

## Responsiveness Summary

Oil Spill Prevention, Preparedness and Response Summit Public Meeting

The United States Coast Guard (USCG) and the Washington State Department of Ecology Spills Program (Ecology) developed a cooperative Strategic Work Plan that addresses major initiatives in which the agencies share jurisdiction or have a common interest. The USCG and Ecology recorded and replied to the common themes the agencies heard from public comment on the work Plan in this Responsiveness Summary.

### BACKGROUND

The USCG and Ecology collaborate on a broad range of oil spill prevention, preparedness and response issues. The agencies are further committed to public transparency in their shared work. The USCG and Ecology shared commitments are captured in the following forms:

- **Memorandum of Agreement (MOA)** – signed by Rear Admiral Richard Houck and Governor Christine Gregoire, the MOA is the overarching document that guides the USCG and Ecology’s partnership. It provides for the development of specific protocols that govern the agencies shared work.
- **Work Protocols** – the protocols are the signed, procedural agreements that guide the agencies’ partnership work and through which everyday activities are coordinated.
- **Strategic Work Plan** – an important new step toward furthering our environmentally responsible and publicly accountable partnership, the strategic work plan describes many initiatives agreed to by the agencies. The work plan is designed to be a living document, regularly adapting to changing priorities, resource availability, new initiatives, lessons learned and public input.
- **Inventory of Shared Activities and Authorities** – this inventory summarizes the on-going work of the USCG and Ecology in the oil spill prevention, preparedness and response fields. The variety of work items included in this document highlights the many roles and areas of oversight where the USCG and Ecology exercise regulatory authority and the breadth of other activities where they have management responsibilities.

### REGIONAL EFFORTS

The USCG and Ecology work together with many other groups in Washington to improve the environment and prevent oil spills. Much of the work listed on the Strategic Work Plan will be accomplished through our collective efforts working with the Oil Spill Advisory Council (OSAC), the Northwest Area Committee and Regional Response Team (RRT), Harbor Safety Committees (HSC), Tribal governments, and partners from the State of Oregon, the province of British Columbia and the national government of Canada.

## **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

The USCG and Ecology recognize the exceptional value of public involvement as part of the collaborative process of protecting the environment. Efforts to include the public in this process have included:

- An open-ended comment period on our shared work plan that began on May 21, 2007.
- A public meeting held in Seattle on June 12, 2007, with an invited panel of experts to discuss the work plan.
- Dedicated website created to provide on-going information and a mechanism to receive/respond to comments.
- Emails and briefings to stakeholders and interested parties.
- Advertisement in newspaper and community calendars.

## **COMMON THEMES AND AGENCY RESPONSES**

### **Measuring Performance of the Strategic Work Plan**

- What “metrics” will be used to report the success of the partnership between USCG and Ecology?
- Measurements would identify areas that need improvements and tell us if we achieve what we intended to when we started the work.
- How often will the performance measures be reported?
- Duplicative efforts should be avoided.

### ***USCG/Ecology Response***

The USCG and Ecology signed a series of work protocols (see above). Some of the joint works included in these protocols are inspections and monitoring, unified, coordinated spill response, drills and exercises, information sharing, and the use of the Neah Bay emergency response tug. Each protocol contains process and procedures, tasks for each agency and measurements for the effectiveness of the work. Review of protocols and measurements will be conducted by the agencies on a quarterly basis.

One of the major goals for the USCG and Ecology is to effectively use our limited resources and avoid duplicative work. For example, through coordination we can increase the number of facilities inspected and thereby maximize environmental protection. In order to do this, we must become experts on authorities and jurisdiction, which is why we have developed the MOA, protocols and work plan. Through strong coordination mechanisms the agencies can set and meet the highest standards for spill prevention, preparedness and response.

## **Data sharing and consistency**

- There should be harmonization of spill data between the two agencies.

## ***USCG/Ecology Response***

The USCG and Ecology agree. Good data is important to effectively focus shared efforts and measure successes. Good data will help the agencies incorporate lessons learned and improve the Strategic Work Plan.

