Arctic and Western Alaska Area Committee Meeting Minutes
Date – 02 May 2023
Location – Gorsuch Commons, University of Alaska Anchorage
Attendees – USCG & DEC: AWA Area Committee Members. UAA: Jeff Libby, Heather Paulsen, Alta Dean, Caitlin Kollander.

I. Introductions/OSC Opening Comments
- Purpose: What is an area committee meeting? Goals:
  - Prepare the Area Contingency Plan- ACP
  - Advise federal and state OSC's
  - Clearing house
  - Foster collaborative relationships
  - Enhance equal awareness
  - Ideas for boosting meeting engagement
- Overview of agenda

II. Business Meeting
- Sub committees and status reports and personnel:
  - Area Contingency Plan
  - Geographic Response Strategies
  - Exercise and training: develop ICS and HAZWOPER training for response personnel in remote areas in AK
  - Regulator Advisory and Coordination: IWI Policy, starting up with more new problems: APC's
  - External Communication
- Steering Committee Report
  - Charter updates, admin items, look ahead
- Announcement: On May 29th there will be a workgroup meeting for Salvage and Marine Firefighting
  - Cook Inlet Harbor Safety Committee (CIHSC) is also working on a Salvage and Marine Firefighting group
  - The Committee is striving to make this a multi-agency workgroup – want one combined plan with maybe multiple area annexes that reference the master plan
  - Transitioning to Constant Contact to stay connected. There will be a monthly newsletter (around 15th) – this is the primary way Area Committee will communicate with people outside of workshops – people need to sign up for these, can contribute ideas for topics or events you would like to see
  - Webpages will still be available for meeting info and agendas
  - UAA is using Cvent to make presentations available

III. Pollution Response Topics- Presented by: Victoria Colles and Matt Richards

- December 21, 2021 school district in Kotzebue, Kivalina
  - Teacher housing had 1,900-gallon fuel leak
- NW Artic Borough District – Kivalina
  - Due to coastal erosion, Kivalina is a high priority site to move
  - Moved school 8 miles inland- didn't study site well enough, picked because windswept and low snow
  - More frequent problems, school has had 4 fuel releases since 10 Feb. '23.
    - 650, 550, 175, 50-gallon fuel leak(s) respectively
  - Decreasing in size, have released about 1,200 gallons of fuel total
  - Coordinated with USCG and EPA
  - Students have had to be remote
  - Need to develop mitigation plans: ice fences, etc.
  - Spills occurred on the edge of the communities drinking water boundary
  - How to deal with this problem environmental challenges and limited HAZWOPER trained personnel
  - Contractors were sent to Kotzebue, waited for a weather window but never got out to Kivalina
    - It's a very difficult area to get to, ground storms block response teams from reaching spills in Kivalina
- Another spill case study of note: Kodiak rocket launch spill
  - January 10, 2023: occurred as result of rocket launch failure
  - 5,200 gallons of jet AA was aboard, fire went through the night
  - No direct impact to water, took samples from 22 locations
  - No PFAS was used in firefighting response
  - Stockpile of 2,200 cy has been lined and repaired and is being prepared to be shipped for disposal

IV. IMO'S Oil Spill Risk Evaluation – Presented by: Matt Richards

- IMO's oil spill risk evaluation and assessment of response and preparedness model
- Currently no risk assessment methodology for determining risk of oil spills
- IMO produces a manual on how to produce risk assessments
- Need to especially identify high risk areas in the state
  - 2014 NOAA risk assessment: mainly ecological
  - Identifies high risk areas and species: AK Scenarios Compendium
  - Arctic AK has identified 7 worst case scenarios
    - Additional 2 sub-sets of disaster scenarios
  - However, there's no existing methodology to show how to identify those risks
- How do we put this into context?
  - Climate change is affecting the landscape 4 times faster than the rest of the U.S.
  - How fast are our risks changing and what is our response to that?

