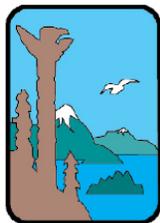


ALASKA  
Department of  
Environmental  
Conservation



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### **Dive team on site to begin M/V Monarch fuel removal operations**

JUNEAU, Alaska - The Unified Command has approved a plan to recover fuel from the 12 fuel and oil tanks on the M/V Monarch. The vessel sank in Cook Inlet on January 15. It contains an estimated 30,000 gallons of diesel fuel, and 690 gallons of lube oil.

The 166-foot Monarch now rests on the seabed near the Granite Point platform, 16 miles from Nikiski. Naval architects and a salvage team have monitored the vessel and observed no movement due to tidal forces.

The offshore supply vessel Perseverance will serve as the staging area for fuel recovery operations. The 207-foot vessel arrived at the Granite Point platform Thursday. The Perseverance is being positioned above the Monarch using multiple anchors and a temporary line attached to a platform leg.

After mooring is complete, a dive crew will prepare equipment at the wreck site for fuel removal. Three dives are planned during each 24-hour period. Dives are expected to last 30 minutes each and can only occur during slack tides. Divers plan to access the Monarch's fuel tanks from existing deck fittings. A flexible wand will be attached to a pump on board the dive platform on the deck of the Perseverance. The wand will be inserted into each tank and then crews will pump recoverable fuel or oil to temporary storage on the Perseverance. Pumping will continue until no sheen is observed in a collection sample. The operation could last approximately 32 days.

Unified Command personnel will monitor operations. "It is hard to exaggerate the difficulty of this fuel recovery operation. Tidal currents in Cook Inlet are among the highest in the world, visibility for the divers is near zero, and the wreck is upside down," said Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation's Gary Folley, state on scene coordinator.

"The highest priority for everyone involved is the safety of the divers and support personnel," said U.S. Coast Guard Capt. John Kenyon, federal on scene coordinator.

Monarch owner Ocean Marine Services Inc., Kirkland, Wash., has retained Global Diving and Salvage Inc., to coordinate and conduct the fuel removal operations.

The SPT Vigilance loaded with spill response equipment will be in the immediate area during recovery operations in case any oil is released.

One 330-gallon portable tank listed as deck cargo from the Monarch has been recovered on Afognak Island. A second 330-gallon portable tank and a 110-gallon portable tank have been recovered from the inlet floor just north of the Monarch's position. Approximately 3,500 gallons of diesel and hydraulic oil spilled as the vessel sank.