

## Arctic Initiatives

### Upcoming and recent events:

On Sept. 4, 2009 MMS suspended their federal review process to obtain additional air emissions information from Shell regarding their Beaufort Sea Exploration Plan. This information was submitted Sept. 18<sup>th</sup>, and in October the MMS issued a EA finding of No Significant Impact for this plan. On October 16<sup>th</sup> the MMS approved Shells OCS lease Exploration Plan Camden Bay.

See [http://www.mms.gov/alaska/ref/ProjectHistory/Shell\\_BF/BF.HTM](http://www.mms.gov/alaska/ref/ProjectHistory/Shell_BF/BF.HTM).

October 22-24. AMSA Workshop in Fairbanks: (UAF), the University of the Arctic Institute for Applied Circumpolar Policy (UArctic), and Dartmouth College hosted a workshop entitled Considering a Roadmap Forward: The Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment (AMSA). Participants were invited to discuss aspects of the road ahead for the 17 AMSA recommendations.

See <http://dickey.dartmouth.edu/content/view/198/1/> for review.

**January 2010. Arctic Biological Conference:** The goal is to look at the effect an oil spill and cleanup might have on the arctic biology and habitat. Participants will include approximately 35 to 40 scientists/researchers/experts from federal agencies, State, local government, indigenous communities, RCACs and any appropriate non-affiliated persons. Participation will be by invitation only.

**January 18-22. Alaska Marine Science Symposium:** Started in 2002, the Alaska Marine Science Symposium has provided opportunities for scientists from Alaska, the Pacific Northwest, the Nation, and beyond to inform each other about their research activities in the marine regions off Alaska. The Alaska Marine Science Symposium showcases ocean research in the Arctic Ocean, Bering Sea, and Gulf of Alaska. See <http://www.alaskamarinescience.org/>.

**February 2-6, 2009. The Alaska Forum on the Environment:** Over 130 technical breakout sessions and 8 Keynote Events. A full week of sessions on climate change, energy, environmental regulations, cleanup and remediation, fish & wildlife, solid waste, and of course much more. <http://www.akforum.com/>

**March 2010. State of the Arctic Conference:** at the Hyatt Regency in Miami, Florida. The main goal of the conference is to review our understanding of the arctic system in a time of human-induced, rapid environmental change. It will provide an open international forum for discussion of future research directions. Expect 800–1,000 participants. <http://soa.arcus.org/>

**Summer 2010. Arctic Environmental Risk Assessment (ERA):** The ERA will be conducted between Cape Prince of Wales to the international border with Canada. The end product intended to be a Guidebook that can be used during the planning process to obtain a consensus among area stakeholders on what response options are most likely to minimize environmental consequences and encourage recovery after an oil spill or discharge of hazardous substances into the marine environment.

**Winter 2010. Assessing Risk in Arctic Offshore Oil and Gas** – University of Alaska initiative. developing a follow-on workshop to North by 2020.

Source: Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation  
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**CANUSNORTH:** Pollution response exercise coordinated by D17, Canadian Coast Guard, and Sector Anchorage.

### **Underlying Treaties/agreements**

**UNCLOS:** 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. Customary international law. Fundamental agreement on which the Arctic nations are engaged in various stages of demonstrating the limits of their continental shelves beyond 200 nautical miles from their declared baselines (Russian claims to North Pole).

**Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS):** Nonbinding agreement adopted in June 1991 by Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, the USSR, and the United States. The AEPS dealt with monitoring, assessment, protection, emergency preparedness/response, and conservation of the Arctic zone. Remains framework for the Arctic Council activities.

### **Non Gov/Intra Gov Organizations**

**Arctic Council:** Intergovernmental forum to provide a means for promoting cooperation, coordination and interaction among the Arctic States, with the involvement of the Arctic Indigenous communities and other Arctic inhabitants on common Arctic issues. Works within the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS) adopted in 1991. Publications include: Field Guide for Oil Spill Response in Arctic Waters, 1998, Arctic Offshore Oil and Gas Guidelines, revised 2009 Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment (AMSA), 2009

**IMO:** Agency of the United Nations with 168 Member States which develops and maintains regulatory framework for shipping. The MARPOL Convention is the main international convention covering prevention of pollution by ships. Defines "special areas" as areas so vulnerable to pollution that discharges are completely prohibited (minor exceptions). The Antarctic Ocean (among others) is defined as a special area under Annex I, II and III. The Arctic is not. The IMO has issued voluntary guidelines for "Ships Operating in the Arctic Ice Covered waters".

