Updating Darkened Waters

A display describing the Exxon Valdez oil spill.

Background
The Darkened Waters display was built as a fixed and traveling museum display describing the Exxon Valdez oil spill. Being aware of the impacts of oil spills is important to institute changes that prevent future spills. As the event that led to the formation of OSRI, the display covers our past and indicates future direction.

Approach
OSRI has supported two updates to the display. The first update was conducted by the Pratt Museum. They added materials describing insights learned by research, traditional ecological knowledge, and personal experience. The effort updated both the traveling and permanent (Homer) versions of Darkened Waters. In 2009 OSRI supported bringing the traveling exhibit to Cordova and the creation of a smaller exhibit better suited to traveling to other venues.

Results
The traveling version of the Darkened Waters display was found to be extremely large and used outdated technology. The Cordova Historical Society chose to build a smaller display that not only described the spill, but also included information about changes that have taken place since the spill. That display is currently located in the Cordova museum. It consists of several panels that describe the event and mechanisms that have been put in place to better understand the damages and prevent future spills, and it includes a small part of the hull that was found on Bligh Reef.