

Workgroup Meeting of the Aleutian Subarea PPOR Workgroup

January 31, 2007
USFWS Service Center
1011 E. Tudor Rd.
Anchorage, Alaska

Attendees:

Dave Bash, King Cove -Teleconference	Larry Iwamoto, ADEC
Joe Bereskin, Akutan	Mark Janes, Nuka Research
John Bauer, ADEC	Shirley Marquardt, Unalaska
Catherine Berg, USFWS	Shannon Miller, ADNR
John Brown, ADEC	Steve Moreno, Alaska Marine Pilots
Mark DeVries, USCG	Doug Mutter, USDOJ
Rosanna Dickens, ADEC	Leslie Pearson, ADEC
Meredeth Gillman, USCG	Tim Robertson, Nuka Research
Mary Goolie, USEPA	Tammy Stromberg, Akutan
Paul Gronholdt, Sand Point	Walter Tague, Crowley Marine
Eric Henry, ADEC	David Zezula, NOAA

Doug Mutter opened the meeting, familiarized the group with the facility and led the introductions.

Mark DeVries, Captain of the Port (COTP) for Western Alaska, offered comments regarding the Potential Places of Refuge (PPOR) Projects that have been conducted in Alaska. He noted that Alaska is ahead in the nation in addressing the issues of stricken or disabled vessels and that the participating members and agencies deserve credit for this accomplishment. He is pleased to have these pre-crisis tools, but pointed out that more work needs to be done in many areas in Alaska. As evidence he outlined the string of recent events, from the grounding of the Selendang Ayu to an incident that was happening in the North Pacific. All these events offer confirmation that the planning that takes place prior to a crisis will lessen the negative consequences.

Tim Robertson gave a presentation on potential places of refuge and the process that will be used to develop them in the Aleutian Subarea. This presentation,

070131PPORnuka.ppt, is available online at the workgroup page under the heading "Meeting Materials". (www.dec.state.ak.us/spar/perp/aippor/wg.htm)

Key points of the presentation included:

- There are no pre-designated places of refuge
- Potential sites will be identified and relevant info is collected
- A PPOR is selected on an incident specific basis
- The document is produced by a workgroup process
- The plans will become a section in the Subarea Contingency Plan

Aleutian Subarea Potential Places of Refuge Workgroup

- Decision-making Guidelines and Pre-incident Planning greatly aid the On-scene coordinators and Unified Command during an actual event
- Public involvement at the planning stage is critical to success

He reviewed the content and format of the past plans used in other Subareas.

Mr. Robertson stated the goal of the meeting is to

- Provide public information
- Review and collect edits to developed work products
- Develop draft list of PPOR in Aleutians

John Bauer of the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation then gave a presentation of the Alaska Regional Response Team's (ARRT) PPOR Decision-making Guidelines. The ARRT formed a workgroup to develop guidelines to assist the Captain of the Port and other decision makers who may have to assist stricken vessels. This presentation, ADEC_PPOR_GuideLines.ppt, is available online at the workgroup page under the heading "Meeting Materials". (www.dec.state.ak.us/spar/perp/aippor/wg.htm)

The following parameters were established to guide the workgroup:

- Present guidelines for use throughout Alaska
- Identify process for decision-making
- Assist authorities in PPOR decision-making
- Use standardized format for evaluating risks
- Recognize the authorities and resources of agencies, local governments, landowners

He pointed out that the decision-making guidelines are separate from pre-identifying a PPOR. The plans identify a management structure that includes:

- COTP activating a Unified Command, if time allows
- Provisions for consultation of local and tribal governments, landowners, resource agencies
- If time does not allow, COTP addresses the PPOR request immediately and notifies stakeholders as soon as possible

The ARRT Guidelines encourage a risk-based decision-making process to evaluate the risks of the vessel to public health and the environment in light of the following scenarios:

- If the ship remains in the same position
- If the ship continues on its voyage
- If the ship reaches a place of refuge
- If the ship is taken out to sea
- If the ship is to be scuttled

The Guidelines provide a step-by-step process and checklists that prompt:

- The vessel master or ownership to provide status of the ship
- Determination of whether a vessel should be offered a place of refuge
- Evaluation of feasibility of a specific place of refuge or grounding site
- Identification of resources at risk

Mr. Bauer offered to take questions.

“How can this information be used and/or communicated to vessel operators? Could the information be in the Coast Pilot?”

Mr. Bauer noted that this wasn't done in other projects. Mark DeVries noted that these plans are not for use by vessel masters, they are used in an incident command structure.

Mr. Robertson led the group in a review of the Risk Maps (<http://www.dec.state.ak.us/spar/perp/grs/ai/airiskmap.pdf>) that were developed to assist decision making for the PPOR project as well as the concurrent Geographic Response Strategies project. He noted that the maps were last updated in May of 2004 and that additional study has gone into the risks in the area. He pointed out the study commissioned by ADEC “Vessel Traffic in the Aleutians Subarea” (http://www.dec.state.ak.us/spar/perp/docs/060920vesselreport_s.pdf) and that data from that report and edits offered today will be included in the maps.

The group pointed out additional information and directed the changes in the maps.

Major changes will include:

- Inclusion of new data regarding spills, tramper activities, airports
- Note that commercial fishing occurs in all areas under 200 ft. water depth,
- Addition of a map layer noting areas of subsistence use
- Addition of a map layer noting islands that are “rat-free”

The group then reviewed charts of the entire subarea to identify PPOR. With direction from Steve Moreno of the Alaska Marine Pilots and Aleutian East Borough Council member, Paul Gronholdt, of Sand Point the group identified sites that will be further researched as PPORs for vessels of different drafts. Approximately 70 sites were identified.

Mr. Robertson concluded the meeting outlining a timeline for the research and development of the PPOR products. These will be posted to the project website and available for review prior to the next meeting. He offered that the next meeting should be in May and that it will take place in Unalaska. The group deferred setting an exact date to be able to consult with individuals in Unalaska to ensure a minimum of conflicting events.

Action Items:

- Alaska Marine Pilots will provide their list of “port parameters” to Nuka Research
- USFWS will provide a list of rat free islands.
- ADEC and USCG will review the list of response equipment and offer corrections.
- ADF&G will provide new research on subsistence areas in the State
- Nuka Research will adjust the Risk Maps, develop the Site Assessment Matrix, Introductory Section for the SCP, and the PPOR Plans to capture the information and edits collected in the meeting and will research additional information as directed.
- Nuka Research will post all products to the web and the workgroup will be notified.
- Nuka will work with the workgroup to set a date for the next meeting.