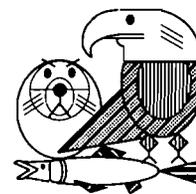


# Restoration Update

December 1993

Volume 1 Number 1



## Trustees Pursue Comprehensive Approach

The Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council moved forward with a comprehensive approach to restoration and recovery of the resources injured by the 1989 spill at their November 30 meeting.

"The Trustees' actions will provide a balanced approach to restoration of the Alaskan ecosystem injured by the oil spill," said newly-appointed Executive Director Jim Ayers.

The Trustee Council sanctioned projects ranging from Kodiak to Prince William Sound. They approved a *Draft Restoration Plan* which will guide all future restoration actions, adopted a mission statement to help focus future Trustee actions, and released the list of proposed 1994 projects for public review.

The *Draft Restoration Plan*, which still must comply with the National Environmental Protection Act process, will be used to guide annual decisions on how to spend the bulk of the civil settlement monies.

The plan outlines an ecosystem approach which includes general restoration, monitoring and research, and habitat protection. The deadline for public comment on the plan is January 14, 1994.

The *Draft 1994 Work Plan* includes a number of general restoration projects proposed for the

*"I'm confident that the Trustees' direction will result in wise use of the settlement funds to understand and restore the injured ecosystem in the spill area," said Jim Ayers, Executive Director.*

coming year, such as a project for restoration of sockeye salmon in Prince William Sound to replace salmon lost as a result of the oil spill, work to remove oil from mussel beds, and treatment of oiled beaches near the village of Chenega.

Monitoring and research projects under consideration include the development of a marine research institute that would enable better monitoring and restoration of resources damaged by the spill.

Other research projects under consideration include fisheries projects to determine the causes of recent drops in pink salmon and herring populations in Prince William Sound and sockeye on the Kenai Peninsula, and projects to assess the condition of various indicator species such as marine mammals and seabirds.

Action planned on habitat protection includes evaluation and

ranking of additional parcels of land for their importance to species injured by the spill. The Trustees also directed Ayers to initiate discussions and preliminary negotiations with the owners of seventeen parcels which were already highly ranked.

"It's been two years of long hard work to get the restoration to this point," said Ayers. "I'm confident that the Trustees' direction will result in wise use of the settlement funds to understand and restore the injured ecosystem in the spill area."

### Restoration Update

This is the first edition of a newsletter we sincerely hope will keep you—the interested public—informed about actions, policies and plans of the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council.

Publication of the Restoration Update will depend, in part, on events but will hopefully occur at least six times a year. Please drop us a note or call and let us know what you think:

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645 G St., Suite 402  
Anchorage, AK 99501

In Anchorage, call 278-8012

In Alaska, call toll-free at  
1-800-478-7745

Outside Alaska, call toll-free at  
1-800-283-7745.



## Introducing Jim Ayers

The Trustees have established a clear direction based on a comprehensive ecosystem approach to assure the most effective restoration program possible. This approach is critical to the long-term health and recovery of the damaged resources and services.

I believe a responsible, efficient management structure and strategy is key to our success. To that end we must establish measurable objectives based on our mission. The Trustees have directed me to improve and expand our communication and involvement of the

public, with emphasis on the Public Advisory Group and the impacted communities.

I have begun a reorganization of the staff at the direction of the Trustees and will have a new structure in place by February 1. Molly McCammon has been hired as the Director of Operations and will focus on day-to-day operations in the Anchorage office, including project oversight.

We will soon appoint a Director of Administration to focus on Council finances, provide quarterly reports and audits, and develop an annual report.

The public's goals of protecting habitat, improving our understanding of the resources through

monitoring and research, and conducting general restoration work to provide for the long-term health and recovery of the ecosystem are achievable. By working together with the Trustees in positive, constructive ways we can attain worthwhile goals and accomplish the mission.

I feel privileged to be selected for this tremendous job and am excited about the opportunity to work with all of you in moving forward the efforts of the Trustee Council.

