



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 #: 7

SPILL #: 22119908001

DATE/TIME OF DISTRIBUTION: April 22, 2022, at 3:30 p.m.
Information current as of April 22, 2022, at 12:00 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: Western Towboat Co. reports that an estimated total of 5,307 gallons of diesel were spilled of the 43,500 gallons estimated to be onboard at the time of the grounding. 33,040 gallons of clean diesel was directly offloaded from the *Western Mariner* to secured storage tanks. On-water recovery operations and mixed oil/water pumped from the tug yielded an estimated 4,453 gallons of oil recovered. The volume of oil recovered from the water via skimming operations was an estimated 700 gallons. 20 cubic yards of saturated absorbents have been generated.

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 Mariner*, and all fuel tanks aboard the tug were emptied as of March 26. The *Western Mariner* was safely towed to Sitka.

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

On April 18th, 2022, the SCAT team revisited Highwater Island, which had been previously identified as an area that did not meet the cleanup endpoint criteria. The SCAT team observed that the middle intertidal zone on Highwater Island still did not meet cleanup endpoints.

On April 19th, 2022, the SCAT team returned and performed shoreline treatment in the form of manual agitation in the middle intertidal zone.

The UC identified the shoreline cleanup endpoints as the following: no pooled sheen, no rainbow sheen, no continuous silver sheen, and no persistent odor. Small amounts of isolated silver sheen are acceptable.

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.

The Alaska Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) and ADEC issued several seafood safety recommendations for herring egg and other subsistence harvests. The department recommends that harvesters continue to use particular attention in Neva Strait and St. John Baptist Bay; do not eat any harvested food if you see, smell, or taste oil on it; and avoid setting gear or harvesting wherever oil and/or sheens can be smelled on the beach or water.

If any oil sheens are observed in the water, please call the ADEC Spill Line 907-465-5340 during normal business hours, or please call 1-800-478-9300 outside normal business hours.

FUTURE PLANS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: Shoreline monitoring will continue, and the SCAT team is anticipated to return to the grounding site in the following months to assess the conditions at Highwater Island.

WEATHER:

High pressure over the area providing clear skies, warm temperatures, overall calm winds and seas. Day time heating will bring up sea breeze activity through the day. A weather front associated with a low moving into the western AK Gulf with rainfall, lower cloud ceilings, increased winds and building seas. Heaviest rain, strongest winds, and highest seas will occur Friday night into Saturday making any sea or aviation operations more difficult. As the low center tracks east periods of rain will continue into the weekend but winds and seas will decrease slightly. Drying trend begins next week as the main low drops south Monday into Tuesday.

Friday, April 22nd:

Precipitation from the associated front will arrive over the outer coast of Southeast Alaska late Friday afternoon. SSE wind around 10 kt. Rain likely, mainly after 4pm. Seas 1 to 2 ft. Temperature high is 46 °F

Saturday, April 23rd:

A gale force low over the Aleutians will move east over the western Gulf of Alaska on Saturday. SE wind 10 to 15 kt. Rain. Seas around 2 ft. Temperature high is 46 °F and low is 36 °F.

Tides:

Date	Day	Time	Pred	High/Low
4/22	Fri	05:08 AM	10.09	H
4/22	Fri	12:20 PM	-0.36	L
4/22	Fri	7:10 PM	7.50	H
4/23	Sat	12:15 AM	4.45	L
4/23	Sat	06:14 AM	9.21	H
4/23	Sat	1:33 PM	0.24	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

