Oregon Committee Testimony to Energy and Environment on HB 2131 and HB 3344

Chair Helm and Members of the Committee

My name is Rob Bignall. I am a fishing guide working the mainstream of the Columbia River and Pacific Ocean.

Over the last 40 years my experiences includes 15 years of oilfield construction diving off Kenai Alaska oil platforms, working construction on the Alyeska Pipeline and managing a portion of the Exxon Valdez cleanup.

I was intricately involved with the Exxon Valdez oil spill in 1989 including sending 2 barges from Seattle within the first 48 hours to the Valdez accident, then onto constructing and managing a floating man- camp on the Resurrection Bay Ro-Ro barge that housed 524 and feeding a total accompaniment of 750 clean up personnel off Little Smith Island in Prince William Sound.

Early on the State of Alaska negotiated with Alyeska Pipeline in 1973 where Exxon, a third party carrier, and Alyeska would use great care in having a contingency plan to avoid a catastrophic spill.

Well it took 3 days to get any support to the Exxon Valdez which was approximately 50 miles away.

Committee members we have had a wakeup call with the Mosier Incident and lucky for us it was in one of the only land areas along railroad right away next to the Columbia River.

The Columbia River watershed is freshwater and not saltwater. The major cleanup in Alaska was **not** hot water/high pressure cleaning, **not** mechanical cleanup and **not** bioremediation but Mother Nature herself. This is the nature of saltwater but **not** freshwater and now those efforts may take years.

My questions to you are:

Where are the stationed materials and boat containment vessels strategically stored for a response in a free flowing river?

Who works with the Army Corps of Engineers to shutting down the dams water flow?

What trained labor force response teams are to be used, because working with the railroad they will use their own labor?

What about the economic impacts to the fishery loss and transportation creating thousands of lawsuits?

When does the risk outweigh the control of economic growth?

The Exxon Valdez lost approximately 11M gallons of bulk fuel oil. The damage was spread over 11K square miles of the Prince William Sound or 1000 gallons /sq. mile.

A Railroad car tanker carries about 30,000 gallons. So, one car loss of fuel would contaminate the total pool between Bonneville Dam and The Dalles Dam equaling the Exxon Spill and whoever heard of a one car rail incident.

Exxon's lack of preparedness for an incident was the greatest cause in untold damage to the economy and its eco-system. The real results were lawsuits and years of litigation.

Thank you.

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How many miles of shoreline were impacted by oil?
Approximately 1,300 miles. *200 miles were heavily or moderately oiled (meaning the impact was obvious); 1,100 miles were lightly or very lightly oiled (meaning light sheen or occasional tarballs). By comparison, there is more than 9,000 miles of shoreline in the spill region.*

How large an area did the spill cover?
From Bligh Reef the spill stretched 460 miles to the tiny village of Chignik on the Alaska Peninsula.

View a map of the spill

How was the spill cleaned up?
Complicated question. It took more than four summers of cleanup efforts before the effort was called off. Not all beaches were cleaned and some beaches remain oiled today. At its peak the cleanup effort included 10,000 workers, about 1,000 boats and roughly 100 airplanes and helicopters, known as Exxon's army, navy, and air force. *It is widely believed, however, that wave action from winter storms did more to clean the beaches than all the human effort involved.*

How much did it cost?
Exxon says it spent about $2.1 billion on the cleanup effort.

What techniques were used?
TIP: Check out National Geographic, January 1990, Pages 18-19 for a great illustration on how shoreline cleanup was conducted.

Hot water treatment was popular until it was determined that the treatment could be causing more damage than the oil. Small organisms were being cooked by the hot water.

High pressure cold water treatment and hot water treatment involved dozens of people holding fire hoses and spraying the beaches. The water, with floating oil, would trickle down to the shore. The oil would be trapped within several layers of boom and either be scooped up, sucked up or absorbed using special oil-absorbent materials.

Mechanical cleanup was attempted on some beaches. Backhoes and other heavy equipment would till the beaches to expose oil underneath so that it could be washed out.

Many beaches were fertilized to promote growth of microscopic bacteria that eat the hydrocarbons. Known as **bioremediation**, this method was successful on several beaches where the oil was not too thick. More information about bioremediation techniques used can be found on the EPA website.

A few solvents and **chemical agents** were used, although none extensively.

