



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



Tug Western Mariner Grounding Neva Strait

SITREP #: 1

SPILL #: 22119908001

DATE/TIME OF DISTRIBUTION: March 21, 2022, at 3:00 p.m.
Information current as of March 21, 2022, at 1:00 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. Western Towboat Co. estimates the amount of fuel onboard at the time of the grounding to be 45,000 gallons. The port forward fuel tank, which is a known source of the discharge, is reported to have a 13,000 gallon maximum capacity. A broken silver and rainbow sheen was observed to cover approximately four nautical miles.

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 not been achieved. Source control actions are underway by the dive and salvage crew, Hanson Maritime, who arrived onsite at approximately 8:00 a.m.. All fuel manifolds are closed on the tug which will prevent fuel transfer between tanks. Response crew onsite have prioritized lightering the contents from the damaged and discharging port forward tank into an assisting fishing tender vessel.

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

A single layer of containment boom has been deployed around the vessel. SEAPRO has been activated and is in the process of organizing response operations. The oil spill response vessel, *Neka Bay*, has been mobilized from

Juneau and is carrying 500 ft. of boom and anchor systems. A vessel of opportunity in Sitka has been mobilized with 1000 ft. of boom. An additional 9,000 ft. of boom and three additional vessels of opportunity are on standby in Sitka. The USCG cutter, *Hickory*, was mobilized and plans to arrive on-scene Wednesday.

The freight barge remains afloat, is reportedly undamaged, and is being assisted by vessels onsite. A towing vessel is on-scene with the intention of towing the barge to Sitka.

RESOURCES AT RISK OR AFFECTED:

Pacific herring are currently aggregating and staging for spawning in the greater Sitka Sound area. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG) conducted an overflight survey this morning and did not observe any herring spawning or schooling within Neva Strait. A potential herring opening may happen as soon as tomorrow in Hayward Strait (Figure 1). Marine mammal and avian predators are likely aggregating in the area to prey on herring. No impacts to marine mammals or wildlife have been reported, but no dedicated wildlife surveys have been conducted at this time. Stretches of environmentally sensitive shoreline occur in the area, such as tidal flats and brackish marsh. 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 have yet been reported. St. John Baptist Bay is a known salmon habitat and is a known, but rarely used, nursery area for juvenile sablefish. Neva Strait is a known sea cucumber habitat and commercial harvesting ground. Nearby beaches have been used historically as clam harvesting areas.

