

REPORT OUT NOTES for June 6, 2015 Workshop Oil Spills in Your Backyard & Opportunities for Citizen Engagement

There were four small groups, facilitated by Alexandra, Leila, Sven, and North Shore NOPE. The latter consisted mainly of people with NSNOPE. The groups were asked to address three questions:

- 1) What has jumped out at you in what you've heard at this workshop?
- 2) What would we like to see in our oil spill response plan?
- 3) What is your personal commitment to carry forward?

WHAT JUMPED OUT AT US

Human health

- √√ Complexity of spills & duration in time and space
- √√√ Surprised at severity of health risks, long-lasting nature of harm, and length of time to recover
- √√√ Air quality health impacts: how toxins can be absorbed via [inhalation] or via skin from [rain in] clouds carrying toxins miles away. NSNOPE: Citizens need Emergency Response kits that include masks and skin covering. If sheltering in place, paper masks are no good, windows must be sealed.
- √ People don't know what to do during a spill or how to respond safely
- √ Lack of education on health risks
- √ Risks are much greater than thought; "shelter in place" is not acceptable if home in US have been condemned and bulldozed after exposure to air contamination from tar sands oil spills
- √ Risk is too great to our quality of life and economy – No more pipelines!
- √ Long-term mental health impacts & pressure on community

Environment

- √√ Lack of baseline monitoring before spills & environmental monitoring after spills
- √√ Oil spills can't be cleaned up
- √ Video of oil still on the beach after 17 years
- √ Need trained volunteers for wildlife rehab

Industry actions

- √ Industry does the bare minimum; industry ignores Realistic Maximum Oil Discharge (RMOD) in planning response scenarios
- √√ Complexity of chemicals, dispersants make situation worse. WCMRC allowed to use Corexit surface washing agents. Need to know: what other products might WCMRC use? What does 2014 law change mean? How are dispersants and other products disposed of?

Government actions

- √ Unaware of changes in law around dispersant use
- √ Difficulty/ complexity of coordinating response plans
- √ Who determines when beach is safe again? Training? Are they still monitoring beaches, ocean now?
- √ Have evacuation plans for earthquakes but none for oil spill dangers from air quality

Citizen actions

- √ Citizens' advisory councils are powerful tool and set great precedent; inspirational.
- √ Power of educating youth, grades 6-8. NSNOPE has had limited success with college, university age youth. Possibly approach students via Pacts, issue of emergency response may open door to awareness of pipeline threat.

RESPONSE GAPS / NEEDS

Air quality monitoring

- √√ No Rapid Health Assessment after exposure for residents, workers. Who does it? GPs don't know what to look for.
- √ Air quality models and monitoring needed: WCMRC personnel have hand held monitors in boats as they approach spill, but they have to turn back if pollutant levels too high.
- √ Air quality standards in place are not sensitive enough: We need to look instead for evidence-based criteria; e.g., if people are getting sick, then air is not safe. How many children at a school, or workers on a task force, or neighborhood residents need to get sick during a spill in order to trigger action to protect people at the school, on the task force, or in the neighborhood? Follow up treatment and long-term monitoring should be done by health care professionals trained in Occupational and Environmental Medicine.
- √ Any air quality standards should be updated to include the latest research; there is no federal Clean Air Act in Canada, but there are BC standards for air quality.
- √√ Need Bucket Brigade with citizens taking samples

Evacuation plans for oil spills

- √ Procedures for evacuation; shelter in place may not be safe (can't long-term)
- √ Evacuation plans if air quality is bad or if lots of people are getting sick
- √ Need neighborhood plans, build on earthquake plans but with human health considerations
- √ Engage health officers; health officers should say when 'clean' or safe & establish evidence-based criteria (criteria based on evidence of harm, rather than standards)
- √ Notification of oil spills & product use
- √ Oil spill sirens for coastal communities

Citizen engagement

- √√√√ Citizens' Advisory Councils: Let's get a plan. Prince William Sound Citizens' Advisory Council is willing to help set up our councils. Cost pennies to industry for large gain in strengthening spill prevention and response