    - Develop our own worst-case scenario manual that highlights methodology
        - Improvements to risk forecasting
- Objectives
    - Evaluation of methodology for determining likelihood, consequence and total risk for each scenario
    - Identification of resources at risk- both human and environmental
        - Example: tanker collision- from there you can determine trajectories and mitigation
- Framework
    - National response system
    - Area contingency plan
    - Oil and hazardous substances
- AWA Area Contingency Plan – updated when new risks are identified
    - All plans should be written based on worst-case discharge
    - Trainings are performed and then preparedness is reassessed based on any issues or shortfalls that arise; the plan is updated accordingly
    - To reduce the likelihood of a spill or the consequences of a pollution event, the objectives of the response must be identified, methodology developed, and different scenarios evaluated
        - The Area Committee mostly focuses on reducing consequences - primarily consists of conducting training and assessing how to deploy response teams to these areas
        - Policy or strategy
        - Ops procedures and technical guidelines
        - Data directory
- Risk Assessment Process – first step is to identify all the variables involved in response and then keep those variables consistent throughout the assessment process
    - This is challenging considering AK is very large and there are many stakeholders
    - In order to identify all the variables necessary for risk assessment, the Area Committee would like to put together a series of workshops that stakeholders can attend and provide their feedback.
    - Will also require expanding outreach greatly, especially to tribes and rural communities
    - Can mitigate either likelihood or consequence
    - Everyone has their own prevention protocols
        - We want to focus more on consequences
    - Specifics; oil type, oil volume…
- Data to collect:

  - Qualitative data needs to be converted to quantitative data - from there we can establish risk numbers
- Likelihood
  - Adjust existing guidelines specifically for AK
- Two-pronged approach: while assessing the likelihood of pollution events to occur, two categories are taken into consideration: vessels and facilities
  - Vessels are a harder category to quantify data for and rank in terms of risk due to mobility
    - The Committee will rely on historical data of vessels in their risk assessment
  - ADAC Environmental Risk Index Project
    - Coastal erosion will help forecast likelihood of a spill
    - Figure out how likely a spill is from a structure
    - Consider historic spills, vessel type and construction, paths and areas where spills are more likely
- Consequence Matrix: outlines the variables that help determine the qualitative consequences of certain actions
  - Based on the New Zealand Marine Oil Spill Risk Assessment 2004
    - NOAA scientists developed a similar table
  - Table topics included: shorelines, protected sites, plants and animals, pinnipeds, cetaceans…
  - The project PI broke down this matrix into relevant sub-matrices for each species or groups of species such as clades or phyla
    - The risk to each species is dependent on its ecology and its susceptibility to harm by pollution events. These variables differ between species and need to be assessed separately
  - Assigned sensitivity scores to each category
  - Developed a formula to establish risk for each matrix category/topic
  - Plants and animals had one to six categories
    - Recognize different species-specific factors: ESA status, feeding type, environments used, etc.
  - Ultimately, the Risk Assessment Matrix provides a numerical value which can be used to compare how at-risk different species are
  - For example, the cultural risks of oil spills are especially challenging. There is hardly ever one specific location that needs to be prioritized by response teams to protect the site's cultural importance. To protect the cultural value of an area usually requires protecting much larger expanses of land than what may be feasible in a response scenario
- Risk Rating
  - Mark a path forward based on what the risk result numbers show

- Series of workshops will happen to establish scenarios
  - First workshop will brain storm scenarios
  - Hold meetings locally to openly establish what people's concerns are
- Encourage the use of information on the DEC website (Cook Inlet)
  - Want to use legacy documents and information that already exists
- Have to work together across the state, different plans from other groups and the development of the compendium

V. Questions:

Seasonality as a component to risk assessment?

- Seasonality will be represented as quarterly or monthly, highest risk seasonality will be prioritized and will go in the compendium
  - All other evaluated scenarios will be included: no unusable scenario data
  - Keeping all risk assessment data

Want to take this methodology out to local and rural communities to get their input. Takes time and effort- how will you get it done? Also incorporating in other subject matter experts and specialists- anthropologists, etc.

- Cultural impacts are very difficult to quantify. Knowing who needs to be in the room when we go to rural areas, outreach is key. Want to work this into our multiyear training program, to do more workshops and to get the funding to do so. AOOS and additional state and federally funded entities have can make this happen.