**IACS:** International Association of Classification Societies issued "Unified Requirements for Polar Class Vessels".

### **Federal Legislation and Executive orders/memoranda**

**Arctic Research and Policy Act of 1984:** Created the **USARC (Arctic Research Commission)** to develop and recommend national Arctic research policy, assist IARPC in establishing a national Arctic Research Plan, review federal Arctic research programs and suggest improvements, and facilitate cooperation between fed, state and local, and other nations in respect to arctic research.

**Arctic Region Policy (NSPD 66/HSPD 25)– Jan. 2009:** This directive establishes the policy of the United States with respect to the Arctic region and directs related implementation actions. Addresses: international governance (urges Senate to act favorably on accession to the UNCLOS); Continental shelf

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boundary issues; International Scientific Cooperation; Maritime Transportation; Economic and Energy issues; Environmental Protection and Conservation.

**Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force – June 2009:** Temporary entity responsible for developing recommendations on national policy on ocean and coastal protection and rehabilitation, response to climate change, policy coordination of efforts to improve stewardship, and implementation strategy prioritizing objectives the US should pursue to meet objectives of a national ocean policy. Develop framework for integrated, ecosystem-based approach that addresses conservation, economic development, user conflict, and sustainability in coastal and marine spatial planning. The Task Force has three near term deliverables for the President: (1) a National Oceans Policy, (2) a governance structure for ocean issues, and (3) an implementation plan to implement the policy.

### **Federal Agency Initiatives**

#### **USCG:**

2007-09 Arctic Domain Awareness flights (bi- weekly C130 flights out of Nome)

2008: USGS Circum-Arctic Resource Appraisal

2008 Aug.: Operation Salliq Barrow, AK: testing local infrastructure and asset capabilities. The existing infrastructure in the U.S. Arctic is insufficient to support prolonged or seasonal Coast Guard operations. Thirty-seven CG personnel in Barrow completely consumed their infrastructure. Due to the resource redundancy required for self-rescue, the loss of one asset (aircraft, small boat, etc.) rendered the entire asset class Not Mission Capable.

2009 Aug.: Arctic Crossroads Nome: testing local infrastructure and asset capabilities. 20 days, medical services and boating safety awareness, in conjunction with US Air Force, Army National Guard, Air National Guard and US public health services.

2010: Anticipate Prudhoe Bay.

2010 Summer: High Latitude Study: Intended to provide the research and analysis required to define the need of and the expanding requirements of USCG arctic operations. ADM Allen has a hesitation to ask Congress to fund specific assets (ice breakers, air fields, ports or stations) until the “High Latitude Study” has been completed. Available in the summer of 2010

**NOAA:** ( <http://www.arctic.noaa.gov/> ).

2008-09 Summer: Mapping Arctic Seafloor – Joint mapping of the Arctic Ocean extended continental shelf involving Coast Guard, NOAA, and Canadian Coast Guard.

The Office of Response and Restoration (OR&R)( <http://response.restoration.noaa.gov/> ) provides science based solutions to address pollution threats to our oceans and coasts. They work with federal, state and local partners as well as industry and non-governmental organizations.

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NOAA's Damage Assessment, Remediation, and Restoration Program (DARRP) (<http://www.darrp.noaa.gov/northwest/index.html>) has initiated a project to start planning for and addressing the challenges of conducting damage assessment and restoration after oil spills in the Arctic.

NOAA's Marine Debris Program (MDP) a centralized program to coordinate marine debris activities within NOAA. (<http://marinedebris.noaa.gov/>), currently there are no assessments that model the impacts of fishing this region, working to develop assessments of the potential impacts from derelict fishing gear and 'ghost fishing'.

**MMS:** (Minerals Management Service) Manages the nation's natural gas, oil and mineral resources on the outer continental shelf (OCS). Currently Arctic projects include the Liberty Development Project, the Northstar unit and Shell offshore (Camden Bay) in the Beaufort Sea and Shell offshore in Chuckchi Sea. On Sept. 4, 2009 MMS suspended their federal review process to obtain additional air emissions information from Shell regarding their Beaufort Sea Exploration Plan. (This results in a suspension of the Alaska Coastal Management Program (ACMP) Consistency Review process.) This information was submitted Sept. 18<sup>th</sup>, and in October the MMS issued a EA finding of No Significant Impact for this plan. On October 16<sup>th</sup> the MMS approved Shells OCS lease Exploration Plan Camden Bay. See [http://www.mms.gov/alaska/ref/ProjectHistory/Shell\\_BF/BF.HTM](http://www.mms.gov/alaska/ref/ProjectHistory/Shell_BF/BF.HTM)

Research projects include; Project 588, Detection of Oil on and Under Ice, Project 586, Planning Support for an Experimental Oil Spill in Pack Ice, Project 597, Assessment of Superstructure Ice Protection As Applied to Offshore Oil Operations Safety . See <http://www.mms.gov/tarprojects/> .

