



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

CHANGES FROM PREVIOUS SITREP ARE DENOTED IN RED

Unknown Oil Spill at Sitka Sound Science Center



SITREP #: 3 and final

SPILL #: 21119932201

DATE/TIME OF DISTRIBUTION: January 11, 2022, at 8:30 a.m.

POTENTIAL RESPONSIBLE PARTY (PRP): Unknown. The source has not been located.

INCIDENT LOCATION: 801 Lincoln Street, Sitka, Alaska

DATE/TIME OF SPILL: The spill was discovered on November 18, 2021, at approximately 9:30 a.m.

HOW/WHEN SPILL WAS DISCOVERED AND REPORTED: The spill was discovered by contractors near the Sitka Sound Science Center (Science Center) hatchery penstocks at approximately 9:30 a.m. on November 18. Oil was observed seeping from an exposed crack in the concrete seawall when water was pumped from a manmade pond holding freshwater to feed the hatchery penstocks during scheduled maintenance at the Science Center. The department and U.S. Coast Guard were notified at 11:15 a.m.

TYPE/AMOUNT OF PRODUCT SPILLED: The U.S. Coast Guard estimates that the total volume released was approximately 10 gallons. Analytical sample results indicate that the product contains gasoline, diesel, and residual range organics but is primarily composed of diesel range organics. The results detected several metals below levels protective of human health. The product doesn't contain PCBs.

CAUSE OF SPILL: Oil discharged from the cracked seawall was limited to the initial event on November 18, 2021, a smaller event on November 19, 2021 when freshwater was rerouted back through the wooden freshwater supply pipe, and a third release on December 2, 2021 when freshwater was temporarily secured to allow for the collection of analytical samples. An assessment completed by the EPA and their contractors in late November and early December 2021 were unable to identify the source of the oil.

SOURCE CONTROL: The Science Center has completed initial repairs to the seawall which has successfully eliminated the discharge into waters of the state. Additional planned repairs will further eliminate any risk of petroleum entering the hatchery tailrace in the future.

RESPONSE ACTION: A U.S. Coast Guard contractor maintained containment and sorbent boom around the hatchery until the completion of initial repairs to prevent any additional discharge.

The EPA, U.S. Coast Guard, and department completed a records search for information on past spills, known contaminated sites, and potential modern or historical sources in the area. These records identified a number of potential sources including numerous historic underground tanks located on multiple properties, extensive

contaminated soil from an unknown source or sources discovered in 2001 and 2003 at multiple locations on the Sheldon Jackson College (SJC) campus, and subsurface oil contamination documented in 2006 near the SJC Power Plant fuel vault (fuel vault) now owned by the Sitka Fine Arts Camp. Records dating back to the 1950s also identified a historic marine header that serviced the fuel vault via a three-inch diameter buried fuel line that ran directly across Science Center property, under Lincoln Street, and adjacent to the Stratton Library. This information led the department to identify three property owners, Sitka Fine Arts Camp, Sitka Sound Science Center, and State of Alaska, as potential responsible parties.

The EPA and USCG sampled the unknown oil from the Science Center as well as the oil located in the fuel vault on the Sitka Fine Arts Camp property. The sample results had different ratios of gasoline, diesel, and residual range organics which lead the EPA to conclude that the oil seep at the Science Center did not originate from the fuel vault.

The EPA conducted a subsurface investigation upslope from the Science Center by means of small excavations to explore the extent of contamination and potentially identify a source of the oil discharge. Three test pits were advanced on State of Alaska property: two in the parking lot of the Stratton Library, and one in a grassy area northwest of the Stratton Library. The EPA observed groundwater with no sheen in all three test pits. Analytical results for water samples collected in each test pit are below the department's regulatory cleanup level for petroleum hydrocarbons. Concerns about buried critical infrastructure prevented additional test pits closer to the buried wooden freshwater supply pipe or on Science Center property.

The EPA also collected samples of three surface water sources that discharge into the Science Center fish penstock area including the wooden freshwater supply pipe. All sample results were below the department's regulatory cleanup level for petroleum hydrocarbons.

RESOURCES AT RISK OR AFFECTED: The Science Center operates a hatchery, but because of previously planned maintenance, they do not have any active fish present at the hatchery at this time. Additionally, there are no fish present in the outside penstocks due to normal seasonal operations. The empty penstocks and shoreline immediately around them have been impacted by the spill. The U.S. Coast Guard has completed their Section 7 Endangered Species Act (ESA) consultation and no resources at risk were identified. There have been no observations or reports of impacts to wildlife.

