environment and Safety Committee of the International Oil and Gas Compact Commission, a Congressionally-formed Commission, and participates on the IOGCC/EPA/MOU Task Force.
- Provides comments to the State of Alaska regarding spill preparedness and recommended changes to Statutes and Regulations and expanded funding.
- Participates on the National Dispersants Workgroup sponsored by the Coastal Response Research Center (CRRC) to evaluate research needs and coordinate efforts towards understanding the fates, effects, and efficacy of dispersants.
- Provided comments to the AOGCC regarding proposed regulation changes for Hydraulic Fracturing applications, operations and reporting requirements.
- Provided comments regarding proposed changes to Alaska Administrative Code for Oil and Gas Exploration and Development by Geographical Area; Lease Plans of Operation
- Provided comments regarding APDES Permit renewal for Cook Inlet waters.

## Section 2: Communication

- Provided comments to USCG regarding proposed regulation changes for Tank Vessel Oil Transfers
- Provided comments to BOEM for 2013 Annual Progress Report on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Oil and Gas Leasing Program 2012-2017.
- Participated in an Oil Simulants workgroup to determine if there is a national consensus that oil spill simulants are needed to improve oil spill response technologies and tactics in the U.S. The workgroup is working to identify preferred substances for use as simulants in on-water oil spill response exercises and equipment trials; as well as identifying state and federal permitting requirements for simulant materials to be used and whether blanket permits may be issued to facilitate on water oil spill response exercises and equipment trials without harming the environment.

### **(iii) Keep industry and government interests informed of plans, findings, and recommendations:**

- Government agency representatives serve on the board and committees as Ex-Officio members and receive information packets (which include agendas, calendars, staff reports, and project reports) for each meeting.
- Industry affiliates are given information packets (which include agendas, calendars, staff reports, and project reports) for each meeting.
- Cook Inlet RCAC e-newsletter, *Cook Inlet Navigator*, is sent out monthly to its subscribers including industry and government representatives. The newsletter provides readers with a regular update on Cook Inlet RCAC projects.
- Information is regularly updated on the Cook Inlet RCAC website, [www.circac.org](http://www.circac.org). The website was overhauled in 2013, and officially re-launched in January 2014.
- Cook Inlet RCAC meets with personnel from various governmental agencies and Cook Inlet oil industry operators on common issues throughout the year.
- Staff regularly works with personnel from various agencies and industry during planning phases for field research to ensure coordination when possible and to reduce duplication. Staff participated in a planning meeting for the Drift River Oil Terminal facility upgrade.
- Staff regularly contacts personnel from various agencies and industry when compiling information during preparation of comments, or recommendations to obtain clarifications if needed, to ensure that information released by Cook Inlet RCAC is factual.

**SECTION 3. Scientific Work: The Coast Guard will review the extent to which the Cook Inlet RCAC coordinates its independent scientific work with the scientific work performed by or on behalf of the terminal operators and operators of the crude oil tankers in an effort to avoid unnecessary duplication, and to ensure that research and studies are relevant to issues that impact the environment in the vicinity of the terminal facilities, and of crude oil tankers calling at those facilities.**

The Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (OPA 90) mandates Cook Inlet RCAC conduct a variety of tasks that require thoughtful scientific study. For example, one task is to conduct a monitoring program that provides early detection of any environmental effects due to oil industry operations in Cook Inlet, and to determine whether oil industry operations are causing adverse impacts to Cook Inlet's ecosystem. This comprehensive and complex task, along with the numerous other mandates of OPA 90, requires rigorous scientific study designs.

This scientific work is carried out within a framework of programs, each with long-term goals designed to meet the intentions of OPA 90. Individual projects are developed to address one or more goals within a program and priorities are worked out based on short-term data needs, annual budgets, and opportunistic funding and partnerships. Depending on the scientific and logistical needs of each scientific study, staff, independent contractors and/or partner organizations conduct the work.

Cook Inlet RCAC ensures quality studies by requiring robust quality assurance/control for sampling, chemical analyses, data entry and analyses, and other study components. Despite the expenses associated with using some of the top contractors and laboratories, we believe that our ability to build partnerships is based on a certain trust others have demonstrated in the quality of our body of work. The considerable efforts we put forth to coordinate our scientific work have produced a long list of partnerships and successful projects, several of which are now state-wide initiatives:

- We initiated a coastal mapping program in Cook Inlet thirteen years ago that is now a statewide partnership of dozens of agencies and organizations
- We partnered with state and federal agencies to conduct the first Alaska components of the National Coastal Assessment, which is now the Alaska Monitoring and Assessment Program (AK-MAP)
- We organized numerous scientific panels to ensure coordination among oceanographic researchers and physical model developers for better understanding and predicting Cook Inlet's complex ocean circulation
- We initiated and led a partnership of Chevron, XTO and NOAA to conduct an extensive, statistically rigorous sediment and water column sampling program throughout Cook Inlet that led to multiple scientific presentations, reports and current actions to provide this complex database on-line

### Section 3: Scientific Work

These few examples demonstrate Cook Inlet RCAC's conviction that leveraged studies lead to a more comprehensive understanding of Cook Inlet and its complex environment, and that coordination reduces duplication and enhances comparability of data.

Funding for Cook Inlet RCAC's science, research, and monitoring efforts are through a combination of industry contract funds, federal or state agency appropriations, competitive grants, and through leveraging of funds via various partnerships. In the past 15 years, the majority of Cook Inlet RCAC's science program has been funded outside of industry contract funds through successful competitive proposals that address the program needs identified in our Strategic Plan. Most of our funded projects are also leveraged significantly by partnering with other organizations with similar goals to minimize duplication and maximize the value of the research. The development process for new scientific studies consistently includes the solicitation of input by the various organizations identified as having interests or needs for the type of data to be collected.

Described below are descriptions of Cook Inlet RCAC's scientific studies and efforts to coordinate with industry and agencies. Included are long-term initiatives that are on-going, as well as studies that were completed this year.

#### **Biological and Chemical Monitoring Program**

##### Integrated Cook Inlet Environmental Monitoring and Assessment Project (ICIEMAP)

Although the field and analytical work was completed years ago, there are on-going components of the project that include using this project database to begin building a comprehensive database of Cook Inlet sediment and water column contaminants from previous – and future – studies. In addition, we are working with database developers to provide on-line access and data aggregating tools for hydrocarbon fingerprinting data for Cook Inlet.

The ICIEMAP study design and sampling program nests within the larger Gulf of Alaska component of the National Coastal Assessment and was developed to include both probabilistic sampling and targeted sampling to assess point source discharges. Project coordination with the EPA, NOAA, Chevron and XTO resulted in a sampling plan that was approved by each agency by integrating sampling programs that had originally been designed to meet specific needs. By incorporating the component required by industry's NPDES permit, and by careful analysis and interpretation of source, background and industry-targeted hydrocarbon samples, the thoughtful planning of this project prior to sampling ensured that the study design was relevant to issues associated with terminal facility and crude oil tanker operations in Cook Inlet.

