

PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND - PORTS OF SAFE REFUGE PLANNING AND IDENTIFICATION

SCOPE OF WORK

Title: Prince William Sound Ports of Safe Refuge

Background:

Leaking or disabled vessels may require a sheltered location with adequate water depth to repair or lighter the vessel in order to minimize the amount of spilled product. If leaking vessels are not repaired, oil or other hazardous substances released from the vessel can impact downstream environmental resources and shoreline. Vessels should be anchored or moored in protected waters to safely undergo repairs and minimize polluting the environment.

Prince William Sound (PWS) has some of the most environmentally sensitive coastal areas in Alaska. In addition to sensitive shoreline habitats such as marshes, sheltered tidal flats, and exposed tidal flats, PWS supports a number of sensitive biological resources including birds, fish and shellfish, and marine mammals. The area contains national parks, national forests, state critical habitat areas, state parks, and native or other private lands, and is managed for a variety of uses including oil transportation and commercial /sport fishing.

PWS is also widely used for marine commerce. Oil tanker vessels, log transport ships, fuel barges, freighters, oil industry work boats, ferries, and cruise ships make routine stops at PWS ports. Also, commercial fishing boats, sport fishing charter boats, and privately-owned vessels regularly use local harbors and docks.

Anchoring or mooring large vessels generally requires water depths 30 fathoms or less. In addition, labor and necessary equipment must be available to make repairs or to lighter product. Suitable emergency mooring locations need to be pre-identified for the PWS subarea to expedite the response process. Once identified, the information will be included in the PWS Subarea Contingency Plan.

There is no perfect mooring or anchoring site for all vessels and all situations. Larger vessels, such as oil tankers and freighters, cannot be taken to certain locations. Some ports may have shallow approaches or small-sized bays, and large ships cannot enter these locations. But smaller vessels, such as fishing vessels and charter vessels, may be able to utilize these smaller sites. Decision-makers must address both environmental and operational issues when deciding where to take stricken vessels.

Potential anchoring or mooring sites will need to be reviewed by state and federal agencies, the Southwest Pilots Association, the marine crude oil shippers, local communities in PWS, spill cooperatives operating in PWS, and Prince William Sound RCAC. In the event a

vessel needs assistance, officials may refer to pre-identified sites to aid them in responding to the incident.

The U. S. Coast Guard Captain of the Port (COTP) Prince William Sound has jurisdiction over approving temporary mooring or anchoring locations for leaking or damaged vessels within the PWS subarea. The COTP will confer with state and local officials when deciding where and when to move a stricken vessel. Prior coordination and pre-identification of potential ports of safe refuge will significantly enhance the decision-making process and facilitate the overall response operation.

Each vessel incident presents unique circumstances that must be addressed. The goal is to safely repair or salvage a damaged vessel while avoiding or minimizing impacts to local resources. Prior to bringing a vessel into an anchoring or mooring location, the following factors will need to be considered:

- Status of the vessel
- Public safety
- Environmental resources at risk
- Strategies to protect sensitive areas
- Prevailing winds
- Navigational approach to the mooring site
- Anchoring ground
- Vessel traffic
- Available dock and support facilities
- Available skilled and spill response labor
- Economic concerns and potential impacts

Objective: The primary purpose of this project is to meet with primary stakeholders and discuss, pre-identify and reach consensus on ports of safe refuge for PWS. Tasks for this overall project include conducting research, coordinating meeting arrangements, facilitating meetings, developing draft products, acquiring public and stakeholder consensus on the identified ports of safe refuge, and submitting the final product for inclusion in the PWS subarea plan.

