

Unified Command: Princess Kathleen



AK
Department of
Environmental
Conservation

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News Release

Oil removal commences on Point Lena wreck

JUNEAU, Alaska – Specialized divers began removing oil from the Princess Kathleen shipwreck Saturday. The Unified Command has approved a detailed plan to “vacuum” oil which has leaked from the tanks and is now trapped within the aging vessel. Following that process, divers will begin removing oil from the fuel tanks.

Protecting coastal areas and wildlife around Point Lena is a key priority. The Unified Command and State and federal resource agencies have identified environmentally sensitive areas around the wreck. They have pre-positioned containment boom and response equipment close to the sites as a precautionary measure against the unlikely event of a large release. As an additional precautionary measure, the spill response cooperative Southeast Alaska Petroleum Resource Organization will have oil recovery vessels and crew onsite during all fuel recover operations.

Divers have been assessing the wreck since February, and have identified between 14,000 and 34,000 gallons of heavy bunker oil in 10 of the ship's tanks. Four additional tanks remain to be surveyed. The Unified Command decided to remove the oil before further deterioration of the ship resulted in a large oil spill.

Other parties involved in the fuel removal process include Southeast Alaska Lighterage, Trucano Construction, Olsen Marine, Foss Maritime Company and Allen Marine.

The ship ran aground on Point Lena in 1952, and has periodically released small amounts of unrecoverable oil in the years since. The Princess Kathleen rests on a slope at depths between 52 and 134 feet, and is a popular recreational diving site.

For more information please visit: the Princess Kathleen Unified Command Web site at <http://www.dec.state.ak.us/spar/princesskathleen>

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