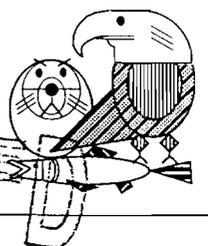


Restoration Update

September 1994

Volume 1 Number 5

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OIL SPILL
TRUSTEE COUNCIL
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Draft 1995 Work Plan Out for Review

The Trustee Council has released the *Draft Fiscal Year 1995 Work Plan* for public review and comment. This document describes restoration programs being considered by the Trustees for action in federal fiscal year 1995 (October 1, 1994 - September 30, 1995).

The Trustees have not decided which projects should be part of the 1995 restoration program. When they make their decision in late October, they will take into consideration your comments as well as those from the Public Advisory Group.

You may make comments by writing or calling the Restoration Office by October 3rd. All written comments must be postmarked no later than October 3, 1994. A public meeting to take additional comments will take place on Wednesday, September 28, beginning at 7 P.M. at the Oil Spill Public Information Center, 645 G Street in Anchorage. The meeting will include a detailed briefing on the status of restoration activities,

including habitat protection and acquisition efforts. Access to this meeting will be available via teleconference to residents of all the communities and villages in the oil spill region.

Contact your Alaska Legislative Information Office or L.J. Evans at the Trustee Council Office at 278-8012 for information about participating in the September 28 meeting.

Where did 1995 projects come from?

In May 1994 the Trustee Council published an *Invitation to Submit Restoration Projects for Fiscal Year 1995*. A total of 172 projects were submitted and reviewed.

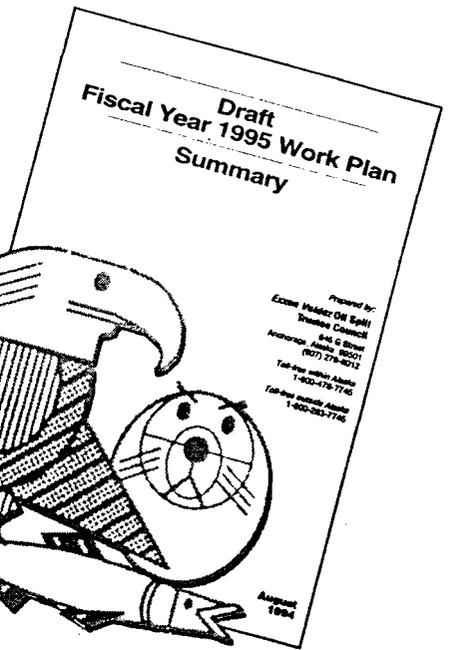
Proposals were assessed by the executive director, agency staff and a group of independent scientists for their scientific and technical merit as well as potential restoration benefit; some also received a preliminary legal review.

How can the public be involved?

The Trustees have asked the public to review the proposed projects with these major questions in mind:

- How will this project benefit restoration?
- If a long-term commitment is suggested, can this project be sustained financially?

What is the appropriate balance for the 1995 work season? Do you have a priority regarding the



funding level of various projects and/or of the various restoration categories?

• Is this project proposal an appropriate activity for a government agency, or would the project objectives be better served if a competitive contract were awarded to a non-Trustee organization?

What documents are available, and where?

The *Draft FY 95 Work Plan: Summary* describes each project's cost, objective, and how

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1995 Work Plan Key Dates

September 28 - Public Meeting 7:00 pm, 645 G St. in Anchorage, or via teleconference

October 3 - Deadline for public comments

October 12 & 13 - Public Advisory Group meeting, 645 G Street

October 31 (tentative) - Trustee Council meeting to make decisions about 1995 work plan

New Trustee Council Member Representing U.S. Department of Agriculture

by Phil Janik, U.S. Forest Service Alaska Region



Since coming on board as the Alaska Regional Forester in May, I have learned a great deal about the mission of the

Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council and the complexity of our assignment. I am excited to be involved with such an important task as restoration of the resources and services injured by America's worst tanker spill.

It is clear that the Trustees have

made a significant commitment to involve the public in as many steps and as early in the process as possible. I am glad to see this commitment to public participation because it is also one of my priorities within the Forest Service in Alaska.

There are a variety of approaches to restoration and various members of the public who strongly support each of them. The Trustees' job is to achieve an effective, reasonable balance among the priorities, but this will probably mean that no one will see all of the funds spent exactly as they would have wished.

One of the important areas in which the Forest Service is providing expertise to the restoration process is in overseeing appraisals of large land parcels under consideration for habitat protection. Staff are overseeing the appraisal of more than 575,000 acres throughout the spill area for

their value to restoration efforts.

The Forest Service is one of the major land managers in the oil spill region. Shorelines in the Chugach National Forest were heavily oiled, and wildlife species which depend on those lands for habitat were affected. The Forest Service's experience in ecosystem management will blend and enhance implementation of the "comprehensive balanced approach" outlined in the Draft Restoration Plan.

Phil Janik was appointed as Alaska Regional Forester on May 4, 1994. He has spent 27 years of service with the federal government working with resource management issues and conflict resolution. He served as Alaska Director of Wildlife, Fisheries and Subsistence in the Forest Service from 1983 to 1989, and notes that he and his wife Pat are happy to be back in Alaska.

PAG Nomination Deadline Extended

The Trustees have extended the time period for accepting nominations for the Public Advisory Group to October 31.

The Public Advisory Group advises the Trustee Council on decisions related to the planning, evaluation and conduct of injury assessment and restoration activities using funds from the 1991 civil settlement. Public Advisory Group members will be selected to serve a two-year term. PAG members are compensated for travel and per diem for attendance at approximately five two-day meetings per year.