*Jim Ayers was hired as Executive Director November 23, 1993. He has nearly 20 years of experience in private enterprise and public administration, most recently as Director of the Alaska Marine Highway System and Deputy Commissioner of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.*

## Restoration Plan Outlines Policies

The Draft Restoration Plan incorporates nine general policies that address issues raised during public discussions:

- the restoration program will take an ecosystem approach;
- restoration activities may be considered for any injured resource or the service it provides;
- most restoration activities will occur within the spill area; a few may occur elsewhere in Alaska;
- activities will emphasize resources and services that have not recovered from injuries sustained as a result of the 1989 spill;
- activities must have a relationship to an injured resource, benefit the same user group that was injured and should be compatible with the character and public uses of the area;
- competitive proposals will be encouraged;
- restoration projects will be subject to independent scientific review;
- meaningful public participation will continue to be actively solicited; and
- government agencies involved will be funded only for restoration work not normally conducted.

Copies of the Restoration Plan are available at the Oil Spill Public Information Center.

## Trustees Adopt Mission Statement

With the goal of clarifying and focusing Trustee Council activities, the Trustees adopted a mission statement on November 30.

"This statement is intended to be a very simple summary of what it is we're all about," Executive Director Jim Ayers said. "We should be able to measure every proposed action against this statement and see if it fits before going any further. It will serve as an additional measuring stick, supplementing the Restoration Plan."

Stating that neither the Draft Restoration Plan nor the mission statement are cast in stone, Ayers said new information might require that both be revised to meet new challenges.

### Mission Statement of the Exxon Valdez Trustee Council

*The mission of the Trustee Council and all participants in council efforts is to efficiently restore the environment injured by the Exxon Valdez oil spill to a healthy, productive, world renowned ecosystem, while taking into account the importance of quality of life and the need for viable opportunities to establish and sustain a reasonable standard of living.*

*The restoration will be accomplished through the development and implementation of a comprehensive interdisciplinary recovery and rehabilitation program that includes:*

- Natural Recovery
- Monitoring and Research
- Resource and Service Restoration
- Habitat Acquisition and Protection
- Resource and Service Enhancement
- Replacement
- Meaningful Public Participation
- Project Evaluation
- Fiscal Accountability
- Efficient Administration

## Habitat Protection Part of Ecosystem Approach

### Comprehensive Habitat Protection Document Released

Another step in the process to protect some of the habitat important to species injured by the spill was completed when the Trustees reviewed the *Comprehensive Habitat Protection Process: Large Parcel Evaluation & Ranking* at their November 30 meeting.

As part of this process, Trustee staff contacted ninety landowners in the spill area, then evaluated and ranked eighty-one identified land parcels of one thousand acres or more for their importance to resources injured by the spill. The parcels were distributed throughout the spill region.

Each parcel had to meet certain threshold criteria in order to be considered. These included a seller, of either the parcel or certain property rights, who was willing to sell at or below fair market value, and clear linkage of the candidate lands to injuries to resources or services sustained from the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill.

There also had to be evidence that injured resources would benefit from protection of the parcel; and some reasonable way to incorporate the lands into an already-existing public land management system.

The Trustees directed Executive Director Jim Ayers to initiate discussions with the owners of seventeen parcels which received the highest rankings. The lands are located in Prince William Sound, on the Kenai Peninsula and in the Kodiak region. Ayers and staff are now assessing the need for a similar analysis of smaller parcels.



Survey worker digs a pit in the Bay of Isles on Knight Island in July 1993.

## Shoreline Survey Finds Oil Is Decreasing

Project Leader Ernie Piper and coastal geologist Dr. Jim Gibeaut reported at the November 30 Trustee Council meeting that they found a substantial decrease in subsurface oil in the spill region during the 1993 shoreline survey.

Gibeaut noted that the rate of decrease is slowing, however, and speculated that it may take another four years to see the amount of improvement observed between 1991 and 1993.

