



BLACK

THE LEGACY OF THE EXXON VALDEZ

WAVE

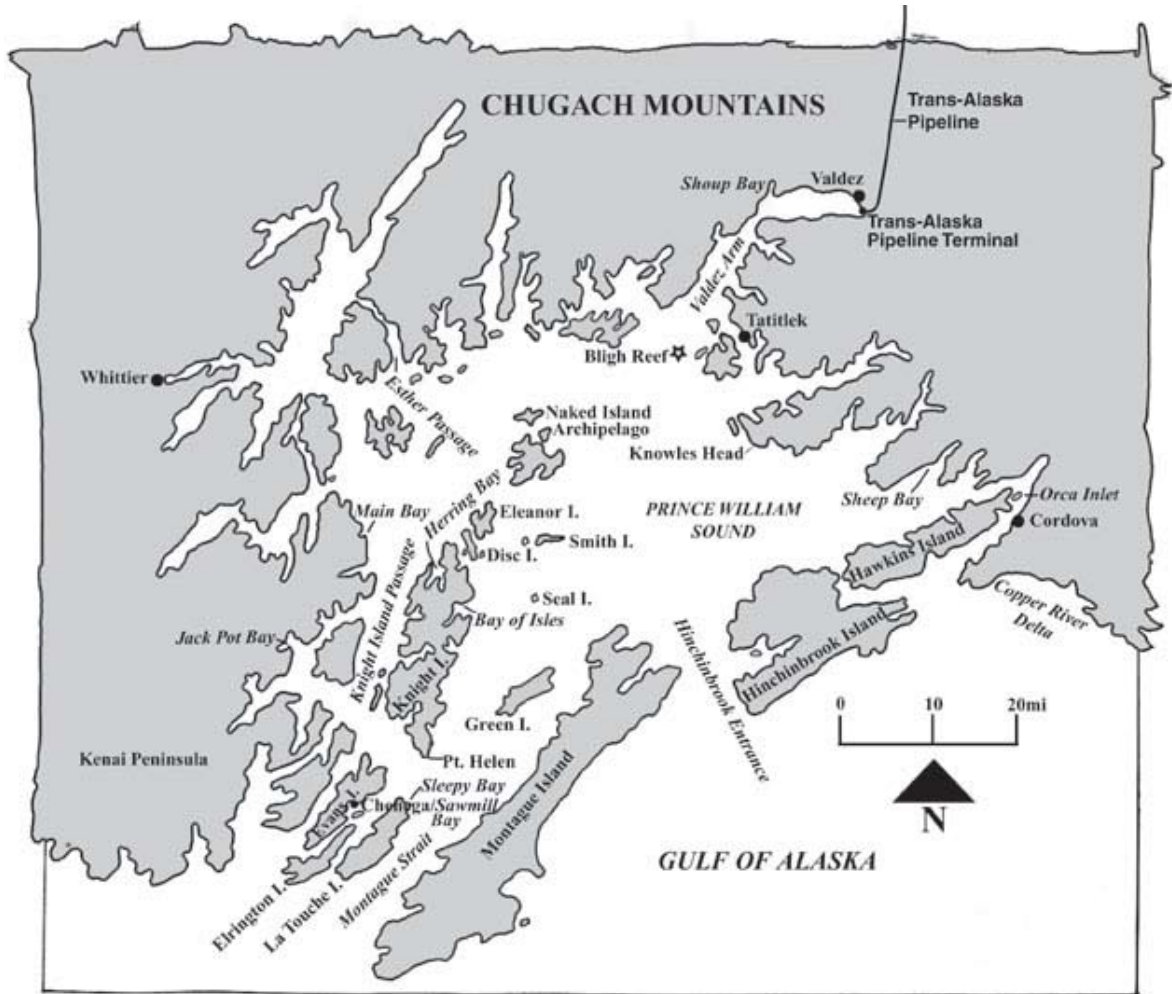
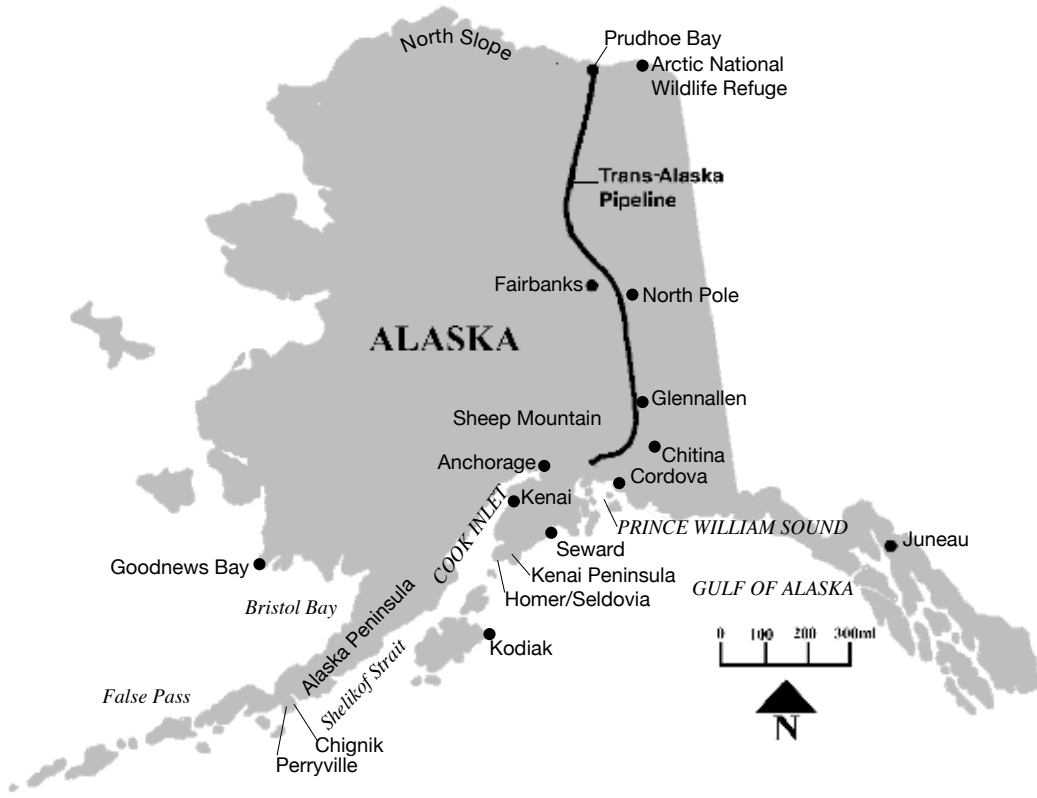
A DOCUMENTARY FILM OF THE TWENTY-YEAR STRUGGLE FOR JUSTICE
FOLLOWING THE EXXON VALDEZ OIL SPILL IN PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND

Student Study Guide

by Riki Ott, PhD

for Ultimate Civics, a project of Earth Island Institute

MAPS



From: Sound Truth and Corporate Myths (Dragonfly Sisters Press, 2004) by Riki Ott, PhD

Black Wave Review Questions

1. Who was the Master Captain of the *Exxon Valdez*?
2. Where did the *Exxon Valdez* run aground?
3. What are PAHs? What harm do they cause to wildlife? To people?
4. What is the “Valdez crud”?
5. What recourse did sick workers have after the cleanup?
6. Which President signed legislation authorizing the construction of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System?
7. Why did the *Exxon Valdez* crew members ask permission to deviate course?
8. Why were the fishermen the first to respond to the spill?
9. How much of the oil spilled stayed in Prince William Sound?
10. What was the first indicator of long-term ecosystem harm from the oil spill?
11. What was the first indicator of long-term economic harm from the oil spill?
12. What was the first indicator of long-term community health impacts from the oil spill?
13. How are ecosystem, economic, and community health impacts related to each other and to the oil spill?

Black Wave Discussion Topics

1. What are key attributes that define effective activists or spokespersons?
2. Who should be in charge of the clean up – the federal government or the corporation that caused the harm? Who should perform the cleanup? How effective was Exxon’s contingency plan? Who had responsibility for making sure the plan actually worked?
3. Discuss the ethics of the cleanup: How much emphasis was placed on the health of the environment versus the health of the workers? The health of the environment versus public relations?
4. Discuss how community residents and scientists learned that oil is more toxic than previously thought. Discuss the concept of a paradigm shift in field of oil eco-toxicology. Discuss the relationship between science and public policy, and the ramification of a paradigm shift in science for public policies.
5. Discuss how community residents and scientists learned that disaster trauma and litigation can lead to social trauma and community dysfunction. Discuss the concept of a paradigm shift in field of sociology: understanding of disaster trauma and mitigation. Discuss the relationship between science and public policy, and the ramification of a paradigm shift in science for public policies.

6. Discuss Exxon's response to the ecosystem assessments conducted in Prince William Sound. Compare this to Exxon's response about climate change.
7. Discuss the impacts of the spill on fishing families and within the community. What were the economic impacts of the Pink Salmon and Herring run failures? What is the significance of the absence of images of oiled animals?
8. In 1989 Exxon promised, "We will consider whatever it takes to make you whole." The original \$5 billion punitive damage fine was eventually reduced to \$507 million in 2008. Exxon brought in a record of a \$40 billion profit the same year. Discuss the concept of "equal treatment under law" as it applies to the residents of Prince William Sound and Exxon. Discuss the concept of punitive awards in relation to wealthy corporations – and justice.





photo by Linden O'Toole



photo by Riki Ott



photo by Dave Janka



photo by Robert Cormelie



photo by Kathy Halgren



photo by Kathy Halgren

A. The O'Toole family onboard their fishing boat. B. *Exxon Valdez* oil spill cleanup workers in Prince William Sound. C. Digging for oil on Knight Island, Prince William Sound, 17 years after the spill. D. Digging for oil on Smith Island, Prince William Sound, 19 years after the spill. E. Local fishermen take action right after the spill – and collect more oil using buckets than Exxon.

photo by Erik Hill/Anchorage Daily News



F. Exxon Valdez aground on Bligh Reef, Prince William Sound