

ALASKA REGIONAL RESPONSE TEAM

Meeting Summary

**0815 – 1630 Wednesday January 27, 2016
BP Energy Center
Anchorage, AK**

Sign-in sheets can be viewed [here](#).

The agenda can be viewed [here](#).

Copies of the presentations and handouts are available on the Alaska Regional Response Team website, under ARRT Meetings. <http://alaskarrt.org>

SAFETY BRIEFING, INTRODUCTIONS, OPENING REMARKS

Mr. Nick Knowles, the Alaska Regional Response Team (ARRT) coordinator with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), welcomed the meeting attendees, and conducted introductions. BP Energy Center staff provided a safety briefing for the facility.

The ARRT co-chairs—Mr. Mark Everett, U.S. Coast Guard (USCG); Mr. Chris Field, (EPA); and Ms. Kristin Ryan, Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC)—welcomed all the attendees to the meeting and offered opening remarks. Mr. Field summarized the work for reviewing and addressing the comments received on the Dispersant Plan; an EPA mandate requiring a review of downstream notification procedures and a notification exercise, and the ARRT Annual Strategy meeting held on September 25, 2015, in Anchorage, AK. Mr. Everett also spoke on the process and work on the Dispersant Use Plan, in particular the responses to Tribal and public comments. Ms. Ryan also provided an update on the status of ADEC, including the state budget limitations. ADEC has made some changes in Contingency Plan (C Plan) regulations, including requiring that plans be submitted electronically and defining what constitutes a minor and major change to the C Plan. She also noted that Mr. Gary Folley will be retiring.

Biennial Work Plan

Mr. Everett reviewed the ARRT Biennial Work Plan for 2016-2017. He noted, in particular, a new priority on Page 3, 3rd bullet: *“Where relevant to ARRT equities, ARRT member agencies will work collaboratively to implement the Reasonable and Prudent Measures (RPM) (with Terms and Conditions) from the NMFS ESA Biological Opinion and, to the maximum extent practicable, the Conservation Recommendations from the NMFS and USFWS Biological Opinions.”* This priority was added in recognition of the need to ensure that the recommendations and requirements stipulated in the Endangered Species Act (ESA) biological opinions prepared by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) are enacted. A copy of the work plan is available on the ARRT Website [here](#).

WORKING GROUP/SUBCOMMITTEE/TASK FORCE REPORTS

Unified Plan Update Committee Update

Mr. Knowles presented a summary of the current status of the Unified Plan Update Committee (UPUC). The Steering Committee has revised Annex D of the Unified Plan, which delineates the process to update the Unified Plan. The ARRT has also issued final approval for updates to Annex D of the Unified Plan in December 2015. [Annex D](#) is available on the ADEC Unified Plan website. The next Unified Plan section to be addressed is the Regional Stakeholder Committee guidance in Annex B.

Food Safety Task Force Update

Mr. Doug Helton, U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), provided an update on the status of the ARRT Food Safety Task Force. He summarized the food-related issues that are applicable and unique to Alaska, including subsistence food sources, food security concerns and cultural value of food sources. The task force has completed a summary document that includes the issues to be addressed in a plan specific to food safety. This document has been posted on the ARRT website [here](#).

EPA Emergency Response Team

Mr. Henry Gerard, the EPA Emergency Response Team liaison for Region 10, offered a presentation of the Emergency Response Team role and capabilities. His presentation is available on the ARRT website [here](#).

ARRT Cultural Resources Committee

Dr. Philip Johnson, U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI), updated the ARRT on the status of the ARRT Cultural Resources Committee. The committee has not met since the last ARRT meeting. However, he has met with the State Historic Preservation Office regarding the need to reconstitute the committee. Based on meetings with On-Scene Coordinators (OSCs), it is also recognized that the roster of qualified cultural resource experts needs to be expanded and the committee will be looking into offering the necessary training to meet this need.

ARRT Wildlife Protection Committee

Dr. Johnson also updated the ARRT on the status of the ARRT Wildlife Protection Committee. The committee has not met since the last ARRT meeting.

Science and Technology Committee

Ms. Catherine Berg, NOAA Scientific Support Coordinator, provided an update on the status of the Science and Technology Committee (STC). The STC polled the OSCs to determine the science topics that need to be addressed by the committees. The priorities include:

- Assist the OSCs in preparing guidance to assist in determining dispersant avoidance areas;
- Develop a framework to aid in analyzing environmental trade-offs; and
- Advising the Federal OSCs (FOSCs) in incorporating recommendations and requirements specified in the ESA biological opinions.

Other priorities include providing speakers for the ARRT and Area Planning meetings, advancing the food safety plan for spill response, informing OSCs on dispersants, and coordinating with the National Response Team (NRT) STC to ensure alignment on complex issues. An upcoming project will include providing guidance on the *in situ* burning policy. Ms. Berg's presentation is available on the ARRT website [here](#).