Work on the ICIEMAP data now focuses on compiling the data into formats that will allow access and visualization on the web. We are currently working with consultants and with the Alaska Ocean Observing System (AOOS) to eventually provide ICIEMAP data through the Cook Inlet data portal in a way that will allow data access and query

## Section 3: Scientific Work

tools. In addition, Cook Inlet RCAC is working to compile historical data collected since our inception so that all contaminant data will also be accessible via the web.

### Belugas – Winter Prey Availability and Contaminants

Based on known science gaps identified in the Cook Inlet Beluga Whale Conservation Plan, Cook Inlet RCAC submitted a proposal to the Kenai Peninsula Borough in January 2010 to extend earlier studies to include winter habitat areas of Cook Inlet belugas. After review by the Borough and the Cook Inlet Beluga Whale recovery team, the proposal was selected for funding with Cook Inlet RCAC identified as project lead and Mote Marine Laboratory and the Alaska Department of Fish & Game participating.

The focuses of the project were to sample for potential beluga whale winter prey species; assess prey abundance, biomass and diversity; and analyze a selection of potential prey species for hydrocarbon contaminants. Sampling was originally scheduled to begin in late fall 2011, but an early severe storm and early ice formation in the Inlet combined to delay the project. Sampling took place in spring and fall 2012, with laboratory analysis taking place through fall 2013.

A preliminary findings presentation was made to the Cook Inlet RCAC Board of Directors at its September 2013 meeting in Homer. A final report entitled “*Assessment of the Prey Availability and Oil-Related Contaminants in Winter Habitat of Cook Inlet Beluga Whales*” was submitted to the Kenai Peninsula Borough in February 2014. Multiple scientific presentations were provided to agencies and the public throughout the project. The proposed study was described at committee and Board of Directors meetings – attended by Ex Officio Directors and representatives of industry – prior to, during and after the field sampling to ensure that opportunities for coordination and for leveraging funds were explored. Prior to the project the Principal Investigators did significant outreach to ensure that the project would not duplicate efforts by any other organization, including industry consulting firms, for fish or beluga whale sampling in the Inlet. No other entity was conducting benthic trawl surveys in winter habitat of Cook Inlet beluga whales, nor were any fish tissue analyses taking place – but there was overwhelming interest in having these data gaps filled.

### **Coastal Habitat Mapping Program**

#### Alaska ShoreZone Habitat Mapping

Cook Inlet RCAC has focused on increasing our knowledge of coastal habitats in our areas of concern, based on the importance of the information for understanding potential impacts of stranded oil or dissolved hydrocarbons to nearshore and intertidal organisms and habitat. Cook Inlet’s nearshore environment, including the intertidal zone, supports numerous ecosystem components. For example, the coastal environment provides extremely important feeding habitat for resident and migrating birds; is defined as critical habitat for beluga whales; provides structure for spawning herring and habitat for out-

### Section 3: Scientific Work

migrating salmon; supports commercial and recreational shellfish harvesting; and includes extensive salt-marshes which is important habitat for organisms at all trophic levels. Throughout our efforts to obtain detailed coastal habitat information in our areas of concern, outreach to industry, agencies and other organizations, and the general public, was and continues to be a high priority, and has ensured the longevity of our study results.

In 2001, Cook Inlet RCAC conducted a coastal habitat mapping program in Cook Inlet using survey and mapping protocols named “ShoreZone”. Cook Inlet RCAC added new equipment for web-accessible ShoreZone data and imagery. Within four years, we and partnering agencies had completed mapping throughout our area of concern, including all of Cook Inlet, the Kenai Peninsula, the Katmai National Park, and all of Kodiak Island. The program continued to grow and evolve. Subsequent support by NOAA and other agencies has led to the completion of imaging and mapping surveys for over 70% of Alaska’s coast. In addition, a successful demonstration project initiated by Cook Inlet RCAC provided users with web-access to complex biological and geomorphological habitat data and digital shoreline video and photographs, allowing users to virtually “fly the coast”. Ultimately, our efforts led to the establishment of the Alaska ShoreZone Partners, and the state-wide ShoreZone database is administered and served by NOAA’s Alaska Fisheries Science Center. Users can now access data and imagery for most of Alaska’s coast at [www.alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/shorezone](http://www.alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/shorezone). This site may be accessed by the link provided on the Council’s website as well.

The statewide Alaska ShoreZone Partnership was described as “...unprecedented in size and scope...” when it received a 2009 Spirit Award by Coastal America, recognizing outstanding partnerships in protecting, preserving and restoring the nation’s coastal resources and ecosystems. The success of the Alaska ShoreZone Partnership program is based largely on the development of Alaska ShoreZone Protocols that are applied during all ShoreZone survey and mapping efforts throughout the state. This ensures the compatibility of all datasets so they can be compiled by NOAA into one database that can be served and viewed on-line. Early demonstrations of the project, dozens of proposal applications for funding to industry and agencies, and extensive public outreach since 2001 has ensured that these efforts had strong interest and support. The state-wide dataset is and can be incorporated within numerous other initiatives, such as the NOAA’s Office of Response and Restoration Environmental Response Application, and the Alaska Ocean Observing System’s Cook Inlet Response Tool data portal (described below).

Cook Inlet RCAC participated in the Incident Command Center in Anchorage for the *Kulluk* incident when the drill rig grounded on Sitkalidak Island, and our ShoreZone and Cook Inlet Response Tool project data played an important role. Responders accessed ShoreZone imagery, originally collected during a Cook Inlet RCAC project, to “see” the coast in the incident area. Throughout the response, various branches of the Incident Command System and agency personnel not at the IC used ShoreZone imagery and data for response planning. During the incident, the release of another oil spill response tool was fast-tracked to provide access to other resource data in the area and to provide access to on-line full streaming video that was not available on the ShoreZone website at the



### Section 3: Scientific Work

time. That tool, the Cook Inlet Response Tool (CIRT) was developed through a partnership between the Cook Inlet RCAC and the Alaska Ocean Observing System (AOOS), and is described in more detail below.

Finally, the stunning images collected through Alaska ShoreZone are being shared with the people of the State of Alaska through exhibits of large-format photographs under the title *Coastal Impressions*. The first museum-quality exhibition and accompanying catalog – *Coastal Impressions: A Photographic Journey along Alaska’s Gulf Coast* – featuring Cook Inlet and the Gulf of Alaska, has been presented throughout Southcentral Alaska and in Juneau. A display featuring Kodiak Island was presented during the Kodiak Area Marine Science Symposium in Kodiak in April 2014. The formats of our original Coastal Impressions exhibit and booklet were so successful that they were used by NOAA, BOEM and NPS as the basis for *Coastal Impressions: A Photographic Journey along Alaska’s Arctic*. Images from Cook Inlet have been collected and are packaged, along with a short presentation on Cook Inlet RCAC, on a flash drive to be given away by the Council at conferences, expos and other occasions.

