

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – Aug. 27, 2013 and time

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Ecology, Coast Guard and contractors continue response to sunken vessel at Willow Grove Island near Longview

LONGVIEW – The Washington Department of Ecology, U.S. Coast Guard and contractors Cowlitz Clean Sweep Inc and Ballard Diving & Salvage are continuing to clean up a Columbia River oil spill associated with the sunken vessel Granby.

The 75-foot vessel sunk at Willow Grove Island, about five miles west of Longview. At this time, responders estimate 50 to 100 gallons of oil have spilled. This number could be revised after divers complete their investigation of the vessel.

The Cowlitz Co. Health Department issued an [advisory](#) asking people not swim or fish in the Columbia River near the Willow Grove Park area until the visible oil sheen has dissipated. The department also recommends not allowing pets to enter water in this area because consuming the water could make pets ill as well.

The park is about one mile from the incident site. A Coast Guard helicopter over flight as well as land and water investigations revealed light sheen along the shoreline about six miles downriver from the incident site.

Divers at the scene have begun pumping oil from the sunken vessel. Once oil is removed, the vessel owner can develop a plan to raise and remove the vessel.

Responders continue to investigate possible impacts to wetlands, fish and wildlife. The cause of the sinking also is under investigation.

The boat owner, who reported the incident to state and federal agencies about 7 a.m. and also hired the response contractors, is continuing to cooperate with Ecology and the Coast Guard.

This morning, response crews placed oil-containment boom and oil-absorbing pads around the vessel.

The sunken vessel was built in 1929. The wood-hulled trawler is no longer used for commercial purposes. The vessel potentially had 600 gallons of oil on board when it sunk, including diesel fuel.

Oil spilled to water typically forms oily patches that spread out quickly and can cover many acres of water. In fact, one quart of oil has the potential to foul 100,000 gallons of water.

All oil spills cause environmental damage, regardless of size. Prompt reporting of oil spills is important because the sooner responders are notified, the sooner they can work to minimize potential harm to the environment. Oil spills can be reported to 1-800-OILS-911

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Ecology Spills Program: www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/spills/spills.html

Ecology homepage: www.ecy.wa.gov/

Cowlitz County Health & Human Services:
<http://www.co.cowlitz.wa.us/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=63>