VI. USCG District 17 & Sector Anchorage Bering Strait Pollution Response Exercise – Presented by: Mark Everett

- Exercise was initially maritime pollution response for the Bering Strait at the Maritime Boundary Line with Russia
  - Last training/meeting with Russia was in 2021
- Operation Arctic Shield 2023: focus is projecting/testing USCG response capabilities further into new areas
  - Multi-mission portfolio
  - Bering Strait is a challenging location and it's a high-risk area
    - What other activities can we do to strengthen this mission?
  - Exercise elements:
    1. Ecological risk assessment
    2. Community based waste management workshop
    3. JRT notification/activation—U.S. version of the U.S./Russia training

4. AK RRT incident specific activation
5. Full scale exercise
6. Spill of national significance briefing
7. Distinguished Visitor Day (DV Day)- TBD on who the visitor will be
8. Elements 1 and 2 are already done

Element 1: Ecological Risk Assessment

- Completed – who (AWAAC, natural resource and technical agencies/organizations, local communities, tribes, co-management orgs), what (IMO risk assessment model as a new standard for Alaska), when, where, and why have all been established
  - Summary: still working on identifying the correct points of contact so things can move forward with better input from stakeholders. There was less participation than what was hoped for, but a lot of great presentations from various stakeholders. Additional outreach might result in better participation in the future. This could involve potential funding to bring individuals to Anchorage to hold more robust workshops

Element 2: Community Based Exercise

- Completed - Accomplished goals, establishing points of contact and planning for the next phase
  - Waste management workshop also had minimal turn out, but it's a good start and with a broader outreach and either going to, or bringing everyone here will make things easier- "captive audience"

Element 3: Joint Response Team (JRT):

- Not an aspect practiced very often
- Interagency focus

Element 4: Alaska Regional Response Team (RRT) Incident-Specific Activation

- Standing RRT Activation:
  - Holding regular meetings, overseeing policy, 'peace time mode'
- Incident Specific RRT Activation:
  - Response mode, direct support from the on-scene coordinator
  - Practice RRT's at least once a year
  - The Joint Response Team plays into the Regional Response Team Element of this exercise

Element 5: Full-Scale Exercise

- Actual equipment and personnel being deployed

- Will include CG vessels, and MSRC vessels, will converge in the Bering Strait- June 7 goal date -weather dependent
- Proposed scenario: Russian tanker carrying crude oil collides with another Russian vessel on the Russian side of the Bering Strait, 48 hours after collision the tanker begins leaking- 5 metric ton crude oil spill
- Working in conjunction with Sector Anchorage as command post
- Ability to provide real time imagery and communications
    - 6-hour training period
    - Element 5a: test our ability to mechanically recover oil spilled
    - Demonstration of on water mechanical oil spill recovery capabilities on the U.S. side of the Bering Strait
    - C130J transport aircraft- will be sent from either Kodiak or Hawaii for aerial surveillance
    - Will use oceangoing buoy tender (Cutter FIR) Oil Spill Recovery (OSR) with CBS and side support tug/barge launch from Anchorage

Element 5b: aerial dispersant application

- NOT putting anything in the water, practicing with the equipment available, including one of three modified C130's
    - Will use freshwater as dispersant - Strict accordance with the AK dispersant use regulations
    - A typical spotter/monitoring aircraft may also be utilized during the exercise since dispersing in a real scenario will require a spotter

Element 5c: On Scene- Command, Control, and Communications

- Employ USCG C130J from CGAS Barbers Point to on-scene comms/asset coordination platform
    - Validate/conduct spill trajectory monitoring
    - Response communications and coordination

Element 5d: special teams support

- A Coast Guard strike team from CA will be coming up to attend
    - Add realism to the exercise and give new challenges for personnel

Element 6: Spill of National Significance (SONS) Briefing

- Practice protocol to enhance awareness and build competency
    - Minimal spills of 'National Significance' occur- still need to practice these response protocols
- Federal On-Scene Coordinator (OSC) will do a scripted briefing for the CG headquarters leaders to practice national protocols for declaration of a SONS

- This will be a two-day teleconference – Capt. Lusk will be doing the online briefing for headquarters

VII. Questions:

C130 vs modified short-body SRC737: primary response tactics; limitations to altitude, speed and capability differences? Benefits to using different aircraft?

- Some differences but overall, it's not going to hinder response, this exercise will be an opportunity to test these methods. Operating parameters make it faster, if anything the C137 is more conservative in operating parameters.

ADF&G Rep.: Has this dispersant system been tested in cold conditions? What can we potentially expect in terms of seasonality?

