



# Alaska Regional Response Team



Quarterly Newsletter

2024  
Winter issue

The ARRT Coordinators, Secretaries, and Planners of Alaska's four Area Committees would like to share the following information with you on upcoming projects and events. Please RSVP or register for meetings - this helps us plan better for meeting spaces and provide you with additional meeting information and materials.

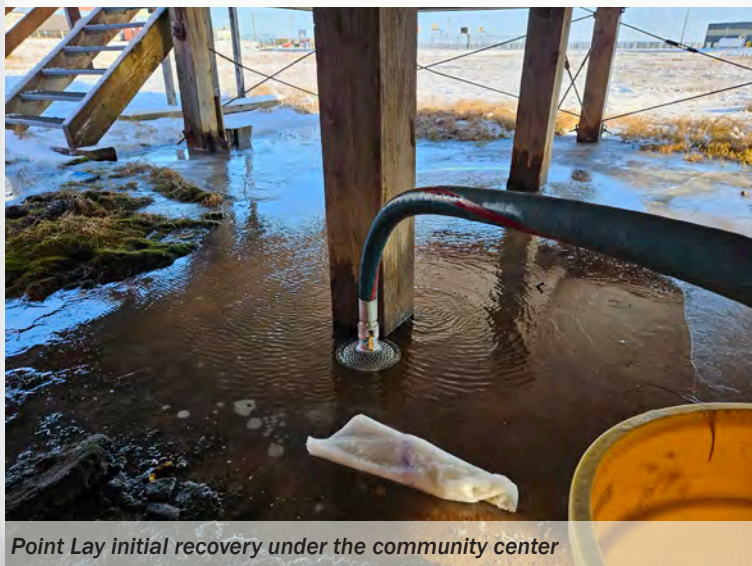
## Upcoming Meeting Dates

- January 24th – AWA Quarterly Subcommittee Meetings (1901 Bragaw St. Boardroom and MS Teams)
- February 12th – SEAK Area Committee Meeting
- March 7th – ARRT Meeting (2700 Sharon Lane, Gorsuch Commons)
- May 7th – AWA Area Committee Meeting (2700 Sharon Lane, Gorsuch Commons)

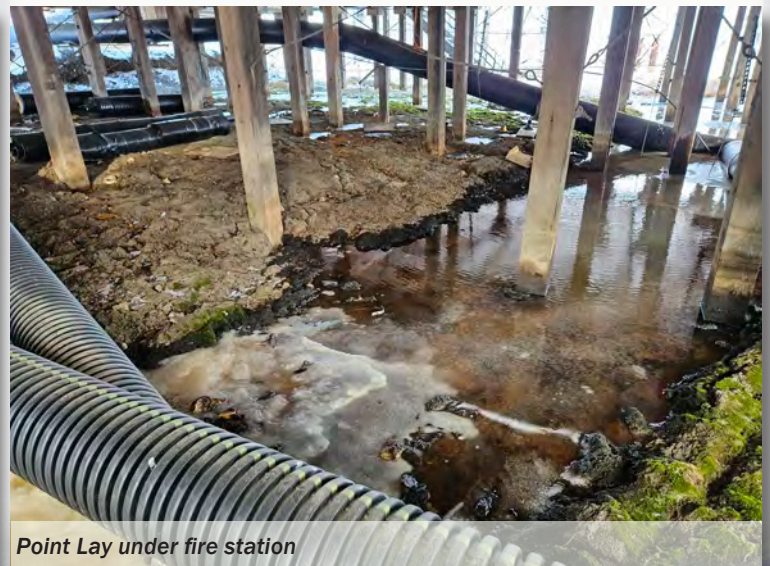
## Case Highlights Point Lay Response

On 09 Oct, 2,500 gallons of diesel were reported to have been discharged from a tank in Point Lay, AK due to an open/ faulty valve. The fuel discharged into secondary containment which ultimately failed causing the fuel to run under the community center, fire house, and telecommunications center. UMIAQ Environmental responded and led response operations. The buildings were isolated due to air quality concerns. Response operations focused on recovering product.

