

# NOAA Abandoned and Derelict Vessel Case Study



## F/V Leading Lady and F/V Kupreanof

Contributor: Wyn Menefee, Alaska Department of Natural Resources

### Project Overview

**Reason for project:** To protect the natural resources in the Kachemak Bay Critical Habitat Area from pollution.

**Date initiated:** December 26, 2012

**Project duration:** 18 months (with disposal)

**Number of vessels removed:** 2

### Project Location

**Location:** Jakolof Bay, Kenai Peninsula, Alaska

**Site Name(s):** Jakolof Bay (59° 27.933N - 151° 32.16W)

**General description of location:** Jakolof Bay is a small protected bay 12 miles south of Homer, Alaska on the west side of the Kenai Peninsula which is within the Kachemak Bay Critical Habitat designation area.

**Average Site Depth:** 30 ft

**Habitat/Substrate Type Impacted:** Rock and mud

**Jurisdictions:** The federal government had initial jurisdiction, due to a pollution threat from leaking fuel and oil. After the pollution threat was abated the State of Alaska took over jurisdiction.



### Project Narrative

**History:** The fishing vessels Leading Lady and Kupreanof, which was under tow, moored in Jakolof Bay, Alaska in October after being denied access to the Homer and Seldovia Harbors. The boats, which were tied together, sank during a snow storm on December 24<sup>th</sup>-25<sup>th</sup>, 2012, with one vessel resting on top of the other. Four feet of snow fell during the storm and the extra weight of the snow is believed to be the reason that the vessels sank. The sunken vessels were discovered by a passing vessel and reported to both federal and state authorities. There was a visible sheen around the vessels from fuel and oil that was being released from the F/V Leading Lady (the F/V Kupreanof did not have an engine or fuel aboard at the time of sinking). Due to inclement weather the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) was not able to raise the vessels and remove the fuel/oil until the middle of January, at which point the vessels were raised and the fuel was removed. After the fuel and oil was removed the USCG, which no longer had jurisdiction once the pollution threat was removed, transferred jurisdiction of the vessels over to Alaska's Department of Natural Resources (ADNR). ADNR had the vessels towed to Homer Harbor and placed in a local boat yard for storage until they could be appraised and disposed of.

**Why was the project initiated:** The project was initiated after the two vessels sank and started to release fuel and oil into the surrounding waters of Jakolof Bay.

**Who initiated the project:** The U.S. Coast Guard and the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC).

**Lead agency or organization:** U.S. Coast Guard (for pollution control) and the Alaska Department of Natural Resources (for removal and disposal of vessels).



## F/V Leading Lady and F/V Kupreanof

**Other collaborators/stakeholders involved:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game, City of Homer and the Department of Law.

**Funding source(s):** Funding came from federal and state sources for oil pollution. Some money (\$11,475) was recovered during the repossession of the F/V Kupreanof by the responsible party.

### Threats from ADV

**Environmental:** Because of the leaking fuel (50 gallons) and oil (20-30 gallons) these vessels posed a threat to the bay ecosystem and the wildlife. Due to the weather conditions after the vessels sank it was not possible to contain the spill and prevent the pollution from spreading to other areas of the bay. The area is used by migratory birds and sea otters; however, no endangered or threatened species were in the area at this time of year. It is not believed that the sinking of these vessels caused any lasting environmental damage.

**Critical habitats involved:** The vessels sank in Jakolof Bay which is located within the Kachemak Bay Critical Habitat Area, in an area where oyster farms are present.

**Public safety and health:** Due to the limited amount of fuel and oil in the vessels public safety and health were not a major factor; however, there was concern that oysters harvested in the area might be contaminated so a testing program was instituted within the vicinity of the spill.

**Navigation:** These vessels sank in the bay while moored and did not present an immediate navigation hazard once the boom was deployed identifying the site.

**Commerce:** A Stop Sale Order was issued to the local oyster farmers in the general area of the vessels until a testing program could be initiated. The event did not end up affecting the local oyster farmers because oyster harvesting was not scheduled to occur until the spring months.

**Aesthetic:** Jakolof Bay area is a high use recreational area.

### Summary of Removal

**Number of vessels:** 2

**Primary vessel type:** Fishing vessels

**Primary hull type:** Wooden

**Average vessel size:** 55 ft

**Acres restored via removal:** N/A

**Approximate removal costs:** F/V leading Lady (\$25,300) and F/V Kupreanof (\$12,100), plus an additional \$2,000 for storage fees.

**Other cost information:** The USCG paid approximately \$400,000 (unconfirmed) to a contractor for raising the vessels and removing the pollutants and state staff spent an undocumented number of hours dealing with the disposal process.

**Additional debris removed:** None

**Vessel removal summary:** The vessels were raised by a USCG contractor and the remaining fuel and oil was removed. Once the pollution threat was abated the USCG turned the vessels over to the ADNR who hired a contractor to tow the vessels into Homer Harbor for temporary mooring. The vessels were eventually removed to a local boat yard for storage, where they were appraised and the Leading Lady was eventually disposed of and the Kupreanof was repossessed by the owner.



### **Project Removal Actions**

**Start date:** January 18, 2013

**End date:** January 21, 2013

**Removal options considered:** A contractor was hired to raise and remove the vessels.

**Environmental Considerations:** At the time of sinking the weather was uncooperative and the raising of the vessels, removal of pollutants, and towing to Homer Harbor had to be delay by almost a month until the weather was suitable.

**Removal Methods:** The vessels were raised using floatation devices by a private contractor. Once raised the vessels were pumped dry of water and the remaining fuel and oil on board was removed. The vessels were still able to float once they were raised off the bottom and were towed within a couple of days after being raised to Homer Harbor for storage and disposal.

**Authorities used to take Possession of Vessels:** The vessels were taken into state possession in accordance with Alaska State statues § 30.30 for Abandoned and Derelict Vessels.

**Permits Required:** None

**Salvage Contractor(s):** Salvage contractors were used throughout the removal, storage and disposal of these vessels.

**Contractor Selection Process:** N/A

**Vessel Disposal Process/Issues:** Once the vessels were removed and relocated to a private boat yard storage facility the state had both vessels appraised and both vessels were found to be valueless, as the cost of disposal would exceed any salvage worth. The F/V Leading Lady was demolished at cost to ADNR, while the responsible party repossessed the F/V Kupreanof prior to demolition for \$11,475, which almost covered the entire costs incurred by ADNR for towing and storing the vessel. The responsible party was required to make reasonable repairs and have the vessel inspected by a marine inspector to determine if it was sea worthy before it was allowed to be launched again.

### **Project Challenges**

**Weather/Seasonal:** The weather presented significant problems with the pollution control and removal efforts, which had to be delay for almost a month until the weather improved enough to raise the vessels.

**Funding:** Funding for the cleanup and removal had to be covered by the federal government (raising and pollution control) and the State of Alaska from operational funds.

### **Contact Information:**

Wyn Menefee

Chief of Operations

Alaska DNR, Division of Mining, Land and Water

(907) 269-8501



## F/V Leading Lady and F/V Kupreanof

### Images:



### Vessels Removed

Vessel name	Vessel Type	Time abandoned	Incident	Length	Hull material
F/V Leading Lady	Motor	3 months	Abandoned	53	Wood
F/V Kupreanof	Motor	3 months	Abandoned	58	Wood