

**PWS PLACES OF REFUGE
WORKGROUP MEETING**

August 30, 2004
PWSRCAC Conference Room
Anchorage, Alaska

Attendees:

Rhonda Arvidson- PWSRCAC*	Cliff Chambers-PWSRCAC
Tom Colby-Polar Tankers*	Mary Goolie-USEPA
Karen Williams-CIRCAC*	Anne Logan-USCG
Larry Iwamoto-ADEC	Cdr. Mark Swanson-USCG
Mark Fink- ADF&G	Jack Sinclair-AKDNR/State Parks
Tim Robertson-Nuka Research	Donna Schantz-PWSRCAC
Mark Janes- Nuka Research	Joe Banta-PWSRCAC
Capt. Ron Ward-SWAPA	Steve Zempke – USDA, Forest Service (Chugach National Park)
Sam Means-ADNR	* Attended by teleconference
John Bauer-ADEC	
Doug Mutter-DOI	

Rhonda Arvidson opened the meeting and welcomed the group.

Cdr. Mark Swanson offered opening comments. He reviewed the project to date, and noted the following:

- The Alaska Regional Response Team (ARRT) is developing the guidelines for the decision making process for Potential Place of Refuge (PPOR) implementation. Both projects need to be considered together in order to show the entire scope of the project, and the overall decision-making process.
- The work and research being done will assist in making difficult decisions when a vessel is in distress in PWS. The PPOR Section will be a tool in the decision making process and not a designation of one geographic location being preferred over another. The more information that a Captain of the Port (COTP) has regarding a location, the more effectively she/he will be able to utilize or not utilize the area based on the specifics of the situation.
- The recent PWS NPREP Exercise was to focus on utilizing the Jack Bay PPOR plan to test its efficacy. After considering all the information, the decision was made to not utilize Jack Bay and instead return the tanker to Valdez. This process shows the usefulness of having the type of information being prepared by this work group.
- The products of the Work group are not designating any place as the preferred place of refuge. Additionally, there is a misconception that Places of Refuge are “sacrificial sites” for relocating a vessel experiencing a major oil spill. This is not the case as PPORs may be used for vessels on fire, or experiencing steering or propulsion problems, etc., and not solely for oil spill contingencies.

The meeting was opened for public comment. None was offered.

Rhonda Arvidson offered the PWSRCAC public comment and outreach plan.

- RCAC has established a PPOR page on their web site and sent an informational letter to landowners in Jack Bay. The letter addressed the NPREP exercise and also discussed the PPOR project. Three letters have been received, one addressed to Cdr Swanson and two to PWSRCAC.
- After the results of this meeting are posted, the outreach effort will be expanded to seek additional comments and information from the entire PWS Subarea.
- Public input is needed to verify and add local knowledge regarding each site.

The letters from Jon Miller and Ron Brown were reviewed point-by-point and generated the following actions:

- ADNR, USFS will review their land use plans for possible conflicts with the PPOR's. These plans and any conflicts with the PPOR document will be mentioned in the Introduction Section.
- John Bauer will bring the land use plans information to the ARRT PPOR Work Group to be considered in developing the ARRT Guidelines document.
- Resources and geographic considerations discussed in the letters will be incorporated in the PPOR maps and tables, and
- The USCG and PWSRCAC will answer each letter addressed to them.

John Bauer, Rhonda Arvidson, Cdr. Swanson and Tom Colby reviewed the use of the PPOR in the recent Jack Bay exercise. All felt the process worked well, as Valdez was chosen over the original POR site (Jack Bay) based on the circumstances in the scenario, and detailed discussions by the Incident Management Team. The Site Assessment Matrix was helpful and assisted in the decision-making process.

John Bauer gave a report on the ARRT's progress in developing the statewide "Guidelines for Places of Refuge Decision-Making". The guidelines will provide a COTP with a process that will expedite the decision and ensure that stakeholders and experts are consulted as appropriate. He reviewed the step-by-step process being developed. The workgroup wanted to ensure that the "Guidelines" would be available when the PWS PPOR's are put out for public review and comment. The group noted that the two documents need to use parallel language.

Tim Robertson reviewed the aerial photographs taken for the project and thanked the Coast Guard for their assistance in providing a helicopter.

Tim Robertson reviewed the Draft "Introduction Section" of the document and received additional edits including:

- Tim Robertson, with input from John Bauer and Doug Mutter, will make edits to the PWS PPOR Introduction section to make it consistent with the ARRT Guidelines document,
- Changing the vessel classification system terms to "Deep Draft", "Light Draft", "Shallow Draft" replacing "Large", "Medium", and "Small" respectively,

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- Inclusion of grounding sites,
- “Annex O” is to be noted as the location of the *Guidelines for Places of Refuge Decision-Making* in the Unified Plan,
- The ARRT Guidelines, the Pacific States/British Columbia Task Force Guidelines, identified land management plans, and the web sites from BLM, ADNR “tidelands mapper” will be added to the Reference section, and

The group reviewed and edited the Site Assessment Matrix and key. Changes are to include:

- Reorganization of the site ID system to eliminate duplication of numbers,
- The inclusion of grounding sites on the matrix,
- Changing “Cultural Resources” to “Historic Properties” throughout the matrix and map pages, and
- Inclusion of a designation identifying State Marine Parks.

The group reviewed the PPOR Maps/Tables 01-14 and made changes to the content of each site and to the overall format. Format changes include:

- Changing the “Jurisdiction/Landowners” table title to “Stakeholders”,
- ADNR will assist in identifying land owners through the public records web site,
- The contact information for the stakeholders will be referenced to the resource section of the PWS Subarea Contingency Plan,
- The “Site Considerations” table sub-headings will be changed to “Human Health and Safety Considerations”, “Natural Resource Considerations”, “Other Stakeholder Considerations” and “Response and Salvage Resource Considerations”,
- A Subsistence row will be added to the “Site Considerations” table under the “Other Stakeholder Considerations” section,
- Sensitive Areas are to include the GRS site names in the immediate area of the PPOR and any other sensitive areas identified by the Work Group,
- The language used in the GRS’ for Historic Properties designation will be replicated in the PPOR,
- The ARRT Cultural Resources Workgroup will be asked to review all the tables and assist with the appropriate historic properties designation, and
- Grounding sites will be included on the maps.

The group directed the contractor to develop 2 additional maps. PPOR-15 will include the Heather Bay and Growler Island dock. PPOR-16 will include two anchorages in the area around Kayak and Wingham Island.

Larry Iwamoto summarized the action items from the meeting and outlined the timeline for the project. The timeline was agreed upon to be:

- September 28 - Updated documents from this meeting posted on website to accommodate the ARRT meeting on September 29th
- October 1 - PWS RCAC begins public comment period
- November 15 - Public Comment period ends
- December 8 - Work Group convenes to discuss public comments.