

## GEOGRAPHIC RESPONSE STRATEGIES: PART ONE - INTRODUCTION

The GRS Introduction pages are available on the ADEC Website at <http://dec.alaska.gov/spar/perp/grs/pws/home.htm>.

### A. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

These Geographic Response Strategies (GRS) are designed to be a supplement to the Prince William Sound (PWS) Subarea Contingency Plan for Oil and Hazardous Substances Spills and Releases, commonly referred to as the PWS Subarea Contingency Plan (SCP). GRS provide response strategies for the protection of selected sensitive areas to aid first responders to an oil spill. The strategies here serve as the federal and state on-scene coordinators' "orders" during an oil spill in the area covered by this GRS. As such, they have been approved by the U.S. Coast Guard Marine Safety Office and the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation.

Implementation of these Geographic Response Strategies is the third phase of an oil spill response. The first and primary phase of the response is to contain and remove the oil at the scene of the spill or while it is still on the open water, thereby reducing or eliminating impact on shorelines or sensitive habitats. If some of the spilled oil escapes this tactic, the second phase, which is no less important, is to intercept, contain and remove the oil in the nearshore area. The intent of phase two is the same as phase one: remove the spilled oil before it impacts sensitive environments. If phases one and two are not fully successful, phase three is to protect sensitive areas in the path of the oil. The purpose of phase three is to protect the selected sensitive areas from the impacts of a spill or to minimize that impact to the maximum extent practical.

The sites selected for development of Geographic Response Strategies are not meant to be exclusive; other sensitive sites may require protection during any given spill. The fact that a GRS may not have been developed for a certain sensitive site does not mean that site should not be protected if it is threatened by an oil spill.

These strategies are intended to be flexible to allow the spill responders to modify them, as necessary, to fit the prevailing conditions at the time of a spill. Seasonal constraints, such as ice or weather, may preclude implementation of some of the strategies in the winter months. It is not intended that all the sites be automatically protected at the beginning of a spill, only those that are in the projected path of the spill. The strategies developed for the selected sites were completed with a focus on minimizing environmental damage, leaving as small a footprint as possible to support the response operations. Equipment deployment strategies were developed that will not cause more damage than the spilled oil. To test these GRS, each site will be visited and equipment may be deployed according to the strategy, to ensure that the strategy is the most effective in protecting the resources at risk at the site. Revisions will be made to the strategies, and this document, if changes are indicated by site visits, drills or actual use during spills.

The PWS Subarea has been divided into five Geographic Response Zones (Figure G-1-1). The Copper River Delta Flats Zone strategies were developed through a separate Work Group process and are not

included in this document. The Copper River Delta Flats GRS are considered a separate annex to the PWS Subarea Contingency Plan at this time.

## **B. HOW TO USE THESE GEOGRAPHIC RESPONSE STRATEGIES**

The information provided here supplements information provided in the Prince William Sound SCP and the Alaska Federal/State Preparedness Plan for Response to Oil & Hazardous Substances Discharge/Releases (commonly referred to as the Unified Plan). Information provided in either of those plans is not duplicated herein. This document is intended for use by response professionals already familiar with spill response techniques.

Part 2 contains a general description of the protection/recovery tactics utilized throughout the GRS. Each general description contains the tactic objective, deployment depictions, resource sets required to implement the tactic, and deployment considerations and limitations. These general tactics may be adapted to produce a protection scheme for any site in Prince William Sound.

Part 3 contains site-specific response strategies. An index at the beginning of each sub-section shows the location of the selected sites. Each GRS consists of two parts: 1) a graphic showing a map, deployment diagram, picture and implementation notes; and 2) a matrix giving the location description, response strategy, response resources, staging area, site access, natural resources being protected and special considerations.

## **C. WHO TO CONTACT FOR INPUT**

Comments and recommendations on these GRS are welcomed. Please send your comments to either of the following agencies:

Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation  
Prevention and Emergency Response Program  
555 Cordova Street  
Anchorage, AK 99501

United States Coast Guard  
Captain of the Port, Valdez, Alaska  
Marine Safety Office Valdez  
PO Box 486  
Valdez, AK 99686

## **D. HOW THE DOCUMENT WAS DEVELOPED**

These GRS were developed through a cooperative, work group process involving federal, state, and local spill response experts working with representatives from the oil production and transportation industry, citizens' groups, and natural resource agencies. The Prince William Sound GRS Work Group developed the GRS for the Northwest, Northeast, Southeast, and Southwest Zones. The Copper River Delta Flats zone GRS were developed by a separate work group.

Work Group participants identified sensitive areas with potential to be classified as “Areas of Major Concern” under the criteria established in the PWS Subarea Plan. These potential sites were evaluated by the additional criteria of 1) risk of being impacted from a water borne spill; and 2) feasibility of successfully protecting the site with existing technology. Using this process, the work group selected a preliminary list of sites that was released for public input. Feedback on site selection was solicited from tribal representatives, user groups, environmental organizations and the general public. Based on the feedback received, the work group made the final site selections for the zone. Additional sites may be selected in the future.

A PWS Tactics committee, composed of spill response professionals, was formed to develop draft strategies for each site selected. The draft strategies were reviewed and approved by the entire Work Group and the final draft was forwarded to the PWS Subarea Committee with the recommendation that it be adopted as part of the Prince William Sound SCP.

### **1. PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND GRS WORKGROUP**

The Prince William Sound GRS Work Group developed GRSs for the Northwest (NW), Northeast (NE), Southeast (SE), and Southwest (SW) GRS zones. The work group consisted of representatives from the following organizations:

Alaska Chadux Corporation	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
*Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation	National Marine Fisheries Service
Alaska Department of Fish and Game	Polar Tanker Company
Alaska Department of Natural Resources	Prince William Sound Regional Citizens’ Advisory Council
Alaska Tanker Company	SeaRiver Maritime
Alyeska Pipeline Service Company – Ship Escort and Vessel Response Service	Tatitlek Village IRA Council
British Petroleum	*Tesoro Alaska Company
Conoco/Phillips	United States Coast Guard
Cook Inlet Spill Prevention and Response, Inc.	United States Environmental Protection Agency
Chenega Village IRA Council	United States Department of the Interior
ChevronTexaco	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
Crowley Marine Services	United States Forest Service

\* = co-chairs

The work group developed the site selection matrix key, page G-1-5, to aid in the selection of sites from within the four PWS GRS Zones. The resulting tables, tables G-1-1, G-1-2, G-1-3, and G-1-4, consist of identified sites in each row, with information about resources at each site that could qualify the site as an area of major concern detailed in the columns.

Figures G-1-2 through G-1-5 show the location of GRS sites in the Northwest, Northeast, Southeast, and Southwest zones. GRS for the Copper River Delta Flats are contained in the Copper River Delta Flats GRS document.

**To view these table please visit Part 1. Introduction on DEC’s website**

**<http://dec.alaska.gov/spar/perp/grs/pws/home.htm>**