

Aleutian Islands Waterway Safety Committee (AIWSC)  
Informational Meeting

Grand Aleutian Hotel, Unalaska, Alaska

April 26, 2017

MEETING SUMMARY (DRAFT)

**Attendees:**

- Aaron Poe, Aleutian and Bering Sea Islands (ABSI)
- Amy Holman, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA)
- Anthony Faymeville, Chief Mate, Northern Glacier
- Ben Matheson, Aleutian and Bering Sea Islands (ABSI)
- Bev Nieman, Delta Western
- Brian Sargis, U.S. Coast Guard(USCG), MSD Dutch Harbor
- Bruce Wright, Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association (APIA)
- Buddy Custard, Alaska Maritime Prevention and Response Network\*
- Captain Ed Page, Marine Exchange of Alaska\*
- CDR Hector Cintron, U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), Sector Anchorage\*
- David Gregory, City of Unalaska/ Ounalashka Corporation
- David Toron, U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), Marine Safety Detachment Dutch Harbor
- Doug Limpindel, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA)
- Emily Gibson, Unisea
- Erik Newton, Alaska Response Company, LLC & Aleutians Spill Control, Inc.\*
- Frank Kelty, Mayor, City of Unalaska
- Graham Wood, Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC)\*
- Jeff Williams, US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)\*
- Judy Miller, Alaska Response Company\*
- Karen Pletnikoff, Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association (APIA)
- Keith Austin, Alaska Marine Pilots
- Kris Arnold, Chief Engineer, Northern Glacier
- Krista Milani, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA)
- Laura Kraegel, KUCB
- Leah Bower, Aleut International Association
- Lori Verbrugge, US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)\*
- Masoud Te'Moury, University of Alaska Fairbanks
- Matthew Forney, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA)\*
- Melissa Good, Alaska Sea Grant
- Michael Newell, U.S. Coast Guard (USCG)
- OPatricia Lekanoff Gregory
- Pat Mulligan, Delta Western\*
- Paula Cottrell, Offshore Systems, Inc.\*
- Paula Cullenburg, Alaska Sea Grant
- Phillip Johnson, US Department of Interior\*
- Rebecca Reese, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA)/GC/International\*

- Rick Entenmann, Alaska Marine Pilots
- Rob Rogers, Icicle Seafoods\*
- Sara Nichols, Nuka Research\*
- Steven Gabelein, Alaska Maritime Prevention and Response Network\*
- Thomas Robinson, Qawalangin Tribe
- Tim Hunter, Delta Western Dutch Harbor Operations Manager
- Tim Robertson, Nuka Research
- Todd Duke, Resolve Marine/1-Call AK

\* attended by teleconference/webinar

### **Purpose of the Meeting**

One of the recommendations of the Aleutian Islands Risk Assessment was to bring together stakeholders in a proactive forum to determine ways to reduce risk, prevent accidents, and foster collaboration among a diverse set of waterway users in a non-regulatory body. An exploratory meeting was held in Unalaska to discuss possible ways forward and determine next steps in establishing a Waterway Safety Committee.

### **Welcome and Introductions**

Unalaska Mayor Frank Kelty shared his observations of the improvements made in the 10 years since the *Selendang Ayu* grounding. At the time, the area was ill-equipped to handle an incident of that magnitude. The Aleutian Islands Risk Assessment contributed to a better understanding of the preparedness necessary for another such incident. The seafood industry is the only industry in the area. He identified the following components critical to the protection of marine resources in the area:

- Deployment of Emergency Towing Systems (ETS) in Unalaska, Adak, Kodiak, Anchorage, and Sitka
- Placement of a mooring buoy in Wide Bay for vessels taking refuge
- Annual exercises and training with the ETS
- New tug/towing capability in Unalaska
- USCG assets (more patrols, better towing, new vessels)
- Continued studies on vessel traffic patterns
- Improvements in communication and upgrades to Automated Identification System (AIS)
- Vessel monitoring
- Increased salvage and spill capabilities.

Mayor Kelty stated that creating a Waterway Safety Committee would carry forward the work begun in the Aleutian Islands Risk Assessment.

### **Overview**

Tim Robertson with Nuka Research and Planning Group, the company that has been contracted to facilitate the AIWSC, described the Aleutian Islands Risk Assessment and described the particulars leading up to the concept of the AIWSC.

[Session 1 – Overview Presentation](#)

## **What is a Waterway Safety Committee?**

CDR Hector Cintron and Chief Brian Sargis with the USCG presented the background of waterway and harbor safety committees, gave examples of the two committees currently in Alaska, the Cook Inlet Harbor Safety Committee (CIHSC) and Arctic Waterway Safety Committee (AWSC), as well as other parts of the U.S. They also, shared lessons learned from other committees.