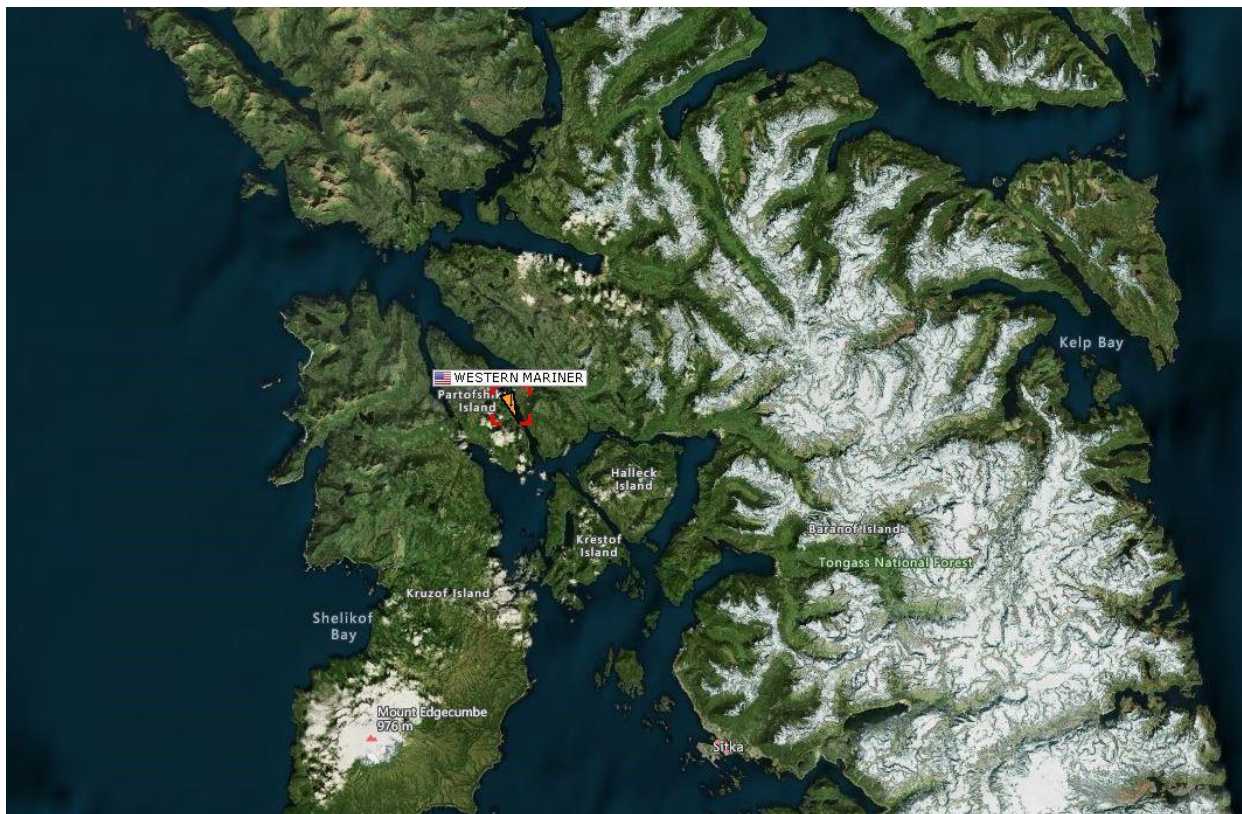


Figure 1. Incident Location.