#### Cook Inlet Response Tool (CIRT)

Cook Inlet RCAC’s coastal habitat mapping efforts have provided oil spill planning and response personnel from industry and agencies with access to high quality imagery, data and summary information to improve planning and response decisions. In Cook Inlet alone, we have collected high-resolution digital video and over 13,000 high resolution digital photographs along the entire Cook Inlet shoreline during low tides. The imagery collected in 2009 replaced lower resolution imagery collected from 2001-2003.

In addition to serving the imagery on the NOAA ShoreZone web site, we have partnered with the Alaska Ocean Observing System (AOOS) to develop a module with their much larger data visualization tool where they serve real-time sensor data, ocean model forecasts and resource data. By leveraging against the hundreds of thousands of dollars that they have invested in their state-wide, state-of-the-art data aggregation and visualization web portal, we are able to accomplish our goal of serving high resolution streaming video and digital imagery from ShoreZone along with many other data sources needed for oil spill planning and response.

The Cook Inlet Response Tool (CIRT) is a data integration and visualization product designed to assist responders in the event of an oil spill or other event. It is available as the “Cook Inlet Portal” on the AOOS website at [www.aos.org](http://www.aos.org). This interactive web-based tool combines:

- GIS special data layers
- Real time observations
- Model nowcasts and forecasts for winds, waves and ocean circulation
- ShoreZone video and imagery

## Section 3: Scientific Work

Cook Inlet was the ideal location for this demonstration project because many of the needed datasets are mature, and the area is tractable. The application is scalable so that other areas in Alaska and the nation will benefit, and this was demonstrated during the *Kulluk* incident when numerous CIRT data layers were also available for the Kodiak region and were accessed by planning and response personnel.

Prior to developing CIRT, we met with numerous organizations to assess interest and to ensure we were not duplicating efforts. For example, meetings with NOAA personnel involved with developing and managing the Environmental Response Management Application (ERMA) for oil spill planning and response took place to try to coordinate efforts. At that time, it was decided that there would be a benefit to developing CIRT through AOOS that would also provide value to the ERMA team in the event that NOAA's tool was required for our areas of concern during a real-time incident. Data layers gathered for CIRT would be made available to ERMA in the event they were required, potentially saving days and weeks of valuable time during a real incident. AOOS's data portal had the capability of serving streaming high-resolution video – a capability that was not available on ERMA.

Cook Inlet RCAC has accessed and demonstrated CIRT at various oil spill drills in our region, leading to numerous requests to provide detailed presentations and training on the use of CIRT and the Alaska ShoreZone website to industry and local oil spill responders. For example, in March 2014 Cook Inlet RCAC provided training at CISPRI for the Environmental Unit of Tesoro Alaska, and used recent incidents and local data to demonstrate both CIRT and the ShoreZone website. Also in March, we provided training to Hilcorp Alaska by targeting scenarios developed for a series of three oil spill drills in April. For these training sessions, the audience was shown how to access and download imagery, query and visualize ShoreZone habitat data, and use the CIRT tool to layer resource data, ocean circulation model results, and real-time meteorological sensor data, all while viewing associated shoreline video and high-resolution photographs of the shoreline.

Ongoing efforts for CIRT include upgrading the underlying database format from Flash to HTML5 to ensure its longevity and stability with changing internet technology. We will be updating data layers, integrating additional resource and hydrocarbon data layers, expanding the tool from Cook Inlet to our larger areas of concern (e.g. – Kodiak Island), and integrating additional oil response data layers. We will be working with ocean circulation modelers to potentially integrate oil spill trajectory modeling capabilities within CIRT.

### **Physical Oceanography Program**

Cook Inlet RCAC continues to work with industry and their contractors, state and federal agencies, and research and modeling communities to improve observational data collections on the physical oceanography of Cook Inlet and nearby areas. We drafted the first Cook Inlet Ocean Observing System Plan and continue to work closely with the Alaska Ocean Observing System (AOOS) to revise plans for the Cook Inlet area.

### Section 3: Scientific Work

Cook Inlet RCAC has continually been a partner in coordinating data collection and improving model development for Cook Inlet. Since 2011, we have worked with AOOS, the Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G) and the Department of Agriculture's National Resources Conservation Council (NRCS) to deploy and maintain a remote, telemetered weather station, based on the SNOTEL technology that was used to develop the Prince William Sound Ocean Observing System. This remote weather station based at Mikfik Lake is helping to fill a critical gap in atmospheric information for a remote corner of Cook Inlet in lower Kamishak Bay. By improving weather observational data, we can improve our ability to provide more accurate atmospheric models for lower Cook Inlet. In turn, the atmospheric models are used to drive wave and current models for Cook Inlet, which are instrumental to improving our ability to determine potential oil spill trajectories. In addition, the near real-time data alone can improve response decisions for an area of Cook Inlet that is known to be a potential oil spill "keeper beach", and which is downstream of any large potential oil spill from traffic or operations in the upper Inlet.

In the past we have worked with industry to share logistics for much of our physical oceanographic work. For example, industry has provided logistical support for deploying surface and drogued drifter buoys from CISPRI vessels, deploying high frequency surface current radars on oil platforms, deploying and towing Acoustic Doppler Current Profilers on a CISPRI vessel, deploying a surface temperature-salinity logger on a platform, and deploying and maintaining ice cameras and transmission equipment on platforms and docks. We continue to work with industry during planning for any physical oceanographic studies in the Inlet. In turn, industry has provided Cook Inlet RCAC with useful data and information from their work on Cook Inlet's physical oceanography and environment. For example, we have obtained detailed digital elevation data and imagery from their pipeline corridor mapping efforts, as well as access to their satellite data for surface drifters deployed during a recent drill.

#### **Oil Fates and Effects Program**

There is a strong link between this program and the Physical Oceanography and Coastal Habitat Mapping Programs. During the early development of Cook Inlet RCAC's strategic plan, we identified the need for better coastal environmental data and better understanding of Cook Inlet's atmospheric and ocean currents before we could develop the tools needed to improve our understanding of potential fate, transport, and effects of spilled oil, including naturally or chemically dispersed droplets. We continue to seek opportunities to conduct scientific work under those programs that will provide the tools and information necessary for many of the potential projects identified for an oil fates and effects program.

In the meantime, staff continues to address this program by participating on national, regional, state and local initiatives to stay informed about current and planned research relating to the fate and effects of spilled oil and of the various oil spill response options.

### Section 3: Scientific Work

For example, staff will attend the Advanced Oil Spill Modeling workshop at the International Oil Spill Conference in May 2014. We remain active on a national dispersants workgroup addressing fates and effects dispersants research, and will attend a meeting of this workgroup of the Coastal Response Research Center at the IOSC conference in May 2014. Staff is a member of the Oil Spill Recovery Institute Advisory Board. We participate at the BC/States Oil Spill Task Force, and at meetings of the Alaska Regional Response Team (ARRT) and its Science and Technical Committee. Staff participates at conferences and workgroups on issues relating to the goals of this program. We have worked with outside researchers to extend their studies to include Cook Inlet parameters so that their studies provide information valuable to those with an interest in Cook Inlet. For example, we provided Cook Inlet oil samples for testing at the OHMSETT facility, and provided Cook Inlet sediment samples to a Canadian study on dispersed oil/mineral fine aggregates.