- √ Unite efforts with business community; reports filed for NEB show economic impacts to other businesses such as tourism, fishing, fish farming, and more. These businesses should be made aware of risks and need for action.
- √ Get skills to do monitoring ourselves like through Bucket Brigade; getting skills and equipment to citizens is key as we are most protective of our backyards.
- √ Bucket brigade needed to monitor samples of ocean water and beach sand NOW to send for testing, like Suzuki Foundation set up after Fukushima. Measure residual oil at English Bay & Ambleside.
- √ Train fishers and boaters for response; possibly using SERVS (Ship Escort Response Vessel Service) like in Prince William Sound, Alaska
- √ Provide 2-hour rapid fire training [like in other communities?]
- √ Content for youth education, especially grades 6–8
- √ Amp up resistance to fossil fuels and infrastructure
- √ Ghandi: 2 aspects to change – resist the old and create the new.

Government role

- √ More transparency: Push government and industry for transparency; e.g., signs at English Bay about hazards. (Science from BP Gulf spill are finding that oil kills healthy bacteria, and that tar balls contain *vibrio*, a flesh-eating bacteria.)
- √√ Big push for public awareness, education, and honest risk communication; e.g., packages for people to take home; signs on beach with number to call to report oil spills.
- √ Baseline environmental, air quality, and human health studies.
- √ Train teams to work with injured wildlife.
- √√ Create Oil Spill Response Fund by taxing shippers for funding for planning and equipment on-hand such as safety gear [for responders? for public?]

Local leadership from governments

- √√ What are local governments doing now? The more citizens learn, the more we can pressure government to act.
- √ Neighborhood plans building on what munis have done
- √ Clear understanding of who has the power to do what?
- √ Uniting with business community, unions
- √ Wildlife teams with training
- √ Training for fishermen
- √ Two-hour rapid training ?
- √ Public awareness push from government; need packages to take home like for natural disasters
- √ Permanent signage on beaches; if you see oil, report it

Environment & wildlife concerns

- √ Baseline studies, ongoing research

PERSONAL COMMITMENT

Focus: Citizen Actions

- √ NSNOPE – Jodie, Gina & Riki: Develop education program for grades 6-8; allow youth to create their own actions and solutions. Politicians can't lie to kids.
- √ NSNOPE – Trevor, Janie & Riki: Develop a Citizens' Advisory Council
- √ Katie's group – Citizen monitoring baseline and after [for air quality? human health?]



- √ Katie's group: Do report card on government response to spill, based on what we've learned is needed in world-class response plans. Citizens in Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Group monitor government-industry spill response and evaluate response like report card, indicating where are areas for improvement.
- √ Sea Shepard – Train volunteers for wildlife rehab
- √ Hold House Party to educate friends
- √ Meet with people supposed to be in charge, DFO, Coast Guard
- √ Build alliances with unions, public health organizations

Focus: Government

- √ NSNOPE – Jan and Steve: Get clarity around who to call after a spill. 1 call to 911? Should alert key local and Provincial staff. Get quicker response to spill. People unaware of 1-800-Oil spill number.
- √ NSNOPE – Janice: Coordinate group. Develop 1 presentation for MLAs, Municipal Councils and MP candidates. Make TMEP an issue in upcoming Federal election.
- √√ Go back where we live, see what's happening, and go from there. Learn what's there for a Geographic or Area Plan in our own backyard and build on it.
- √ Ask Victoria for their Spill Response plan.
- √ Go to Council meetings; have oil spill planning built into emergency response planning

- √ Grants to get gear & education about harm
- √ Go back to where we live & see what's being done; what is operational
- √ Sea Shepard: will help with wildlife training
- √ Follow up with meeting & specific tasks
- √ Petition for oil spill planning as part of emergency planning
- √ Take info to Council meetings
- √ Meet with DFO to see where can help
- √ Learn more about what City does
- √ Figure out how we can work with bigger groups
- √ Host a house party