



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

Tug *Western Mariner* Grounding Neva Strait



SITREP #: 5

SPILL #: 22119908001

DATE/TIME OF DISTRIBUTION: March 29, 2022, at 6:00 p.m.
Information current as of March 29, 2022, at 5:00 p.m.

POTENTIAL RESPONSIBLE PARTY (PRP): Western Towboat Co.

INCIDENT LOCATION: Neva Strait, approximately 18 miles northwest of Sitka (Lat/Long: 57.26982, -135.59315).

DATE/TIME OF SPILL: March 21, 2022, at 2:55 a.m.

HOW/WHEN SPILL WAS DISCOVERED AND REPORTED: On March 21, 2022, at 4:46 a.m., Western Towboat Co. reported the spill to the National Response Center. Western Towboat Co. reported that the spill occurred following the tug grounding.

TYPE/AMOUNT OF PRODUCT SPILLED: An unknown quantity of diesel was spilled. The vessel has a maximum capacity of 50,000 gallons. Global Diving & Salvage, Inc. estimates the amount of fuel onboard at the time of the grounding to be 43,500 gallons. 32,080 gallons of clean fuel and 11,625 gallons of mixed oil and water from within the vessel were recovered. Skimming operations recovered an estimated 1,750 gallons of oily water, and 15 cubic yards of saturated absorbents have been generated. All fuel tanks aboard the *Western Mariner* have been opened, inspected, and emptied of product.

CAUSE OF SPILL: The 83.7 ft. tug vessel, *Western Mariner*, was towing the freight barge, *Chichagof Provider*, headed south in Neva Strait outside of Sitka when a temporary steering failure onboard the *Western Mariner* caused the barge to collide with the tug. The collision pushed the tug onto the beach, resulting in the release of diesel.

SOURCE CONTROL: Source control has been achieved. Since March 24, 2022, no fuel has left the *Western Mainer*, and all fuel tanks aboard the tug were emptied as of March 26. *The Western Mariner was safely towed to Sitka and is currently moored at the Samson Tug and Barge Facility dock.*

RESPONSE ACTION: ADEC has formed a Unified Command with the United States Coast Guard (USCG) and the responsible party, Western Towboat Co.

Hanson Maritime crews have maintained station throughout the response, monitoring the vessel's conditions overnight. On March 28, 2022, Global Diving and Salvage, Inc., Hanson Maritime, and Western Towboat crew

prepared the *Western Mariner* for refloating. SEAPRO shifted the primary and secondary boom configurations to support the salvage operation. SEAPRO continues to check boom security and pull saturated absorbent materials and replace them as needed. 8,620 ft. of SEAPRO boom remain available in Sitka for use, as well as additional State and federal resources.

On March 28, 2022, the Shoreline Cleanup and Assessment Technique (SCAT) team completed formal beach surveys of the impacted shoreline near the *Western Mariner*. The team identified three areas within Neva Strait as lightly oiled and recommended a high volume, low pressure seawater beach deluge for the impacted areas. SEAPRO mobilized equipment on-site and commenced shoreline flushing operations on March 29, 2022. Operations will continue to tomorrow, March 30, 2022. This activity will be actively monitored by response personnel and containment boom and absorbent materials will be used to capture any sheening that results from the shoreline flushing operations. Precautions will be taken to minimize impacts to the natural shoreline, environment, and wildlife throughout the flushing operations.

The Unified Command (UC) approved the vessel salvage plan provided by Global Diving and Salvage, Inc. and operations to refloat the *Western Mariner* began on March 29, 2022, at 10:00 a.m. At 12:40 p.m. on March 29, 2022, Global reported that the *Western Mariner* was successfully afloat and vessel checks were conducted to ensure the vessel was secure. The salvage crew removed the external buoyancy lift bags and prepared the vessel for transit to Sitka, where it will moor at the Samson Tug and Barge Facility. After the vessel was extracted from the grounding location, containment boom was left at the site to capture any residual sheen. The containment boom continues to be monitored and maintained.

At around 5:00 p.m. on March 29, 2022, the *Western Mariner* was successfully towed to Sitka and secured at the dock.

The Neva Strait remains open to vessel traffic. The USCG has created a safety zone and issued a Broadcast Notice to Mariners, which informs mariners of the ongoing response efforts and the requirement to request permission to come within 100 yards of vessels engaged in those efforts. The notice also informs mariners to transit the area with caution to avoid collision with response vessels and minimize wake to prevent disturbing containment boom.

