

CORDOVA CENTER – MUSEUM NARRATIVE – DRAFT

Exhibit Summary:

To document the years since the *Exxon Valdez* Oil Spill (EVOS) in 1989, the Museum planned for the Cordova Center will include as its centerpiece an exhibit entitled *Sound in Transition* that will describe the original event and the damage caused by the millions of gallons of oil spilled into Prince William Sound. Starting with the specifics of the EVOS, the exhibit will move ahead by emphasizing what has been learned in the 21 years since the EVOS in terms of restoring habitat and human services to an oil-damaged area, the long-term effects of an oil spill, mitigating spills, responding to spills, and transporting oil.

Restoration and protection of habitat and species; the science of the Sound and the social effects on the human populations of the Sound including health consequences of exposure will all be topics of discussion. Prevention and mitigation of future spills; as well as the importance of baseline scientific studies to sensitive areas where oil exploration takes place or will take place - for example the potential of circumpolar navigation – will be explored in the exhibit. *Sound in Transition* will reflect the emotional and economic healing of Prince William Sound following the EVOS.

Exhibit Goals:

The primary goals of the exhibit are threefold. First, the exhibit will remind the public of the long-term effects of an oil spill and the specific effects of oil from the EVOS, including the fact that lingering oil still impacts the Sound after more than 20 years. Second, the exhibit will share information about the specific resources and services injured the EVOS, describing those that have been restored as well as those that have not been restored following the spill, and point out to visitors ways to avoid further injury to resources and services impacted by the EVOS. Finally, the exhibit will focus on the knowledge that has been gained from the EVOS about the importance of collecting baseline science prior to a catastrophic environmental event in order to help evaluate the impacts of a spill; the information about the prevention and mitigation of oil spills; and improvements in the transportation of oil and monitoring the movement of oil.

Key Messages:

The *Sound in Transition* exhibit will focus on several key messages, and the exhibit will be designed to emphasize these messages to visitors. The key messages will be based on the environmental, cultural, and economic aspects of the EVOS and will include an educational component. The messages include the basic facts about the EVOS: what; where, who, when, why, and how the residents of the Sound and the nation reacted. The exhibit will summarize what has been learned since the EVOS, explaining the assumptions that existed in 1989 and reviewing how those assumptions have changed since the EVOS using ten-year increments (in 1999 and 2009; as well as discussing what is anticipated by 2029). *Sound in Transition* will emphasize the social aspects of the spill

- how the community of Cordova and others in the oil spill area have coped and made positive progress in the years since the EVOS and are ready to move forward.

Another important message is that oil remains in Prince William Sound and the oil has ongoing effects on resources and services. Long-term environmental research projects have studied and documented the impacts of the lingering oil. The effects of the lingering oil and the highlights of the associated studies will be a focus of the exhibit.

Target Audiences:

The exhibit will be designed to target visitors of all ages. A special educational component will be geared towards kindergarten through sixth grade. In addition, a companion travelling panel exhibit will be made available to ship to communities in the oil spill area, as well as other Alaskan locations and those in the lower 48.

Exhibit Strategies:

Sound in Transition will rely on a variety of methods to convey information. These include visual components such as photos and videos. The exhibit will also convey information using audio, dialogue, and oral traditions. The travelling panel exhibit will be designed so that it can be configured to work in both small and large venues.

Exhibit Components:

The specific *Sound in Transition* exhibition components will change over time, but will be based around the following concepts and components:

1. History of the TAPS pipeline and oil transportation as it relates to Cordova
 - Discussion of concerns from fishermen related to the pipeline in the early years.
 - Photos from meeting at Cordova District Fishermen United (CDFU in the 1970's.
 - Retrospective on PWS fishing at that point in time.
2. The EVOS event
 - Audio of *Exxon Valdez* Grounding
 - Audio of response
 - Archival images and video of response (first three days after the spill)
 - Oil sample from the *Exxon Valdez*
 - Fragment of *Exxon Valdez* hull
3. Response following the EVOS
 - USCG
 - State

- Fishermen, CDFU, Community
- Oil Spill Response Fact Sheet
- Audio of community meetings in 1989
- Historic T-shirts and other popular culture expressions regarding the EVOS spill and community oil-spill reactions

4. Science of the Sound

- Affected species; discussion about lack of baseline studies before the EVOS
- Prince William Sound Science Center work in Prince William Sound current
- Live feed of buoy reports
- Samples of oiled beach rocks to present

5. Native cultures

- In Prince William Sound
- Impact of spill, including on subsistence

6. Oil Spill Prevention and Response – Present

- SERVS, fishermen training and response
- Oil Spill Recovery Act 1990 and other laws enacted since the EVOS
- Video of escort vessels and double hulled tankers
- Live feed of USCG monitoring vessel traffic