

Neva Strait Oil Spill Incident

Unified Command Memorandum

June 23, 2023

Subject: Unified Command No Further Action Decision

On March 21, 2022, an incident involving the inspected towing vessel (ITV) WESTERN MARINER resulted in a release of diesel fuel to the waters of Neva Strait. Incident response actions included source control, collection of recoverable oil, and the removal of the vessel from the western shore of Neva Strait on March 29, 2022.

As part of the incident response, a Shoreline Cleanup Assessment Technique (SCAT) operations team was established to identify the extent of shoreline oiling and to recommend cleanup methods and cleanup endpoint criteria to the Unified Command.

In April 2022, following formal SCAT surveys, three shorelines within Neva Strait were recommended for treatment to remove recoverable oil. Mechanical treatment was completed, and subsequent surveys identified that two of the three shorelines had met cleanup endpoint criteria. The third shoreline, identified as Highwater Island, did not meet endpoint criteria in the middle intertidal zone. SCAT operations advised no further treatment due to the very low amount of diesel present and the likelihood that additional treatment would cause more harm than good. Continued monitoring was recommended, following a period of natural attenuation.

On March 19, 2023, SCAT operations returned to survey Highwater Island. SCAT operations reported a healthy ecosystem, despite the shoreline not meeting cleanup endpoint criteria due to observations of intermittent pockets of very light rainbow sheen. Live biota is once again colonizing the survey site and based on observed trends, the shoreline is expected to continue to naturally attenuate and improve. SCAT operations recommended no further monitoring and no further treatment.

Public messaging provided by Alaska Department of Health (ADOH) and Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) is accessible and identifies that, based on the available data, the public can resume harvesting resources such as shellfish from the beaches around Neva Strait and St. John Baptist Bay. ADOH maintains the general recommendation, regardless of a known spill in the area, not to eat any harvested food if you see, smell, or taste oil on it, and to avoid setting gear or harvesting wherever oil sheens can be seen or smelled on the beach or water.

Based on the aforementioned information, the Unified Command understands that the amount and concentration of oil impacts are de minimis and will continue to naturally attenuate. The Unified Command finds that the cleanup was sufficient to adequately protect human health, safety, and the environment, and therefore recommends no further action.

Unified Command No Further Action Decision

Signatory Authority:



CAPT Darwin A. Jensen
Federal On-Scene Coordinator

23 JUN 2023

Date



Rachael Krajewski
State On-Scene Coordinator

23 June 2023

Date

DocuSigned by:



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Rich Christiansen
Responsible Party Incident Commander

30 June 2023

Date

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