How about more detail on cleanup techniques?
Chapter 2 in The Exxon Valdez Oil Spill, Final Report, State of Alaska Response (1993) provides details on cleanup techniques.

How many animals died outright from the oil spill?
No one knows. The carcasses of more than 35,000 birds and 1,000 sea otters were found after the spill, but since most carcasses sink, this is considered to be a small fraction of the actual death toll. The best estimates are: 250,000 seabirds, 2,800 sea otters, 300 harbor seals, 250 bald eagles, up to 22 killer whales, and billions of salmon and herring eggs.

How are the animals doing now?
Lingering injuries continue to plague some injured species while others are fully recovered. See the Status of Injured Resources section of this web site.

Other useful websites that may help answer this question:

- Lingering Oil page
- Integrated Herring Restoration Program (IHRP)
- Long-Term Monitoring Program/GulfWatch Alaska
- Nearshore Vertebrate Predator (NVP) Project
- Alaska Predator Ecosystem Experiment (APEX)
- Sound Ecosystem Assessment (SEA) Program
- NOAA: How Much Oil Remains?
- NOAA Habitat Assessment & Marine Chemistry Program

How does oil harm birds and mammals?
TIP: Check out National Geographic, January 1990, Page 26-27 for a great illustration on how oil affects the fur and feathers of wildlife.

There are three primary ways oil injures wildlife:

1. The oil gets on the fur and feathers and destroys the insulation value. Birds and mammals then die of hypothermia (they get too cold).
2. They eat the oil, either while trying to clean the oil off their fur and feathers or while scavenging on dead animals. The oil is a poison that causes death.
3. The oil impacts them in ways that does not lead to a quick death, such as damaging the liver or causing blindness. An impaired animal cannot compete for food and avoid predators. Oil also affects animals in non-lethal ways such as impairing reproduction.

How were the oiled birds and sea otters cleaned?
A professional team and dozens of volunteers, including veterinarians, set up a cleaning facility and recovery facility. Dawn® dishwashing detergent was the cleaning agent of choice.

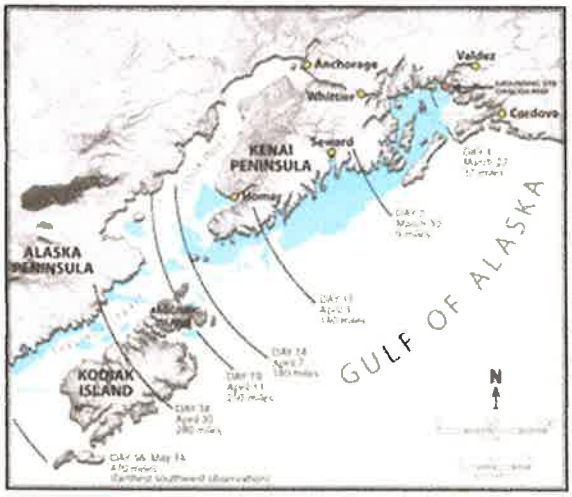
For more information, please check the ARLIS *Exxon Valdez* Oil Spill FAQs.

***Exxon Valdez* Oil Spill Trustee Council** | dfg.evos.restoration@alaska.gov | **Address**: 4230 University Drive, Ste. 220 | Anchorage, AK 99508-4650 |
Phone: (907) 278-8012 | Fax: (907) 276-7178 | Toll-Free: (800) 478-7745 | Office Hours: Mon through Fri, 8am-4:30pm
ARLIS | Alaska Resources Library & Information Services | reference@arlis.org | UAA Library Building | Phone: (907) 272-7547
Restoring the resources injured by the Exxon Valdez oil spill and understanding environmental change in the Northern Gulf of Alaska.

HISTORY OF THE EXXON VALDEZ OIL SPILL

FROM THEN TO NOW...

On March 23, 1989 the *Exxon Valdez* an oil supertanker operated by Exxon and under the command of Captain Joseph J. Hazelwood left the port of Valdez headed for Long beach, CA with 53,094,510 gallons of oil on board. Shortly after midnight on March 24, 1989, the supertanker collided with Bligh Reef, a well known navigation hazard, ruptured 8 of its 11 cargo tanks and spilled 11 million gallons of crude oil into the pristine waters of Prince William Sound. The result was catastrophic. Although the spill was radioed in shortly after the collision Exxon's response was slow. In fact, there was no recovery effort for three days while Exxon searched for clean up equipment. During that time millions of gallons of oil began to spread down the coast. Days later as the clean up effort began the oil slick was no longer containable. It eventually extended 470 miles to the southwest, contaminated hundreds of miles of coastline and utterly destroyed the ecosystem.