National Response Team, National Environmental Subcommittee

Ms. Marcia Combes informed the ARRT on the National Response Team, National Environmental Subcommittee's (NRT NES) status. The NRT NES is looking into ESA Section 7 compliance, in particular looking at pre-spill planning and consultation versus emergency consultation. The ARRT work on the ESA Consultation of the Unified Plan is being used as a potential model for the rest of the nation. A task the subcommittee is addressing is to determine the minimum requirement for pre-spill planning.

Science Action Network

Mr. Everett reported on the status of the Science Action Network. The network was conceived to facilitate information sharing and promote coordination between academic researchers and subject matter experts with spill responders and other disaster responders during responses using regional response teams as the conduit. Mr. Everett will be discussing the Science Action Network concept with the director of the Arctic Domain Awareness Center, an organization with a mission to provide support to Department of Homeland Security agencies in arctic matters, in the hopes that the Center will embrace this model.

DISPERSANT USE PRESENTATIONS

Dispersant Working Group Update

CDR Stocklin provided an update on the status of the work of the Dispersant Working Group (DWG). He remarked that this planning process has been an unprecedented collaborative process and thanked the members of the task force.

Mr. Everett provided a summary of the history of the dispersant use plan and the process, including the outreach, education and consultation process. Over 500 comments from the general public were received by the working group. Sixty representatives from 39 federally-recognized tribes participated in the outreach process and submitted over 150 comments. The comments and responses to comments are posted on the ARRT website, on the Unified Plan page [here](#). The final plan, public comment matrix and tribal comment matrix have been reviewed by the ARRT. Representatives of the five signatory agencies of the plan signed the plan at this meeting. This plan is Appendix 1 to Annex F of the Unified Plan and is posted on the ADEC Unified Plan website [here](#).

The dispersant use protocol in the updated plan will be effective January 27, 2016. The industry has 24 months from January 27, 2016, to comply with preauthorization capability requirements. Preauthorization areas will be effective 24 months from January 27, 2016. During this 24-month period, OSCs will identify dispersant use avoidance areas within the preauthorization zone by subarea. If the process is not complete in this timeframe, the entire subarea will revert to protocol for the undesignated area.

Process for Identifying Dispersant Avoidance Areas in Subarea Plans

Mr. Everett introduced the process for identifying dispersant use avoidance areas in the subarea plans, which is described in the new plan. This process will occur over the next 24 months. The purpose is to identify in the preauthorization zone, however, there is no restrictions on the identification of additional avoidance areas within the case-by-case zone. There is no limitation or timeframe for the identification of avoidance areas outside of the preauthorization zone.

Dispersants and Wildlife: Potential Risks and Benefits

Dr. Lori Verbrugge, USFWS, and Dr. Sarah Allan, NOAA Office of Response and Restoration, offered a presentation on dispersants and the potential risks and benefits to wildlife. This included an overview of the effects of oil to wildlife; the properties and effectiveness of dispersants and chemically dispersed oil; the toxicity of oil and its component, poly-aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs). They spoke of oil as a physical and chemical toxicant and its ability to impair habitats. They noted that dispersants do not affect the toxicity of oil, but rather affect the exposure routes and duration. Dispersants reduce surface and shoreline oiling, but increase the bioavailability of oil chemicals and increase exposure by pelagic organisms. They provided examples of general categories of wildlife, which vary in whether their exposure to oil is increased or decreased by the effective use of dispersants. (Example: The use of dispersants reduces the exposure of mammals and birds to external oiling, but increase the exposure to dispersed oil by pelagic fish and invertebrates.) Their presentation is available online [here](#).

GENERAL DISCUSSION TOPICS & SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE) Arctic Spill Response Equipment Database

Mr. Steve Pearson provided a summary on the international arctic spill response equipment. The scope of this project includes identifying oil spill response equipment and developing a catalog database to assist in identifying and procuring spill response equipment (government-owned and commercially-owned) to be used to respond to an arctic oil spill. Mr. Pearson's presentation is available online [here](#).

Arctic Environmental Response Management Application (ERMA)

Mr. Zach Winters-Staszak, NOAA, spoke on the Environmental Response Management Application (and specifically the Arctic ERMA, available online at <https://erma.noaa.gov/arctic/erma>). The intent of this presentation was to showcase new ERMA capabilities and offer a viable tool to OSCs to develop dispersant use areas to be avoided.

Mr. Winters-Staszak's presentation is available [here](#).

Special Note

Mr. Gary Folley is retiring at the end of April 2016. Mr. Field and Mr. Everett recognized his extensive work and knowledge in spill response and prevention.

ON-SCENE COORDINATOR REPORTS

U.S. Coast Guard Prince William Sound COTP Zone

CDR Joe Lally, MSU Valdez, made a presentation on the spills and responses in Prince William Sound since October 2015. The 2016 PREP Exercise will be a full Incident Management Team tabletop exercise

in Cordova, AK, which will be held in conjunction with the Prince William Sound Subarea Contingency Plan (SCP) meeting and various outreach meetings during the week of February 21, 2016. The Subarea Committee meeting will be on February 23, 2016 and the exercise on February 24, 2016. CDR Lally's presentation is available [here](#).

