

Electronic Media Transcripts

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Announcer: Fishermen, oil producers, politicians and other groups found a common cause this morning – they were all at Marine Institute in St. John's to launch a new oil spill training program. As Cory Snook explains, fishermen will learn how to clean up an oil spill.

Unnamed: The oil spinner that we inside of it here is called an MI30 and it's an oleophilic disc skimmer.

Cory Snook: It sounds technical, and it is. The first people to show up at an oil spill need special training to use this oil recovery equipment. That's why Placentia Bay Fisherman Earle Johnson is here. Oil companies ship almost 50 million tons of oil through the bay where he fishes each year. Fishermen such as Johnson know the shoreline better than anyone.

Earle Johnson: Well, most, for most all of us and for anyone here on shore, we got our boats on site and we're trained partially to use ropes and nets and twine and (inaudible), I guess.

Snook: Johnson has been pushing for oil spill training for the past 15 years. Now he's getting his wish. One Ocean is the liaison group between the fishery and petroleum industries. Starting next month, the

organization will begin a series of five day oil spill training courses throughout the province. The federal government's Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency is paying for the program. But the money only covers training. The province's minister of Environment and Conservation, Tom Osborne, still has some concerns.

Tom Osborne: I don't yet personally have that sense of comfort that we can handle the job either through equipment or through training. But what One Ocean's are doing here today is a huge step forward.

Snook: The amount of oil being shipped through Nfld waters has grown by 700 percent since 1993. Officials expect that number will rise further by the end of the year when the White Rose oil field starts pumping crude. Cory Snook, CBC News, St. John's.
