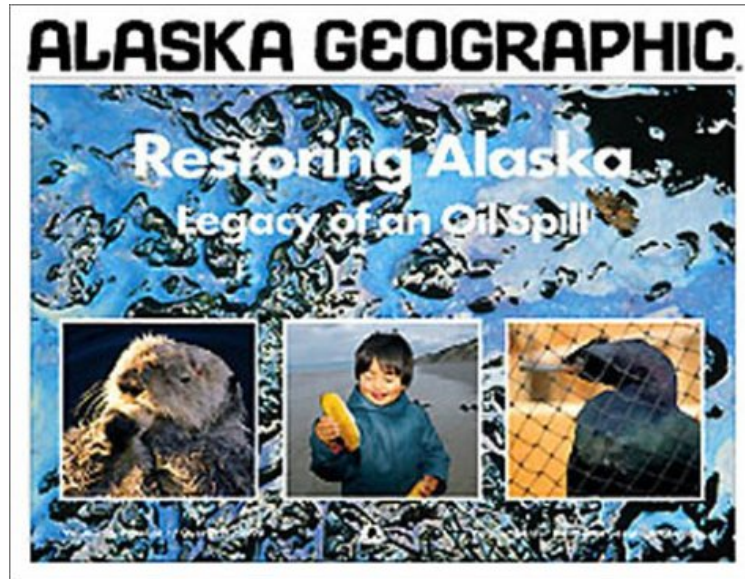


[Download pdf ebook] Restoring Alaska: Legacy of Oil Spill (Alaska Geographic.,)

Restoring Alaska: Legacy of Oil Spill (Alaska Geographic.,)

Alaska Geographic Association
*ebooks | Download PDF | *ePub | DOC | audiobook*



[Download](#)

[Read Online](#)

#5253193 in Books Alaska Geographic Society 1999-04-01 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.38 x .30 x 10.76l, #File Name: 156661046X112 pages | File size: 47.Mb

Alaska Geographic Association : Restoring Alaska: Legacy of Oil Spill (Alaska Geographic.,) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Restoring Alaska: Legacy of Oil Spill (Alaska Geographic.,):

Alaska Geographic is an award-winning series that presents the people, places, and wonders of Alaska to the world. Over the past 30 years, Alaska Geographic has earned its reputation as the publication for those who love Alaska. The series boasts more than 100 books to date, featuring communities from Barrow to Ketchikan, animals from bears to dinosaurs, history from the Russian explorers to today, and natural phenomena from the aurora to glaciers. Written by leading experts in their fields, these books are illustrated throughout with world-class photography and include colorful maps for reference.

From the Publisher About this Issue: Restoring Alaska: Legacy of an Oil Spill tells the decade-long story of the Exxon Valdez oil spill, focusing on spill-zone lands and scientific research as well as the people whose lives were touched by the tanker accident in 1989. We are indebted to the scientists, industry and government officials and oil spill researchers coast to coast who contributed to this book and shared our goal of explaining oil spills and oil spill science to a wider audience. About the Author Journalism instructor and ALASKA GEOGRAPHIC contributor Sherry Simpson teaches at the University of Alaska Anchorage. Her book, *The Way Winter Comes*, is a collection of essays about Alaska published in 1998. A freelance writer who contributes to books, magazines, guidebooks and ALASKA GEOGRAPHIC, Kris Capps was a reporter for the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner in 1989 when oil spilled into Prince William Sound, a place she first visited as a fishing boat deckhand. She has since explored the Sound by small plane, sea kayak, sailboat and research vessel. "It is still exquisitely beautiful," Capp says. A staff writer for the Anchorage

Daily News, Natalie Phillips has spent much of the past eight years reporting on oil spill legal battles and efforts to restore Alaskas wildlife and lands. She first glimpsed Exxon Valdez oil while on a western Prince William Sound kayak trip in 1989. Phillips has returned to the Sound each summer since to explore a new stretch. An Anchorage writer and ALASKA GEOGRAPHIC contributor, Charles P. Wohlforth was a reporter for the Anchorage Daily News from 1988 to 1992 and devoted most of 1989 to the Exxon Valdez oil spill, touring the region by boat purchased by the newspaper and piloted by Wohlforth. A two-term member of the Anchorage Assembly, Wohlforth is a lifelong Alaskan. As a special assistant to the governor in 1989, Ernie Piper was focusing on resource issues when the Exxon Valdez oil spill occurred, moving him into position as the states liaison with displaced communities. He later managed state agency and community response programs as Alaskas on-scene coordinator; in 1993, Piper prepared the states final report on the accident. An ALASKA GEOGRAPHIC author and former Anchorage journalist, Piper today is public affairs director for the Alaska Railroad. Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.

