

## **Meeting of the Aleutians Subarea GRS Workgroup**

January 30, 2008  
ADEC Conference Room  
555 Cordova St.  
Anchorage, Alaska

### **Attendees:**

Greg Balogh, USFWS	Mark Janes, Nuka Research
Amber Bethe, ADF&G	Doug Mutter, DOI
John Brown, ADEC	Pete Pritchard, Alaska Chadux
Keith Darby, Alaska Chadux	Tim Robertson, Nuka Research
Paul Day, City of Sand Point	Tom Reuter, Alaska Maritime Agencies
Gary Folley, ADEC	Kent Sundseth, AMNWR
Dale Gardner, ADEC	Moses Tcheripanoff, Aleutian Pribilof Is. Association
Meredith Gillman, USCG	David Zezula, NOAA
Paul Gronholdt, AEB/Sand Point	

### **Proceedings:**

John Brown of ADEC opened the workgroup meeting at 9:30 am and gave a safety briefing for the meeting space.

Tim Robertson of Nuka Research lead the introduction for the group. He gave a brief overview of the project to date, explaining the initial start of the program in 2004 prior to the Selendang Ayu incident and the subsequent development of GRS for 20 sites in the Aleutians East B Zone. He outlined what a Geographic Response Strategy (GRS) is and how they are developed. He then reviewed the three general criteria used for selecting sites for which GRS would be developed. These are:

- Environmental (or cultural/historical) Sensitivity
- Risk of being impacted by a water borne spill
- Ability to protect the area with the current technology and resources available

He stated the goals for the meeting as

- Review the Site Selection Matrix (SSM) and add any new or missing resource information.
- Review the sites nominated previously
- Nominate additional sites for a total of 20 sites to have GRS developed, and
- Establish a plan to facilitate site surveys

Doug Mutter of the Department of the Interior led the workgroup in a discussion and review of the SSM. The workgroup offered input on endangered species and information of fish resources in the area. Moses Tcheripanoff of the Aleutian/Pribilof Island Association requested that shellfish resources be designated in the SSM. The group concurred. After the initial edits were presented and recorded for inclusion in the SSM,

the resource agencies agreed to have additional personnel review the SSM and submit any additional edits by the end of February.

Mr. Robertson then led the workgroup in reviewing the sites previously selected during the initial stage of the project. In 2004 the workgroup nominated 13 sites in the East A Zone as High Priority sites. These sites did not receive public input or review at that time and are now being reconsidered. The sites included:

1. AEA10-Albatros Anchorage/Balboa Bay
2. AEA11-Lefthand Bay/Balboa Bay
3. AEA12-Balboa Bay
4. AEA32-King Cove
5. AEA35-Kinzarof Lagoon/Cold Bay
6. AEA70-Izembek Lagoon-east
7. AEA71-Izembek Lagoon-west
8. AEA75-West Nelson Lagoon
9. AEA76-Kudbodin Islands
10. AEA77-Mud Bay/Deer Island
11. AEA80-Port Moller Bay-mouth
12. AEA81-Port Moller Bay-head
13. AEA82-Port Moller

The workgroup removed AEA12-Balboa Bay, citing that the majority of resources were at the back of the bay and already covered by the nominations of Albatros Anchorage and Lefthand Bay, and the area was generally exposed to extreme weather and ocean states.

The group discussed the ability to stage responses on the north side of the Alaska Peninsula. The distances and prevailing weather would make staging a response in a timely manner extremely challenging. The workgroup discussed Izembek Lagoon and Port Moller sites, which everyone agreed were some of the most sensitive and important in the entire Subarea, but the risk was relatively low and response resources were a great distance from the area. Izembek Lagoon is accessible via a dirt road from Cold Bay and there is a USFWS small boat launch. The group agreed to the nomination of the two sites in Izembek Lagoon, even though concerns were raised regarding the large area requiring protection and the difficulty of access. The group tasked the Tactics Committee to include these considerations when designing the GRS for Izembek Lagoon.

The group then discussed the Port Moller area. Mr. Robertson noted that in Nelson Lagoon the local community expanded fuel deliveries to a fish processor. In response to this increased risk of oil spills and due to the presence of an endangered species, a GRS was developed to mitigate risk. As with Izembek Lagoon, the the Port Moller area contains endangered species, is extremely important to migratory birds, and boasts significant marine mammal and fishery resources. The group discussed response resources that are present at Nelson Lagoon; skiff and fishing vessels are kept there and may be launched with some notice, but in the off-season, crews may not be available. The group decided that the area is significant enough environmentally to warrant designation for a GRS. They directed the Tactics Committee to develop generalized

tactics for the salmon resources and create a single GRS to address inclusively sites AEA76 to AEA82.