Due to weather and already present ice, operations were challenging with an estimated 270 gallons recovered. A winterization plan was developed and efforts will be made in the Spring to recover the remaining fuel. Additional monitoring of air quality and building structural integrity continues. Case pends.



Point Lay initial recovery under the community center



Point Lay under fire station

# Introductions

**CAPT Chris Culpepper** assumed the responsibilities of the Arctic and Western Alaska (AWA) Captain of the Port (COTP). He is responsible for marine safety, security, and environmental stewardship throughout the U.S. AWA COTP zone. He leads more than 600 active duty, civilian, reserve, and auxiliary personnel, and exercises operational control of three 110' Patrol Boats, small boat station, Aids to Navigation Team, Marine Safety Unit, and three Marine Safety Detachments.

Captain Culpepper's previous assignments include a Military Fellows Program at Carnegie Mellon University's



Captain Culpepper

Institute for Politics and Strategy; Commanding Officer at Maritime Force Protection Unit in Kings Bay, GA; Department of Homeland Security Secretary's Military Assistant; Coast Guard Sector North Bend's Surface Operations Officer; and Redeployment Assistance and Inspection

Detachment (RAID) Team Leader in Afghanistan and Kuwait for Patrol Forces Southwest Asia.

**LCDR JoEllen Arons** assumed the responsibilities of the AWA Executive Secretary reporting from Coast Guard Headquarters in Washington DC.

**LT Travis Dopp** assumed the responsibilities of the USCG Sector Anchorage Incident Management Division Chief. LT Dopp reported from a congressional fellowship in Senator Sullivan's office, Washington DC.

**LT Lindsay Wheeler** is assuming the duties of SEAK AC Secretary upon Ms. Kathy Hamblett's retirement on February 29th, 2024. LT Lindsay Wheeler has served in Alaska since 2018. She started her career in Ketchikan as Operations Officer on the CGC JOHN MCCORMICK and then transferred to be a Command Duty Officer at the



ARRT members 14 SEP 2023

District 17 Command Center in Juneau. LT Wheeler then reported to the Emergency Management department of Sector Southeast Alaska in August 2023.

Spill Prevention and Response's Prevention Preparedness and Response Program welcomes **Ytamar M Rodriguez** as the new IAC Unit Manager. Ytamar comes to the program with a background in Environmental Health, with a combined 18 years of experience working for the Municipality of Anchorage Department of Health and Human Services and then the State of Alaska's Food Safety & Sanitation (FSS) Program. In his last position with the FSS Program, Ytamar supervised the Fairbanks and Wasilla offices, which were responsible for the permitting and inspection of regulated facilities in the Northern and Eastern Regions of the State. Ytamar has a Bachelor's Degree in Environmental Studies with a minor in Business and is passionate about establishing lasting working relationships and helping preserve and protect our environmental resources. In his time off, Ytamar enjoys spending his time traveling and hiking throughout our great State, listening to great music and enjoying good food.



Ytamar Rodriguez

## Western Alaska Planning Criteria

The Coast Guard Authorization Act (CGAA) of 2022 directed the USCG to establish a new Western Alaska Oil Spill Planning Criteria. This new standard will set the oil spill response requirements for vessels operating with a Vessel Response Plan in the Arctic and Western Alaska Captain of the Port Zone. Due to the remoteness of the region, vessels are unable to meet the National Planning Criteria and are currently operating under Alternative Planning Criteria, which has been challenging to implement. This new planning criteria, once established, will set the bar for the response resources that are required to be contracted for vessels transiting the region. This will be a multistep process, led by the Coast Guard

Marine Environmental Response (CG-MER) Office, and will be initiated by a Request For Information (RFI) published in the Federal Register (due to be released in November 2024). This RFI will be the first step in gathering concerns, recommendations, and general comments on the new planning criteria. More information will be released through various Coast Guard offices and meetings, but primarily through the Western Alaska Area Committee and its Regulator sub-committee.