- All dispersants are tested in controlled environments; these parameters are tested at length in a controlled system before field use and practice.
- Not exercising with Russia this year, it's still important for the U.S. side to get this training and proficiency. In real life if there were an emergency, there would be lines of communication with Russia and the contingency plans would still be in place.

VIII. Arctic Area Committee Newsletter

- Taking a moment to show the monthly newsletter, for the Arctic Area Committee Meeting. Minimizing emails, and increasing the capacity of the emails you actually get. Newsletter has links and better modes of communication to register for events and get better information. We want to make these even better and to go to as many groups as possible as a form of outreach.
- Who sends the emails?
- The majority of emails come from: "Alaska Planning". But that isn't the email you want to reply to with questions, links are at the bottom of the newsletters, Victoria is who you want to email. There are lists of area secretaries of who you should contact with questions, most of the time it's Victoria.

IX. Intro to Geographic Response Strategies (GRS) Presented by - Matt Richards

- Intended use is a quick response tool and user guide that someone in the field can use and adjust based on the infield scenario
- Historically there are 7 different GRS templates that exist in the state of AK
- They are a very overwhelming documents, ~730 exist
    - Started the overhaul in 2021

- DCRA wrote an algorithm that could pull important information off of existing GRSs documents and could put it into an ArcGIS map
    - GIS system via Arctic ERMA
    - Scalable, integrated facility data, equipment layers, ESI data layers, trajectories
        - Attribute style data pop up shows up when you select one of the 'tactics'
- The GIS system via Arctic ERMA allows tactics data to be overlaid on GIS maps of the user's choosing
- Field map mobile application
    - Can download offline and you can select any current point on the map and can pull up data stored in the original GRS PDF document
- Can still take pictures and information without cell service and then it will upload once on the internet again
- Integral to comprehensive ACP
- GRS management includes:
    - Periodic review, validation and uploading
    - GRS validation tiers one through five
    - Analog vs. digital
- GRS is currently unmanaged, no organizational aspects in place
- Transition to GIS to make management more possible and to improve the efficacy and use of GRSs
    - Future application could be drones, putting GRSs in more of a manageable format and use
- Currently creating a database; original goal was to digitize a static PDF so we can propose updates and changes and access documents more efficiently
    - The database is now useable to the point that you can query search for specific topics and sites
- GRS inputs:
    - Facility Specifics– plays into how we would respond in these regions
        - Includes: type of products stored, total capacity, infrastructure condition, climate change impacts, accessibility, response resources
    - ESI Maps – shoreline type, critical habitat, seasonality, human use factors
    - Vessel Traffic Studies – identifies high risk areas, provides pictures of fuel types and hazards, informs preparedness activities
    - Protected Areas – highly sensitive areas, important for geographical planning, may require consultation with Natural Resource Trustees
    - Cultural Sites – requires consultation, tribal and local involvement, involves the State Historic Preservation Officer, requires continued training and exposures
    - Available Resources – limited quantities, logistics concerns, hub community access, seasonal challenges
    - All these variables have to be considered when validating the GRSs

- In the process of developing tier one and two checklists, all the layers from arctic ERMA will be there and phone numbers of helpful contacts
- Subcommittee will review GRSs from other groups in June. Want to have virtual meeting and gather information to group existing communities

X. Questions:

Priority protection sites?

- ACS chatting with USCG so we can convert that data to GRS that we can use. Data gaps and how we will fill them. Will be accessed by the subcommittee.
- Use a risk assessment to establish priority areas in the state.
- Main goal is 100% coverage via GRSs. 35-40% of the AK coastline is mapped, including priority action sites.

When you talk to community members, if this can be looped through education aspects, field work. Universities gathering data need to take training so that we can gather sensitive information in rural areas.

- This summer will be beta testing for that, developing training and what MSTs will be doing in the field.

Aside from personal benefit, is it worth it to go verify the GRSs that are old. Is it worth our time since funding is very limited?

- Our exercises and training subcommittee network with industry, the priorities that we come up with are brought into the trainings and we can show them the GRS areas we need to validate, and when there's overlap we can work together to get more accurate data. We want this platform live and usable by next summer.

How can people get involved if they want to?

