

**Aleutians Subarea
Geographic Response
Strategies (GRS)
Workgroup**

**May 7, 2004
9:30 AM to 4:00 PM
Gordon Watson Conference Room (1st Floor)
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Building
1011 East Tudor Road
Anchorage, AK**

Purpose of Meeting:

The workgroup process to develop Geographic Response Strategies (GRS) as Section G of the Aleutians Subarea Contingency Plan begins with this meeting. The primary purpose of the meeting is to acquaint the Workgroup with the GRS development process and to make preliminary selections of high priority sites for GRS development.

Over the course of the GRS development process, the Workgroup, in conjunction with the contractor, will:

- inventory regional capabilities and risks;
- identify potential sites for GRS development;
- identify potential Places of Refuge (POR);
- provide for public information and input;
- make final selections of high priority GRS sites;
- draft GRS for high priority sites;
- draft worksheets for Places of Refuge;
- survey and photograph high priority GRS and POR sites; and
- approve the final draft of Section G.

Below is the meeting agenda.

ADEC has hired a contractor to assist in the first phase of the GRS development process; the Scope of Work for the ADEC contractor is attached. Also included is the initially proposed project timeline.

Attendees: See workgroup list at <http://www.state.ak.us/dec/spar/perp/grs/ai/aiwgmaster.pdf>

Agenda

09:30 Introductions/Review Agenda Dale Gardner, ADEC, co-chair
09:40 Opening & public comments
10:00 Review GRS process, scope of work, web sites and timeline...Tim Robertson, Nuka Research,
10:30 Review Memorandum of Understanding.....Group
10:45 Break
10:55 Review of oil spill risk/capability maps for Aleutians Subarea.....Chris Woodley, USCG, co-chair
11:30 Discussion of Aleutians Subarea currents and winds.....John Whitney, NOAA
12:00 Lunch
13:00 Public Comments
13:10 Review and revise site selection matrix.....Doug Mutter, DOI
14:30 Break
14:40 Preliminary selection of Aleutians GRS high priority sites.....Group
15:20 Discuss Public Information and Input Process.....Tim Robertson
15:30 Identification of Tactics and Places of Refuge subgroups.....Group
15:35 Review decisions and action itemsMark Janes, Nuka Research
15:45 Schedule next meeting and closing comments.....Group
16:00 Adjourn

Workgroup Website: <http://www.state.ak.us/dec/spar/perp/grs/ai/home.htm>

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ALEUTIANS SUBAREA GEOGRAPHIC RESPONSE STRATEGY (GRS)

Title: Aleutians Geographic Response Strategies (GRS) Initiative (Phase I)

Background:

Geographic response strategies (GRS) are site-specific spill response methods used to protect sensitive coastal environments from the deleterious effects of petroleum or other hazardous substance spills. GRS provide first responders with specific guidance for a rapid deployment of pre-identified actions to protect priority sensitive sites.

With its thousands of miles of coastline, Alaska possesses many unique, vital or highly sensitive areas that merit immediate attention and protection in the event of a spill. GRS are one tool that can help expedite a successful response or mitigation of a spill impact.

To address the development of GRS for a subarea of Alaska, a workgroup is created under an agreement that specifies the purpose, composition, funding, process, and guiding principles for preparing GRS in a specific subarea.

Sites are selected based on three primary considerations: the environmental or cultural sensitivity; the risk from an oil spill; and the ability to protect the site. Factors such as amount and type of biota resources needing protection and recreational or local significance are considered. The federal and state natural resource trustee agencies make preliminary site selections, which are published for public comment. After consideration of public inputs, the workgroup selects the GRS sites. The GRS process has the additional benefit of helping stakeholders and the public understand what response actions may be feasible during a spill response.

A tactics subgroup designs the response strategy using basic spill response tactics. The final GRS product is a document, which includes a site map, photograph, and table of associated information, that describes the resources to protect, operational tactics to carry out the protection, the equipment and personnel needs, site access, and staging considerations.

The GRS are field-tested when possible to verify operational feasibility and to ensure that proposed response actions do not inadvertently harm sensitive resources. Past field-tests, as well as site visits, have proven quite valuable in discerning the applicability and potential for success of a GRS. Completed GRS for a subarea are compiled as an addendum to the appropriate Alaska Federal/State Subarea Contingency Plan.

GRS have been developed for the Cook Inlet, Kodiak, Prince William Sound and Southeast Alaska subareas, and have proven so successful that efforts have been expanded to develop GRS elsewhere in Alaska. Attention is now turning towards development of GRS for the Aleutians Subarea, with follow-on projects for the Bristol Bay and Western Alaska Subareas (resources permitting).

Objective: The primary purpose of this initiative is to coordinate the development of GRS for the Aleutians Subarea and, in the process, complete information gathering and risk assessments for the remaining subareas (Bristol Bay, Western Alaska, Northwest Arctic, and the North Slope). Tasks for this overall project include conducting research, developing draft products, coordinating meeting arrangements, facilitating meetings, coordinating resources, participating in site visits, and completing final production of GRS for the subarea.

Scope: The scope of Phase I of this project includes the following tasks (as further defined below): request information from operators, regulatory agencies, natural resource agencies and other key agencies in performing a risk analysis of the identified subareas to determine areas at risk from both persistent and non-persistent oil. Determine critical areas requiring protection (as identified by the federal and state resource agencies).