## Case Highlights (cont.)

### Old Matanuska Townsite Response:

The EPA also conducted a removal of hazardous substances at the Old Matanuska Townsite near Palmer, AK, this October. The site has a history of contamination and has been used as a salvage yard and auto repair shop since the 1970s. Earlier this year, the EPA conducted a site evaluation to inventory the remaining containers of hazardous materials and to assess the extent and volume of contaminated soil.



The nine-day removal focused on the removal and off-site disposal of 84 tons lead and thallium-contaminated soil and 25 cubic yards of hazardous substances, particularly lead-based paint, corrosive material, solvents, and asbestos-containing material. The removal was conducted in partnership with the Matanuska-Susitna



Borough (MSB) who disposed of over 500 cubic yards of non-hazardous solid waste. The supporting agencies for this site include ADEC, Native Village of Eklutna, MSB, and Eklutna, Inc. who have engaged in multiple previous investigations-and removals of oil drums, abandoned vehicles and other hazardous waste at the site.



Shungnak Spill Site, October 2023

### Shungnak River Response:

The EPA had a busy October this year in Alaska! In early October, EPA Region 10 traveled to Shungnak, Alaska to assess and mitigate the threat of a diesel spill in the village. The Native Village of Shungnak is an Iñupiat village incorporated in 1967. The Iñupiat are a Federally recognized tribe. The village is located on the banks of the Kobuk River, about 150 miles east of Kotzebue. The Kobuk River is directly downgradient of the bluff where the estimated 15,000-gallon spill occurred in 2020. The river is the source of drinking water for Shungnak and is relied on for subsistence fishing. After the spill, contaminated soil was excavated and stockpiled onsite. Since then, the oil has migrated downslope to the southeast. In June 2023, oil was observed approximately 30 feet from the Kobuk River near the drinking water collection gallery for the municipal water intake. The EPA responded to complete a variety of site mitigation, assessment, and community engagement activities. Surface and subsurface soil samples collected during the visit will aid in delineating the extent of soil contamination and identifying oil migration pathways to the Kobuk River. While on-site, regular communications and meetings were held with Tribal and City government, the School District, and interested community members. EPA also participated in a school event for students that included a description of the work being conducted and student-led interviews of site workers. In the coming months, EPA will review the evaluation data and determine appropriate next steps with community and State stakeholders.

# Alaska's Area Committees

Please see the Area Committee webpages for the most current information on area committee meetings, subcommittee and working group projects and other events.

## Southeast Alaska Area Committee



<https://dec.alaska.gov/spar/ppr/contingency-plans/response-plans/southeast-alaska-area/>

Next Meeting: 12 FEB 2024  
Location: Federal Building, 709 W 9th St., Juneau, AK

## Alaska Inland Area Committee



<https://dec.alaska.gov/spar/ppr/contingency-plans/response-plans/inland-area/>

Currently working on modifications to the Area Contingency Plan. Please send your recommended changes and revision to Mary Goolie [goolie.mary@epa.gov](mailto:goolie.mary@epa.gov)

## Prince William Sound Area Committee



<https://dec.alaska.gov/spar/ppr/contingency-plans/response-plans/prince-william-sound-area/>

Next Meeting: 14 MAR 2024  
Location: TBD

## Arctic and Western Alaska Area Committee



<https://dec.alaska.gov/spar/ppr/contingency-plans/response-plans/arctic-western-area/>

Next Meeting: 07 MAY 2024  
Location: Anchorage, AK and Virtual  
Meeting Details will be posted on Area Committee Website

## ARRT & Area Committee Contacts:

Prince William Sound Area Committee  
USCG Secretary: LT Shelby Frasca [shelby.e.frasca@uscg.mil](mailto:shelby.e.frasca@uscg.mil)  
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