# RDA Committee Meeting

Wednesday, September 8, 2021
**WebEx**

Call to Order: 9:05 am

Attendees: Geoff Baran (Ecology), Phil Riise (Seaview Boatyard North), Jessica Logan (PARKS), Mark Toy (DOH), Russell Shrewsbury (Western Towboat), Rob Whitlam (DAHP), Shayne Cothern (DNR), Tami Neilson (Ecology), Tom Waller (Western Towboat), Brian MacDonald (WDFW)

Approval of Minutes: Motion to approve meeting minutes for the August 11, 2021 RDA Committee Meeting passed.

Adjournment: 9:50 am

## Minutes

### New Business

#### Preassessment Screenings

##### ERTS# 707967 Ex-F/V Bligh Island

* Geoff summarized the incident:
The Port of Bellingham hired Seaview Boatyard North to scrap the derelict ex-F/V *Bligh Island*. Seaview sub-contracted Western Towboat to tow the *Bligh Island* from Blaine Harbor to the Seaview yard in Bellingham. While underway, the *Bligh Island* began taking on water. The tug attempted to return to Blaine Harbor, but the onboard pumps were overwhelmed, and the *Bligh Island* sank in about 240 to 300 feet of water in the Strait of George, about 2 miles west of Cherry Point. An oil sheen was observed on the water, and Seaview hired US-Ecology to search for recoverable oil. US-Ecology was unable to recover the thin residual sheen. 50 to 100 gallons of diesel was aboard the vessel at the time of the spill, in addition to a 5 gallon gas can for the generator, and 8 to 10 gallons of lube oil in the motor.
* Phil Riise (Seaview Boatyard North) described the preparations prior to the operation. Seaview monitored and inspected the boat for five days prior to the incident. They cleared the vessel of debris and garbage and hired dive crew to check the hull. Divers did not observe any major flaws in the hull. Seaview placed multiple pumps aboard in case of emergency. Due to the rate of the sinking, a major flaw in the hull must have developed while underway. Perhaps a plank came loose.
* Shayne asked why the fuel was not pumped off prior to the tow. Phil replied that fuel removal was not part of the RFP with the Port of Bellingham, and at the time the residual fuel aboard was deemed “minimal”.
* Russell Shrewsbury (Western Towboat) reiterated that this was a slow, methodical operation. The vessel was towed slowly and carefully.
* Shayne asked if a dead ship tow plan was filed with the USCG prior to the incident. Russell and Phil said no. Russell indicated that they have done this in the past for complicated tows, but it was not required for this operation.
* Preassessment Screening:
	+ Are the damages quantifiable at a reasonable cost? 6 no.
	+ Is restoration or enhancement technically feasible? 6 no.
	+ Compensation schedule authorized to calculate damages.

### Old Business

* + None.

### Announcements

* Geoff announced that Carlos Clements is the new Spills Program Manager. Carlos comes to us from the US Air Force, and brings a strong emergency response background to the position. Welcome Carlos!
NRDA specialist position interviews are complete. Hope to announce soon.
* Next meeting: Wednesday, October 13, 2021 at 9:00am via WebEx.