



Combined NEPA/SEPA

Environmental Impact Statement Proposed Gateway Pacific Terminal/Custer Spur

Comment form

Please submit your comments on the Gateway Pacific Terminal/Custer Spur Environmental Impact Statement by January 21, 2013 to be included in the scoping summary report. Comments can also be submitted online at www.eisgatewaypacificwa.gov.

What part of the proposal does your comment relate to?

- Vessel
- Rail
- Industrial site
- Multiple/not listed

Does your comment relate to any of the following topic areas? (check all that apply)

Human environment

- Noise
- Air quality
- Human health
- Traffic or safety
- Other human environment topic

Natural environment

- Wildlife or vegetation
- Marine species, fish or fisheries
- Wetlands or streams
- Water quality
- Other natural environment topic

EIS Process

- Alternatives
- Areas of potential effect
- EIS regulatory process
- Other EIS process topic

Please share your comments below: (comments can also be attached to this form)

Please enter the 2 attached 2-sided pages to
the record:

- 1) 1997 continental spirit coal carrier
incident off port of Astoria
- 2) 1972 oil spill at cherry point the year
before the collapse of the heavy stocks
- 3) marine impact summary sheet 2-page

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Would you like to be added to the mailing list? Yes No

Note: Any information provided to the agencies will be posted on the website and may be released to a third party as part of the agencies' record for this action. This includes the release of identifiable personal information such as personal name, address, phone number, etc., that is provided in the response.



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Environmental Impact Statement
Proposed Gateway Pacific Terminal/Custer Spur

Place
Stamp
Here

GPT/BNSF Custer Spur EIS Co-Lead Agencies
c/o CH2MHILL
1100 112th Avenue NE, Suite 400
Bellevue, WA 98004

Cargo ship goes adrift near Patos Island

Possible oil spill narrowly averted

By LIAM MORLARTY
Journal Reporter

A cargo ship bound for Point Roberts lost power and steering on July 19 and drifted for about an hour before finally dropping anchor about 500 yards short of a reef south of Patos Island.

The Continental Spirit, a 736-foot bulk coal carrier operated by the New York-based Overseas Shipping Group, Inc., was en route from the Victoria pilot station to Point Roberts. According to the U.S. Coast Guard watch supervisor's log, the vessel's pilot reported loss of power to Vancouver Traffic Control at 7:45 a.m., but said assistance was not needed.

But by 8:20, with the freighter drifting out of control between East Point on Saturna Island and Patos Island, a call went out for tug boat assistance. In less than ten minutes, three tugs -- the Cindy Mozell, the Barbara Foss from Bellingham and the Discovery out of Point Roberts -- were on their way to help. The Canadian Coast Guard cutter Tanu was underway, as well.

But the Discovery and the Barbara Foss were at least two hours away, the Cindy Mozell and the cutter almost one. The stricken freighter, empty of coal but carrying 600 tons of heavy oil and 80 tons of diesel fuel, continued to drift southeast on a strong tidal current.

At 8:48, the Continental Spirit reported that they had dropped anchor in 60 fathoms (360 feet) of water, about one mile due

south of Patos. By the time it came to a stop, the ship had drifted more than three miles in less than 30 minutes and lay about 500 yards off a reef 35 feet below the water. The Continental Spirit draws nearly 60 feet.

The Cindy Mozell arrived on the scene about 9:00, but was towing a barge full of gravel and would have had to release its load to be of help; the Barbara Foss

By the time it came to a stop, the ship had drifted more than three miles in less than 30 minutes and lay about 500 yards off a reef 35 feet below the water. The Continental Spirit draws nearly 60 feet.