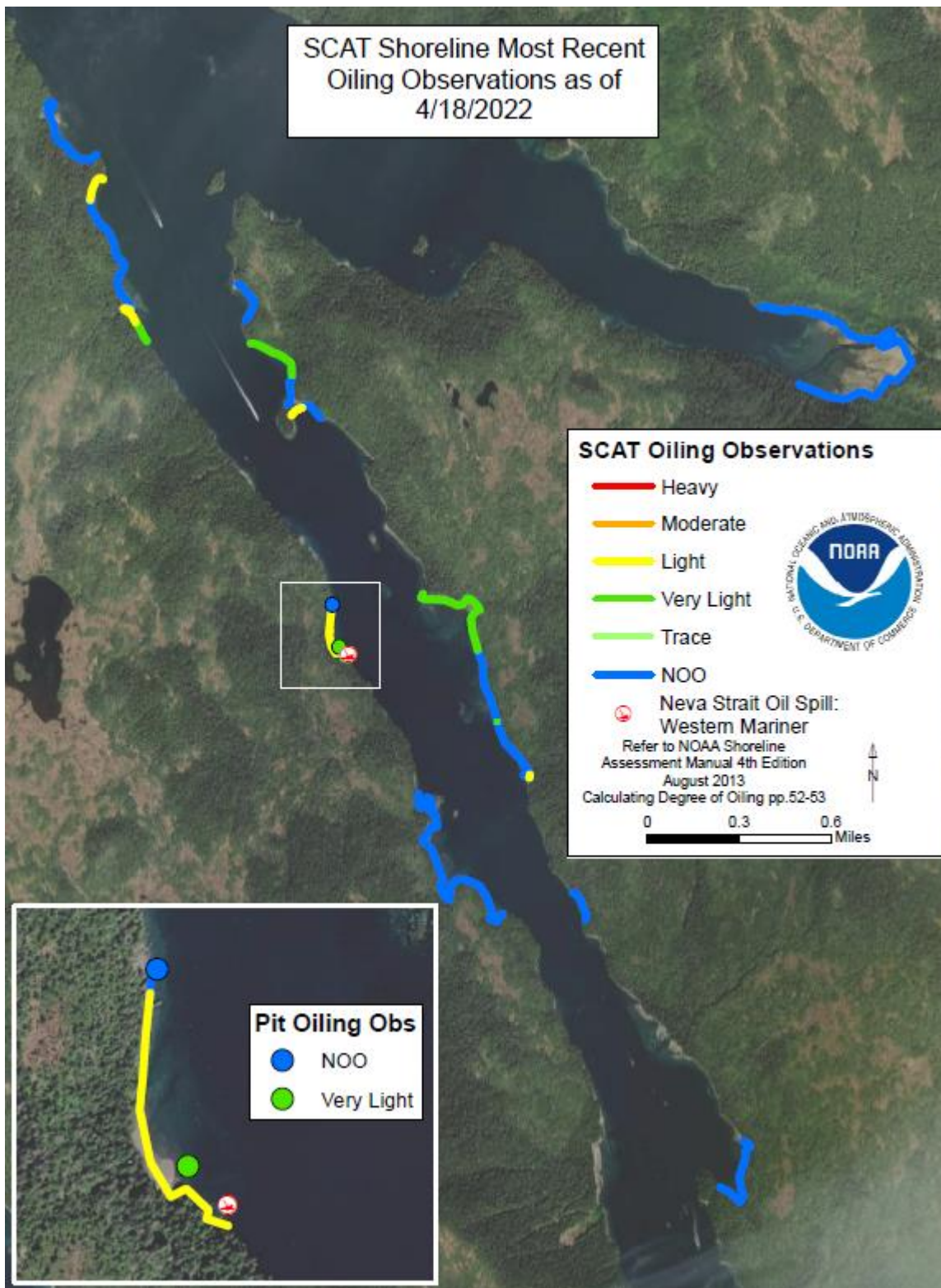


Figure 2. Satellite image showing the shoreline oiling observations as of April 18th, 2022. Figure created by NOAA.