Legacy of an Oil Spill: Move on, Yes; Forget, Never by Sherry Simpson In the decade since the Exxon Valdez collided with history, the nations largest oil spill has been distilled into a series of calculations: Crude oil spilled (11.2 million gallons). Coastline oiled (1,300 miles). Sea otters killed (2,800). Birds dead (250,000). Cleanup workers employed (11,000). Oil recovered (about 12 percent). Civil settlement paid by Exxon (\$900 million). Criminal penalty exacted by jury (\$5 billion, under appeal). Species of birds, mammals and fish significantly damaged (26). Species "recovered" (2). So much is beyond measure, though. Some equations will not resolve. No one has yet fixed the true value of an otter, or a fouled beach, or a lifestyle lost. How to reckon the anger, the sorrow, the regret? Humanity is not included on the list of species damaged by the oil spill and so the question remains: Prince William Sound may indeed recover some day, but will we? Ten years after the oil spill ask anybody, "What is the legacy of the Exxon Valdez?" Chances are you will hear, as I did, either puzzled silence or knee-jerk answers: "A lot of people made money." "Greed and avarice." "Isnt it all fixed now?" Id like to believe that people answer this way because what they mean to say is "I dont know." So much remains in flux. Courts grind away, decisions are appealed or reversed. Scientists wrangle with difficult questions and sometimes they wrangle with each other. Ecosystems are changing in the Gulf of Alaska, but which changes were caused by the oil spill and which by shifts in climate and food sources? Faced with such complications, how easy it becomes to succumb to complacency again. Similarly, the passage of time has rendered the events of the oil spill more perplexing than ever. Once it seemed simple to identify the heroes, the villains, the victims. But the smudge of complicity lingers, shared by a ships crew that faltered at the helm, the companies and agencies that did too little and much too late, the watchdogs who failed to watch, the citizens distracted by easy money, the consumers who demanded more, more, more. Some stains cannot be removed entirely no matter how hard we rub. The spill created every kind of damage imaginable: creatures died by the hundreds of thousands, fisheries were impaired, habitats corroded, trust lost. The lives of many people villagers, fishermen, even the cleanup workers were grounded with the Exxon Valdez too. A decade ago, wholesale ruination seemed inevitable. Yet hasty judgments have been confounded. The spills consequences seem neither as lasting as once feared, nor as fleeting as some would have us believe. Look out upon the waters of Prince William Sound and all seems serene, a landscape restored. The persistence of life appears miraculous. But dig your hands below the surface of some beaches and oil will blacken them, a constant reminder that the vitality of Prince William Sound has dimmed in ways we cannot clearly see. It would be wrong, though, to ignore the good things that have emerged over the years. Nearly 760,000 acres of land, much of which would have been logged otherwise, have been purchased or protected by the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council with settlement money. The new Alaska SeaLife Center in Seward allows visitors to glimpse both the oceanic and scientific worlds in the only major cold water marine lab in the world. Research continues to expand knowledge about coastal Alaskas ecology and the behavior of oil once its been loosed upon the world. Federal and state legislation created tougher tanker regulations, stiffer penalties and a new focus on disaster prevention and response. The spill taught us about ourselves, too. Nobody can be sure how he or she will behave in a disaster. Now we know. Some of us turn to each other (remember the fishermens mosquito fleet to save a hatchery in the "Battle of Sawmill Bay"); some of us turn on each other (think of the carping over who has reaped money from the spill and who has not). Now we seize eagerly upon the faintest signs of healing. Bald eagles and river otters appear to have regained their original strength. Several other populations seem to be mending, including common murre, sockeye and pink salmon, and denizens of the tidal zones. Native villagers have returned cautiously to eating traditional foods offered by the ocean. A real danger lies in the false sense that recovery is certain, though. There will never come a day when some potentate announces, "The oil spill is over! Its all better now!" nor will we ever be free from jeopardy. As long as we require petroleum, oil spills will afflict us. Within 30 months after North Slope crude gushed into Alaskas waters, four spills of more than 10 million gallons occurred throughout the world. As I write this, a tanker grounded off the Oregon coast has been set afire to prevent more oil from washing ashore. Perhaps the true legacy is our sense of vulnerability, the bitter awareness of all that can go wrong and all that can be forfeited. We saw how easily the richness of life can slip away, but the magnitude of the oil spills devastation dominates our vision so that we do not always see the losses that occur around us daily, the steady erosions of our ecosystems and landscapes and a sense of place. Disasters do not always arrive in large-scale formats or in made-for-TV movies. They can happen drop by drop, forest by forest, bay by

bay, otter by otter.