Staff attended the Gulf of Mexico Oil Spill Ecosystem Conference in February 2014 to stay informed on some of the more recent research related to analytical techniques for, and the fate and effects of, dispersants, oil and dispersed oil.

Finally, the Council's Environmental Monitoring and PROPS Committees will partner to revisit oil spill trajectory models. We have approved a white paper to look at how to improve our Cook Inlet Oil Spill Model (CIOSM) project.

#### **Technical Review Program**

##### Ballast Water Catalog

This project was established to develop a Cook Inlet ballast water database and on-line catalog. The original catalogue was provided in 2004 and was compiled by Nuka Research with funds that Cook Inlet RCAC received from the USF&WS. These catalogues include information gathered from ballast water discharge reports for ships entering Cook Inlet. A more recent report updated the data through 2010 and looked at major sources and major discharge locations in order to better evaluate risks of non-indigenous species (NIS) introductions into Cook Inlet via ballast water. At the time of the first report, US Coast Guard (USCG) Federal Regulations required ballast water management practice reporting, but did not require ballast water treatment for ships entering the United States. Since that catalog was produced, the USCG passed regulations that required ballast water treatment from any ship entering the US waters from outside of the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). The updated catalog allowed us to evaluate whether risks have reduced and what are still the major risks of ballast water to Cook Inlet; a database has been compiled from the ballast water reports and the data linked to port arrival information. We are currently working with contractors to develop methods that will provide on-line access to the catalog with monthly updates and annual summaries. As with all of our science projects, we provide periodic updates and data demonstrations at committee and board meetings, with industry and agency representatives invited to attend to ensure that we are not duplicating their efforts.

## Section 3: Scientific Work

### Discharge Monitoring Report Database

Cook Inlet RCAC continues to archive and evaluate monthly Discharge Monitoring Reports (DMRs) from the major oil industry dischargers to Cook Inlet. DMRs are self-reporting documents required of industry by their National and Alaska Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES and APDES, respectively) permits that allow discharge of contaminants to Cook Inlet. Through the certification of mixing zones by the State of Alaska, these reports document concentrations discharged at “end-of-pipe” that can violate water quality standards within state-certified mixing zones. By summarizing these reports, we can compile the volumes and concentrations of certain pollutants in various discharge sources such as produced water. In the past, this project mainly focused on archiving the hardcopies of DMRs received from industry. Our contractors have developed an electronic database so that monthly DMR data can be entered and evaluated against permitted discharge limits. We are currently developing an on-line access tool that will provide comparisons of DMR data to permit requirements and will provide summary data and graphics. Industry is supplying us with copies of the DMRs so that we do not have to separately obtain them from EPA and ADEC. In April 2014, we hosted a small gathering of our Environmental Monitoring Committee, some of Cook Inlet industry representatives and the state and federal agencies responsible for administering NPDES permits and evaluating the required DMRs. The purpose of the gathering was to have them provide presentations summarizing each of their responsibilities under the NPDES and APDES programs, and to provide them with updates on our DMR database efforts in order to ensure collaboration and solicit input.

**SECTION 4. Monitoring Program: The Coast Guard will review the extent to which the Cook Inlet RCAC develops and carries out an effective monitoring program.**

Cook Inlet RCAC uses a combination of staff and independent contractors to monitor drills, exercises and training events, and occasionally participates in the planning of these events. Cook Inlet RCAC is also an active part of the drill performance evaluation working with Cook Inlet Spill Prevention and Response, Inc. (CISPRI), Incident Management professionals hired by plan holder/facility operators, the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC), and Contingency Plan writers to improve response capabilities.

**(4a). Reviewing the operation and maintenance of terminals and tankers.**

Annual Voluntary Pipeline Report

Cook Inlet RCAC worked with the Sub-sea pipeline operators to put together a standardized Annual Pipeline Activity Report on the status of pipelines in Cook Inlet. Each Cook Inlet pipeline operator provides a presentation to the PROPS Committee that includes:

- Summary of previous year's activities highlighting goals, accomplishments and improvements.
- A description, including location and age, of the facility(s).
- Pipeline design description or Inventory List (Pipe size, length, material, operating pressures, etc.).
- Identify most recent DOT audits and the date each was conducted with a brief summary of the audit.
- Description of Integrity Management Program listing general PM protocols, recent maintenance accomplishments etc.
- List risks or known issues and how each is addressed.
- List of reportable leaks from sub-sea pipelines and how each was resolved.
- Describe Spill Prevention Program, listing activities conducted during the previous year (Drills or actual spill response etc.).
- Any physical changes in facility or procedural changes as a result of activities conduct in the previous year.

Cook Inlet Energy and XTO Energy have committed to providing the PROPS Committee with a Trans Foreland Pipeline report at upcoming Council or PROPS meetings.

The Prevention, Response, Operations and Safety (PROPS) Committee hosted the Hilcorp pipeline report at its March 2013 meeting in Nikiski.

## Section 4: Monitoring Program

Staff also attended two meetings hosted by Hilcorp to address Swanson River facility updates. In attendance were representatives from the Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish & Wildlife, and Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation. The meeting was specific to Swanson River facility operations. Topics covered were spills-to-date, improvement plans and concerns.

### **(4b). Monitoring cleanup drills and actual spill cleanups.**

During each drill event, Cook Inlet RCAC staff observes the Unified Command and the Incident Management Team and makes recommendations regarding opportunities for improvement. Cook Inlet RCAC has a process for obtaining current information at the command center and distributing it to Council members for dissemination to respective communities and interest groups. Staff also brings the concerns of the Council and Committees to Command Center personnel. This process also allows Cook Inlet RCAC to test its own internal communications with its board members and committees.

Cook Inlet RCAC attended the following drills/demonstrations during this recertification period (1 September 2013 – 31 August 2014):

#### Tesoro

Cook Inlet RCAC participated in the development phase of this late 2013 drill, as well as participated during the drill, focusing on the Operations, Public Information and Environmental Sections. In the Environmental unit, staff provided access to CIRT and ShoreZone, and advised on the satellite drifter buoy interpretations based on our knowledge of Cook Inlet oceanography.

#### Hilcorp

Staff attended a Cook Inlet Pipeline drill hosted by Hilcorp at the Cook Inlet Spill Prevention and Response, Inc. (CISPRI) command center. The drill scenario centered on a tank rupture caused by an aircraft collision. The drill was part of a two day training exercise for the Hilcorp Incident Management Team (IMT). The first day was conducted as an Incident Command System (ICS) training day that allowed the IMT time to exercise the electronic forms used to manage drill functions. Day two was used as a table top drill (no equipment was deployed) where the evolutions of response activities were conducted as though the spill event had started the day before. This presented different problems for the IMT to solve and react to, resulting in a very successful drill event. Hilcorp supplied ample staffing in the command center and challenged the IMT through the use of a broad assortment of ‘injects’ (information provided at intervals throughout the drill to challenge the response team) to the spill scenario.