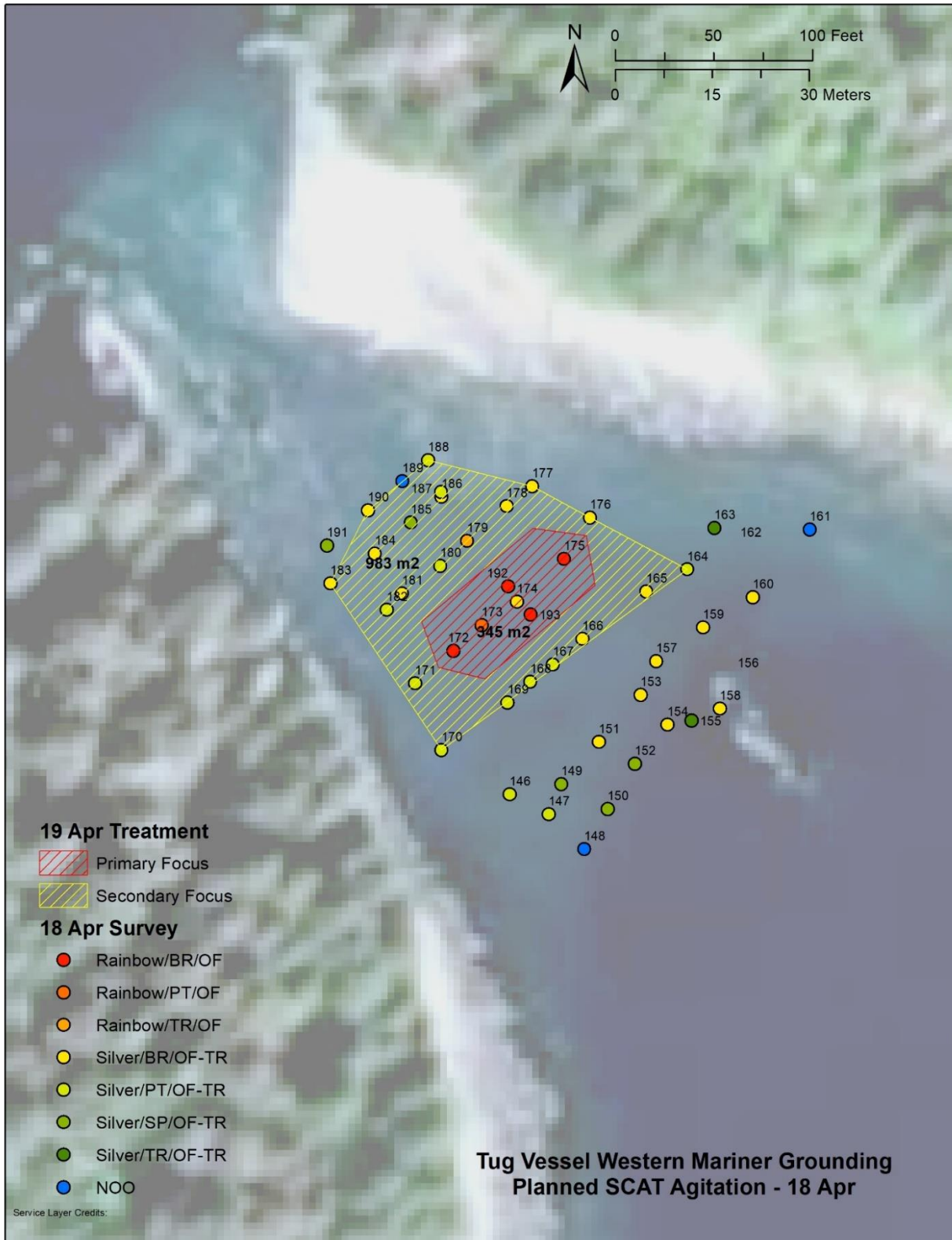


Figure 3. Satellite image showing shoreline oiling observations from April 18th, 2022, and manual agitation treatment zones from April 19th, 2022 at Highwater Island in Neva Strait. Photo created by NOAA.



Figure 4. Image of the SCAT Team conducting a shoreline survey at Highwater Island in Neva Strait on April 19, 2022. Photo provided by ADEC.



Figure 5. Image of the SCAT Team performing manual agitation of impacted areas at Highwater Island in Neva Strait on April 19, 2022. Photo provided by ADEC.



Figure 6. Image of overflight observations at Highwater Island in Neva Strait on April 20th, 2022. Photo provided by Polaris Applied Sciences, 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.