Task 1: Coordinate with ADEC, US Coast Guard (Marine Safety Office Anchorage), Alaska Chadux Corporation, industry, and other potential sources of information, and develop maps and supporting documentation depicting the following information for the Aleutians, Bristol Bay, Western Alaska, Northwest Arctic, and North Slope subareas:

- Primary traffic routes for non-persistent oil delivery in the subareas.
- Locations of communities, ports, industrial and military sites, and commercial tank farms that receive bulk fuel deliveries.
- Primary traffic routes for vessels with persistent oil that travel through the subareas (non-tank vessels, etc.)
- Identify locations of frequent fishing vessel / trawler offload activities (This activity usually occurs in Kiska, Tanaga Island, Akutan, and Unalaska for the Aleutians Subarea). This is a fairly high risk activity which can lead to grounding / spill events.
- Identify cruise ship traffic in the subareas and their "ports of call".
- Identify key near shore fishing grounds (Aleutian Island King Crab fisheries, inshore pollock fisheries, Aleutian Island trawl and longline fisheries, and other locations in each of the identified subareas) where there is a heavy concentration of vessels which may lead to grounding, etc.
- local/private).
- Identify and list any abandoned canneries in the subareas, based on information received during the information gathering phase.
- Identify locations of previous major spill events in each of the subareas and their causes (Data will be provided by ADEC through the Spills database).

Deliverables for Task 1: Map(s) and supporting data for presentation at the initial Aleutians GRS Workgroup meeting. The map will serve as the preliminary risk assessment to be considered in prioritizing sites for GRS development. Maps and supporting data for the other subareas will be used for future GRS development projects.

Task 2: Coordinate with ADEC, US Coast Guard (Marine Safety Office Anchorage), Alaska Chadux Corporation, industry, and other potential sources of information, and develop the standard sensitive areas matrix for the Aleutians Subarea (with previously identified ADFG MESAs and others identified by federal/state resource agencies and local/tribal entities).

Deliverables for Task 2: A listing of environmentally or culturally significant areas for the Aleutians Subarea in the standard GRS matrix format.

Task 3: Develop a draft Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) similar to the agreements developed for Cook Inlet and Prince William Sound GRS development outlining the following:

- Participating members (federal, state, industry, local, tribal, others)
- General GRS content and format
- Workgroup participation
- Resource commitments (financial, equipment, in-kind, staff, travel to/from workgroup meetings, air support, aerial photography support, etc.)
- GRS development strategy and process (sensitive area identification and selection, ports of refuge identification, public process, field testing/ validation, overall project timeline)
- Workgroup listing (to include contact information)

Deliverable for Task 3: Draft MOA to be reviewed and discussed at the initial Aleutians GRS Workgroup meeting; the MOA will serve as a basis for commitment by participating organizations and as the overall strategy for GRS development for the Aleutians Subarea.

Task 4: Meet with core members of the Aleutians GRS Workgroup (ADEC, MSO Anchorage, EPA, DOI) and discuss the overall strategy for the initial and follow-on meetings. The overall strategy will include soliciting maximum participation from targeted organizations, identifying a potential industry co-chair, pre-identifying issues of concern, and discussing the overall scope of the project. Discuss and agree upon activating a website for the project.

Deliverable for Task 4: Meet with the core members in Anchorage on a date agreeable to all and discuss and formally prepare an overall strategy for GRS development for the Aleutians Subarea (to include reviewing and commenting on the preliminary risk assessment map and matrix, and the draft MOA). Activate and publicize the website for this project and inform workgroup members of the website address.

Task 5: Facilitate the initial meeting of the Aleutians GRS Workgroup. Tasks include the following:

- Contact prospective workgroup members (based on listing to be provided by core workgroup members) and solicit their attendance and input.
- Secure a meeting location in Anchorage suitable for 30-40 people.
- Develop the agenda (including provisions for review and comment by the core workgroup members)
- Facilitate and conduct the meeting
- Prepare minutes of the meeting identifying decisions, action items, and future meeting dates.
- Prepare a draft work plan for Phase II, based on meeting results.

Deliverable for Task 5: Coordinate and conduct the meeting and provide minutes of the meeting to the core workgroup members. Prepare a directory of workgroup participants. Update the sensitive areas matrix to reflect workgroup inputs. Compile a draft work plan for Phase II.

Timetable: Phase I of this project should be completed no later than May 2004, with an anticipated initial workgroup meeting sometime in February or March 2004.

Phase II of the project will be conducted after completion of Phase I. A separate scope of work (SOW) will be prepared outlining tasks in detail including facilitation of future meetings, and overall management of the GRS development process to include final delivery of the agreed upon number of GRS for the Aleutians Subarea.

Proposed Project Timeline

March 15, 2005 Website live with first draft of Risk Maps,
March 23, 2004 Steering Committee Meeting,
May 7, 2004 1st Workgroup Meeting – Preliminary Site Selections,
May 30, 2004 Draft Work Plan due,
undetermined Public Outreach Begins
“ Public Comments Due
“ 2nd Workgroup Meeting – Final Site Selections
“ Tactics Committee meetings as necessary to Draft GRS and POR documents.
“ Aerial Photographs Completed
“ Site Surveys Completed
“ Tactics Committee drafted GRS to Workgroup
“ Workgroup Comments Due
“ Final Draft Comments Approved by Workgroup