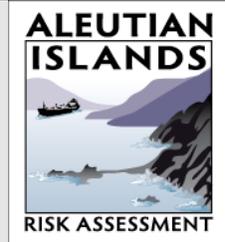


Aleutian Islands Risk Assessment
Particularly Sensitive Sea Area Workgroup
Thursday, May 29, 2013
Teleconference
9:30 AM AST/10:30 AM PST/1:30 PM EST



Teleconference Meeting Summary

Participants:

Crystal Smith, ADEC
Stephanie Altman, NOAA
Trisha Bergmann, NOAA
Whit Sheard, OCEANA
Jon Warrenchuk, OCEANA

Dave Eley, Cape International
Sierra Fletcher, Nuka Research and Planning
Amy Gilson, Nuka Research and Planning
Tim Robertson, Nuka Research and Planning
Leslie Pearson, Pearson Consulting

Note: Many of the items below were proposed or described by one person. Since there were no objections or counter-proposals we assume there was group consensus for the following.

1. Teleconference Objective:

To identify information or presentations needed for the in-person meeting tentatively planned for August 29 in Anchorage.

2. Bering Strait Port Access Route Study (PARS)

This project is underway and facilitated by the USCG. It includes a study of possible routing measures. This should be an agenda item for the August meeting. Comments will be accepted at least through September.

3. USCG Participation in the PSSA workgroup

USCG representatives to the Management Team are changing due to personnel transfers. Representatives for AIRA Project, including the membership on the PSSA workgroup, should be in place by July.

It is important to have a USCG D17 representative at the August meeting, as well as the USCG's representative to the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

Action items:

- Add update on Bering Strait PARS to Aug Agenda
- Firm up USCG participation for the August meeting, including the IMO liaison.

4. Reference documents for the PSSA Workgroup

During the December 2012 teleconference the Workgroup agreed that more information was necessary. To that end, the contractors (Dave and Leslie) developed or compiled a number of reference documents which are posted on the workgroup website. Information collected to date was briefly reviewed.

- **PARS** (1979 – 1980) looked at establishing fairways for Unimak Pass. There was minimal data captured for that study. It was focused on establishing a fairway in Unimak Pass and at Hinchinbrook Entrance in Prince William Sound. One of the big concerns was potential conflict with fishing gear. Dave could not find information of directly applicable to the PSSA workgroup's objectives.
- **Voyage planning for the Western Aleutians and allowed operations for ships passing through the Bering Sea as per P&I clubs.** (See PSSA WG document). Dave is still trying to talk to ship captains that regularly ply the waters of the western Aleutians in an attempt to better understand voyage planning for the region.
- **Important ecosystems:** There are three documents posted that address environmentally sensitive areas in the Aleutians. Suffice to say that every island in the chain is sensitive and is designated as important for something. This item is discussed in more detail below and will be the subject of discussion at the August workgroup meeting.
- A summary of reference documents currently on the AIRA PSSA Workgroup library is at the end of this meeting summary.

5. 2012 Vessel Data for Unimak Pass

The project contractors purchased 2012 AIS data for Unimak Pass to support this part of the project and the tug-of-opportunity analysis. In calendar year 2012 there were 3200 westbound vessels and 1300 eastbound vessels. (Note: many eastbound vessels go south of the Aleutians.) Bulk carriers represented the largest percentage in both directions.

For \$40,000, could get and process satellite data for the whole study area, plus farther south where many vessels are expected to pass.

Future trends in tanker traffic will be of interest.

NOAA can request USCG LRIT data. NOAA has received satellite AIS data from the USCG for Arctic north of 70 degrees and can ask for additional data farther south as well.

Dave will check on the availability of satellite data from the USCG and the Marine Exchange.

The Important Ecosystem Area Atlas provides information from fish habitat and bottom trawl work done; it's a comprehensive resource with important ecological area analysis.

6. Communication/Education Strategy

The Advisory Panel recognizes that educating people about what a PSSA actually is and what it may mean for mariners is important.

Should the workgroup meetings be open to the public? There has been interest from environmental organizations in participating. What is briefing these groups and is available to address their interests. At this time, the workgroup is believed to represent all interests and there is no need to open the workgroup teleconferences to the public.

Proposed PSSA workgroup schedule: A schedule or target dates will be developed during the August meeting.

The primary target audience is the public, government agencies, elected officials, and the maritime industry. The process is expected to be completed by the end of Q3 2014.

