

PREASSESSMENT SCREENING OIL SPILL REPORT FORM

ERTS# 707967

Date of Incident: 07/13/2021

Potential Liable Party: Seaview Boatyard North, Western Towboat, Port of Bellingham

Product Spilled: Diesel/Marine Gas Oil, Gasoline, Lube Oil/Motor Oil

Spill Source: Ex-F/V Bligh Island

Oil Spill Size Estimate: 89 gallons total (75 diesel/marine gas oil, 5 gasoline, 9 lube oil/motor oil)

Water Body Affected: Strait of Georgia

Ecology Region: NWRO

County: Whatcom

Nearest City: Ferndale

Location of Spill: 2 miles off Cherry Point

Cause: Inadequate Maintenance, Structural Failure, Unknown

Ecology Responder: Zachary Gaston

Incident Summary: The Bligh Island (wood-hulled; 77 foot ex purse seiner) came into the possession of the Port of Bellingham as the result of non-payment of moorage. The Port of Bellingham contracted with Seaview Boatyard North to scrap the vessel at their yard in Bellingham. Seaview Boatyard North sub-contracted Western Towboat to bring the vessel to Bellingham. On Tuesday, July 13, 2021, a Western Towboat tug, the Tug West Point departed Blaine Marina towing the ex-fishing vessel Bligh Island alongside. While underway to Bellingham, the Bligh Island began taking on water and developed a starboard list. The captain of the West Point changed course, intending a return to Blaine Harbor, however the pumps aboard the Bligh Island were overwhelmed, causing the vessel to roll onto its starboard side. The West Point's captain disconnected from the Bligh Island, and shortly after the vessel sank in about 240 to 300 feet of water. An estimated 50 to 100 gallons of diesel fuel was aboard when it sank, plus a 5-gallon can of gasoline for the dewatering pumps. There was also about 8 to 10 gallons of lubricating oil estimated to be aboard. Seaview hired US Ecology/NRCES to search for recoverable oil, however they were unable to recover the thin residual oil sheen.