Monterrey Could Be On the Move Friday

Thursday, 14 June 2012

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A trawler sails out of Kodiak harbor past the grounded U.S. Army Reserve landing craft Monterrey Sunday, as the civilian landing craft Cape Douglas stands by with more oil spill containment boom. Jay Barrett/KMXT photo

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The U.S. Army Reserve landing craft Monterrey, which has spent all week aground in Kodiak after striking a rock and taking on water, could be moved by noon Friday. Maj. Annmarie Daneker said Thursday morning that engineers and crew were prepping for the move and that extra personnel and specific equipment will be on hand in case more diesel fuel leaked to the surface after the ship is moved.

The crash into Humpback Rock late last Friday punctured two of the Monterrey's starboard fuel tanks, draining 8,000 gallons from one, and somewhat less from the other. Enough diesel fuel leaked before containment booms were put around the ship that it could be seen and smelled along the Kodiak waterfront. However there have been no reports of the fuel harming wildlife or habitat.

Daneker says the Monterrey will make the trip to the Coast Guard Base in Women's Bay under its own power. It's a trip of about six miles. She says once it's tied up, the 350 tons of construction equipment will be offloaded and divers will evaluate the damage to the Monterrey.

Thursday, in a letter to the Secretary of the Army, Alaska Sen. Lisa Murkowski suggested

that the Monterrey could be repaired at the Ketchikan shipyard, which has the dry dock capacity to handle the 174-foot landing craft.

Murkowski also urged the Army to do what it can to get the construction equipment to its destination near Newtok as soon as possible. It was headed there to support a Marine Corps project to build a new townsite for the people of Newtok, whose village is in danger from erosion and melting permafrost. Daneker said the decision on how best to get the equipment there is still to be made.

She said a military fact- finding investigation will be conducted to see what went wrong and caused the Monterrey to hit a charted rock just off the Kodiak waterfront. She had no timeline for how long that might take.