Workshops: October 2009 the MMS Arctic Technologies Workshop was held To share the regulatory processes and advanced technologies that are designed to reduce environmental risk associated with offshore oil and gas activities in the Arctic Outer Continental Shelf.

**Army Corp of Engineers:** sharing scope of work or Point Thompson EIS in Sept. Including discussion of Shells Sivuliq prospect regarding subsea pipeline landfall near Pt. Thompson.

**US Arctic Research Commission:** The Arctic Research Policy Act of 1984 established USARC. Its principal duties are to develop and recommend Arctic research policy and to establish a national Arctic research program plan. USARC Commissioners facilitate cooperation among the federal government, state and local governments, and other nations with respect to Arctic research. The USARC Chairman has recently called for development of an Arctic spills research agenda, citing the lack of integrated federal program and committing the USARC to follow the lead of the IOPRCC (see below).

**US Interagency Arctic Research Policy Committee:** Established by The Arctic Research Policy Act of 1984.

**Interagency Oil Pollution Research Coordinating Committee:** Established by OPA 90.

**Commission on Ocean Policy:** Submitted in 2004 its recommendations for a coordinated and comprehensive national ocean policy to the President and Congress. The Commission's final report, "An

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Ocean Blueprint for the 21st Century," contains 212 recommendations addressing aspects of ocean and coastal policy. Commission Expired Dec 2004.

**NPFMC:** The North Pacific Fishery Management Council voted unanimously in Feb 2009 to prohibit industrial fishing in nearly 200,000 square miles of U.S. waters in the Chukchi and Beaufort seas. The U.S. Commerce Department is expected to approve the recommendation.

### **State of Alaska/ Regional Initiatives:**

**Alaska Climate Change Strategy** – Commission chartered by the governor to propose recommendations for the state to prepare for future climate change impacts. Recommendations have been completed and submitted to the commission for review Spring 2009.

**Alaska Form:** The Alaska Forum, Inc formed as an organization to support an annual educational event, The Alaska Forum on the Environment. Its extended mission is to promote effective cooperation, communication and education in Alaska.

**Assessing Risk in Arctic Offshore Oil and Gas** – University of Alaska initiative planning a workshop in the winter of 2010 to develop a follow-on workshop to North by 2020.

### **Universities**

**U of New Hampshire ( <http://www.crrc.unh.edu> ):** Coastal Response Research Center: The Coastal Response Research Center was established as a partnership between NOAA, through OR&R, and UNH in 2004. The purpose is to bring together the resources of a research-oriented university and the field expertise of OR&R to conduct research and outreach in spill response, assessment and restoration.

Workshops: March 2008 in partnership with USCG (OSPP), NOAA(ORR) and Arctic Research Commission to host 'Opening the Arctic Seas' workshop. Consisted of 5 different scenarios: 4 vessel and one well blow out. Incorporated into AMSA. Report available at:

[http://www.crrc.unh.edu/workshops/arctic\\_spill\\_summit/arctic\\_summit\\_report\\_final.pdf](http://www.crrc.unh.edu/workshops/arctic_spill_summit/arctic_summit_report_final.pdf)

**UAF International Arctic Research Center (IARC)( <http://www.iarc.uaf.edu/> ):** Established in 1999 as a cooperative research institute supported by the U.S. and Japanese governments. More than 20 international groups and more than 60 scientists are collaborating with IARC.

Workshops: October 22-24. AMSA Workshop in Fairbanks: (UAF), the University of the Arctic Institute for Applied Circumpolar Policy (UARctic), and Dartmouth College are hosted a workshop entitled Considering a Roadmap Forward: The Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment (AMSA). Participants were invited to discuss aspects of the road ahead for the 17 AMSA recommendations.

### **Institutes and organizations:**

**Oil Spill Recovery Institute (OSRI):** (<http://www.pws-osri.org/index.shtml> )The purpose of the Institute is to support research, education, and demonstration projects designed to respond to and understand the effects of oil spills in the Arctic and sub-Arctic marine environments. OSRI is located in Cordova,

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Alaska and is administered through the Prince William Sound Science Center (PWSSC). Publications include; Dispersant application in Alaska, 1998, Advancing Oil Spill Response in Ice-Covered Waters, 2003.

