



ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION  
Division of Spill Prevention and Response  
Prevention Preparedness and Response Program  
**SITUATION REPORT (SITREP)**

CHANGES FROM PREVIOUS SITREPS ARE DENOTED IN RED

## Tug *Powhatan* Sinking

SITREP #: 5

SPILL #: 17119910901

TIME/DATE OF DISTRIBUTION: 1:00 p.m. June 6, 2017

POTENTIAL RESPONSIBLE PARTY (PRP): Samson Tug & Barge

**INCIDENT LOCATION:** The Tug *Powhatan* sank at the Samson Tug & Barge (Samson) dock and moved 330 meters to the Northwest in Starrigavan Bay, approximately 7 miles north of Sitka. The tug moved from an initial depth of 15 meters to its current depth of approximately 60 meters. The tug is currently located at 57° 07' 52.47" N, 135° 22' 48.58" W.

**TIME/DATE OF SPILL:** April 19, 2017 at approximately 10:15 p.m.

**HOW/WHEN SPILL WAS DISCOVERED AND REPORTED:** The United States Coast Guard (USCG) Marine Safety Detachment Sitka reported the sinking through the National Response Center on April 19, 2017 at 10:15 p.m.

**TYPE/AMOUNT OF PRODUCT SPILLED:** Initial estimates provided to the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) of 340 gallons of oil on board were in error. The amount of oil released is unknown.

**CAUSE OF SPILL:** The vessel sank at the dock; the cause for the sinking is currently being investigated.

**SOURCE CONTROL:** Alaska Commercial Divers (ACD) arrived the morning of April 25, 2017 on their vessel, the *Alaskan Salvor*. Divers from ACD were able to cap the two main fuel tank vents by 2:00 p.m. on April 25. Subsequent dives identified multiple locations where oil could escape the vessel. These locations have been secured by capping and/or other means.

**RESPONSE ACTION:** The Pollution Mitigation and Wreck Removal Plan submitted by Samson was reviewed and approved by the Unified Command. Samson contracted with ACD and Pacific Pile & Marine (Pacific Pile) to raise and dispose of the *Powhatan*. The wreck removal barge *Salvation* with a heavy lift crane, the *KP-2* deck barge, and three assisting tugs, the *Carolyn H.*, the *Allison H.*, and the *Maia H.*, arrived on scene on June 3<sup>rd</sup>. Work to prepare the *Salvation* and the *Powhatan* for the lifting process is ongoing. SEAPRO deployed the Oil Spill Response Vessel (OSRV) *Neka Bay* to the site on June 4<sup>th</sup> to provide backup during the wreck removal process. The *Neka Bay* is a Bay Class vessel with on-board skimming capabilities. The ADEC Southeast Region State On-Scene Coordinator is on site to monitor the wreck removal operation.

The water surface above the *Powhatan* remains encircled by 1,500 feet of containment boom with sorbent boom inside to collect any surfacing oil. An additional 1,300 feet of deflection boom remains in place to protect Starrigavan Beach. Southeast Alaska Petroleum Response Organization (SEAPRO) continues to maintain the



boom and assist in the recovery of fuel from the *Powhatan*. Daily overflights to monitor the oil released from the tug and potential impacts to sensitive areas are conducted using a drone. Aerial imagery shows decreased sheen within the containment boom surrounding the *Powhatan* and no additional oiling of the shoreline. **Pollution mitigation efforts to recover oil from the *Powhatan* resulted in the recovery of 6,830 gallons of oil/water mixture to date.**

**RESOURCES AT RISK OR AFFECTED:** Herring larvae recently emerged from the last spawning event and may be in the surface water in the vicinity of the sinking and salmon fry are migrating from nearby streams and are known to use the shoreline in the area regularly. There is the potential for exposure to marine wildlife, however no sea mammals have been observed by response teams or reported. Starrigavan Beach is used for clam harvesting. Deflection boom remains in place to protect against oil reaching the beach. ADEC, Alaska Department of Health & Social Services (ADH&SS), and U.S. National Park Service (NPS) coordinated to make alert signs asking the public to refrain from using the beach and harvesting shellfish due to the potential presence of oil. Signs were posted at both North and South Starrigavan Beach access points. The Unified Command continues to monitor the situation and potential impacts to wildlife.

***Special Note for Public Awareness:***

Though unrelated to the *Powhatan* sinking, paralytic shellfish toxins have been identified at Starrigavan. Southeast Alaska Tribal Ocean Research (SEATOR) has a sampling program in place which pre-dates the spill and recommends against the harvest of all molluscan shellfish at this location due to elevated levels of paralytic shellfish toxins. Updates and contact information are available on the SEATOR website (SEATOR.org).

**FUTURE PLANS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:** Samson intends to raise the *Powhatan* on June 8<sup>th</sup>. The heavy lift crane onboard the *Salvation* will lift the *Powhatan* and place it on the deck barge to be taken off-site for disposal. The Unified Command has established safety measures to be in place near the public boat launch during the wreck removal process. The public boat launch will remain open and safety measures will include establishing a no-wake zone, posted warning signs, and directing boats away from the operation in safe transit lanes. A USCG Auxiliary vessel will be on scene to assist in directing boaters.

**WEATHER:** The National Weather Service Spot Forecast calls for cloudy weather with rain likely. The high temperature is expected to be 55°F with southeast winds around 14 mph. Rain is expected for Tuesday night with east winds around 10 mph. The low temperature is expected to be 50°F.

**UNIFIED COMMAND AND PERSONNEL:**

Incident Commander: George Baggen, Samson Tug & Barge  
SOSC: Bob Mattson, ADEC  
DSOSC: David Pikul, ADEC  
FOSC: Captain Shannan Greene  
FOSCR: CWO Jay Willimon

**TIME/DATE OF THE NEXT REPORT DISTRIBUTION:** As situation requires.

**FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CONTACT:** David Pikul, Southeast Region Unit Supervisor,  
ADEC (907)465-5234

[http://dec.alaska.gov/spar/ppr/response/sum\\_fy17/170419101/170419101\\_index.htm](http://dec.alaska.gov/spar/ppr/response/sum_fy17/170419101/170419101_index.htm)



The barge *Salvation*, the *KP-2* deck barge, and two tugs tied up at Samson's dock. The *Alaskan Salvor* located inside the containment boom around the tug *Powhatan*. (Photo provided by Samson Tug & Barge; June 4, 2017)

**AGENCY/STAKEHOLDER NOTIFICATION LIST:** Please refer to the first SITREP, distributed April 21, 2017 for the agency/stakeholder notification list. The first SITREP can be found by following the link in the **Additional Information** box above.