



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

CHANGES FROM THE PREVIOUS SITREP ARE DENOTED IN RED

Tug *Western Mariner* Grounding Neva Strait

SITREP #: 8 and Final

SPILL #: 22119908001

DATE/TIME OF DISTRIBUTION: December 14, 2023, at 2:30 p.m.
Information current as of December 14, 2023, at 2:30 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 recovery. 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 was achieved on March 24, 2022; all fuel tanks were emptied on March 26, 2023; the tug was towed offsite on March 29, 2022.

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 March 19, 2023, SCAT operations returned to survey Highwater Island. SCAT operations reported a healthy ecosystem. Observations were made 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.

On June 30th, 2023, a No Further Action decision memorandum was signed by the Unified Command and can be found at: <https://dec.alaska.gov/spar/ppr/spill-information/response/2022/01-tug-western-mariner-grounding/>.

RESOURCES AT RISK OR AFFECTED:

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.

FUTURE PLANS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: Based on the SCAT operations conducted on March 19, 2023, no further monitoring or further treatment is recommended at this time.

UNIFIED COMMAND AND PERSONNEL:

Incident Commander: Richard Christiansen, Western Towboat Co.

SOSC: Rachael Krajewski, ADEC

FOSC: CAPT. Darwin Jensen, USCG

DATE/TIME OF THE NEXT REPORT DISTRIBUTION: N/A

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

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Photo: A Shoreline Cleanup and Assessment (SCAT) team conducting a shoreline survey at Highwater Island in Neva Strait on March 19, 2023. Photo by ADEC.

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.