## Section 4: Monitoring Program

### Hilcorp

Staff attended a Swanson River drill hosted at the CISPRI command center. The drill scenario centered on a buried pipeline breach. The drill tested aspects of the contingency plan and provided a good training exercise for the Hilcorp IMT. The drill included 40 injects. This presented different problems for the IMT to solve and react to, resulting in a very successful drill event. One new component offered was a remote camera on scene that provided live video in the command center of the field deployment. Even though the field deployment was not considered the focus of the drill, it provided additional training opportunities for the Hilcorp Immediate Response Team (IRT) members that participated with CISPRI responders to deploy numerous portable tanks, pumps and skimmers.

### Hilcorp

Staff participated in a three day series of drills in mid-April 2014. Over the course of the three day drill series, staff provided advice to the Unified Command regarding Unified Plan and Sub-Area Plan provisions for Local On-Scene Coordinator (LOSC) involvement, and by providing contact information for area tribal contacts. Additionally, staff monitored ICS section functions and performance.

### Furie Operating Alaska

Staff attended and participated in the Furie Operating Alaska 2013 annual drill hosted at the CISPRI command center. Staff participated in the Public Information/Liaison Sections and demonstrated the Cook Inlet Response Tool (CIRT) to the Environmental, Planning, and Operations Sections. The drill scenario centered on an uncontrolled surface blowout on the Spartan 151 jack up rig. Furie utilizes Witt/O'Brien as an Incident Management Team to assist Furie personnel in managing the spill response. The IMT worked well together and had improved over previous drills. During the drill critique it was noted that additional personnel is needed to reduce the demands placed on some of the incident command sections, such as the environmental and planning sections, and that additional assets should have been deployed initially.

### Furie Operating Alaska

Staff attended a Furie table top drill on March 19, 2014 hosted at the CISPRI command center in Nikiski. The drill scenario took place in July and centered on a new exploratory well that had been successfully drilled by the Spartan Rig 151 and was undergoing crude oil and natural gas testing. While transporting materials from a service vessel with the rig's crane, a piece of rigging snagged beneath the load suddenly releasing tension and causing the load to swing in a pendulum motion, repeatedly impacting and puncturing both crude storage tanks. The punctured tanks released approximately 310 BBls of their crude oil contents directly into Cook Inlet and onto the rig's deck. The Unified Command determined that part of the fishery would need to be shut down to allow response activities to take place and not endanger fishermen. Cook Inlet RCAC staff worked with the Unified Command to arrange a public meeting to address the fishery closure and



## Section 4: Monitoring Program

present the extent of the spill and response activities to the community. Additionally, staff was able to demonstrate the Cook Inlet Response Tool (CIRT) to the Operations and Environmental Sections, receiving a favorable appraisal of its usefulness from both section leaders.

### Buccaneer Alaska

The company conducted their annual drill hosted at the CISPRI command center. Staff participated in the Public Information and Liaison Sections and demonstrated the Cook Inlet Response Tool to the Environmental, Planning and Operations Sections. Buccaneer also utilizes Witt/O'Brien as an Incident Management team to assist Buccaneer personnel in managing the spill response. Buccaneer had personnel in the Logistics, Finance and Public Information Sections. No Buccaneer management personnel attended the drill in person; however Buccaneer designated an alternate from Witt/O'Brien to fill the Incident Command sections such as Environmental and Planning Sections.

### XTO Energy

Staff attended the 2013 XTO drill hosted at the CISPRI facility in Nikiski. The drill scenario focused on an uncontrolled well release occurring during a work over operation. The Operations Section Deputy played a key role in directing source control measures. He is an experienced XTO employee that normally works on the platforms. Having working knowledge of the facility and the operations is important to finding creative solutions to problems. Drills are used to test the contingency plan, the Incident Management Team (IMT) and the on-scene responders. It is always a good sign when a problem is presented or injected to one or all of the participants and it is solved in a creative and effective way. It is a reliable indicator that they are fully engaged in the drill and the response. Drill facilitators noted several times throughout the drill how engaged and efficient each section had been in carrying out its tasks. All of the goals and objectives set out at the beginning of the drill were met.

### Cook Inlet Energy

Staff attended a Cook Inlet Energy drill hosted at the Witt/O'Brien facility in Anchorage. The drill centered on a subsea pipeline breach caused by an unknown vessel's anchor. Staff worked within the Operations, Planning, Environmental and Public Information Sections. Cook Inlet Energy simulated use of the ice camera to monitor recovery operations. Staff introduced the Planning and Environmental Sections to the Cook Inlet Response Tool (CIRT). During the course of every drill the Unified Command produces a press statement for distribution through the Public Information Officer (PIO) or Joint Information Center (JIC). At this drill Cook Inlet Energy conducted a mock press conference. Staff, along with Witt/O'Brien personnel played the roles of reporters and other interested parties. This is a very important progression for operators when conducting a spill drill, in that it provides the PIO/JIC and the Unified Command the opportunity to role play in a press conference environment. Like each section of the ICS, the PIO/JIC needs to practice their role for a successful spill response.

## Section 4: Monitoring Program

### Kenai Pipeline (KPL)

Staff participated in the development phase of a Tesoro/KPL drill held in Cook Inlet, at and around the KPL facility in August 2013. At the drill, the Executive Director participated as an on-water observer; additional staff participated in the Environmental Section, providing advice and recommendations to aid response efforts. Still other staff attached to the Public Information and Operations Sections. In addition, staff has been invited to attend a Tesoro/KPL drill scheduled for October 2014. While this drill will be for a refined product scenario, Tesoro has chosen to invite Cook Inlet RCAC staff as a valued participant and keen observer. Staff will attend as observers only.

### Tesoro Drill Planning

This year the drill is planned on a refined product spill which would exclude us. That said, we have been invited and warned that we may be pressed into service.

### Spill Monitoring

Cook Inlet RCAC monitors spill activity. The following spills occurred since the last recertification application was submitted in 2013:

#### April 2013

Granite Point Tank Farm – Crude Oil

#### June 2013

Trading Bay Production Facility – Crude Oil

#### July 2013

Bruce Platform – Crude Oil

Trading Bay/Grayling Pig Trap Building – Produced Water/Crude Oil

Granite Point Platform – Crude Oil

#### September 2013

Granite Point Platform – Crude Oil

#### October 2013

Granite Point Platform – Crude Oil

#### December 2013

Monopod Platform – Crude Oil

### **(4c). Reviewing results of oil spill (incident) in its region**

#### Spill Notification and Review

Cook Inlet RCAC routinely receives spill notifications from industry, USCG and ADEC, and is identified in industry contingency plans for notification in the event of a spill.

## Section 4: Monitoring Program

Staff at Cook Inlet RCAC works with ADEC and oil facility operators to review all aspects of the spill to minimize reoccurrence of the discharge. Spill notifications and updates are sent to all directors and committee members via email once all pertinent facts of the spill can be gathered. Staff routinely receives spill notifications for non-crude spills as well. When the quantity or location is significant, staff follows the same notification protocol for notifying Directors and Committee members as with a crude oil spill, as it is likely those members will receive questions from their constituents about the incident.

