

Meeting of the Southeast Alaska Subarea Potential Places of Refuge (PPOR) Workgroup

October 22, 2008

Vocational Training & Resource Center Meeting Room
Juneau, Alaska

Attendees:

Scott Bornemann, USCG, Sector Juneau
Mike Conway, MAC Services
Rob Edwardson, USCG, Sector Juneau
Andrew Green, Cruise Line Agencies of
Alaska
Don Habeger, Royal Caribbean
Bill Hanson, USFWS
Larry Iwamoto, ADEC
Mark Janes, Nuka Research
Gus Martinez, Glacier Bay NP
Matt O'Boyle, Skagway Harbormaster

Ray Paddock, Central Council Tlingit
& Haida Tribes
Rick Rodriguez, USCG, District 17
Doug Sturm, SE AK Pilots Association
Scot Tiernan, ADEC
Tom Schumacher, ADF&G

By Teleconference:

Cheryl Fultz, SEAPRO
Jim Pomplan, SEAPRO
Doug Mutter, DOI

Refer to the workgroup and project website for meeting materials and presentations at:

<http://www.dec.state.ak.us/spar/perp/seakpor/home.htm> .

Proceedings:

Meeting facilitator, Mike Conway, opened the meeting and led the introduction of the workgroup members. He solicited individual expectations for the meeting and encouraged participation in the discussions. He reviewed the agenda and outlined the meeting objectives.

Commander Scott Bornemann (USCG Sector Juneau) discussed the importance of preplanning in the event of a crisis. The PPOR process in Southeast Alaska is a positive step in preplanning for a marine crisis and will lead to better decisions. He related recent marine events in which the decision-making process would have been aided by the information developed by the PPOR planning process.

Larry Iwamoto, of the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC), presented information on the Alaska Regional Response Team's (ARRT) Potential Places of Refuge Guidelines that included background on the international events leading to developing the Guidelines. He outlined the 10-step decision-making process that the ARRT created for PPOR decisions that relies on the Incident Command System (ICS) to arrive at and implement decisions. He emphasized that the USCG Captain of the Port

exercises ultimate authority during a crisis and has the option and duty to make decisions requiring immediate action. Mr. Iwamoto's presentation is available at the project website.

Mark Janes, of Nuka Research, presented a description of the project and additional background on past PPOR projects in Alaska. PPOR projects have been completed in the Prince William Sound, Cook Inlet, Kodiak, and Aleutian Subareas. He reviewed the workgroup process in which public and broad-based input is sought to gain as much local knowledge and buy-in to the project as possible. This process has been found to strengthen the final plans and increase the general knowledge of stakeholders about the issues inherent in PPORs. He presented final documents produced by past workgroups consisting of the following:

- Introductory Section
- Site Assessment Matrix
- Risk and Asset Maps
- Index Maps
- PPOR Plans
 - Map Page
 - Site Information Page and Tables

Mr. Janes noted the content of the plans, and that the workgroup for each project directed, edited, reviewed, and approved the content. A similar process will be used with the Southeast Potential Places of Refuge (SEPPOR) project. He encouraged reviewing the presented documents and plans, and suggested that edits be offered throughout the process to ensure the documents are suited for the unique conditions in Southeast Alaska. The final documents will be placed in the Southeast Alaska Subarea Contingency Plan for availability to the USCG, ADEC and others in the event of a crisis. He stated that the primary goals of the meeting are as follows:

- Identify types and routes of vessels typical of Southeast Alaska.
- Review the risk and asset information for the Subarea.
- Discuss aerial photography support.
- Discuss project funding.
- Identify sites appropriate for PPOR in Southeast Alaska.
- Establish project timeline and outreach activities.

The group took up the issue of aerial photography. Rick Rodriguez of the USCG will be following up on the availability of the Coast Guard to assist with this issue. Other potential sources for aerial support include the Alaska State Troopers, the National Park Service, and the Nature Conservancy. However, the aerial photos available thru the Nature Conservancy were determined to be not very useful due to the scale of the photos.

The group then discussed the vessel routes presented in the risk maps and types of vessels frequently present in the Subarea. The group agreed that the maps of vessel routes are correct. The two vessel classification schemes used in past projects were presented. The

group discussed the type of vessels plying local waters, noting that tankers are not present. It was established that cruise ships are getting larger. A cruise vessel of more than 1,000 feet is working the West Coast of the United States. This vessel is not currently scheduled to come to Alaska, but a trend exists toward larger vessels coming to the area in the future. The group decided that the key limitation when considering a PPOR is the vessel's draft. The group concluded that the classification scheme should focus on the vessel's draft, and the specifics formalized in the selection of PPORs.

The group also discussed whether to develop a separate category for large passenger vessels (e.g., cruise ships) and provide a detailed assessment of support infrastructure available at each PPOR (i.e., medical resources, airports, etc.) The 2006 Basic Medical Resources Guide developed by the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services was mentioned as a good source of information.

Communications connectivity and blackout areas were also discussed as an item of concern. Where possible, specific information on communications limitations will be included in the Physical/Operational characteristics for each specific PPOR.

Tom Schumacher (ADF&G) inquired as to whether the PPOR information could reside in a searchable database for ease of access by responders. A database has not been developed for PPORs in the other subareas, although there may be some merit in exploring this option.

Additional information from the risk and asset maps was quickly reviewed. The group agreed that these maps require additional research, but the maximum benefit for the project is to focus on identifying PPORs during this meeting.

Larry Iwamoto discussed funding issues for the project. Because of the extensive Southeast Alaska coastline, the project will be performed in phases over the course of several years, as funding becomes available. He envisions one-third of the area can be completed at this time with the current funding available. It would be up to the workgroup to set the priority areas.

The group presented the issue of priority areas for the Subarea. Cheryl Fultz, of the Southeast Alaska Petroleum Resource Organization (SEAPRO), stated that SEAPRO prefers that the focus remain on the established response zones. These zones are used by SEAPRO for organizing responses and have been used in past Geographic Response Strategies (GRS) projects. The group discussed using either vessel routes or bodies of water as alternatives. The group's final decision was to retain the response zones, focusing on Zones 5, 6, and 7, and including Zone 8 which would be relatively easy to accomplish. Additionally, they identified sites present on vessel routes used in the past for PPOR incidents. These routes were presented on a SEAPRO map that shows the routes used to take disabled vessels from the scene to the Ketchikan shipyard.

The group then identified PPOR sites in zones 5, 6, 7, and 8, and those leading to Ketchikan. A total of 68 sites were identified. Doug Sturm, of the Southeast Alaska Pilots

Association, requested an opportunity to have additional pilots review the list of sites before finalization. This review will be accomplished by producing draft index maps with the current sites, which will then be printed and reviewed by additional pilots. Comments from these pilots will be included in the list.

Mark Janes outlined the process and timeline for the project. He said the next contact with the workgroup will be upon activation of the website and posting of current information for the workgroup to review. Nuka Research will begin the work of compiling information used in the PPORs. The process will take approximately four months. The group agreed to reconvene in mid-March to review and edit the draft products produced by the research.

Action Items:

- Nuka Research will develop individual PPORs, Site Assessment Matrix and Index Maps.
- Nuka Research will revise the Introductory Section.
- Nuka Research will develop draft maps and send to the Southeast Alaska Pilots Association for review.
- The United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) will follow up with additional resource information regarding endangered species for the Site Selection Matrix.
- USCG will investigate use of a helicopter for aerial photography.
- USCG will provide a copy of the draft Sector Juneau Marine Firefighting Plan (completed)