The PSSA WG will continue to use the website as a living library for the project.

The monthly project newsletter will be used to announce meetings and project developments.

Leslie will circulate a draft plan amongst the PSSA WG once internal comments have been received from the contract team.

7. Aleutian Island EIS (presented by Jon Warrenchuk, OCEANA)

OCEANA has had a long-term interest in the Aleutian Islands and the area's marine resources. The diversity and extent of sensitive and important marine resources make them stand out.

Identifying Important Ecological Areas: It is understood that all areas of the Aleutians are important and environmentally sensitive. The purpose of this work is to identify areas, which have some important features for maintaining biodiversity or particular species, and are disproportionately more important than other areas. GIS is used to overlay data in a grid across areas of interest. The data is then combined to identify areas to focus conservation efforts.

OCEANA also compiled a comprehensive bibliography of ecological literature on the area, plus traditional knowledge and large-scale ecological studies in the Bering Sea. They have done some ground-truthing with actual surveys. This information can be a useful resource for prioritizing response of sensitive areas and identifying preferred shipping routes or areas to be avoided. This will be published in a journal and was presented at the Alaska Marine Science Symposium. The goal is to have some of this information published in September and perhaps preliminary maps for the August PSSA WG meeting.

Will Sheard plans to make a presentation on this work at the August PSSA WG meeting. WG participants are invited to give their input regarding the types of maps that would be useful.

8. The IMO PSSA process (Presented by Stephanie Altman and Trisha Bergman (NOAA))

NOAA provided a brief overview of the PSSA application procedures. (Note: There are helpful documents on the AIRA website including a more comprehensive summary by Stephanie.)

NOAA will start to put together a skeleton of PSSA application. IMO has specific criteria that need to be included.

It is important to explain why the international measure is needed and support this empirically. The application must explain why appropriate protection cannot be provided through domestic measures only.

A question was asked as to whether a PSSA Associated Protective Measures (APM) could require, presumably through some funding mechanism, a landside response and rescue towing system. Currently, there are no APM for other PSSA's of that nature. It may be possible to develop new APM. There is no way to require vessels in innocent passage to help ensure that emergency services are in place for towing, salvage, and spill response.

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Summary of documents currently in the AIRA PSSA Workgroup Library (28 May 2013)

I. Understanding the PSSA intent and process

- A. **IMO measures for protection from international shipping.** Authored by Stephanie Altman (NOAA), a member of the Aleutians PSSA work group, this 6-page document reviews PSSA's and associated protective measures (APM). It also includes a brief description of discharge restrictions that can be employed under MARPOL.
- B. **PSSA FAQ's.** Developed in draft by Nuka Research and Planning, this document is intended for stakeholders and the interested public.
- C. **US delegates to IMO:** A government flowchart, current as of 15 May 2013, showing US participants in IMO Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC)
- D. **From IMO:**
 - Resolution A.982(24) – Revised Guidelines for the Identification and Designation of Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (2005)
 - Resolution A.927(22) - Guidelines for the Designation of Special Areas Under MARPOL 73/78 & Guidelines for the Identification & Designation of Particularly Sensitive SEA Areas
 - MEPC.1/Circ.778/Rev.1, List of special areas under MARPOL and PSSA's (16 November 2012)
 - IMO Interactive PSSA Website

II. Establishing the Unimak Pass fairway

Four documents relate to the development of the fairway at Unimak Pass in 1981. These include the announcement of the port access routes study (PARS) in the Federal Register in April 1979 and the results published in the Federal Register in December 1981. Also included are the State of Alaska's comments on the proposal for the Unimak Pass fairway. The State's comments, which concerned the size of the fairway and potential for fishing gear conflicts, ultimately lead to the Coast Guard decision to reduce the width of the fairway from 5 miles to 4 miles.

III. Vessel Routing in the Western Aleutians

Allowed passages as per insurance clause. This PowerPoint states the general routes allowed by protection and indemnity insurers (P&I Clubs) of vessels transiting the Aleutians. Slides show AIS plots of vessels using 4 different passes through the Aleutian chain (from west to east: Buldir Island, Amchitka, Amukta and Unimak).

IV. Sensitive areas in the Aleutians

- A. **Aleutian ecosystem bibliography:** A comprehensive list of published articles, papers and reports. Compiled by Jon Warrenchuk, Senior scientist for Oceana.
- B. **Important Bird Areas:** A spreadsheet culled from a larger data based developed by Bird Life International