### Cook Inlet Annual Spill Report

Cook Inlet RCAC annually compiles a spill report using the ADEC spill database. The results from this compilation are presented to the Council and committees. Staff will present the 2014 spill report to the PROPS Committee in the summer and the Board at its fall meeting on September 12, 2014 in Kodiak.

### **(4d). Reviewing government and company reports.**

Cook Inlet RCAC staff reviews reports, study plans and manuscripts that relate to our mandates under OPA 90. These often include studies done by state and federal agencies, the Oil Spill Recovery Institute, Kachemak Bay Research Reserve, NOAA's Office of Response and Restoration, the Prince William Sound RCAC, the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council, universities, industry, and other organizations, including our stakeholder members. For example, Cook Inlet RCAC staff has:

- Reviewed documents and reports from National Marine Fisheries Service about Cook Inlet beluga whale status, critical habitat and recovery.
- Reviewed all Fact Sheets, Ocean Discharge Criteria, and other documents and study plans associated with the draft NPDES and APDES exploration permit for Cook Inlet general industry oil and gas operations.
- Reviewed spill reports from industry and agencies (ADEC and USCG NRC).
- Staff and two Directors serve as members of American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM). Director Bob Flint has reviewed proposed changes and has voted during this period on all ASTM proposals.
- Provided independent scientific peer review of proposals and reports for research entities such as the North Pacific Research Board, the Kachemak Bay Research Reserve, the Oil Spill Recovery Institute, and the Coastal Research and Response Center.
- Provided formal review for NOAA's draft sampling guidelines for ephemeral data collection to support Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA) in the event of an oil spill in the Arctic.
- Reviewed the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM)'s Alaska Studies Program and provided input for their Alaska Annual Studies Plan, FY 2015.
- Reviewed numerous submitted or final scientific manuscripts relating to contaminants research, physical oceanography, habitat mapping, and ballast water treatment technology, vectors for introductions of invasive species, ocean

## Section 4: Monitoring Program

observing systems, dispersants fates & effects, invertebrate and algal taxonomy, and many other research categories.

- Read the Durham University review article on Induced Seismicity and Hydraulic Fracturing for the recovery of Hydrocarbons for potential applicability to Cook Inlet.
- Evaluated the ARRT Biennial Work Plan, RRT Charter Revision, Regulations on Stakeholder revisions to the Unified plan and a Tribal Engagement Workgroup, as well as USCG Non-Tank Vessel Regulations on alternate compliance methods.

### **(4e). Conduct or review necessary scientific studies with or by recognized experts in the field under study.**

Most of Cook Inlet RCAC's scientific work is done through a process that brings together experts in the field. Cook Inlet RCAC often develops a team that includes expertise required for a particular study. Over the years, we've identified scientists with extensive experience and expertise in various fields of study, especially those with particular experience in Cook Inlet. During the past year, Cook Inlet RCAC has contracted or partnered with many recognized experts. Below are some examples:

- Dr. John Harper, Coastal and Ocean Sciences, Inc.: ShoreZone Mapping
- Mary Morris, Archipelago Marine Research: Shore-station species-level database for ShoreZone Mapping
- Dr. Carl Schoch, Coastwise Research: ShoreZone and Cook Inlet Response Tool (CIRT)
- Dr. Dennis Lees, Littoral Ecological and Ecosystem Services: Cook Inlet Intertidal Studies
- Mark Savoie and Gary Gillingham, Kinnetic Laboratories, Inc.: Integrated Cook Inlet Environmental Monitoring and Assessment Program (ICIEMAP)
- William Driskell, Independent Contractor: Cook Inlet contaminants and database development
- Dr. Ian Hartwell, NOAA National Status and Trends: Integrated Cook Inlet Environmental Monitoring and Assessment Program (ICIEMAP)
- Tim Robertson and Brent Higman, Nuka Research: Development of Ballast Water Catalogue and Discharge Monitoring Report Database
- Gary Greenberg, Alaska Map Company: GIS Mapping for Cook Inlet beluga winter prey study
- Dr. James Reynolds and Dr. Dana Wetzel, Mote Marine Laboratory: Cook Inlet beluga winter prey study and Cook Inlet beluga whale tissue contaminants database
- Mandy Lindeberg, NOAA Auke Bay Laboratory: ShoreZone and Seaweeds of Alaska websites
- Rob Bohanek, Axiom Consulting and Design: Cook Inlet Oil Spill Response Tool
- Dr. Kris Holdereid, NOAA National Ocean Service, Kasitsna Bay Laboratory: Cook Inlet physical oceanography

#### Section 4: Monitoring Program

- Heather Coletti, National Park Service: Katmai National Park intertidal and nearshore studies
- Dr. Scott Pegau, Science Director for Oil Spill Recovery Institute: Oil Fate and Effects Studies, Arctic Oil Research, Ocean Observing Systems
- Mark Willette, Alaska Department of Fish & Game: Beluga whale winter prey study
- Kathleen Cole, NOAA Anchorage Forecast Office: NOAA Ice Forecaster
- Sam Albanese, NOAA Anchorage Forecast Office: Warning Coordinator Meteorologist

Individual scientific studies are described in other sections. Please refer to Section 3 which describes the scientific studies and efforts to coordinate efforts with recognized experts in the fields of study.

**SECTION 5. Prevention and Response: Efforts to prevent oil spills and to plan for responding to, containing, cleaning up, and mitigating impacts of oil spills. The Coast Guard will review the extent to which the Cook Inlet RCAC...**

Cook Inlet RCAC's programs are designed to monitor actual and potential environmental impacts stemming from the operation of oil facilities in Cook Inlet, and to review operational and maintenance practices at the facility in the interest of mitigating those impacts.

The **Prevention, Response, Operations and Safety (PROPS) Committee** and the **Protocol Committee** monitor and review port organizations, operations, incidents, and vessel traffic. As industry submits additions to their contingency plans such as the addition of "spot charters," or revisions and amendments to contingency plans Cook Inlet RCAC researches the provided information with Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) and the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG).

**(5a). Periodically reviews oil spill prevention and contingency plans for terminal facilities and crude oil tankers while in Cook Inlet in light of new technological developments and changed circumstances.**

Oil spill prevention and response plans for tankers and for facilities are submitted to the State of Alaska under a five-year review cycle. Cook Inlet RCAC's Protocol Committee reviews contingency plans for new and existing operations within Cook Inlet. When these plans are reviewed every section is completely and thoroughly reviewed each time. This is done to ensure that, while some plans have been reviewed three times, nothing has been missed in the previous reviews and to look for areas where Best Available Technology (BAT) and best management practices can be implemented.