They also noted that overall oiling is markedly reduced, and

that the effects of cleanup work are becoming more apparent over time, as indicated by reductions in oil remaining at sites which were cleaned more aggressively.

However, Piper said, surveyors found some oil residue—either surface or subsurface—at every one of the 59 study sites the team visited in Prince William Sound and the Kenai region.

A shoreline survey to continue to track changes in oiling conditions is being considered for next summer.

## Workshop Evaluates Ecosystem Approach

Fishermen, scientists and citizens of Prince William Sound met in Cordova the first week in December to discuss an ecosystem approach to restoration of the resources injured by the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill.

The Trustee Council sponsored the Cordova workshop to help define the process and consolidate resources and information already available for Prince William Sound.

"We are engaged here to unite in our efforts," Executive Director Jim Ayers said at the opening of the workshop. "Managing restoration from an ecosystem perspective makes good scientific sense, and the products developed here will

assist in the process of looking at the Sound and designing a comprehensive approach."

More than fifty researchers, including twelve internationally-recognized specialists in marine ecology and other relevant fields, discussed the Sound Ecosystem Assessment or "SEA" plan, during the December 4-6 workshop.

The plan was a first look at how an ecosystem approach to study of damaged resources in the sound might be structured, and was developed by fisheries specialists and scientists from Cordova who participated in the Prince William Sound Fisheries Ecosystem Research Planning Group.

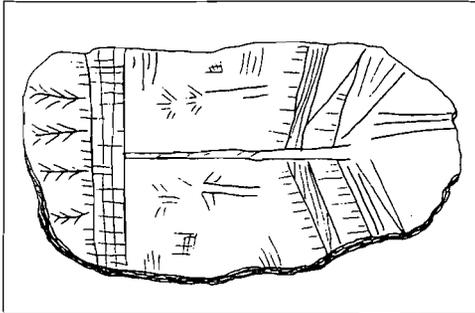
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## Kodiak Cultural Artifacts Protected

The Trustee Council approved funding for an Alutiiq Archaeological Repository in Kodiak at its November 30 meeting.

The repository will protect and preserve artifacts from archaeological sites injured by the oil spill and cleanup work.

The Trustees agreed to provide \$1.5 million to construct the facility, and the Kodiak Area Native Association pledged to provide staffing and upkeep.



Incised slate tablet, about 7" x 3," similar to one found during Exxon Valdez cleanup work.

"This action on the part of the Trustee Council will help to enhance and preserve the cultural richness of the Alutiiq people in the spill region," said Jerome Selby, Kodiak Island Borough Mayor. "We welcome and

appreciate this support from the Trustees."

Construction of the facility will begin in 1994, Mayor Selby said.

## Ecosystem Workshop

Continued from page 3

The scientists commended the Cordova group for the quality of the SEA plan, and made suggestions to both broaden the scope and sharpen the focus of the study. They also underscored the importance of understanding toxic effects of remaining oil as one source of stress in the system, and endorsed the comprehensive approach as the basis for restoration.

The scientists recommended selection of certain key species as indicators to reflect the ecosystem as a whole. Species proposed included pink salmon, Pacific herring, harbor seals, black-legged kittiwakes, sea otters and harlequin ducks.

Comments will be synthesized into recommendations by the ecosystem study steering committee for presentation to the Trustee Council later in 1994.

For a copy of the SEA plan or additional information about the ecosystem workshop, contact the Prince William Sound Science Center at 907/424-5800.

### Documents Available

Contact the Oil Spill Public Information Center for a copy of:

- Draft 1994 Work Plan
- Comprehensive Habitat Protection Process: Large Parcel Evaluation & Ranking
- Draft Restoration Plan

For more information or copies of other Trustee Council documents, contact the Oil Spill Public Information Center at 645 G Street, Anchorage, AK 99501, or call 907/278-8008, toll free in Alaska at 1-800-478-7745, or from outside Alaska at 1-800-283-7745.

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