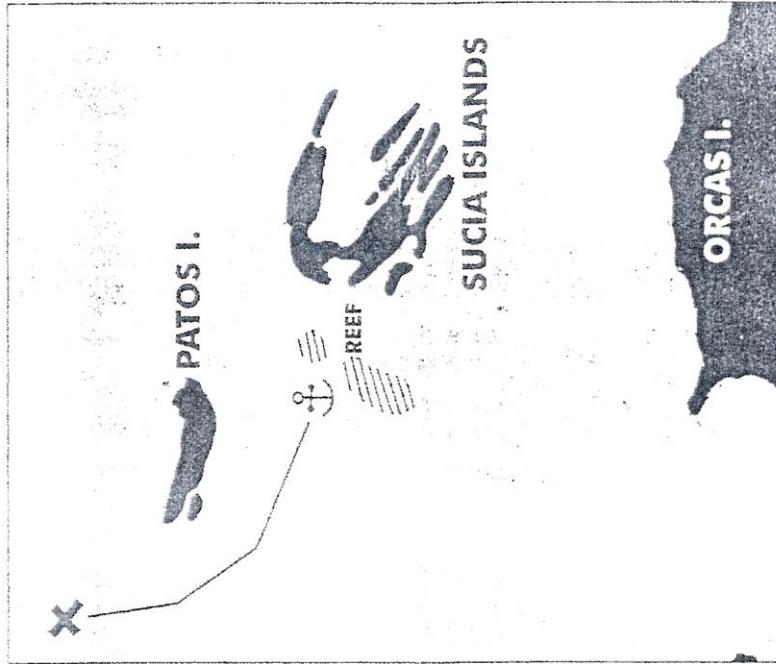
miss with the Continental Spirit illustrates the San Juan Islands vulnerability to oil spills.

For one thing, he sees this as a precursor to the sorts of accidents the islands will be exposed to when the Gateway Pacific bulk shipping terminal is built at Cherry Point near Bellingham. At 65,000 deadweight tons, the Continental Spirit is barely a quarter of the size of the vessels the Gateway Pacific terminal will be sized to accept. Felleman said it's a general rule of commercial shipping that low-value bulk commodities like coal, wood chips, coke and ores tend to be transported in low-value ships that are old, poorly-maintained and almost always registered to nations that have lax safety standards. The Continental Spirit carries a Marshall Islands flag.

When Gateway Pacific is in operation -- the project is still in the permit process with the state -- Felleman says the San Juan Islands will be in greater danger. "What we just saw was a real case in point of the risks imposed by this kind of traffic."

Felleman also said the incident points to the need to create a redundant traffic monitoring system, where American and Canadian controllers would have access to each other's information. Though the crippled freighter was drifting into American waters, the U.S. Coast Guard had to rely on Canadian traffic controllers to notify them of the danger. The fact that the Canadians knew the ship was in trouble more than half an hour before informing the Americans is not reassuring, he said.

The fact that the vessel didn't report the incident to the state oil spill prevention agency was also not reassuring to Dodge Kenyon



CHRIS MINNEY/JOURNAL OF THE SAN JUAN ISLANDS
A cargo ship carrying heavy oil and diesel fuel nearly drifted into a reef near Sucia Island. The Continental Spirit dropped anchor only 500 yards from a reef that would have ripped it apart. The ship normally hauls coal.

Kenyon is a vessel inspector for the Puget Sound Marine Safety Field Office, the state agency in charge of enforcing the state's strict regulations on commercial vessels. He said his office had issued a violation notice to the owners of the Continental Spirit for failing to report the incident immediately to the state, and for not submitting a written report within 24 hours. The fine could go as high as \$10,000 for each day the vessel's owners fail to

comply. Although fines that large are rarely assessed, Kenyon said, "We're serious about oil spill prevention."

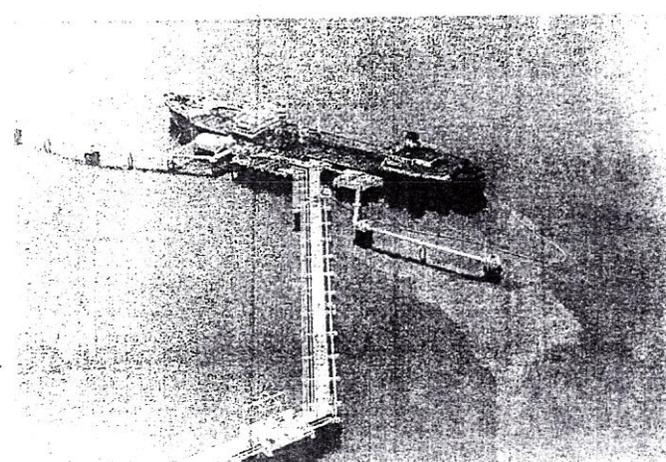
WEDNESDAY HARBOR
ACE
HARDWARE
and
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Mon-Sat 9-7
Sunday 9-6
340 Argyle Ave.
Under the Flaga
378-4622

June 4, 1972 oil spill estimated to be in excess of 20,000 gallons occurred after a particularly heavy herring spawn at Cherry Point. There are no official state records of this spill which was likely to be far larger than what was estimated at the time.

