

Annual Progress Report Form - Oil Spill Recovery Institute

Today's date: November 11, 2003

Name of awardee/grantee: Prince William Sound Science Center; Katie Olson,
Education Coordinator

Project title: Science of the Sound: Community Education

Dates this progress report covers: October 2002- October 2003

PART I - Progress Report on Activities

Science of the Sound

A Community Based Science and Environmental Education Program

Report for Oct. 2002– Oct. 2003

The goals of Science of the Sound are to provoke inquiry into the natural world, increase science and ecological literacy, and to foster stewardship for the sound use of our natural resources.

STAFF

Changes in staffing structure and personnel for *Science of the Sound* educators took place in 2003. Katie Olson resigned her position in September 2003 and Kate Alexander, Education Intern, moved into the position of Education Specialist. Current program educators are Kate Alexander, Allen Marquette—Education Specialist, and Debbie Eagly—Discovery Room Educator (part-time).

Kate Alexander attended the North American Association of Environmental Education Conference in October, 2003. The conference highlighted other existing environmental and science education organizations throughout North America and provided networking opportunities with other Alaskan organizations. Kate was able to attend workshops focusing on successful partnership tactics, curriculum development strategies, and other relevant topics. The ability for all Science Center educators to attend conferences like this are crucial to continued development and advancement of *Science of the Sound* education programs.

PROGRAMS

The **Discovery Room** has been the mainstay of *Science of the Sound* for almost twelve years. Instructors from the Prince William Sound Science Center (PWSSC) and the U.S. Forest Service cooperatively plan and implement the hands-on science and environmental education programs that are housed in the Prince William Sound Community College. During the school year, every Cordova student in kindergarten through sixth grade visits

the Discovery Room once a month to explore a new theme. The 2002-2003 topics included natural resources, trees, forest ecology, forest resources, the water cycle, oceans, water pollution and wastewater, and shorebirds.

Elementary school teachers completed Discovery Room evaluations at the end of the school year, commenting on the highlights of the Discovery Room as well as suggesting ideas for the future. Favorite activities were making paper and creating a sea anemone. The highlight for 4-6 grade classes was the March field trip to the local freshwater and wastewater treatment plants. As one of the 6th grade teachers said, it enabled these students “to see scientists in the community, not just guys in lab coats.” An increased number of field trips are planned for the 2003-2004 school year.

Outreach Discovery takes place in the villages of Chenega Bay and Tatitlek, Alaska Native communities located in Prince William Sound. These bush schools have limited opportunity and resources available for science education. Discovery Room topics are catered to fit the school’s interests and curricula. Outreach Discovery programs help to enhance science curriculum and encourage excitement about science among Alaska Native youth. During the visits, PWSSC educators work with the entire student body (ranging from 12-30 students) for two full days.

In April, 2003, Kate Alexander, Education Intern, and Allen Marquette, Education Specialist traveled to both Chenega Bay and Tatitlek and focused on natural resources, specifically forest and marine intertidal resources. During both trips, Science Center educators utilized the outdoor classroom around the schools, doing most of the instruction in the forest or marine intertidal zone. Not only were the students listening to lessons or playing games related to decomposers, but they were actually digging through dirt and logs to find examples of real decomposers! This enables science to become more relevant for the students as they see first-hand that it exists all around them.

Community Programs are geared for Cordovan adults and families and are now presented on a weekly basis during the school year. The goal of these programs is to get Cordovans to enjoy and understand their surroundings by participating in lectures, seminars, and field trips. 2002-2003 outings, led by PWSSC educators, included intertidal exploration, owl hikes, moose, and storytelling. Twenty-five community programs took place between September 2002-May 2003 and averaged 13 people in attendance. All programs are free of charge.

In the future

Many plans and ideas are currently being implemented for the 2003-2004 Science of the Sound programs. An overall theme of “systems” has been chosen for the **Discovery Room**, with monthly topics covering the systems of weather, electricity, astronomy, anatomy, chemistry, and geology. Three of these topics (electricity, astronomy, and anatomy) include plans for a fieldtrip to local organizations that utilize these branches of science in their everyday functions.

The **Community Program** series has been diversified by involving a wider range of local scientists in the presentations. In 2003-2004, presentations will not only be given by Science Center educators, but also by researchers from US Forest Service, PWSSC, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Native Village of Eyak, and the Copper River Watershed Project. The hope is that with a wider range of presenters and topics, a wider range of community members will be attracted to the programs.

In 2004, educators hope to complete two **Outreach Discovery** trips to each of the villages. This will also allow for long-term science projects that can be started by Science Center educators during their first visit, continued in their absence, and then re-visited and completed during their second visit.

There are also plans for two new Science of the Sound programs. The first is **Research Discovery**, a program that works with the local Cordovan high school students and increases their exposure to high-level research science. It will include participating in the Alaska Tsunami Bowl, the regional competition for the National Oceans Science Bowl. Students will also be provided with opportunities to collect data and participate in field trips with Science Center researchers. The other new program is the design and creation of **web-based** materials. This includes educational components of the Orca Project webpage and the creation of an online Alaska Oil Spill Curriculum.

Part II - Annual Financial Statement

Year-to-date Balance:

Budget Category	Budget Expenses	Remaining
Direct Costs		
Personnel	\$16,240	\$0.0
Travel	\$0.0	\$0.0
Contractual	\$0.0	\$0.0
Commodities	\$0.0	\$0.0
Equipment	\$2,960	\$0.0
Subtotal Direct Costs	\$19,200	
Indirect	\$4,800	
Project Total	\$24,000	\$0.0