Download high resolution map

Photo Credit: *Composite done by the Exxon Valdez Trustee Council from an original map by the Alaska Dept. of Environmental Conservation.*

Description: *Blue areas illustrate oil slick spread of 11,000 sq. miles.*

These are the well known facts of the spill but there is much more to the story. Here is the Whole Truth. **The history of the spill really began back in 1973 when Congress authorized the Trans-Alaska pipeline. This allowed oil companies including Exxon to access the crude oil from Alaska's North Slope and transport it to the lower 48 states.** While this meant great wealth for the oil companies it also jeopardized the waters of the Prince William Sound and the fisheries which drove the economy in the region.

Related Resources

Audio file: Excerpt of transcript of radio transmission recorded by the Vessel Traffic Center on March 23 and 24, 1989 relating to the grounding of the Exxon Valdez.

Movie excerpt: President of Exxon speaks to citizens of Prince William Sound immediately after the oil spill.

Geographic Distribution of Exxon Claimants

For more information, visit:

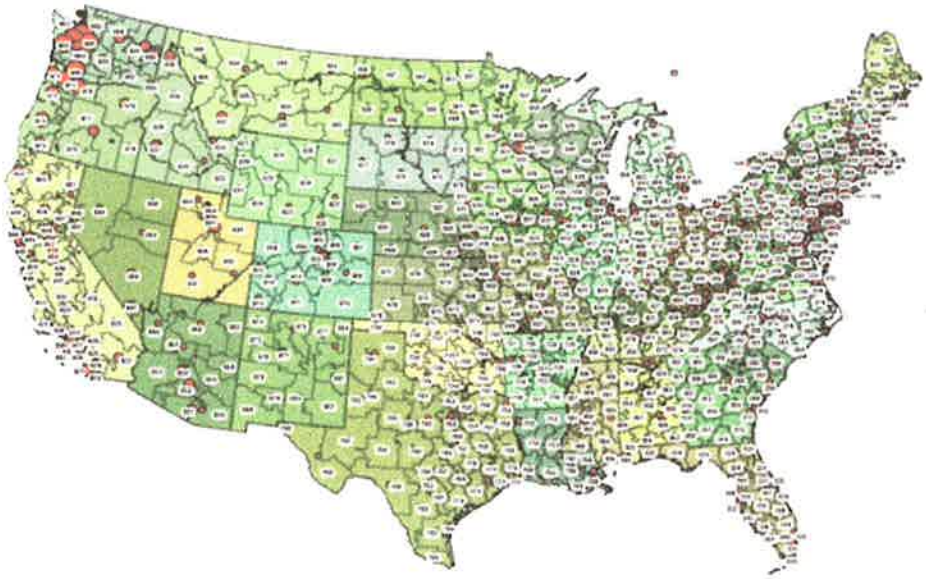
Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council

Anchorage Daily News - Hard Aground: Disaster in Prince William Sound

*** Since 1978 residents have recieved a rebate check from the State from oil subsidies.

Download high resolution map

Geographic Distribution of Exxon Claimants



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Exxon, along with the rest of the oil industry knew that navigating a large supertanker through the icy and treacherous waters of Prince William Sound was extremely complicated. It also knew that Alaska was not equipped to contain a large oil spill. In fact the contingency plan in place at the time acknowledged that a spill over 8.4 million gallons could not be contained and would result in long term consequences. Armed with this knowledge the oil companies promised to use great care to avoid a spill.

Exxon broke that promise. Despite the risk of a spill, Exxon knowingly allowed Captain Hazelwood, a relapsed alcoholic, to command its supertanker through these treacherous waters. For nearly three years before the spill Exxon officials ignored repeated reports of Hazelwood's relapse and failed to enforce its substance abuse policies. In fact, Hazelwood was allowed to continue operating the supertanker even though his driver's license had been revoked for operating a motor vehicle under the influence.

