

PRESS RELEASE 11/14/05

Coastal Response Research Center Hosts Dispersants Working Group and Workshop

The National Research Council report entitled “Understanding Oil Spill Dispersants: Efficacy and Effects” notes that there are “significant gaps in the knowledge needed to make sound decisions regarding the use of dispersant in areas that [are] nearshore, shallow, or with restricted flushing rates.” It also recommends that “National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA),... Minerals Management Service (MMS), U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), relevant state agencies, industry, and appropriate international partners should work together to establish an integrated research plan which focuses on collecting and disseminating peer-reviewed information about key aspects of dispersant use in a scientifically robust, but environmentally meaningful context.” The Coastal Response Research Center (CRRC), a partnership between NOAA’s Office of Response and Restoration and the University of New Hampshire (UNH), convened a meeting of many of these entities in July 2005 to discuss the possibility of forming an integrated approach to dispersants research. The participants decided to form a Dispersants Working Group (DWG) and agreed that integration of various research projects would be useful. Participants agreed:

- To participate in a coordinated research plan;
- Each participating entity will maintain its autonomy;
- Requests for proposals (RFPs) and Broad Agency Announcements (BAAs), other funding announcements and all research results will be shared among the DWG and made public, where possible.

The CRRC agreed to coordinate DWG activities and to provide the mechanism by which reports, RFPs and other elements of interest are distributed and shared among the entities and the oil spill community. The DWG members include: AK Department of Environmental Conservation, American Petroleum Institute, BP, CA Office of Spill Prevention and Response, Cook Inlet Regional Citizens Advisory Council, CRRC, EPA, ExxonMobil, LA Oil Spill Research and Development Program, MMS, NOAA, Prince William Sound Oil Spill Recovery Institute, Prince William Sound Regional Citizens’ Advisory Council, TX General Land Office, and USCG. In January 2006, the CRRC will add an area to its website (www.crrc.unh.edu) dedicated to the DWG. It will include funding announcements, links to the DWG and dispersant/dispersed oil R&D.

As the inaugural DWG event, the CRRC hosted a workshop entitled *Research & Development Needs for Making Decisions Regarding Dispersing Oil* at UNH on September 20-21, 2005. The goal of the workshop was to develop a list of priority topics that can serve as a basis for a coordinated research plan. The workshop brought together more than 30 representatives from federal and state agencies, industry, academia, and the private sector for small group and plenary discussions of the effectiveness and effects of dispersant use. The dedication and hard work of the participants resulted in an impressive list of research topics for future funding announcements. A workshop report will be posted on the Center’s website in the coming months.