**Joint Industry Program (JIP) on Oil Spill Response:** SINTEF has on behalf of Shell, Chevron, Statoil, Total and ConocoPhillips performed a pre-project for development of a R&D program for oil spill response in ice-infested and Arctic waters. is responsible for the arrangement of two workshops every year located on the American and the European continent alternatively.

Workshops: Svalbard, Norway, April 2007. Anchorage, Alaska, October 2007. Biological Effects of Oil-in-Ice, JIP Project, Add-On Project to SINTEF's Ongoing Oil-in-Ice Joint Industry Program (JIP), April 2007. St. Johns, Canada, October 2008

### **Pending Legislation:**

**Senator Mark Begich** - Inuvikput legislative package – Status of All: 8/3/2009 Read twice and referred to Committee.

S. 1562 - Arctic Science, Coordination and Integration Act: Would require the National Research Council to study and report on existing research programs and entities engaged in Arctic Ocean Research, gaps in the research and recommend a comprehensive strategy for prioritizing and coordinating research. Provides for a comprehensive 20 year research and monitoring plan.

S.1563 - Arctic Ambassador Act: Would establish within Dept. of State an ambassador at Large for Arctic Affairs. Appointed by the President and confirmed by Senate. The Ambassador would represent the US in matters relevant to the Arctic and be principle advisor to the President regarding the Arctic.

S.1564 - Arctic Oil Spill Research and Prevention Act: Would enhance the readiness of the US to respond to maritime accidents in the Arctic. Charges the USCG to asses and take action to improve: oil spill response, contingency plans and agreements with other departments and governments, expand research, designate ports of refuge, enhance navigational infrastructure, and vessel monitoring. Charges NOAA to improve navigational charting of the Arctic, identify critical habitat and Environmental Sensitivity Indexes.

S.1561 - Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment Implementation Act: Acknowledges US must act internationally in the arctic. Would require USCG to report on future Arctic mission requirements and vessel traffic risk assessment. Also to turn St. George Island into a year round harbor of refuge, and conduct a study on establishing a deep-water port in the Arctic. Amends Hydrographic Services Improvement Act with the addition of requirements to acquire Hydrographic data to ensure safe navigation in the Arctic and to delineate the US continental shelf.

S. 1560 – AK Adjacent Zone Revenue Sharing Act: Provides for the Sharing of OCS revenues with the State; Divided between Political Subdivisions, Regional Corporations, Indian Tribes, Land and Water Conservation Fund, and Deficit Reduction.

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S.1565 – Better Health in the Arctic Act: Would authorize the Arctic Research Commission to study science base, gaps in knowledge and strategies for prevention and treatment of health problems faced by Arctic populations. Would establish a national Arctic health science policy and establish Desk for Arctic Health.

S.1566 - Arctic Climate Change Adaptation Act: Would designate the Denali Commission to select administer and coordinate grants and establish an Adaptation Advisory Committee. Grants administered to the State of Alaska or a borough and community of Alaska for projects repairing or replacing infrastructure damaged or threatened by the effects of climate change. Including human health, migration cycles and habitat.

**Senator Lisa Murkowski** Status of all: 7/24/2009 Read twice and referred to Committee.

S.1514 – Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment Implementation Act: USCG: work through IMO to establish agreements to place and maintain aids to nav.; appropriate icebreaking, tug and salvage capabilities; ensure oil spill prevention and response; ensure search and rescue; and ensure maritime domain awareness. Secretary of Transportation may enter into agreements to conduct demonstration projects to reduce emissions or discharges from vessels operating in the Arctic.

S. 1515 – Hydrographic Services Improvement Act Amendment: Amends Hydrographic Services Improvement Act of 1998 to authorize funds for hydrographic data and to provide hydrographic services to the Arctic for safe navigation, delineating the US extended continental shelf, and for monitoring of coastal changes.

**Representative Don Young** Latest Major Action: 6/16/2009 Referred to House subcommittee.

H.R. 2864 - Hydrographic Services Improvement Act Amendment: Amends Hydrographic Services Improvement Act of 1998 to authorize funds for hydrographic data and to provide hydrographic services to the Arctic for safe navigation, delineating the US extended continental shelf, and for monitoring of coastal changes.

**Representative Jim Oberstar (MN)** Passed House Oct 23. Latest Major Action: **11/2/2009** Read twice. Placed on Senate Legislative Calendar under General Orders.

H.R. 3619 - To authorize appropriations for the Coast Guard for fiscal year 2010, and for other purposes. Section 311 is to ensure safe, secure, and reliable maritime shipping in the Arctic including aids to navigation, vessel escorts, spill response capability, and maritime search and rescue in the Arctic. Appropriates money for arctic operations through 2015 and requires analyses of upgrading or replacing ice breakers.