

# Coming Down the Pipe



## News from the Joint Pipeline Office

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### Alyeska to maintain low water crossing at Unnamed Creek

In mid-June the ADF&G liaison Dennis Gnath accompanied Alyeska staff for a surveillance at the low water crossing at Unnamed Creek located at pipeline milepost crossing (PLMP) 679.9. Alyeska wanted to change the stream crossing from a low water crossing into a culvert crossing. At the recommendation of the ADF&G liaison, Jerry Brossia, the BLM Authorized Officer and Mike Thompson, the State Pipeline Coordinator agreed that Alyeska's request should be denied. Upstream of the crossing is a small pond that supports Arctic grayling and numerous species of migratory waterfowl and beaver. Part of the recommendation was based on the fact that culvert crossings attract beaver activity. The ADF&G liaison believes that it would be extremely difficult to consistently maintain fish habitat through a culvert in an area so occupied by beavers.



(Above) Picture of Low Water Crossing at Unnamed creek (PLMP 679.9); (Bottom Left) Nesting swan at pond located upstream of Unnamed Creek low water crossing. Photos courtesy of JPO/ADF&G Liaison Dennis Gnath

### JPO Staff to Monitor 2<sup>nd</sup> Planned Shutdown of TAPS

On July 18 and 19 Alyeska will execute its second, planned shutdown of the TAPS this summer. Two of the major areas of work involved in this shutdown will include the installation of a pig launcher at Pump Station 8 and critical shutdown and testing work at Pump Station 3.

BLM Electrical Engineer Tom Finger will be at PS03. The work at this station primarily involves the load testing of critical battery banks for the Uninterruptible Power Supplies (UPS) in the Control Module and Power Distribution Modules. Alyeska staff will also be testing fire panels. BLM Engineer John Governale will be at Pump Station 8 to monitor the installation of an "inline" pig launcher in the manifold building.

There are a number of different pigging tools employed by Alyeska to clean and inspect the interior of the 48" pipeline. The project at PS08 will be unusual in that it will be a pig launching station only. Its purpose is to launch pigs equipped with In-Line Inspection (ILI) devices. By placing this launcher at PS08, Alyeska will shorten the maximum run length for the southern section of the TAPS by one-third. After modifications associated with shutting down facilities, Alyeska could launch ILI devices only from

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PS01 and PS04. The northern run covered about 200 miles, but the southern run covered nearly 600 miles, the entire distance from the northern slopes of the Brooks Range to Valdez. The PS08 inline launcher will decrease the ILI run to two shorter sections: approximately 200 miles and 400 miles. It is hoped that this modification will produce improved ILI results from less wax accumulation and reduce the potential of pig damage. This modification should be functional for the next scheduled TAPS ILI run, currently scheduled for October 2009.

### Alyeska briefs JPO on TAPS Low Flow issues

On Thursday, July 16, 2009 employees with Alyeska Pipeline Service Company (Alyeska) met with staff members of the Joint Pipeline Office to discuss long-term challenges for the continued operation of the TAPS through 2030 due to decreased throughput of crude in the 800-mile long pipeline. Alyeska estimates that they may have to start dealing with this problem as early as 2012-2018. (This is only a rough estimate based upon a set of assumptions).

Nearly everyone in Alaska recognizes that North Slope oil production is declining and that this decline will increasingly impact the state's economy. Declining throughput in the TAPS carries operational implications that are complicated by operating a pipeline in an arctic environment.

Under current conditions, crude enters the TAPS at Pump Station 1 at a temperature of approximately 110 degrees Fahrenheit. With lower rates of oil flow, temperatures downstream from PS01 will decrease because the transit time from Prudhoe to Valdez will increase. When oil temperatures cool, a myriad of physical changes can add to the operational challenges of operating TAPS. For example, water droplets suspended in the oil can drop more quickly out of the solution. Additional wax can build up on the pipe walls or precipitate out of the fluid. Maintenance pigging frequency may have to be increased and additional wax may pose problems for in-line inspection. Water droplets can separate and freeze or they can accumulate in low spots along the pipeline. Water dropout can lead to increased bottom-of-pipe corrosion. Certain segments of buried pipe may heave due to decreased pipe-wall temperatures. Ice can form in the fluids and either be frozen to the **(con't. on pg. 3)**