Cook Inlet RCAC continues to receive contingency plans for review, to add updates or amendments, and revisions. The following plans received approved amendments, revisions or were submitted for review during this recertification period (1 September 2013 – 31 August 2014):

- Cook Inlet Pipeline Company – 27 September 2013 – Review of Major Amendment
- Cook Inlet Pipeline – 4 November 2013 – Second round Request for Additional Information (RFAI)
- Hilcorp Alaska Production Facilities – 23 December 2013 – Review of Major Amendment

Tesoro Spot Charter reviews

Cook Inlet RCAC continues to review Tesoro spot charters as new amendments to plans are submitted. These spot charter reviews are important to the continued safety of navigation in Cook Inlet and are conducted in cooperation with ADEC.

## Section 5: Prevention and Response

Spot Charter packages are received on a routine basis and are reviewed and evaluated. Those received and reviewed during this recertification period (1 September 2013 – 31 August 2014) follow. Note: Cook Inlet RCAC received six spot charter notifications in 2013, however none were for crude oil. To date in 2014, we have received only one spot charter notification for crude oil, for the *T/V Asian Sapphire*.

- *Pacific Galaxy* – Operational period – 5 December 2013 to 9 January 2014
- *Maersk Misumi* – Operational period – 20 October 2013 to 5 November 2013
- *Banda Sea* – Operational period – 13 June 2013 to 12 July 2013
- *Explorer* – Operational period – 16 August 2013 to 9 September 2013
- *Valverde* – Operational period – 15 March 2014 to 15 April 2014
- *Asian Sapphire* – Operational period – 25 May 2014 to 30 May 2014

The Protocol Control Committee provided comments on:

- Hilcorp Alaska's Production Plan and Exploration Plan and amendments;
- Bucanear's Exploration Plan and West Eagle Amendment;
- the Alaska Administrative Code – Hydraulic Fracturing amendments;
- Regulations for Oil and Gas Exploration and Development by Geographic Area and Lease Plans of Operation;
- Cook Inlet Pipeline Company Contingency Plan;
- Proposed changes to the Unified Plan Dispersant Use Guidelines;
- USCG Assessment Framework and Organizational Restatement Regarding preemption for Certain Regulations Issued by the Coast Guard
- BOEM's 2013 Annual Progress Report on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Oil and Gas Leasing Program – 2012-2017;
- USCG Tank Vessel Oil Transfers (Docket #USCG-2013-0522); and
- APDES permit

### **(5b). Monitor periodic drills and testing of the oil spill contingency plans for terminal facilities and for crude oil tankers while in Cook Inlet.**

Cook Inlet RCAC has long advocated for exercising contingency plans through drills; which provides an excellent opportunity to verify and improve planning assumptions. Cook Inlet RCAC's role in drills is varied and in some cases Cook Inlet RCAC was integrated into the command structure. Depending on the need of the company being tested Cook Inlet RCAC participated in the following incident command structure areas:

- Unified Command
- Public Information
- Liaison
- Operations
- Planning

## Section 5: Prevention and Response

Cook Inlet RCAC has a process for obtaining current information at the command center and distributing it to Council members for dissemination to respective communities and interest groups. Staff also brings the concerns of the Council and Committees to Command Center personnel.

For more information on Drills, please refer to Section 4 part b.

### **(5c). Wind and water currents and other environmental factors in the vicinity of the terminal facilities that may affect the ability to prevent, respond to, contain, and clean up oil spills.**

Please refer to Section 3, Physical Oceanography Program that describes efforts to better understand wind and water currents in Cook Inlet. Also review Section 3 Coastal Habitat Mapping Program which describes efforts to better understand nearshore habitat – an environmental factor that affects the ability to prevent, respond to, contain, and clean up oil spills. Cook Inlet RCAC also developed and is currently improving an on-line data portal and visualization tool with the Alaska Ocean Observing System that links habitat data and imagery to oil spill planning and response efforts. This Cook Inlet Response Tool (CIRT) is described further in Section 3, and is in short a project that links the habitat information to oil spill response needs so that the information can be provided in a timely fashion at Incident Command during oil spill planning, drills and response efforts.

### **(5d). Identifies highly sensitive areas which may require special protection in the event of a spill in Cook Inlet.**

#### Coast Habitat Mapping

Cook Inlet RCAC continues to develop a coastal habitat mapping program and database for the northern Gulf of Alaska. After piloting the project in 2001, Cook Inlet RCAC has expanded this program through numerous partnerships to include much of the northern Gulf of Alaska coastline using ShoreZone Mapping protocols. This information is useful for long-term environmental monitoring, spill-response planning and protection strategies, and for natural resource management. The imagery has been used to develop response strategies “on the fly” by providing data and imagery that can be queried to identified shorelines most likely to retain oil or include known sensitive habitat. More information on the progress and environmental monitoring aspects are discussed in Section 3 of this application.

#### Geographic Response Strategies

This long-standing program, tailored to protect specific highly sensitive areas in Cook Inlet and Kodiak, can save time and resources during the critical first few hours of an oil spill response. They show responders where sensitive areas are located and where to place oil spill protection resources. Cook Inlet RCAC and its partners have steadily



## Section 5: Prevention and Response

expanded the number of sites identified. Budgeted funds for this project have been retained in order to facilitate site updates. More information for the specific Kodiak Island GRS may be found online (<http://www.state.ak.us/dec/spar/perp/grs/ki/home.htm>). Note: GRSs are now also included in the Cook Inlet Response Tool (CIRT).

### Harbor Specific Geographic Response Strategies

An on-going program, Harbor Specific GRS utilizes a template of GRS and the ADEC/Cook Inlet RCAC-created Clean Harbors and Marinas initiative. This program follows the GRS template to prevent spilled oil from entering small boat harbor areas with the additional benefit of developing a spill response and prevention program to address any spills that may occur inside the harbor area. Cook Inlet RCAC worked with ADEC to develop a work plan and form the Harbor Specific GRS workgroup. The workgroup set up the basic groundwork for the first phase of the project:

- Gather the best management practices for Alaska Ports and Harbors
- Conduct a gap analysis of the pilot project harbors – Homer and Seldovia
- Develop a training, education and public incentive/outreach program to fill the gaps
- Form two subgroups to perform bullets 1 and 2, and a second to perform bullet 3

### **(5e). Periodically reviews port organization, operations, incidents and the adequacy and maintenance of vessel traffic service systems designed to assure safe transit of crude oil tankers.**

#### Cook Inlet Navigational Risk Assessment

Cook Inlet RCAC is actively working on developing an area-wide Harbor Safety Committee as part of the Advisory Panel's recommendations for immediate implementation.

#### Cook Inlet Vessel Traffic Study

Cook Inlet RCAC collected vessel tracking data provided by the Marine Exchange of Alaska for Cook Inlet over an eleven month period. The data was compiled and analyzed by Cape International, an independent contractor. Twenty-two tanker ships called at Cook Inlet during the study period, spending approximately 420 tanker-days in Cook Inlet, either in transit, at berth, or moving between Nikiski and the Drift River Terminal. Annualized, that is 540 tanker-days. This study identifies the makeup and duration of vessels entering Cook Inlet and will continue over a 3-5 year period in order to establish a base line of vessel activity and data for a Cook Inlet Risk Assessment. Although no work was done on this project in 2010-2011, we are maintaining funds to be available to update the project for use in the Cook Inlet Risk Assessment.