Nominations have not yet been received for representatives of the

following interest groups: aquaculture, commercial tourism, and subsistence.

A copy of the charter for the Public Advisory Group and a packet of information on the nomination process are available by contacting the Oil Spill Public Information Center at 645 G St., Suite 100, Anchorage, AK 99501, or by calling 907/278-8008, toll-free within Alaska at 1-800-478-7745.

Nominations should be sent to the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council, 645 G Street, Anchorage, AK 99501. For more information, contact Douglas Mutter at 271-5011 or L.J. Evans at 278-8012.

Help Wanted!

Restoration Update

The Restoration Update is published approximately six times a year by the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council. Its purpose is to update interested members of the public about actions, policies and plans of the Trustee Council to restore resources and services injured by the Exxon Valdez oil spill.

For more information, mailing address correction or to request future articles on specific subjects, contact:

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Habitat Protection: Small Parcel Update

Following a 60 day public solicitation, the Trustee Council received 274 nominations of small parcels of land for habitat protection. The parcels, each consisting of less than 1,000 acres, are being evaluated by staff for their benefit to the resources and services injured by the spill.

The nominated parcels are distributed throughout the spill region: roughly 65 percent are in the Kodiak area, 30 percent on the Kenai Peninsula, and 5 percent in Prince William Sound.

The multi-agency task force evaluating lands for habitat protection estimate that a ranked list of small parcels will be presented to the Trustee Council for consideration early next year.

The Trustees have committed to habitat protection as one component of a balanced approach to restoration. In addition to small parcels, the Trustee Council is currently negotiating for habitat protection on parcels of land greater than 1,000 acres in size. To date, acquisitions have occurred in Kachemak Bay State Park, Seal Bay on Afognak Island, and Orca Narrows in Prince William Sound.

Environmental Impact Statement Moves Towards Completion

At their meeting on August 23 the Trustee Council adirected staff to complete a Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Draft

Restoration Plan that will guide the Council's future restoration activities.

The Final EIS, incorporating public comments and any necessary changes, will be available about September 23. The EIS process will formally close when the federal Trustees sign a Record of Decision in late October. The Trustees are also expected to consider and adopt a Final Restoration Plan at a meeting in late October.

Although this EIS will complete the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance for the overall restoration program, individual projects will still have to be assessed for their potential environmental impacts.

For more information on the Restoration Plan Environmental Impact Statement, contact Rod Kuhn at 278-8012.

Draft 1995 Work Plan Available for Review

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completion of the project would restore resources and services injured by the spill. The *Summary* is being distributed to the entire Trustee Council mailing list and will also be available for review at libraries and some Legislative Information Offices in the spill region, as will the related documents described below.

Three other documents provide more detailed information about each project:

- *Supplement Volume I* includes brief descriptions of 93 projects evaluated to have high restoration benefit and strong technical merit.
- *Supplement Volume II* contains project descriptions for all other projects that were submitted but not included in *Supplement Volume I*. These include those with lower

benefit or technical merit, and those with legal or policy concerns.

- *Supplement Volume III* contains detailed budget information for individual projects.

The *Summary*, *Supplement Volume I* and individual project descriptions or budgets are available from the Oil Spill Public Information Center upon request.

The *Summary* as well as *Supplement Volumes I, II and III* are available at libraries and some Legislative Information Offices in Anchorage and the spill area. To obtain copies of these documents or information about the location of reference copies in your community, contact the Oil Spill Public Information Center at 907/278-8012, toll free within Alaska at 1-800-283-7745, outside Alaska at 1-800-478-7745.

Research Proposals

Some resources injured by the spill are still not recovering. The research proposals contained in the Draft 1995 Work Plan reflect a multi-year effort to find out why these resources are showing little or no signs of recovery. Some of the questions being investigated include:

- What is causing the failure of Prince William Sound herring and pink salmon runs?
- What is causing the long-term decline in some marine mammals and seabirds?
- Is food availability limiting recovery of injured resources?
- What is limiting recovery in the nearshore ecosystem?
- Are the toxic effects of oil still constraining recovery of some resources?

Mussel Bed Cleanup

A team of workers removed oiled sediments underneath mussel beds in Prince William Sound over the course of this summer, removing a possible source of contamination from the marine food web.

Staff from the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and residents of the village of Chenega did work at twelve sites on five different islands.

The team collected the oiled mussels into buckets and set them aside, then removed the oiled sediments and laid down clean sediments in the same site. The bivalves were then replaced in the original location, matching as near as possible the original conditions. The difference is that with clean sediments underneath, the mussels will no longer be taking in and concentrating oil residues in their muscle tissue.

Oiled mussels are a problem because so many seabirds and marine mammals rely on them as a



Charles "Pete" Selanoff, Jr., Tom Sherman and Clint Gregorioff of Chenega remove oiled sediments which were underneath a mussel bed on Squirrel Island in Prince William Sound. The crew later replaced the mussels on top of a layer of clean sediments and cobbles. Photo by L.J. Evans.

major food source. There are indications that some species which are recovering slowly, such as harlequin ducks, may be ingesting oil through the mussels they eat. This oil in turn may be affecting the reproduction of harlequin ducks. Trustee-sponsored surveys have failed for the last several years to turn up any successfully breeding harlequins in western Prince William Sound, an area where they used to be numerous.

The Trustee Council contracted

with the Chenega Corporation to provide logistical support and labor for the effort, appropriately since several of the sites were on Chenega lands. The team worked on mussel beds on Eleanor, Disk, Chenega, Squirrel and Knight Islands during optimal tide cycles in June, July and August.

A small team from DEC and NOAA are currently assessing additional oiled mussel beds and sites of remaining contamination for possible cleanup work next year.

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