### [Session 2 – What is a Waterway Safety Committee](#)

Through these committees, maritime operators and other stakeholders can discuss concerns and develop best practices and standards of care for operations. It is a very effective process when done right. Best practices are not regulations, but the community can establish them with the USCG, which may intervene if the standards of care are not being followed.

What were the driving factors behind the establishment of the committees already in place in Alaska? In the Arctic, food security was the priority. Interactions between vessels and subsistence activities on the water has been the focus. In Cook Inlet, there was a desire for a forum for all marine users to communicate.

How often do the committees in Alaska collaborate? In Alaska, there hasn't been much collaboration to date. CIHSC is just 2 years old, AWSC 3 years, and it takes a while to get a committee up and fully running. There is both a national WSC association and a west coast WSC association, which hold meetings every couple of years to share their experiences.

## **Proposed Approach for Aleutian Islands WSC**

Tim Robertson presented a proposed approach for starting the AIWSC, based largely on the process followed in Cook Inlet but with lots of flexibility to modify the approach as needed for the Aleutians.

### [Session 3 – Proposed Way Forward](#)

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation is funding the establishment and operations of an AIWSC with funds remaining from the Aleutian Island Risk Assessment. After that, it will be critical for the organization to become self-sustaining.

Q&A followed both in the room and via the webinar participants.

The Captain of the Port (COTP), CAPT Albertson, will invite people to establish the Convening Workgroup. This is the process used for the CIHSC worked. The USCG also facilitated the formation of the AWSC.

Q: Have any of the committees thought about funds sharing as a funding strategy to be able to respond?

A: Other than the individual committees banding together to hold association meetings, none were known.

It was clarified that waterway safety committees are focused on prevention of marine accidents, by establishing best practices, and the Area Committees are focused on response after an accident. Although, both organizations may have a role in preparedness.

Would it be inappropriate for the Committee to have a working group to look at making sure response assets are in place? If the Committee wants to take that on, they can, although it's not a traditional role of an HSC. The CIHSC has a salvage and marine firefighting group looking at training and preparedness. The WSC would not be part of the incident command, but would have a role in preparedness.

Captain Ed Page with Alaska Marine Exchange stated he has 25 years experience with Harbor Safety Committees and offered himself as a source for help to get started. He mentioned that the USCG has guidance documents on Harbor Safety Committees. Nuka Research will post them on the AIWSC website.

The Convening Work Group should be a small group (5-7) that understands and has the trust of the marine industry and other stakeholders in the region. They will make the initial decisions necessary to establish a board of directors and develop a charter for the Committee. Their decisions can be modified as the organization forms and grows. The Convening Work Group is appointed by the Captain of the Port and will not be subject to the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), so it can include government members. The Cook Inlet convening group included the USCG, Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, Marine Pilots, Cook Inlet Regional Citizens Advisory Council, Tesoro, and Alaska LNG.

For the Aleutian Islands, a unique challenge will be to engage a representative of the innocent passage vessels. P&I clubs, which have representatives in Alaska, might represent vessels passing through the Aleutians.

It is generally preferred to have different individuals involved in the Convening Work Group, Board of Directors, and Waterway Safety Committee, some individuals may participate in more than one group if there are not enough interested representatives from different stakeholder groups. These are the types of decisions that have to be made as the organization comes together.

The following were suggested as possible stakeholder groups to be represented on the AIWSC: Marine industries, fishermen, fish processors, communities/ports, vessels in innocent passage, marine pilots, containerships, trampers, Alaska natives, and other non-governmental organizations with a stake in marine issues.

It was suggested that the geographic scope should include the Pribilof Islands to the north, the Shumagin Islands to the east and the southern great circle route to the south. Activities across this area pose potential threats to subsistence and commercial fishing. The area includes the Boroughs of Aleutians East, and Aleutians West, and the communities of Unalaska, Sand Point, Cold Bay, Akutan, Nikolski, Adak, Saint Paul, and Saint George.

**Conclusion and Next Steps**

All in attendance were unanimously in favor of establishing a convening workgroup and moving forward with standing up the Aleutian Islands Waterway Safety Committee.

Anyone interested in serving on the AIWSC Convening Workgroup should send an email to CDR Hector Cintron at [hector.l.cintron@uscg.mil](mailto:hector.l.cintron@uscg.mil) and Sara Nichols at [sara@nukaresearch.com](mailto:sara@nukaresearch.com).

Meeting Adjourned 4:16 PM

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