It was no surprise that on the evening of March 23, 1989 Hazelwood visited two local bars and consumed between 5 and 9 double shots (15 to 27 ounces of 80 proof alcohol) before boarding the ship. Even though he was the only officer on board licensed to navigate through Prince William Sound, in his drunken state, he turned the helm over to a fatigued third mate who was not qualified to steer the ship. Shortly thereafter, as the *Exxon Valdez* picked up speed it left the shipping lanes and collided with Bligh Reef. Today the Exxon Valdez oil spill is still considered the worst oil spill in our nation's history.

The first call

Hazelwood radios in to inform the Valdez Traffic Center he has hit Bligh Reef with the ExxonValdez oil tanker.

LISTEN NOW

Excerpt of transcript of radio transmission recorded by the Vessel Traffic Center, Valdez, Alaska on March 23 and 24, 1989 relating to the grounding of the Exxon Valdez.

Written transcript:

HAZELWOOD: *Yeah, Valdez Traffic. EXXON VALDEZ. Over.*

VTC: EXXON VALDEZ. *Valdez traffic.*

HAZELWOOD: *Yeah. Ah, it's VALDEZ back. Ah, we've— ah, should be on your radar there— we've fetched up, ah, hard aground north of, ah, Good Island off Bligh Reef. And, ah, evidently, ah, leaking some oil, and, ah, we're gonna be here for a while. And, ah, if you want, ah, so you're notified. Over.*

Exxon promised to make Prince William Sound whole again.

Alaska President of Exxon, Dan Cornett, spoke to the citizens of Prince William Sound and promised to make them whole. This is an excerpt of this speech, filmed during a community meeting in Prince William Sound following the oil spill."

WATCH NOW

Written transcript:

MALE AUDIENCE MEMBER 1: Is Exxon shipping company prepared to reimburse commercial fisherman for the lost income, fisheries -

DAN CORNETT: You won't have a problem. I don't care if you believe that, that's the truth. You have had some good luck and you don't realize it. You have Exxon and we do business straight.

MALE AUDIENCE MEMBER 2: Don't stand up there and lie to us.

DAN CORNETT: We will consider whatever it takes to keep you whole. Now, that's-- you have my word on that. Dan Cornett. I told you that.

NORTHWEST SPORTFISHING INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

Oregon Sport Fishing : A Heritage and an Economic Force for Conservation

2011 # next 2017

Sportfishing Means Business! In Oregon, growing sport fishing opportunity grows jobs, protects an important piece of our culture, connecting families and friends to each other and the natural environment.

Sportfishing & the Oregon Economy

11,043 Jobs

$382,802,979 Salaries & Wages

638,000 Adult Anglers (resident and non resident)