FUTURE PLANS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: Based on the recent EPA assessment, records from City road work on Lincoln Street and subsurface projects at the Science Center in 2004 that did not observe petroleum contamination, and no petroleum daylighting from any other sections of the shorefront this contamination may be of small quantity and isolated.

The department will coordinate with individual property owners to identify and oversee long term cleanup goals following the identification of contamination on their properties.

WEATHER:

Today: Rain with a high near 44°F. Winds east 15 to 20 mph.

Tonight: Rain with a low near 40°F. Winds southeast 10 to 15 mph.

UNIFIED COMMAND AND PERSONNEL:

SOSC: Sarah Moore, ADEC

FOSCr: Allysia Helton, USCG

DATE/TIME OF THE NEXT REPORT DISTRIBUTION: This is the final report.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CONTACT: Sarah Moore, Environmental Program Manager, ADEC
(907) 465-5239

[\[https://dec.alaska.gov/spar/ppr/spill-information/response/\]](https://dec.alaska.gov/spar/ppr/spill-information/response/)

AGENCY/STAKEHOLDER NOTIFICATION LIST: This situation report was distributed to the agencies listed on the standard distribution list, which includes the governor's office, State Emergency Operations Center, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Marine Fisheries Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and other state agencies. This situation report was also distributed to the following agencies and stakeholders:

AGENCY/STAKEHOLDER	NAME	SENT VIA	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	TELEPHONE
Sitka Fine Arts Camp		Email		
Sitka Sound Science Center		Email		
State of Alaska – Sheldon Jackson Museum		Email		
AK State Legislature; Senate R	Senator Bert Stedman	Email	Senator.Bert.Stedman@akleg.gov Juneau (1/18-4/15) Ketchikan (4/20-1/15)	907-465-3873 907-225-8088
AK State Legislature; House 35	Representative Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins	Email	Representative.Jonathan.Kreiss-Tomkins@akleg.gov Juneau (1/18-4/15) Sitka (4/20-1/15)	907-465-3732 907-747-4665
Sitka Tribe of Alaska; Resource Protection Dept	Jeff Feldpausch	Email	Jeff.Feldpausch@sitkatriben-sns.gov	907-747-7469
ADF&G Habitat	Greg Albrecht	Email	Greg.Albrecht@alaska.gov	907-465-6384
ADF&G Habitat	Kate Kanouse	Email	Kate.Kanouse@alaska.gov	
ADF&G Habitat	Evan Fritz	Email	Evan.Fritz@alaska.gov	
ADF&G Marine Mammals	Lori Polasek	Email	Lori.Polasek@alaska.gov	907-465-6167
ADNR SE Region	Aaron Timian	Email	Aaron.Timian@alaska.gov	907-465-3513
USCG (Sector JNU)	Capt. Darwin Jensen	Email	Darwin.A.Jensen@uscg.mil	907-463-2836
USCG (Sector JNU)	CDR Meredith Gillman	Email	Meredith.S.Gillman@uscg.mil	907-463-2452
USCG (MSD Sitka)	CWO William Glenzer	Email	William.K.Glenzer2@uscg.mil	907-966-5490
USCG (MSD Sitka)	MST1 Brian Wereda	Email	Brian.M.Wereda@uscg.mil	907-966-5480
USCG (MSD Sitka)	MST1 Allysia Helton	Email	Allysia.R.Helton@uscg.mil	907-966-5481
US EPA	Bob Whittier	Email	Whittier.Robert@epa.gov	907-271-3616
USFS	Michele Marie Parker – Tongass Environmental Engineer	Email	Michele.Parker@usda.gov	907-518-1079
Sitka Municipal Administrator	John Leach	Email	administrator@cityofsitka.org	907-747-1812
Southeast Alaska Tribal Ocean Research (SEATOR)		Email	seator@sitkatriben-sns.gov	907-966-9650
NOAA; Fisheries	David Gann – Marine Mammal Specialist	Email	David.Gann@noaa.gov	907-586-7285
NOAA; Fisheries	Sadie Wright – Protected Species Biologist	Email	Sadie.Wright@noaa.gov	907-586-7630
NOAA; Office of Response and Restoration	Catherine Berg – Scientific Support Coordinator	Email	Catherine.Berg@noaa.gov	907-529-9157
NOAA; National Weather Service – Southeast Office	Jonathon Suk – Warning Coordination Meteorologist	Email	Juneau.Weather@noaa.gov	907-790-6824
USFWS; Oil Spill Response	Angela Matz	Email	FWSAKSpillResponse@fws.gov	907-242-6893