File photo of Pump Station 3, taken in Spring 2009—Mark Morones, JPO/SPCO

### JPO Spill Prevention Team participates in pipeline reconnaissance exercise

Shawn Swanson, Office of Pipeline Monitoring, Natural Resource Specialist and Bonnie Friedman, contractor to the Office of Pipeline Monitoring, evaluated a Pipeline Reconnaissance exercise held on July 15. The scenario for this exercise was for reconnaissance teams from Pump Station 04 to respond to a simulated notification of a line imbalance between PS 04 and PS 03. Once a team found the simulated spill, they were to report back to the station and complete an assessment and a site safety and control analysis.

The exercise went very well with the teams practicing a safe reconnaissance and demonstrating good knowledge of the requirements. An action item following the exercise was to make sure a re-inventory of the recon kits will be performed after each exercise. Additionally, routine amendments will be made to the Pipeline Oil Discharge Prevention and Contingency Plan to update reconnaissance actions since Strategic Reconfiguration has been implemented at Pump Station 03.

Alyeska Pipeline Service Company is required to maintain and update oil discharge prevention and contingency plans. The JPO Oil Spill Prevention and Contingency Team reviews Alyeska's plans. The team also monitors and participates in a number of field exercises held each year to ensure that Alyeska's oil spill response personnel and equipment are prepared to deal with any type of oil spill contingency.



Alyeska reconnaissance team members respond at simulated spill site. Photo courtesy of BLM Contractor & JPO Oil Spill Contingency Team Member Bonnie Friedman

**Low Flow issues (con't. from pg. 2)**

inside of the pipe or be free-floating. Oil viscosity will probably increase. The effects of drag-reducing agent may be altered at lower temperatures.

Alyeska staff are working to monitor the pipeline and identify and understand the risks that low throughput can create. JPO's technical staff recognizes these potential issues and will continue to monitor Alyeska's progress to protect this critical state resource.

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SPCO Compliance Team (L-R) Justin Selvik (Natural Resources Specialist III), Tammias Brown (Natural Resources Mgr. II and Team Supervisor); Ann Wright (Natural Resources Specialist I) & Sandra Pierce (Natural Resources Specialist III) - photo by Mark

**SPCO Compliance Team Members recognized by their Co-Workers**

Ann Wright and Sandra Pierce, two members of the Lease Compliance Section were nominated for Peak Performance Denali Award recognition by their peers and coworkers. Although they were not Peak Performance award winners, the nomination demonstrates the level of contributions that these staff make to their team's mission and goals. Although two of the three Compliance Section staff joined the SPCO this spring, Tammias Brown, the Section Manager, is pleased and grateful to have three outstanding individuals, Justin Selvik, Sandra Pierce and Ann Wright building a vibrant team to ensure lessee compliance with ROW leases.

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**JPO Management Team**

*STATE TEAM MEMBERS*

- Mike Thompson (DNR/SPCO)*  
*State Pipeline Coordinator*  
*DNR Liaison*
- Ron Doyel (ADEC)*  
*DEC Liaison*
- Ray Elleven (ADOL/WD)*  
*DOL Liaison*
- Dennis Gnath (ADF&G)*  
*ADF&G Liaison*
- John Reeves (ADOT&PF)*  
*ADOT&PF Liaison*
- John Cawthon (ADPS/SFMO)*  
*ADPS/SFMO Liaison*

*FEDERAL TEAM MEMBERS*

- Jerry Brossia (DOI/BLM)*  
*Authorized Officer*  
*BLM Liaison*
- Jeffrey Walker (DOI/MMS)*  
*DOI/MMS Liaison*
- Dennis Hinnah (DOT/PHMSA)*  
*DOT/PHMSA Liaison*
- Matt Carr (EPA)*  
*EPA Liaison*
- Cdr. Steven T. Pearson (USCG)*  
*USCG Liaison*
- Michael Rabbe (USACE)*  
*USACE Liaison*