

News Release

Divers complete oil removal from Princess Kathleen

JUNEAU, Alaska – Dive operations have concluded on the Princess Kathleen wreck after crews removed large quantities of bunker and other oils from the vessel. An estimated 110,000 gallons of bunker oil and additional amounts of other oils and contaminated water were collected during the operations.

Divers removed oil from 14 fuel tanks and interior engineering spaces using a technique called hot tapping. It employs hot water heat exchangers inserted in the fuel tanks to facilitate pumping of the heavy bunker oil.

Oil collection equipment separated the bunker oil from the water before it was transferred into the fuel barge to be transported to a waste oil recycling and disposal center. The recovered oily waste is being shipped to Seattle for recycling and disposal.

“I’d like to thank the local Juneau community and our state partners who have contributed to the success of this response operation,” said Capt Melissa Bert, federal on-scene coordinator. “We have safely removed a significant threat to the local environment and maintained the Princess Kathleen as a historic recreational diving site.”

The Unified Command is demobilizing pre-positioned containment boom and response equipment from the greater Point Lena area where a safety zone will remain in effect until all equipment departs the scene. The barges and boom will remain on scene until dock space is available for decontamination.

"We've had great success with the removal operation and appreciate the work of all members of the Unified Command. Our State pollution response teams will continue to monitor the vessel for any minor sheening that continues to be released from the vessel," said Scot Tiernan, state on-scene coordinator.

The ship ran aground on Point Lena in 1952, and has periodically released small amounts of unrecoverable oil in the years since. The Princess Kathleen rests on a slope at depths between 52 and 134 feet, and is a popular recreational diving site.

For more information please visit: the Princess Kathleen Unified Command website at <http://www.dec.state.ak.us/spar/princesskathleen>

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