

# Influencing Federal Oil Pollution Research Efforts: Overview of the Interagency Coordinating Committee on Oil Pollution Research (ICOPR) Oil Pollution and Technology Plan (OPRTP)



## Historical Context

- Torrey Canyon oil spill off the coast of England in 1967
- At that time, the U.S. had neither the technical nor operational capacity to deal with a large oil spill in the marine environment
- National Contingency Plan developed in 1968 to address oil spills and began extensive oil pollution research over the next 20 years
- Coordination of the federal research efforts was informal and on an ad hoc basis

## Renewed Focus

- Exxon Valdez oil spill in 1989 revealed the need for federal agencies to better coordinate their research
- Oil Pollution Act established ICOPR and the first requirement for a comprehensive and coordinated Oil Pollution Research and Technology Plan (OPRTP)
- ICOPR published its first version of the OPRTP in 1992 and published a revised version in 1997

## 2015-2021 OPRTP

- New emerging energy sources and lessons learned from Deepwater Horizon highlighted need to update OPRTP.
- Assesses agency roles and responsibilities; status of knowledge of oil pollution prevention, response, and mitigation technologies; priority research and development needs
- Identifies 150 research priorities
- Directed at federal agencies but can serve as a research **planning guide** for industry, academia, state governments, research institutions, and other nations

### OPRTP Development Methodology

#### Step 1: Gap Analysis of published recommendations

- >900 recommendations identified
- 570 unique research needs



#### Step 2: "Categorization Framework" Developed

- 25 Standing Research Areas (SRAs)

#### Step 3: Survey of 280 subject matter experts

- Input on importance needs
- Identify missing needs

#### Step 4: Identify Top Priorities

- Three per SRA or SRA Subcategory
- Equal importance


#### Step 5: Plan Development and Approval

- State of knowledge on oil pollution issues
- Research agencies, organizations, and facilities identified
- Planning process description

Plan Approved – September 29, 2015

#### Next steps:

- Outreach to encourage use of the R&T plan
- Track progress toward addressing the needs
- Revise and Improve the Plan every six years
- Continue collaboration and coordination

Prevention	Preparedness	Response	Injury Assessment and Restoration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Human Error Factors</li> <li>• Offshore Facilities &amp; Systems</li> <li>• Onshore Facilities &amp; Systems</li> <li>• Waterways Management</li> <li>• Vessel Design</li> <li>• Drilling</li> <li>• Rail/Truck Transport</li> <li>• Pipeline Systems</li> </ul> <p>• ICOPR Standing Research Areas (SRAs) as of September 29, 2015</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-spill Baseline Studies</li> <li>• Response Management Systems</li> </ul>  <p>Diluted Bitumen Research at OHMSETT Photo courtesy of EPA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Structural Damage Assessment and Salvage</li> <li>• At Source Control and Containment</li> <li>• Chemical and Physical Behavior Modeling</li> <li>• Oil Spill Detection and Surveillance</li> <li>• In- and On-water Containment and Recovery</li> <li>• Shore Containment and Recovery</li> <li>• Dispersants</li> <li>• In-situ Burning</li> <li>• Bioremediation</li> <li>• Alternative Chemical Countermeasures</li> <li>• Oily Waste and Oil Disposal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental Impacts and Ecosystem Recovery</li> <li>• Environmental Restoration Methods and Technologies</li> <li>• Human Safety and Health</li> <li>• Sociological and Economic Impacts</li> </ul>

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