This consolidation reduced the nomination list to 7 sites, allowing for the nomination of 13 additional sites. Paul Gronholdt, Aleutians East Borough assembly member, Paul Day, Sand Point City Manager, and Moses Tcheripanoff, lifelong fisherman from Sand Point, advocated for the inclusion of additional input from local communities when choosing the remaining locations for GRS, noting that local fisherman would certainly have opinions as to the important resources deserving protection. The workgroup agreed to leave a certain number of GRS locations undesignated and to conduct outreach in the communities prior to the GRS site surveys.

The workgroup proceeded to review the other sites in the Aleutians East A Zone that had been nominated for GRS development. After much discussion, the workgroup chose nine more sites, bringing total to 16 nominations for GRS, and agreed that four GRS locations remain open for the local communities to nominate. Below are the 16 sites chosen:

<b>Seletion #</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>GRS #</b>	<b>Site Name</b>
1	H		Grub Gulch-Stepovak Bay
3	H		Orzinski Bay
10	H		Albatros Anchorage/Balboa Bay
11	H		Lefthand Bay/Balboa Bay
32	H		King Cove-Lagoon
34	H		Mortensens/Old Man Lagoon
35	H		Kinzarof Lagoon-Cold Bay
36	H		Thinpoint Cove
41	H		Big Lagoon-Morzhovoi Bay
70	H		Izembek Lagoon-west
71	H		Izembek Lagoon-East
76	H	COMBINED INTO ONE GRS SITE	Kudbodid Islands
77			Mud Bay/Deer Island
80			Port Moller Bay-Head
81			Port Moller Bay-Mouth
82			Port Moller
84	H		Bear River
86	H		Cape Seniavin
107	H		Sand Point- Popof Island
109	H		Zachary Bay-Unga Island

Mr. Robertson explained the process of vetting the information regarding resources. Base maps for each site will be developed and resources symbols placed where the ESI maps indicate they are located. The workgroup will be asked to review and confirm this information on the project website. This resource information will assist the site survey team in developing the GRS in the field and the Tactics Committee when assessing the chosen tactics.

The workgroup discussed the site survey and community outreach logistics. Funding is available to fly a Nuka Research representative to the local communities and possibly charter a small vessel for surveying nearby sites. Additional individuals are welcome and encouraged to accompany and participate in the survey activities, but the project budget does not include funding travel to the communities.

The gathered data and proposed tactics for each GRS will be reviewed and edited by the Tactics Committee. Volunteers for the committee include the following:

- USCG
- Alaska Chadux
- Paul Gronholdt
- ADEC
- Nuka Research

It was agreed upon that the survey should happen in early May in order to get input from local fishermen before the start of the fishing season. Paul Day offered to assist in moving the process forward in Sand Point. Contacts in other communities will be made to facilitate these surveys. Meredith Gillman agreed to help arrange the use of a USCG helicopter as a platform for aerial photographs for the project. Mr. Robertson then concluded the GRS portion of the meeting and thanked the group for the valuable input.

Dale Gardner, ADEC, took the floor to discuss the status of the Aleutians Subarea Contingency Plan (SCP). Mr. Gardner explained that Change 1 is under development for the Aleutians SCP. As part of the process toward incorporation into the SCP, Change 1 will include the newly created GRS, along with the recently developed Potential Places of Refuge documents for the subarea. The State will conduct a public review later this year, likely to start in August or September. Doug Mutter discussed the Sensitive Areas Section of the Aleutians SCP and the need for workgroup members and resource agencies to provide updated information for this section so that it may be included as part of Change 1.

The meeting concluded at 11:45 am.

**Action Items:**

- Nuka Research will develop resource maps to be used during the site surveys and will post to the project website for review by the workgroup.
- USFWS will follow up with additional resource information regarding endangered species for the Site Selection Matrix.
- Nuka Research will contact local communities to develop a site survey plan and gather additional input for site selections.
- USCG will investigate use of a helicopter for aerial photography.
- Nuka Research will update the Site Selection Matrix and workgroup member list, develop a meeting summary, and post these to the project website.