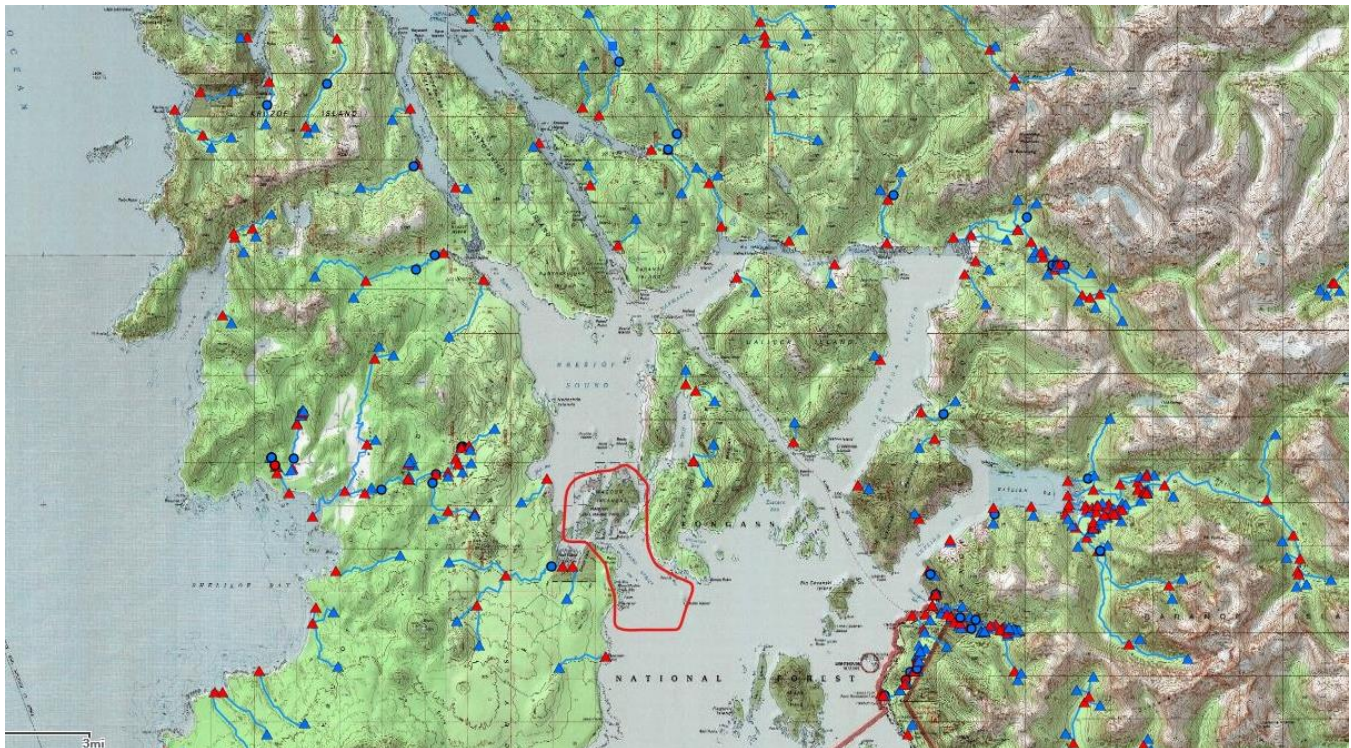


Figure 1. Potential herring opening in Hayward Strait estimated to occur on March 22nd, 2022.

FUTURE PLANS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: Hanson Maritime and Global Diving and Salvage Inc. have been retained and are mobilizing to assist the vessel by plugging the fuel vents, assessing the damage, and containing the release. The damaged port forward fuel tank will be pumped out onto a fishing tender vessel.

WEATHER:

Today:

Cloudy with rain likely late in the morning, then rain in the afternoon. High of 42°F. Winds 6-14 mph east, gusts up to 29 mph in the late morning to early afternoon. Wave height 3 ft., subsiding to 1 ft. late in the afternoon.

Tonight:

Cloudy with rain. Low of 39°F. Winds 6-15 mph southeast with gusts up to around 32 mph, increasing to 18-21 mph with gusts to around 36 mph after midnight. Wave height 2 ft., building to 4 ft. in the late evening and overnight.

Tomorrow:

Cloudy with rain early in the morning, then rain showers. High of 42°F. Winds 16-21 mph south, gusts up to 36 mph early in the morning. Wave height 4 ft.

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 2. Incident Location.

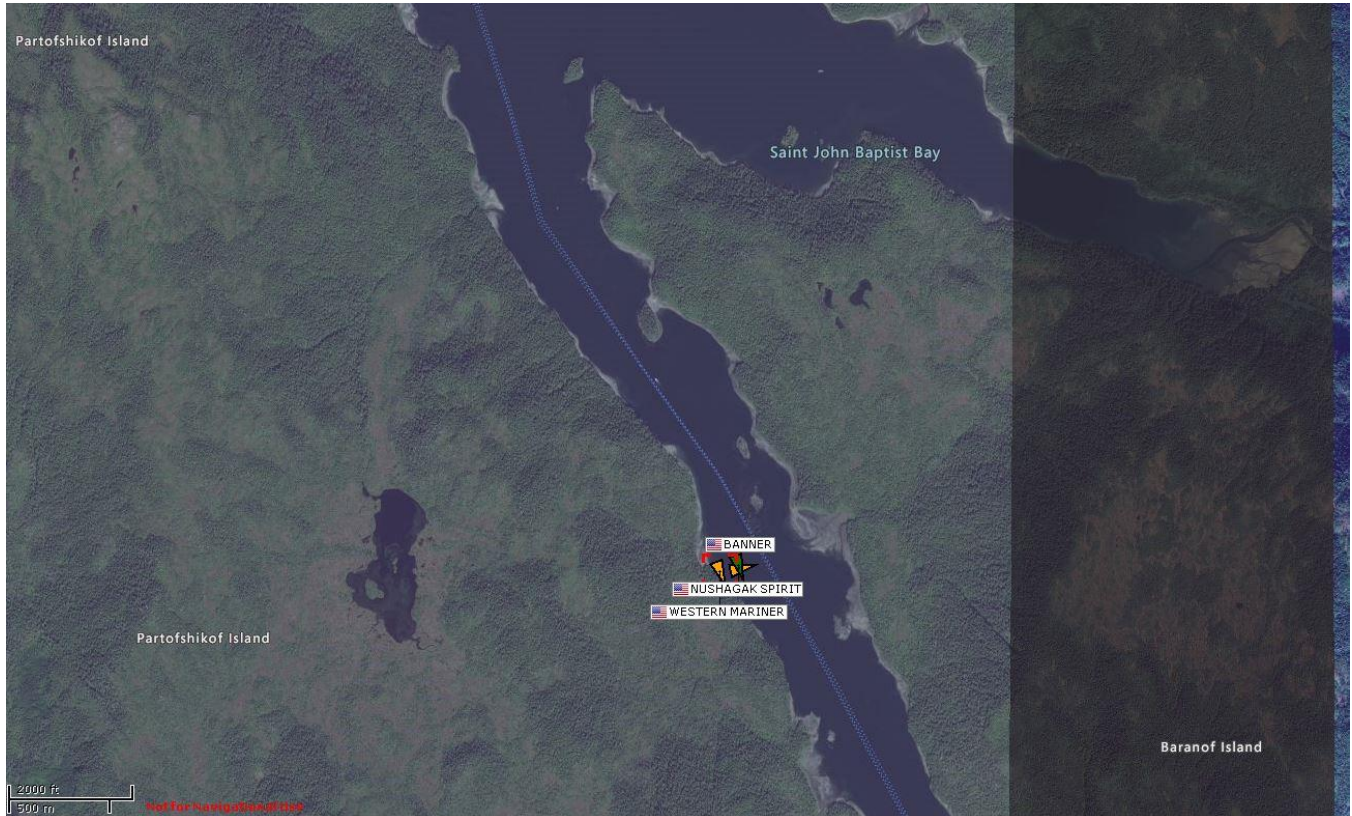


Figure 3. Incident Location.