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MONDAY
June 4, 1972
Volume 82, No. 124

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a Gannett newspaper
Bellingham, Washington 98225



OIL CLEANUP—The Liberian tanker World Bond docked at the Atlantic Richfield Refinery pier is having booms placed in a discharging mishap Sunday caused more than 100 barrels of crude oil to spill into Cherry Point waters. Coast Guard reported the oil not trapped by the boom is moving southward today.—Mickey Hall photo.

Oil being cleaned up

Strait oil spill spreads

Cleanup operations are being carried out around a Liberian tanker which, during a Sunday morning mishap, spilled more than 100 barrels of crude oil into the waters of Cherry Point. Cleanup operations are being carried out around the tanker World Bond docked at the Arco pier. Booms were put around the ship Sunday to prevent more oil from escaping.

Some of the crude spilled into the Cherry Point waters during unloading operations.

Ship's valve fails

valve failure on the ship. The line apparently burst and spilled oil into the water.

The vessel was carrying Midele East crude and was being

Funeral arrangements are pending at Jones Funeral Home.

6/8/72

Herring loss may run high from oil spill

Agencies probe spill damage

(Continued From Page 1)

A potentially heavy loss of newly-hatched herring may be occurring in the waters from Cherry Point to Semiahmoo Bay near Blaine from the effects of the oil spilled at the Atlantic Richfield dock early this week.

This assessment was made by the State Department of Fisheries in Olympia today.

The department has two biologists and a researcher in the Cherry Point area running tests and bioassays in the herring spawn areas, believed to be one of the largest in recent years.

The Coast Guard reported "heavy globules of oil" were seen going ashore on a beach north of the Campbell River mouth in the lower British Columbia mainland today.

Volunteers were on shore putting straw on the beach as the oil washed in. An Arco boat brought in straw for the cleanup.

Cleanup is continuing at Birch Bay and the Coast Guard said the work is nearly complete.

Nature at work

Jack Racine, manager at the Arco refinery near Cherry Point, said cleanup of the oil-covered rock beaches will be left to degrade naturally by the tidal action and weather.

He said this was the recommendation by the EPA, Department of Ecology, and the Canadian fisheries experts and that one week's tidal action would be equivalent to scrubbing the rocks with detergent.

The Coast Guard said no visible oil slicks were found south of Cherry Point where a ferry passenger reported a glob of oil moving into Hale Passage Wednesday.

Dr. Wallace Heath, project director at the Lummi Aquaculture program, said there was a chance for the oil to enter the fish and oyster ponds since the ponds use water from Hale Passage.

Moved elsewhere

He reported this morning, however, that no trace of oil was visible in the ponds and that the slick apparently has moved elsewhere.

An outspoken critic of oil tankers, Heath blasted the handling of the oil spill by Arco as

Egg deposit high

Fisheries Director Thor C. Tollefson said the last two weeks of May showed a heavy deposit of eggs seen over 16 miles of beach area from Point Frances in northern Bellingham Bay through Hale Passage and the Lummi Island area and north to Semiahmoo Bay.

Herring usually deposit their adhesive eggs on aquatic vegetation, he said, but so many eggs were deposited this time they were observed on large boulders with many others washed ashore.

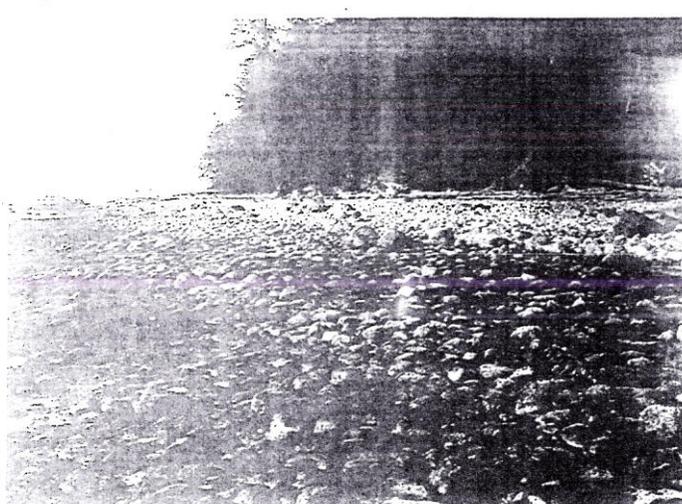
Fisheries personnel monitoring the spawning activity said most of the herring eggs were hatched last Saturday, the day before the tanker spill. The hatched larvae tend to be concentrated near the surface of the water where they are carried by the passing currents.

"It is this characteristic that makes them extremely vulnerable to oil spills," Tollefson said.