RESOURCES AT RISK OR AFFECTED: Pacific herring are currently aggregating and staging for spawning in the greater Sitka Sound area. Humpback whales, porpoises, sea lions, harbor seals, shorebirds, and eagles have been observed in the area, but no impacts to marine mammals or avian wildlife have been reported.

On March 21st, 2022, a four nautical mile sheen was observed between the grounded vessel north to the Kane Islands in southeast Salisbury Sound, but no observations of extensively oiled shorelines were reported.

On March 21st and 23rd, 2022, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG) conducted overflight surveys and did not observe any herring spawning or schooling near the sheen. Subsequent overflights showed that the sheening outside of Neva Strait had dissipated throughout the day.

The Alaska Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) and ADEC issued several seafood safety recommendations for herring egg and other subsistence harvests. An aerial survey conducted by the ADFG on March 26 reported that no herring spawn were observed from Crawfish Inlet to Salisbury Sound. An opening of the Sitka Sound herring sac roe fishery occurred from 11:00 am until 12:15 pm, March 26, 2022.

On March 29, 2022, a morning overflight conducted by Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADFG) observed little change in the sheen distribution throughout Neva Strait. An afternoon overflight conducted by SEAPRO observed a slight rainbow sheen at the site where the *Western Mariner* was removed.

FUTURE PLANS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: SEAPRO will maintain crew onsite to tend the containment and J-configuration boom, and will continue shoreline flushing operations as were recommended by the SCAT team. The *Western Mariner* will remain moored at the Samson Tug and Barge facility with containment boom around the vessel.

WEATHER:

A front over the region will continue steady rain, SE winds, and ceilings between 2500-3500 feet. A developing low approaching from the south will cause backing winds through the late afternoon and diminishing rainfall. The low will pass Kruzof Island early Wednesday morning with moderate to heavy showers and a wind shift to the South-Southwest.

Tuesday night:

Cloudy with scattered showers in the evening, then widespread rain showers after midnight; chance of precipitation 100%. East winds around 15 mph with gusts to around 25 mph shifting to the north 10-14 mph in the evening, then shifting to the southeast. Wave height of 3 feet subsiding to 2 feet in the late evening and overnight. Predicting 0.24 inches of rainfall. Temperature min around 37 F.

Wednesday:

Cloudy with widespread rain showers and chance of precipitation 100%. Southeast winds around 10 mph shifting to the South 12 to 20 mph. Wave height at 2 feet building to 3 feet in the late morning and afternoon. 0.86 inches of rainfall predicted. Temperature max around 43 F.

Tides:

Date	Day	Time	Pred	High/Low
3/29/2022	Tuesday	12:03	8.80	H
3/29/2022	Tuesday	05:47	2.71	L
3/29/2022	Tuesday	11:45	9.78	H
3/29/2022	Tuesday	18:19	-0.28	L
3/30/2022	Wednesday	12:42	9.50	H
3/30/2022	Wednesday	06:37	1.58	L
3/30/2022	Wednesday	12:39	10.09	H
3/30/2022	Wednesday	19:00	-0.31	L

Products available at 9451741 WHITESTONE NARROWS, Neva Strait, AK

UNIFIED COMMAND AND PERSONNEL:

Incident Commander: Rich Christiansen, Western Towboat Co.
SOSC: Rachael Krajewski, ADEC
FOSC: CAPT Darwin Jensen, USCG

DATE/TIME OF THE NEXT REPORT DISTRIBUTION: As the situation warrants.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CONTACT: <https://dec.alaska.gov/spar/ppr/spill-information/response/>

Rachael Krajewski, State On-Scene Coordinator ADEC, (907) 465-6648



Figure 1. Incident Location.



Figure 2. Image of the *Western Mariner* afloat in Neva Strait on March 29, 2022. Photo by SEAPRO.



Figure 3. Image of the primary boom containment configuration after the removal of the *Western Mariner*.
Photo by SEAPRO on March 29, 2022.



Figure 4. Image of the *Western Mariner* afloat in Neva Strait on March 29, 2022. Photo by Global Diving and Salvage, Inc.

AGENCY/STAKEHOLDER NOTIFICATION LIST:

Please refer to the previous SITREPs for the agency/stakeholder notification list. Previous SITREPs can be found by following the link in the **Additional Information** box above.