

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - 3:00 p.m., Jan. 25, 2013
13-029

Contacts: Dieter Bohrmann, Department of Ecology media relations; 509-420-3874
Jordan Akiyama, U.S. Coast Guard Public Affairs; 206-220-7237

Ecology, Coast Guard monitoring 2 derelict vessels in Hylebos Waterway

TACOMA - The Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology) and the U.S. Coast Guard are working with Ballard Diving and Salvage to contain a small amount of oil released to the Hylebos Waterway after two vessels moored at Mason Marine near Tacoma began sinking early Friday.

The derelict vessels Helena Star and Golden West were tied together when the Helena Star began sinking and pulling the other vessel down with it. The Tacoma Fire Department placed oil containment boom around both vessels to prevent possible pollution from any residual fuel remaining inside the vessels. In March 2012, about 20,000 gallons of oil and oily water as well as other hazardous substances were removed from the vessels, limiting the potential for pollution to the waterway.

Ballard Diving and Salvage, an environmental cleanup contractor, is placing secondary boom around the vessels and working to clean up some pockets of diesel fuel in the waterway. Most of the cleanup is expected to be completed today, with continued monitoring by Ecology and the Coast Guard over the next couple of days. There are no plans to untie the vessels or raise them at this time.

The vessels have been moored at the marina for about two years. The suspected owner of the vessels, Mason Marine, filed for bankruptcy in 2012 and was not at the scene. According to the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the two vessels are among an estimated 230 known derelict or abandoned vessels in Washington state.

The state is also investigating a report of four or five birds that may have gotten into oil. More information will be provided as soon as it becomes available.

Washington's natural resources are always put at risk whenever oil is spilled or hazardous materials are released to the environment. All oil spills matter, regardless of size. The damage starts as soon as oil hits the water. Oil products are poisonous to the environment and they add to the toxic load to our water bodies. Spills also are difficult and costly to clean up. That's why Ecology works to prevent spills from occurring in the first place.

###

For more information:

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

Ecology incident web page (includes photos):
<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/spills/incidents/FV.HelenaStar.GoldenWest/FV.HelenaStar&GoldenWest.html>

Ecology homepage: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/>

DNR's Derelict Vessel Removal Program:

http://www.dnr.wa.gov/RecreationEducation/Topics/DerelictVessels/Pages/aqr_derelict_vessel_removal_program.aspx

Department of Ecology's Home Page: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov>

To unsubscribe to Ecology-news, point your browser to <http://listserv.wa.gov/cgi-bin/wa?SUBED1=ecology-news&A=1> or send a "SIGNOFF Ecology-news" command to LISTSERV@LISTSERV.WA.GOV.