

Salvaging the American Way

Thursday, 08 January 2009

The F/V American Way. USCG Photo

Jay Barrett/KMXT

The salvage of the fishing vessel "American Way" has begun. The Coast Guard is reporting that the Unalaska-based salvage vessel "Redeemer" arrived at Aghiyuk Island at 1 a.m. this (Thursday) morning to begin an assessment of the situation.

The American Way was intentionally grounded by its two-man crew on Sunday afternoon around 3 o'clock, after its engine died and the boat began to ice up. The 38-foot fishing boat was on its way from Kodiak to Chignik when the incident happened. After grounding, skipper Jim Brewer and crewman Jay Kingsley took an inflatable ashore, started a fire for warmth and called the Coast Guard on their satellite phone. A helicopter from Air Station Kodiak, about 200 miles northeast, arrived three hours later and hoisted them aboard. They were delivered in good condition to Chignik on the Alaska, about 60 miles away.

The salvagers from Magone Marine will submit a salvage plan for review and approval to the Coast Guard. The American Way is partially submerged and listing to port, just off the rocky beach of the small and uninhabited Aghiyuk Island.

A Coast Guard C-130 overflight on Tuesday spotted a thin diesel fuel sheen extending a couple hundred yards from the American Way, but by Wednesday it had dissipated through evaporation and wave action. The overflights showed a number of items had been washed from the deck, including boxes and line.

The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation and the U.S. Department of the Interior are also monitoring the situation through Coast Guard reports in regards to potential pollution. The American Way had approximately 600 gallons of diesel in the fuel tank and about 200 gallons stored in drums on deck.

