WCSS
Western Canadian Spill Services Ltd.

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Oilspill Cooperative Member Newsletter

35 YEARS 1972 - 2007

March 2007

Inside This Issue

Cooperative 35th Anniversary (1972 – 2007)

Message from the Managing Director

WCSS Website

Cooperative Exercises

Control Points

Look for the 2006 annual stewardship report on line under "publications"

Cooperatives 35th Anniversary (1972-2007)

In 1969, 77,000 barrels of oil spilled from an offshore well in southern California. The spill fouled 50 kilometers of Santa Barbara beachfront and raised unprecedented public outcry. A second major spill the following year; the oil tanker Arrow spilled its contents into a Nova Scotia lobster fishery; oil spills became a sizzling hot environmental issue.

When these large offshore spills heightened awareness the Alberta government and upstream petroleum industry associations worked together through a committee (Environmental Conservation Committee) to review Canadian oil production and pipeline operations and industry's spill preparedness program. In 1971 the upstream industry's trade association released a joint industry/provincial government Oil Spill Contingency Plan. The plan called for a multi-action program where petroleum companies would work collaboratively to build a sustainable oil spill preparedness program; in 1972 petroleum operators organized themselves into 21 Oil Spill Cooperatives from NE British Columbia to Manitoba.

Message from the Managing Director

The long term success of the upstream industry's spill preparedness program can be attributed to the efforts and dedication of the many volunteers in the organization. Volunteers in the organization is far reaching from its Board of Directors and Executive Committee to the Area Oilspill Cooperative volunteers that includes Coop Chairmen, Steering Committees, Initial Spill Response Teams and member companies that store and help maintain the Area's spill response equipment.

Although it is recognized that volunteer involvement in WCSS provides a direct benefit to companies that participate by improving in-house spill response capabilities, WCSS also recognizes the time commitment involved and the overall benefit to the industry.

On behalf of the WCSS Board of Directors and Executive Committee, I would like to extend our appreciation to the numerous Oilspill Cooperative member companies and their staff who volunteer their valuable time towards the continual success of Western Canadian Spill Services.

2007 Oilspill Cooperative Exercises

Under EUB Directive 071 (Section 9) WCSS Oilspill Cooperative members (licensees) must have a representative attend the annual training exercise in the Cooperative where that member has operations. Exemption criteria allows for the licensee to have a representative attend an exercise in another area or complete a recognized oilspill response program provided that the licensee that chooses the exemption notifies the appropriate Cooperative Area Administrator. WCSS is responsible to track exercise attendance and provide a list of non-compliant licensees at year end for EUB follow up.

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WCSS is interested in compiling a list of non-attendance arguments (rational) that could be used to develop additional exemption criteria in the future. We are also interested in comments related to how we can assist members in being compliant and/or how we can improve the exercises themselves. Please email your comments to aomelian@enform.ca or fax to WCSS (403) 291-9408.

The 2007 Cooperative exercise schedule is posted on our website; questions regarding the exercise can be directed to the appropriate Cooperative Administrator.

Control Points

In each of our 18 Cooperative Oil Spill Contingency manuals you can find a mapping section that identifies control points in the area. In most cases control points are access points for spill response equipment. The best location on the water body to deploy containment and recovery equipment is determined at the time of the response and may not be right at the designated control point.

WCSS monitors all critical control points in our jurisdiction; those control points that are upstream of, or within major urban centres and/or are linked to sensitive environmental areas or downstream of major pipeline crossings or higher risk facilities.

WCSS's policy related to the maintenance of all non-critical control points is that it is the responsibility of Cooperative members to review those control points downstream from their operations and ensure that they are assessed for potential spill response activities. WCSS will provide a feedback form on our website so that members can submit updated information related to a specific control point.

WCSS Website

WCSS Website www.wcss.ab.ca

WCSS will be launching our new website in the next few weeks which has a new feature that will allow Oilspill Cooperative members to access and download Oilspill Contingency Manual updates on-line; no more hard copies will be sent through the mail.

Look for the 2006 annual stewardship report on line under "publications" and please contact us (aomelian@enform.ca) if you have questions or concerns about the website content.