One of the biologists investigating the herring hatch said an oil slick was in the vicinity of a spawning area off Birch Bay.

Bellingham Herald

TUESDAY
June 5, 1972
Volume 82, No. 125



Oil spreads along beaches

Border Patrol seeks seaman from tanker

Oil slicks are seen on a beach near Cherry Point. The slicks are about 20 feet long and 10 feet wide. They are being carried southward by the current.

Border Patrol is seeking a seaman from the tanker World Bond who is believed to have been on the ship during the spill.



Copyright: Fred Felleman

If you care about the Salish Sea, you should oppose the Gateway Pacific Coal Terminal (GPT).

Seattle-based SSA Marine proposes to build North America's largest coal export terminal in the Cherry Point Aquatic Reserve near Bellingham, WA. Exporting 48 million tons of coal as proposed requires **974 transits of giant bulk carriers** every year. These ships, twice the size of the oil tankers currently allowed to call on Washington ports, have the worst safety records of any commercial deep-draft vessels. They would significantly add to oil spill risks in the region since they carry up to two million gallons of bunker fuel, suffer from poor maneuverability, are not required to have tug escorts, and would join the increasingly congested waterways of Rosario and Haro Straits.

The problems start with construction

During construction of GPT, the marine life that call Cherry Point home would experience sea-floor disturbance and increased turbidity, noise from pile driving and seismic surveys, and lighting – an attractive nuisance. But during operations after construction, shading from the pier and wharf, toxics from the terminal's outfall pipes, night lighting, and noise from vessel operations would impact species such as herring at Cherry Point year after year. Of particular concern: coal dust in the marine environment.

"Dust is the enemy"

The Westshore coal export terminal in Delta, BC loses **over 1.5 million pounds of coal dust a year** into the surrounding marine environment while shipping 24 million tons of coal. According to the facility manager, "Dust is the enemy." The proposed terminal for Cherry Point would ship twice as much coal from the same footprint, just a few hundred yards from sensitive marine habitat in a high-wind area.

Coal dust and the high PAHs (polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons) it includes would be the nail in the coffin for the Cherry Point Pacific herring. Since 1970, Cherry Point herring have declined from 17,000 tons of spawning biomass to less than 1,000 tons. These small fish play a big role in the health of the Puget Sound ecosystem - they are a linchpin in the food chain that includes **endangered Chinook salmon, migratory seabirds, and Southern Resident orcas**. Herring eggs and larvae are acutely sensitive to the impacts of PAHs.



A slow speed oil spill

At Cherry Point itself, toxics entering the water from the States' two largest oil refineries are already like a slow oil spill. How much will that accelerate with a massive increase in deep-draft vessels (974 transits a year), each of which carries up to two million gallons of bunker fuel for their own power, and receives coal and fuel transferred over water? The sheer number of bulk carriers creates multiple risks:

Rosario Strait already sees in excess of **700 tankers**, with Haro Strait exposed to over **100 loaded tar sands crude tankers** and hundreds more **bulk carrier and container ships**. Tankers in Haro Strait may nearly triple if the Kinder-Morgan tar sands pipeline to Vancouver, BC expands as planned.



- * **Increasing conflicts** between docking vessels and fishing boats during terminal operations, given both increased ship traffic and an exclusion zone for the dock.
- * Ferries crossing Rosario and Haro straits will experience **increased delays**.
- * An **oil spill or collision** becomes much more likely as congestion increases.
- * **Whale and dolphin** communications will be increasingly disrupted by the high-intensity noise from the carriers.

Trading coal for pollution

In return for our coal, we get back two kinds of problems: **invasive species** and **air pollution**. The largest ships bring up to 17,000,000 gallons of ballast water infested with non-native, invasive aquatic species from the western Pacific, including toxic dinoflagellates that increase the risk of harmful algal blooms that lead to paralytic shellfish poisoning. These ships can also bring Chinese mitten crabs, Asian tunicates, Japanese eelgrass, and other invasive species that have the ability to severely disrupt the Salish Sea's ecosystem. With minimal inspection for ballast exchange and exemptions for bad weather it is guaranteed that millions of gallons of foreign ballast water will be discharged into the Salish Sea every year.

And it's not just invasive species—we also get **back mercury pollution** and the **climate impacts** that burning 48 million tons of coal every year, year after year, would create. Carbon dioxide also dramatically contributes to **ocean acidification**, a problem already jeopardizing the fabric of the marine food web.



Produced by: ReSources for Sustainable Communities and Friends of the Earth

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