

## Alaska Oil Spill Symposium



Cook Inlet RCAC staff attended the first Alaska Oil Symposium held in Fairbanks, hosted by the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, the Oil Spill Recovery Institute, and the University of Alaska Fairbanks. The goal of the symposium was to bring researchers together with industry and agencies to better understand the gaps that exist between research and the end users of the data.



Interest in the symposium was so high that the group quickly outgrew the original venue at the UAF campus and it was moved to a facility at the Birch Hill Recreation Ski Area. Attending were leading arctic and sub-arctic oil spill researchers, preparedness specialists, and response professionals from state and federal agencies, Oil Spill Removal Organizations (OSRO's), oil industry, and universities.

Some of the research topics covered included:

- Acute toxicity of chemically dispersed oil to key arctic species
- Remote sensing for arctic oil spill research
- Biodegradation of dispersed oil in arctic conditions
- Oil biodegradation potential of sea ice microbial communities
- Applications for mapping spilled oil in arctic waters

Circulation patterns of Alaska's oceans In addition to presentations by speakers from the research community, regulators and responders presented initiatives within their agencies or industry. Discussions provided the opportunity to help focus oil spill research to fill data gaps needed for improved oil spill planning and response. Poster presentations provided another avenue for researchers, especially students, to present their study plans and results.

Cook Inlet RCAC Director of Operations Vinnie Catalano, and Director of Science & Research Susan Saupe both came away from the two-day symposium with a better understanding of current research in Alaska. The research focusing on Arctic conditions were solid first steps, but there is still a definite need for additional studies. Overall, the symposium provided an excellent forum for researchers, responders, industry, and agencies to exchange information and to aid in the direction of future research to address real world needs.