## Section 5: Prevention and Response

### Potential Places of Refuge

Cook Inlet RCAC participated in the collaborative workgroup that identified and selected sites for Places of Refuge development. We maintain funds to be available to update the project for use in the Cook Inlet Risk Assessment and CIRT.

### Cook Inlet Ice Forecasting Network

We have come a long way since pre-2008, when our ice forecasting consisted of a reporting form, direct observations and satellite radar imagery. In 2008, plans were launched to provide a network of cameras for accurate ice forecasting in Cook Inlet. In 2009 the installation of transmission circuits at key locations began, providing landline data carrier service to support high resolution video cameras. Camera installation began in 2010, and the control station at the NOAA office in Anchorage was installed to allow access to the ice images provided to the NOAA Ice Forecaster. A grant from the Alaska Legislature in 2012 paved the way for the purchase and installation of two additional cameras and transmitters in 2013 – onshore at the ASRC facility in Nikiski, and on Hilcorp's offshore Osprey platform.

Staff has submitted a grant request to the State of Alaska for an additional \$70,000 to expand and update the camera network. The funds would be used to add cameras and/or update two cameras. New locations we are researching are at the mouth of the Kenai River, and Fire Island. The cameras at the ASRC facility and the OSK dock facility have been targeted for updating. These are the old style which provide good images but do not allow the viewer to zoom into a target at great distance without image interference by the camera body, creating a false ceiling that displays a black band at the top of the image. The new cameras do not present this obstacle.

The remaining Cook Inlet RCAC funds would be used to maintain the reoccurring expenses to operate the system and any maintenance that is required. Additionally, Cook Inlet RCAC staff met with the Alaska Ocean Observing System (AOOS) staff to discuss possible funding for a publically available camera to be located at the mouth of the Kenai River. We have recently received notification that the AOOS Board has approved funding for that camera. Cook Inlet RCAC staff has also met with City of Kenai representatives to identify and approve a camera location and to discuss the preliminary details for a partnering agreement. Three sites were identified and preliminary approval received; we are awaiting final approval.

### **(5f). Periodically reviews standards for tankers bound for, loading at, exiting from or otherwise using the terminal facilities.**

#### Tanker Reports

Cook Inlet RCAC continues to receive KPL dock schedule updates with information regarding the mooring status of Tesoro Chartered tankers in Cook Inlet.

## Section 5: Prevention and Response

These tanker mooring reports and Spot Charter packages promote an open and earnest cooperation between industry and the citizens of Cook Inlet, and continue to build on the transparency mandated by OPA 90. Interaction such as this diminishes complacency, addressing a primary concern of OPA 90. In addition, we provide comments to the USCG on tanker loading (USCG Tank Vessel Oil Transfers – Docket #USCG-2013-0522).

### **(5g). Reports findings to local industry and responsible State and Federal officials.**

Cook Inlet RCAC supplies industry and agencies with Committee meeting packages which include copies of completed studies, staff reports on Cook Inlet RCAC activities and upcoming studies, reports, and staff/ committee activities. Please refer also to Sec. 2.

**SECTION 6. Funding: The Coast Guard will determine whether the Cook Inlet RCAC has entered into a contract for funding in accordance with the requirements of 33 U.S.C 2732(o) and will review the Cook Inlet RCAC's expenditures of such funds.**

Cook Inlet RCAC's primary funding source is a long-term contract with the Charter Funding Companies operating in Cook Inlet. The contract provides \$1.3 Million per year with an annual Anchorage CPI increase. A copy of the funding agreement is included as **Appendix 11**.

The Companies that fund Cook Inlet RCAC are:

- Cook Inlet Pipeline Company
- Cook Inlet Energy
- Buccaneer
- BlueCrest Energy (beginning June 2014)
- ConocoPhillips Company
- Tesoro
- Hilcorp Alaska
- XTO Energy
- Furie Operating Alaska

As discussed above, Cook Inlet RCAC also secures funding from other sources in the course of conducting joint scientific and technical research and spill prevention activities, and occasionally contributes its own funds to research projects conducted by others. Below are sources of external funding:

- AK Designated Legislation/Kenai Peninsula Borough
- Kenai Peninsula Borough (separate from above)
- Alaska State Legislature (separate from above)
- US Fish & Wildlife Service
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- NOAA/National Marine Fisheries Service
- Tesoro
- National Fish & Wildlife Foundation
- Prince William Sound Regional Citizens Advisory Council
- United States Coast Guard

**(6a). Expenditures and controls are carried out in a manner consistent with sound business practices.**

The annual audit of Cook Inlet RCAC's financial statements, in the opinion of the independent auditor, was "...in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted

## Part 6: Funding

in the United States of America”. As previously mentioned, the full 2012 report is included as Appendix 3.

**(6b). Expenditures are reasonably related to the prevention or response to oil spills from tanker or terminal operations, including environmental information, in the Cook Inlet RCAC area of responsibility.**

The Cook Inlet RCAC approves an annual operating budget that guides the expenditure of funds. A copy of the 2013 and 2014 Operating Budgets are attached as **Appendix 12**.

**SECTION 7. Accessibility of Application: The Coast Guard’s review will include an examination of the extent to which the Cook Inlet RCAC provided notification to the public via local press releases that it has applied for certification and the extent to which the Cook Inlet RCAC has ensured that the application is accessible for public review.**

Cook Inlet RCAC will inform the public of its recertification application through advertisements and public service announcements in newspapers of wide distribution in Kodiak, Anchorage and the Kenai Peninsula. Press releases will be sent to print, radio and television media outlets. Copies of the application will be available at the Kenai office, Anchorage office, and online at [www.circac.org](http://www.circac.org).

Advertisement/Press Release Example:

The Cook Inlet Regional Citizens Advisory Council (Cook Inlet RCAC) is a nonprofit corporation organized exclusively for the oversight, monitoring, assessing and evaluation of oil spill prevention, safety and response plans, terminal and oil tanker operations, and environmental impacts of oil tanker and oil terminal operations in Cook Inlet.

The Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (OPA 90) includes a provision calling for an annual review of Cook Inlet RCAC’s activities by the United States Coast Guard (USCG). The recertification process is designed to insure that Cook Inlet RCAC is meeting the mandates spelled out in OPA 90 and is representing the interests of the communities within the vicinity of the terminal operations.

A copy of Cook Inlet RCAC’s application to the USCG is available at the Cook Inlet RCAC Kenai office at 8195 Kenai Spur Highway, at the Anchorage office at 1130 W. 6<sup>th</sup> Ave. Suite 110, or online at [www.circac.org](http://www.circac.org). The deadline for public comment to the USCG is August 1, 2014. Comments should be sent to:

Attention:  
Department  
Address  
City/State/Zip

Letters should reference USCG-2014-###, which is the document number from the Coast Guard’s Federal Register notice about the recertification. For more information, call Cook Inlet RCAC at 907-283-7222.

### End of Report ###