



Report from the Northwest Arctic Borough Oil Spill Workshop

May 22-23, 2012
Kotzebue, AK

Prepared by Ukallaysaaq Tom Okleasik



Workshop Review

- * Organized in partnership with...
 - * Coastal Response and Research Center
 - * NOAA-Office of Response and Restoration
 - * Northwest Arctic Borough

- * First meeting in region with federal agencies regarding outer continental shelf (OCS)/offshore oil spill response and restoration



Workshop Review

- * First meeting including the following borough commissioners and committees
 - * Planning Commission
 - * Economic Development Commission
 - * Public Safety Commission
 - * Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC)

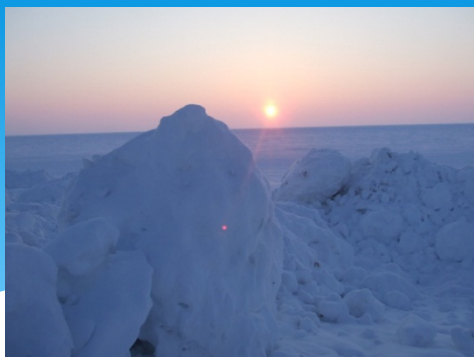


Workshop Review



* Workshop Goals

1. Discuss community **involvement** in oil spill response, natural resource damage assessment (NRDA) and restoration/recovery;
2. Integrate local community **knowledge** into the Arctic Environmental Response Management Application (Arctic ERMA®); and
3. Enhance **relationships** between local communities and government agencies regarding planning and preparation for potential oil spill response, NRDA and restoration/recovery.



Concerns

- * Implications of harsh environmental conditions (ice and severe weather) on spill response, restoration and recovery
- * Delays in Arctic response due to significant travel distances for spill response personnel and equipment
- * Limitations in spill infrastructure and logistical support including a lack of USCG stations in the Arctic
 - * E.g., vessels, fuel, boom and other supplies, equipment and maintenance, and personnel logistical support (food, housing, waste management)

Concerns



- * Potential disruption to subsistence practices and food security
 - * The subsistence way of life in the NWAB is essential for human and community health, spirituality, and culture.
- * Ecological effects of oil on migratory species and sensitive habitats
 - * E.g., lagoons, river mouths, hunting areas
- * Lack of trained local/village personnel to respond to oil spills and restore habitats/environment

Summary Recommendations



- * Build local spill response capability at the village level
- * Incorporate local/community knowledge into NRDA tools that reflect subsistence and ecological status
- * Determine baseline conditions of species and habitats likely to be affected by oil spills
- * Begin restoration planning now
 - * Need involvement now in developing specific project ideas
 - * Continue engagement of the NWAB Planning Commission, Economic Development Commission, Public Safety Commission and Local Emergency Planning Committee

Comments to Share



- * Arctic offshore resources, including oil and gas, need to be planned and developed with extreme caution and ensure that they can be done in harmony with our Inupiaq ways of life.
- * Subsistence is intertwined in our communities: it is our healthy way of life, a unique lifestyle, and proudly supports our people both economically and culturally.





Comments to Share



- * Ice covers the Chukchi, Beaufort and Arctic Ocean for up to ½ the year
 - * Fall period ice formation, winter thickness, spring break up, and what each those conditions could mean to spill response efforts
- * Oil spills in coastal areas with tundra land conditions (clay and silt underlain with permafrost) and lagoon systems.

Comments to Share



- * This is a great opportunity for dialogue to talk about our unique Arctic environment.
- * Encourage all to take advantage of this time to work together and put our concerns on the table for honest discussion.
- * Also encourage participants to share traditional knowledge and help identify the real life gaps that exist in the Arctic.

Closing

- * Quyaana for the time to review and share
- * Ukallaysaaq Tom Okleasik
 - * Past planning director for the NWAB – 2007 to 2012
- * Currently: consultant for Northwest Planning
- * www.nwplanning.net
- * E-mail ukallaysaaq@nwplanning.net