Both agencies are striving to harmonize data. For example, this year a shared notification system for advance notice of oil transfers was developed and launched. Ecology also participates in a data project with the Pacific States-British Columbia Oil Spill Task Force where data harmonization is occurring between the states and British Columbia.

Finally, Ecology is currently updating its data management systems. The new systems enhancements will be more effective in monitoring spill data. The data will be recorded in new ways, allowing easier comparisons between USCG and Ecology data.

## **Neah Bay Emergency Response Tug**

- There is a need for staging a year-round response tug at Neah Bay.
- There is a need to consider tugs in other locations.
- Tug issues should be included in the work plan for Ecology and Coast Guard.

## ***USCG/Ecology Response***

The USCG and Ecology address this issue in other venues and have not included it as part of the work plan. There is recognition that the USCG can not directly advocate for funding of the response tug without taking into consideration additional tug placement from a national perspective. However, agreement on how to best utilize the tug has been completed in a new protocol.

## **Oil Spill Advisory Council (OSAC)**

- The work plan should recognize the role of the council in advising the state on spill prevention policy issues.

## ***USCG/Ecology Response***

Much of the work listed on the Strategic Work Plan will be accomplished through our collective efforts and with the advice and support of the OSAC. The work plan preamble and several items of the Strategic Work Plan were modified to reflect the important role of the OSAC.

## **Geographical Distinction**

- The work plan should distinguish between Puget Sound and the Columbia River, acknowledging the differences in the two environments and economies.

## ***USCG/Ecology Response***

There are obvious differences between Puget Sound, the outer coast and the Columbia River. The work plan has been modified to better reflect geographical distinctions in the initiatives. Much of the work listed on the Strategic Work Plan will be accomplished through our collective efforts and with coordination and involvement with the State of Oregon since jurisdiction on the Columbia River is shared by both governments.

## **Prioritization**

- The work plan should be prioritized and specific individuals should be noted as the lead on the issues.
- It is not clear which of the initiatives are new or existing.

## ***USCG/Ecology Response***

Each initiative listed on the work plan represents a high priority issue for the USCG and Ecology. However during the Fall of 2007, the USCG and Ecology will consider whether additional language would be helpful to prioritize the elements of the work plan.

The work plan has been modified to reflect when the initiatives were added to the work plan.

Several of the most important new or substantially enhanced initiatives are highlighted below; however, new issues will undoubtedly come up and supplant those listed here.

- 2C) The Puget Sound Harbor Safety Committee (PSHSC) and Columbia River Harbor Safety Committee (CRHSC)
  - Review current status and pursue efforts as appropriate to reduce coastal towing failures.
- 2D) Regional Response Team (RRT) and the Northwest Area Committee (NWAC)
  - Coordinate on the review of GRPs through a public process to ensure plans include relevant and current information taking advantage of local knowledge and natural resource expertise available from OSAC members.
- 2H) Puget Sound Partnership
  - Participate as appropriate in the Partnership's efforts to protect and clean up Puget Sound.
- 4) Conferences
  - Clean Pacific Conference

- 2008 National Harbor Safety Committee Conference
  - Green Ports Stakeholder Roundtable
- 10) Best Industry Practices (BIPs)
  - Review current BIPs for consideration by harbor safety committees to incorporate into SOC, as appropriate. (See website link in work plan for more information.)
- 13) Escorts for Canadian In and Out Bound Laden Tankers
  - Examine the options for gathering information to monitor tug escort practices in Boundary Pass and Haro Strait.
- 19) Breaking Bar Casualties
  - Research methods to improve breaking bar safety using USCG work group and Charter Vessel Go/No-Go SOC, at river bar entrances.
- 22) Readiness Drills
  - Set annual goals (unannounced drills).
- 24) Oiled Wildlife Care
  - Monitor and support current efforts to improve wildlife care mechanisms through the Regional Response Team (RRT) and Northwest Area Committee (NWAC), in coordination with Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).