Figure 4. Barge and grounded vessel around 8:00 am on March 21st as crew work to boom the vessel. Photo by U.S. Coast Guard.



Figure 10. Observed sheening as seen around 8:00 am on March 21st as crew work to boom the vessel. Photo by U.S. Coast Guard.

AGENCY/STAKEHOLDER NOTIFICATION LIST: This situation report was distributed to the agencies listed on the standard distribution list, which includes the governor’s office, State Emergency Operations Center, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Marine Fisheries Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and other state agencies. This situation report was also distributed to the following agencies and stakeholders:

AGENCY	NAME	SENT VIA	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	TELEPHONE	FAX
Western Towboat Co.	Rich Christiansen	Email	christiansen@westerntowboat.com, rich@westerntowboat.com		
Global Diving	Kris Lindberg	Email	klindberg@gdiving.com		
Hanson Maritime	Lee Hanson	Email	lee@hansonmaritime.com		
Senate R	Senator Bert Stedman	Email	senator.bert.stedman@akleg.gov Juneau (1/18-4/15) Ketchikan (4/20-1/15)	465-3873 225-8088	465-3922 225-0713
House 35	Representative Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins	Email	representative.jonathan.kreiss-tomkins@akleg.gov Juneau (1/18-4/15)	465-3732	465-2652

			Sitka (4/20-1/15)	747-4665	
Sitka Tribe of Alaska	Kristal Paul	Email	Kristal.Paul@sitkatriben-sns.gov	747-3207	747-4915
City of Port Alexander	Debra Rose Gifford	E-mail	cityofportalexander@yahoo.com	568-2211	568-2211
ADF&G Habitat	Greg Albrecht	Email	greg.albrecht@alaska.gov	465-6384	
ADF&G Marine Mammals	Lori Polasek	Email	Lori.polasek@alaska.gov		
ADNR SE Region	Chris Carpentieri	Email	Chris.carpentieri@alaska.gov	465-3401	
ADNR SE Region	Aaron Timian	Email	Aaron.Timian@alaska.gov	465-3513	
USCG (Sector JNU)	Capt. Darwin Jensen	Email	Darwin.A.Jensen@uscg.mil	463-2836	
USCG (Sector JNU)	CDR Walter Pierce	Email	Walter.S.pierce@uscg.mil	463-2475	
USCG (Sector JNU)	LCDR Jonathan Dale	Email	Jonathan.Dale@uscg.mil	463-2469	
USCG (MSD Sitka)	MST1 Brian Wereda	Email	Brian.M.Wereda@uscg.mil	966-5480	966-5457
USCG (MSD Sitka)	MST1 Allysia Helton	Email	Allysia.R.Helton@uscg.mil	966-5481	
US EPA	Bob Whittier	Fax/Email	Whittier.robert@epa.gov	271-3616	271-3424
USFS - Tongass Env. Engineer	Michele Marie Parker	Email	mmparker@fs.fed.us	518-1079	772-5896
Sitka Municipal Administrator	Keith Brady	Email	Keith.brady@cityofsitka.org	747-1808	
Southeast Alaska Tribal Ocean Research (SEATOR)		Email	seator@sitkatriben-sns.gov	966-9650	
NOAA	David Gann	Email	David.gann@noaa.gov		
NOAA	Sadie Wright	Email	Sadie.wright@noaa.gov		
NOAA	Catherine Berg	Email	Catherine.berg@noaa.gov		
NOAA Weather		Email	Juneau.weather@noaa.gov		
Fish and Wildlife Service	Angela Matz	Email	fwsakspillresponse@fws.gov		
Sitka Tribe of Alaska	Lisa Gassman	Email	Lisa.gassman@sitkatriben-sns.gov	752-0152	
Central Council of Tlingit & Haida Tribes of Alaska	Jason Wilson	Email	jwilson@ccthita-nns.gov	463-7738 723-7354	
DHS CISA	Tom Koloski	Email	Thomas.koloski@cisa.dhs.gov		

AGENCY/STAKEHOLDER NOTIFICATION LIST:

Please refer to the first SITREP, distributed March 21, 2022, for the agency/stakeholder notification list. The first SITREP can be found by following the link in the **Additional Information** box above.