Scope: The scope of this project includes the following tasks (as further defined below):

Task 1: Research available information and determine major vessel traffic routes in the PWS subarea. The PWS Marine Firefighting Plan (Sep 1997) provides an excellent point of departure for much of the required information. This includes verifying information with the Coast Guard, crude oil shipping companies, non-crude oil fuel suppliers, commercial fishing industry, cruise ship operators, the Alaska Marine Highway System (state ferry system), Southwest Pilots Association, and other organizations. Develop a map(s) **and matrix** depicting the following information:

- Primary traffic routes for crude oil and non-crude oil delivery in the PWS subarea (including frequency, seasonality, general vessel/barge description (length, beam, draft, etc)).
- Locations of communities and commercial tank farms that receive **bulk** fuel deliveries.
- Primary traffic routes for vessels with persistent oil that travel through the subarea (non-tank vessels, etc.)
- Identify locations of frequent fishing vessel / tramper offload activities. This is a fairly high risk activity which can lead to grounding / spill events.
- Identify State Ferry and cruise ship traffic routes in the PWS subarea and their "ports of call".
- Locations of spill response hubs/equipment depots (federal, state, industry/ spill coop, and local/private).
- Identify locations of previous major marine spill events in the PWS subarea and their causes (Data will be provided by ADEC through the Spills database).
- Any pre-identified ports of safe refuge selected by any of the organizations (e.g., the Southwest Pilots Association, crude oil shippers, Coast Guard, etc.)

Deliverables for Task 1: Map(s) and supporting data for presentation at the initial PWS Ports of Safe Refuge Work Group meeting. The map and data will serve as the preliminary risk assessment for fostering additional discussion.

Task 2: Facilitate meetings of the PWS Ports of Safe Refuge Work Group. Tasks include the following:

- Contact work group members and solicit their attendance and input.
- Secure a meeting location in Anchorage or Valdez suitable for 30-40 people.
- Develop the agenda (prepare an initial draft agenda and solicit comments from work group members in preparing the final agenda)
- Facilitate and conduct meetings
- Prepare minutes of the meetings identifying decisions, action items, and future meeting dates.

Deliverable for Task 2: Coordinate and conduct meetings and provide minutes of the meetings to work group members. **Prepare a directory of work group participants** to facilitate coordination amongst work group members.

Task 3: Develop the initial draft document describing PWS ports of safe refuge based on work group inputs and discussion. Tasks include the following:

- Prepare an initial draft document which includes maps, detailed location and description of the potential ports of safe refuge (with latitude/longitude coordinates), and accessibility for vessels ranging from crude oil tankers to smaller vessels.
- Distribute the draft document and solicit comments from work group members; incorporate appropriate comments from the work group, and acquire consensus amongst work group members for any contentious issues.
- Prepare a final draft document and solicit public comments from concerned citizens and stakeholders in the PWS subarea.
- Inform work group members of any significant comments received from the public and stakeholders, incorporate comments as directed by the work group.

Deliverable for Task 3: Final draft of the PWS Ports of Safe Refuge document.

Task 4: Prepare and submit the final document to DEC for incorporation into the PWS subarea plan.

Deliverable for Task 4: Prepare the final document in Word and pdf format, and provide both a hard copy and electronic files to the DEC project manager.

Timetable: This project is directly linked to the PWS National Preparedness for Response Exercise Program (NPREP) Drill scheduled for August 4-5, 2004. The procedures in the final document will be implemented during the drill. The following general timeline is established and may be modified based on discussions with the DEC project manager and work group members.

- **January 2004:** DEC issues Notice to Proceed to term contractor. Initial meeting held with DEC project manager, term contractor, and other core work group members to discuss the scope of work and overall process, and determine date of initial and follow-on meetings. Contractor to begin research phase and acquire data on marine vessel activities in PWS.
- **Late February/Early March 2004:** Initial meeting of the PWS Ports of Safe Refuge Work Group.
- **April – May 2004:** Additional meetings (approximately one meeting per month) of the PWS Ports of Safe Refuge Work Group.

- **June 2004**: Initial draft document submitted to work group for review and comments.
- **July 2004**: Public comments solicited; significant comments reviewed by the work group and appropriate action taken.
- **July 30, 2004**: Submit final product to DEC Project Manager. Copies will be distributed at the PWS PREP Drill on August 4-5, 2004.

Cost: To be completed after the cost estimate is received from the ADEC term contractor.

Note: The PWS Regional Citizens Advisory Council (PWS RCAC) is also interested in participating in a joint-funding venture for this project. After receiving and negotiating the cost estimate from the term contractor, DEC and PWS RCAC will determine an equitable cost-sharing plan for this project, and determine costs to be charged to each organization. This Scope of Work will be adjusted accordingly to reflect costs to be incurred by each party.