$680,636,132 Retail sales

$1,172,481,577 Multiplier Effect

$72,381,359 State & Local Tax Revenues

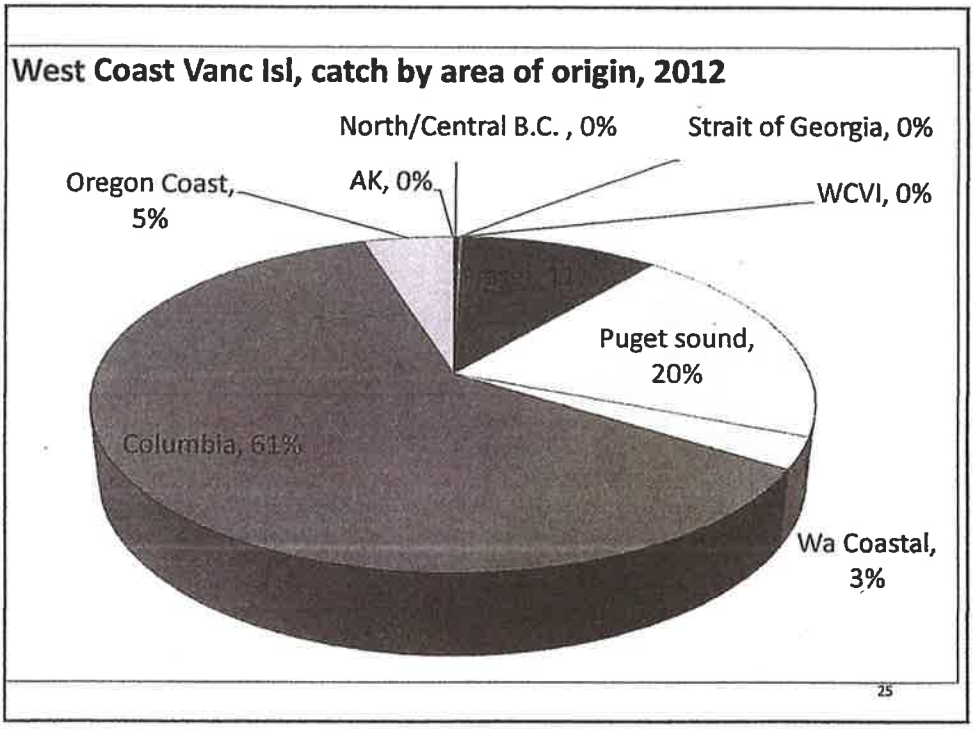
$91,781,493 Federal Tax Revenues

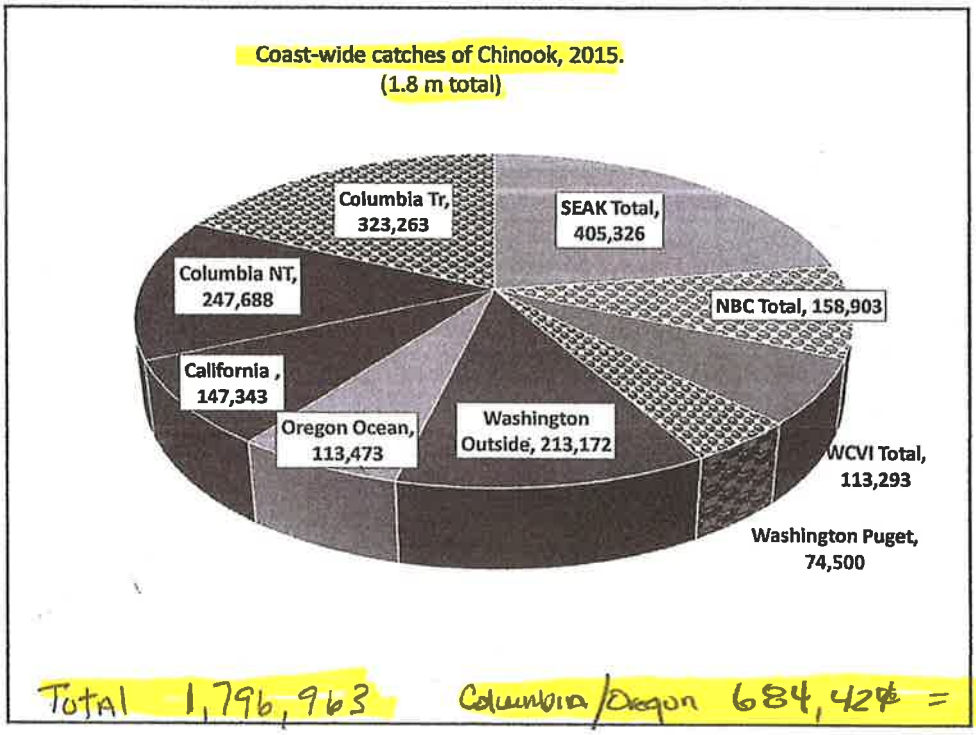
5,658,437 Total Fishing Days

Citation: *Southwick Associates. Sportfishing in America: An Economic Force for Conservation. Produced for the American Sportfishing Association (ASA) under a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Sport Fish Restoration grant (F12AP00137, VA M-26-R) awarded by the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA), 2012.*

Dedicated to the preservation, restoration and enhancement of sport fisheries and the businesses dependent on them.

Northwest Sportfishing Industry Association, for more information visit: www.nsiafishing.org or call 503.631.8859


West Coast Vanc Isl, catch by area of origin, 2012
North/Central B.C., 0%
Strait of Georgia, 0%
Oregon Coast, 5%
AK, 0%
WCVI, 0%
Puget sound, 20%
Columbia, 61%
Wa Coastal, 3%
25


Coast-wide catches of Chinook, 2015.
(1.8 m total)
Columbia Tr, 323,263
SEAK Total, 405,326
Columbia NT, 247,688
NBC Total, 158,903
California , 147,343
Oregon Ocean, 113,473
Washington Outside, 213,172
WCVI Total, 113,293
Washington Puget, 74,500
Total 1,796,963
Columbia/Oregon 684,424 = 40%