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# Coming Down the Pipe

## News from the Joint Pipeline Office

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### JPO Monitors Successful Oil Spill Drill at the Klutina River

On August 26 representatives from the Joint Pipeline Office monitored a successful spill drill conducted by Alyeska at the Klutina River, near the community of Copper Center. Drill responders were faced with the scenario of deploying equipment to deal with a hypothetical leak in the 48-inch Trans-Alaska Pipeline System (TAPS) pipeline.

The challenge posed by this drill is that the pipeline is buried beneath the Klutina River – making any potential leak in that area a significant challenge and an even greater potential threat to the nearby Copper River.

Significant challenges call for unique solutions and the purpose of the drill was to test the deployment of equipment that would mitigate a leak from such a hard-to-reach location. The “fix” called for closing the gates bracketing the leaking section of pipe. Water would then be pumped up to and into the upstream gate valve. Water introduced into the pipeline would flow down to the submerged section of the pipe displacing any oil in the isolated segment of pipe. The leak would still exist, but, in theory, what is leaking out of the pipe is water, not oil.

The recently concluded drill was intended to deploy the equipment that would be used to pump water into the pipe in the event of an actual leak. Alyeska deployed three task forces to man this drill. Each task force was lead by Alyeska employees from the Source Control & Repair Team – Alyeska’s A-Team for dealing with leaks in the mainline. The task forces were manned by baseline crews – contract responders fielded by AHTNA. The baseline crews had just arrived on shift and were not aware that this drill was taking place. Alyeska also deployed its mobile command post.

The JPO had several members on location to monitor the drill. Becky Spiegel and Bill Haese are with the Department of Environmental Conservation. Mike Wrabetz, Rhonda Williams and Bonnie Friedman are with the Bureau of Land Management.

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(TOP) Response team preparing fish filter for placement into the Klutina River. Photo taken by Rhonda Williams—JPO/BLM.



(Picture on Left) Response team preparing water bladder near location of Remote Gate Valve 108; (Picture on Right) Response team members laying out piping that would be used to pump water from the river uphill to the water bladder reservoir. Photos courtesy of John Engles/ADEC.

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The Joint Pipeline Office (JPO) is an umbrella organization of state and federal agencies responsible for regulation and oversight of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System (TAPS), and other non-infield oil and gas pipelines in Alaska.

## Klutina River Drill (continued from pg. 1)

Initial reports from JPO team members indicate that the drill was a success. The mobile command post was set up. The main focus of the drill was source control, which involved pumping water from the river uphill to two 10,000 gallon bladders so that it could be injected into the pipeline at remote gate valve 108 – located north and uphill of the submerged section of pipe.

Alyeska brought piping and water bladders (that had previously been connected) to deploy at the drill location. In the event that there had been an actual spill, Alyeska had the equipment and teams in place to isolate the oil and displace the oil within the closed section of pipe to limit the amount of oil that would actually leak into the Klutina (and from there into the Copper River).

After the exercise was successfully concluded JPO/BLM representative Rhonda Williams noted at the event debriefing that, "There was a distinct lack of frustration" about this drill and the responders "knew what they were doing."

This weekend the second part of the Klutina drill will conclude as Alyeska employees focus on containment efforts on the Klutina River itself. In the event of an actual spill the combined these two aspects of the Klutina drill – mitigation and containment – would go a long way to negate any potential damage to this important state waterway.

## Public Notice of Jim River Boat Launch Proposed Decision

A public notice was published on August 10, 2009 in the Fairbanks Daily News Miner of a proposed decision to issue a right-of-way to Alyeska Pipeline Service Company for a boat launch on the Jim River. The right-of-way will be subject to the provisions of Alaska Statute 38.05.850. The purpose of the project is to establish reliable access to the Jim River for oil spill training and response. The site (*SEE picture to right*) is located within Section 18, Township 23 North, Range 14 West, Fairbanks Meridian, AK. The proposed right-of-way is on the south bank of the Jim River, just northwest of the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities Jim River Maintenance Station at approximately Milepost 138 of the Dalton Highway. The notice may be viewed on the ADNR website at <http://dnr.alaska.gov/commis/pic/pubnotfrm.htm> under Public Notices, Jim River Boat Launch Proposed Decision.



The public is invited to comment on the preliminary decision. Any comments concerning the proposed action must be received in writing by the State Pipeline Coordinator's Office by 4:30 p.m. September 8, 2009 in order to ensure consideration. If no significant change is required to the Proposed Decision, it will be issued as the Final Decision after September 8, 2009 without further notice.

## U. S. Coast Guard to hold inaugural Alaska oil spill awareness seminar in Valdez on September 29, 2009

Commander Darryl Verfaillie, Captain of the Port for Prince William Sound, will host the first ever Alaska Oil Spill Awareness Seminar at the Valdez Civic Center on September 29, 2009. The seminar is designed as part of an outreach effort to provide key leaders, community stakeholders, industry representatives and journalists with an advanced understanding of oil spill response activities. The Coast Guard Marine Safety Unit (MSU) Valdez will partner with the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Alyeska's Ship Escort Response Vessel System, National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration, Spiltec, SeaRiver Maritime, CHADUX, Tesoro, and the Law Office of Kevin Beauchamp Smith to present and discuss various topics, including: oil chemistry, multi-agency cooperative plans, control and containment, response/recovery options and protection of sensitive areas. This seminar is designed as part of an outreach effort to provide key leaders, community stakeholders, industry representatives and journalists with an advanced understanding of oil spill response activities. MSU Valdez intends to make this an annual event to advance the education and understanding of oil spill response and prevention activities. For more information, please contact Lieutenant Matthew York at 907-835-7214 or by e-mail at: [matthew.d.york@uscg.mil](mailto:matthew.d.york@uscg.mil).



## JPO Management Team

### STATE TEAM MEMBERS

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State Pipeline Coordinator

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Ron Doyel (ADEC)

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DOL Liaison

Dennis Gnath (ADF&G)

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John Reeves (ADOT&PF)

ADOT&PF Liaison

John Cawthon (ADPS/SFMO)

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### FEDERAL TEAM MEMBERS

Jerry Brossia (DOI/BLM)

Authorized Officer

BLM Liaison

Jeffrey Walker (DOI/MMS)

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Dennis Hinnah (DOT/PHMSA)

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Cdr. Steven T. Pearson (USCG)

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Michael Rabbe (USACE)

USACE Liaison

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