Coastal Response Research Center
at the University of New Hampshire

The Coastal Response Research Center (CRRC) is a partnership between the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Office of Response and Restoration (ORR) and the University of New Hampshire (UNH). The goal of CRRC is to reduce the consequences of spills and other hazards that threaten coastal environments and communities and to serve as a hub for the local, national and international oil spill communities. Specifically, CRRC: (i) conducts and oversees basic and applied research on spill response and restoration; (ii) transforms research results into practice; (iii) conducts outreach and encourages strategic partnerships to improve preparedness and response; and (iv) educates the next generation of the oil spill community. The Center funds research projects on the injury and recovery of natural resources, socioeconomic/human dimension issues, and transportation and weathering of released materials resulting from spills in coastal regions. CRRC is known as an independent, honest broker and its experience in the areas of environmental and marine science and engineering as they relate to spills.

The CRRC led the collaborative effort among several UNH-NOAA centers and NOAA programs that developed a data platform capable of interfacing diverse spatial data sets and real-time data in a web-based format. The platform, the Environmental Response Management Application (ERMA®) is easy to operate and allows the user to "drill down" to reveal actual data (e.g., sensitive species and habitat), magnify segments of the geography, and monitor real-time conditions. ERMA demonstrates the capabilities of an integrated data management platform and is used extensively, including during the Deepwater Horizon spill in the Gulf of Mexico.

The CRRC has hosted numerous international spill-related workshops on a variety of topics including: dispersants, Arctic ERMA, modeling, human dimensions, submerged oil, and priority research and development needs. These workshops have convened a diverse group of experts from government, industry, NGOs, and academia as well as other stakeholders (e.g., indigenous peoples). The most recent workshops were: Arctic ERMA® - Canada/International Workshop (Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, Feb. 2013); Arctic Communities (Barrow & Kotzebue) workshops on ERMA and NRDA (May and Nov 2012); and the Future of Dispersant Use in Spill Response (Mobile, AL, Sept 2011).

The Center incorporates education in its mission on multiple levels. NOAA and other federal agencies are facing a loss of their workforce as many scientists and engineers move toward retirement in the near future. It is imperative that young scientists and engineers be well prepared to fill the gaps created by these retirements within the spill response and restoration community. To this end, the Center provides innovative internship and educational opportunities to undergraduate and graduate students. For more information on the Center, upcoming workshops, Center-funded research, and student involvement visit our website at www.crrc.unh.edu.

Aerial application of dispersants to an oil slick. Photo courtesy of the U.S. Coast Guard.

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Center for Spills in the Environment

The Center for Spills in the Environment (CSE) is located at the University of New Hampshire (UNH). CSE is a parallel center to the NOAA-funded Coastal Response Research Center (CRRC), also located at UNH. CSE works with a variety of governmental agencies and the private sector. Similar to CRRC, CSE focuses on the education, research and outreach involved with all aspects of spills, with an overall objective of promoting effective protection, restoration and recovery of coastal areas. CSE is known as an independent, honest broker and for its experience in the areas of environmental and marine science and engineering as they relate to spills. CSE has conducted numerous workshops bringing together researchers, practitioners and NGOs of diverse backgrounds to address issues in spill response, restoration and recovery.

Representative of CSE activities and projects:

- Oil Sands Products (OSP) Forum (Seattle, WA). A panel of experts offered the latest information and details on OSP and its characteristics, transportation (via rail, pipeline, vessel), and fate, behavior, modeling any natural resources impacts when spilled. Case studies (Enbridge/Kalamazoo and Burnaby spills) were presented. A final report is available on the CSE website.

- Oil Dispersant Research Workshop (Baton Rouge, LA). This workshop offered a collaborative opportunity for researchers, funded GoMRI, NSF, federal & state agencies, industry and NGOs and practitioners to present their latest findings on dispersant-related issues. It laid the groundwork for determining areas where research has the potential to impact future dispersant use in spill response and promoted mechanisms for scientific exchange and collaboration.

- Dispersants, Submerged Oil and other Working Groups. The goal of these topical working groups are to facilitate discussion among members to identify research needs and keep abreast of new findings resulting on-going studies and to coordinate future efforts. The working groups bring together practitioners, researchers, government officials (federal, state), industry, and NGO partners from U.S. and abroad to help translate research into improved practice.

For more information on CSE activities, please see www.cse.unh.edu or contact Nancy E. Kinne, Ph.D., Director at: nancy.kinne@unh.edu.