U.S. Coast Guard Western Alaska Captain of the Port (COTP) Zone

CAPT Paul Albertson, USCG Sector Anchorage, reviewed the recent spill responses and lessons learned in Western Alaska. He also provided a status concerning the investigation into the source of the mystery sheen in Seward, AK, in Resurrection Bay that was addressed at the September 2015 ARRT Meeting. There will be a Nome Arctic Exercise June 6-10, 2016 and a North Slope Mutual Aid Drill in August 2016. The Sector is currently working on SCP revisions. The plan status is as follows:

- Cook Inlet SCP revision is in progress with a public review draft expected to be complete in late summer 2016.
- Northwest Arctic SCP revision has been initiated and an outreach meeting was held in Nome, January 26, 2016.
- Kodiak SCP initial meeting will be held on May 24, 2016.

CAPT Albertson's presentation is available [here](#).

U.S. Coast Guard Southeast COTP Zone

CDR Patrick Hilbert, USCG Sector Juneau, made a presentation on spill responses in Southeast Alaska. He highlighted the response to the M/V Challenger, which sunk in Gastineau Channel on September 12, 2015. The FOSC has received approval from the USCG Commandant to remove and destroy the vessel. He also reviewed the tribal outreach activities in Southeast Alaska. To support this, the Sector has hired a full-time tribal coordinator. CDR Hilbert's presentation is available [here](#).

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Mr. Matt Carr, EPA, provided an overview of the recent and upcoming activities of the Alaska FOSCs, including drills and Spill Prevention, Containment, and Countermeasures (SPCC) and Facility Response Plan (FRP) inspections. No significant spills have occurred since October 2015. He reviewed the FY16 planning initiatives of the EPA. Mr. Carr's presentation is available [here](#).

Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation

Mr. Gary Folley, ADEC, reviewed the recent cases and responses by ADEC. He reviewed the 20-year spill history. He also reviewed the FY16 program priorities. One of the highest priorities includes improving the drill and exercise program and developing a spill prevention program for unregulated refined fuel tanks. He also reviewed the goals and objectives of ADEC – many of these are intended to improve state and industry exercise, while making them more cost effective. He also presented ADEC's proposal to restructure area planning in Alaska, reducing the number of subarea plans from ten to three and restructuring them so they are stand-alone plans. This would result in the ARRT having oversight of a regional plan and the OSCs with oversight of the area plans. Mr. Folley's presentation is available [here](#).

CONCLUDING COMMENTS AND REMARKS

Public Comments

Non-member meeting attendees were given the opportunity to offer public comments. Four people commented: Delice Calcote (Alaska Inter-Tribal Council), Tom Lakosh, Karen Pletnikoff (Aleutians Pribilof Islands Association) and Rhonda Sparks (Defenders of Wildlife).

Closing Remarks

Representatives of the ARRT member agencies and the OSCs offered closing comments and remarks.

The co-chairs closed the meeting by making their final remarks. Mr. Everett also responded to a public comment made during the meeting regarding the comments submitted for the Dispersant Use Plan. The comments and responses to the public comments are posted on the ARRT website (<http://alaskarrt.org>) on the Unified Plan page. The responses to the tribal comments are being emailed and mailed to the participating tribes. The co-chairs expressed their appreciation for the attendees' participation and the meeting was adjourned.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

- Spring 2016 in Kodiak (May 24 & 25, 2016)
- Fall 2016 in Nome (September 27 & 28, 2016)
- Annual ARRT Strategy Session in Anchorage September 29, 2016

FOLLOW-UP SUBJECTS & ASSIGNMENT OF TASKS

- ARRT members to review Guidance for Development of Exclusion Areas and Biennial Work Plan

PARTICIPANT SUMMARY:

Member Agencies Attendance

Member Agency	Present	Not Present
Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation	●	
Department of Agriculture	●	
Department of Commerce	●	
Department of Defense	●	
Department of Energy	●	
Department of Health and Human Services	●	

Department of Interior	●	
Department of Justice		●
Department of Labor		●
Department of Transportation		●
Environmental Protection Agency	●	
Federal Emergency Management Agency	●	
General Services Agency		●
U.S. Coast Guard	●	

Non-member Organizations in Attendance

Alaska Chadux Corporation
Alaska Incident Response
Alaska Inter-Tribal Council
Alaska Maritime Prevention Network
Alaska Response Company
Alaska Sealife Center
Aleutians Pribilof Islands Association (Consortium of 12 federally-recognized tribes)
BP Exploration
BP Shipping
Conoco Phillips
Cook Inlet Regional Citizen’s Advisory Council
Copper River Native Association (Consortium of eight federally-recognized tribes)
Defenders of Wildlife
Gallagher Marine
Hilcorp
NWH
Pedro Bay Village Council (federally-recognized tribe)
Petroleum News
Pew Charitable Trust
Prince William Sound Regional Citizen’s Advisory Council
Southeast Alaska Petroleum Response Organization (SEAPRO)
State of Alaska, Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Epidemiology
State of Alaska, Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management
The Response Group