

Times-Standard

Good response credited for checking fuel spill

John Driscoll/The Times-Standard

Article Launched: 09/17/2008 01:28:53 AM PDT
Efforts to raise the sunken Allen Cody from the bay floor Tuesday stalled because of an apparent lack of equipment, but officials reported excellent progress in cleaning up the fuel spilled from the boat.

After a critical 24- to 48-hour window, the California Department of Fish and Game is reporting no oiled wildlife in the Fields Landing area where the 100-foot former whaling and fishing boat sank at the dock Saturday.

"This could be much worse than it is appearing," said Fish and Game Environmental Scientist Jeff Dayton.

About 150 gallons of diesel is estimated to have spilled when the boat sank, and some 70 gallons of the fuel was recovered from the vessel by contractor National Response Corp., using booms and absorbent pads.

U.S. Coast Guard Marine Safety Detachment officer Tom Haug said that efforts to raise the boat were ongoing. The plan, Haug said, was to raise the Allen Cody off the bottom using float bags, then float it down the dock to where a crane could access and remove it.

"We'll see how it goes," Haug said.

The owner of the boat is Woody Murphy with Humboldt Bay Forest Products, who bought the vessel a year ago from Hunter Enterprises, which had owned it for decades and had retrofitted it from

a Navy vessel, to a whaler, to a trawler.

Haug said the owner has taken responsibility and is taking action.

Later in the day, Dayton said the effort to raise the boat had apparently been put on hold, and the contractor had to order additional equipment to float the boat.

Dayton said that the NRC crews were being reduced with the immediate pollution threat having largely been contained.

"The response has been very effective," Dayton said.

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