- When the subcommittee is reviewing data that will be announced, if you're in an area that has GRSs that are being updated, to go to those online meetings and be the local voice that is offering real time and accurate input to give updates and get even more accurate updates. Community involvement is key.

XI. GRS Field Work and Field Maps: Presented by RPI Mark White; Demonstration by Bryan Thom

- Can view all the tactics in the entire state and zoom in to a specific location
- Tap on a tactic and it brings up the area and the tactic – select the tactic to see all the fields associated with the tactic

- Can duplicate the tactic on your phone and update location or other information – the phone will use your satellite location to update the point location, can also manually update the location by dragging your marker over to the correct spot on the map
- Only data managers can update the status of the tactic
- On field teams you will only see tactics with approved statuses
- Feedback on what other data should be included in the application or which data layers are important, irrelevant, need updating, etc.
- Currently working on showing flags that indicate whether a tactic is under review or pending updates
    - NOTE: When changes are made to project scope, funding needs to be considered: Is the end goal worth the extra money that it will cost to make changes?
    - A subcommittee member may not know whether a tactic should be validated because they aren't at the site and don't have the required information to judge whether a tactic should be "validated." Approval is more straightforward
- The DEC will need to cache maps to a local device in order for maps and data to be accessed online
- Working on making sure that attached images are viewable in the field

XII. Questions:

Can you add imagery?

- Yes, DEC wants to manage attachments because they can get big.

Is there a field that talks about when it was last validated and how?

- Yes, 'view last modification date'. In the main database it should say what level of editing and modification it's undergone.

Icons, exclusion tactics, can original boom diagram show what is actually going on in the GRS? Visual representation of the boom so we can see what and where data points are in relation to the spill?

- Currently point data and not line data, because the boom deployment could vary in so many ways, we limit that information visually. It can also be the other way around. We currently are evaluating that, converting all point data to line data or both with varying layers. This is one of the bigger, next steps to the project overall development.
- Currently haven't made a long-term decision yet and need input from the people who are actually going to be using it. If you feel strongly about this change then that is key information that we need to develop a better and more usable product.

- Field maps does support line and polygon data points as well. From a responder standpoint we have that experience to be able to make calls like that, but we do need training for others who don't have that experience.

End user can see if a tactic has been put forward for approval, since only tier one is viewable?

- No, end user won't see proposed uses for edited tactics. We need people higher up to be making those decisions. However, if there's real emergency needs, we can have the subcommittee there to make those changes from an environmental conservation standpoint. Especially as real time changes take place, it could become very chaotic very quickly.

Could we 'flag' a tactic to show that it's going through/pending changes?

- Yes, that could be possible, viewing a tactic and looking at what fields in a tactic have been edited and updated. Lines vs dot data, when we make changes to project scope we do have to think about funding. RPI has provided their time and they have been making this happen, adding lines makes this more complicated, we need to make sure they can handle that on the platform and that the data is actually feasible to be presented in that way. We are starting to run out of time and money.
- All RPI funded work. Any time we suggest making changes it means we're contracting people and finding the funding. First priority is the functionality of these GRSs, if we need to move to lines to make this more feasible.

XIII. Concept of Operations for Offshore Facility Oil Spill Response: Additional Meetings Thursday and Friday; May 4-5th

- Appendix to ACP that shows how to respond to offshore oil spills in AK
- Upland Cook Inlet facilities are in inland waters and are not considered under this
- Sponsoring a project to update the offshore spills scenarios for the state of AK
- High level conceptual framework
- The Gulf of Mexico spill is a framework for what we're designing in AK

XIV. Closing Remarks

- ADF&G: The wildlife protection committee is updating the guidelines for the 2020 wildlife oil spill response guidelines. Adding Pribilof Island's protection guidelines, as its own statewide document update. It will have its own wildlife protection guidelines. AK RRT has a wildlife protection guidelines page, including trainings and training tactics for field sampling.

- CAPT Leanne Lusk: The next Area Committee Meeting we want to see more local, rural outreach in AK. Due to warming waters in the arctic there will be more intense storms, especially if there isn't as much ice over in these areas. What happened in western AK with Typhoon Merbok could be a repeat event. Having an outreach potential before we reach storm season will be more and more important. Other groups recognize our hard work and funding is a really good thing at the end of the day.
- Meeting adjourned.