

# The closest thing to an actual spill...

by Warren Jarvis  
for the Tundra Times

In the closest thing to an actual spill Exxon ever wants to see again, the company last week held a small mock-spill exercise in a protected cove near Homer.

The exercise took slightly over an hour from the first dumping of oranges in Kasitna Bay to the boom-encompassed "product" arriving at the stern of one of the two large vessels participating in the spill exercise.

Exxon officials termed the exercise a "success," despite one of the four small boats breaking down during the exercise. If such a thing had happened during a real oil spill, they said, the spare engine each small boat carries would have quickly been installed so the boat could continue operations.

The ships, two of the four Exxon has designated for its winter spill response program, are responsible for the Gulf of Alaska area.

According to Ken Lewis, Exxon's operations coordinator, the two vessels are not normally together and usually patrol widely separated areas of the Gulf.

The winter spill plan will continue in effect, Lewis said, until the spring plan has been formulated and its starting date finalized, probably somewhere around the beginning of April.

The winter plan includes maintaining scattered stockpiles of response equipment such as booms, monitoring of shoreline, and accumulation and assessment of data.

Reporter Warren Jarvis' trip to Homer was sponsored by Exxon Co. USA. He was one 12 reporters taken from Anchorage to Homer to view the test.



photos  
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