# *Ecology Department Confirms Illwaco Boat to be Tsunami Debris*

**Local News**

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Olympia, WA - State and federal agencies learned today that the 20-foot fiberglass boat that washed ashore at Cape Disappointment State Park on Friday June 15 came from Japan after it was swept out to sea by the March 11, 2011, tsunami.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) received confirmation from the Japanese consulate in Seattle that the former boat owner is from the Tohoku region, located on the northeastern portion of Honshu, Japan's largest island.

The consulate told NOAA the owner does not intend to retake ownership of the boat and does not object to the disposal of the craft.

The boat, which spent 15 months in the Pacific Ocean, is remains at Cape Disappointment State Park near Ilwaco.

After the boat washed up on the beach, the state departments of Ecology, Health and Fish and Wildlife, Military Department's Emergency's Management Division (EMD) and Washington Parks and Recreation Commission worked together to ensure the boat did not pose a risk to public health and safety or the environment.

EMD coordinated the response. Ecology responded and determined there was no oil spill or hazardous material threats to the environment.

As a precaution, state Health surveyed the vessel for potential radiation and found no contamination. On Monday, Health also surveyed foam and other debris found on the beach at Ocean Shores for potential radiation and found no contamination.

Fish and Wildlife and Parks removed the boat from the beach on June 16, where it was checked for potential invasive species and thoroughly cleaned inside the state park. Fish and Wildlife took lab samples. None of the samples tested so far have contained invasive plants or animals.

Costs for the multi-agency response to the boat at Cape Disappointment, including equipment, staff time and travel associated with the 250-mile round trip for many of the responders, are still being tallied.

According to NOAA, as of Monday there are 404 total reports of potential tsunami debris along the West Coast from California to Alaska and in the ocean - 40 in the last week. Of these, eight are confirmed tsunami debris (now nine with the boat).

Anyone encountering oil or hazardous materials on Washington beaches should call 1-800-OILS-911.

More about tsunami debris:

* Widely scattered debris has been arriving intermittently along Pacific Northwest shorelines. For more information, go to NOAA's marine debris website at http://marinedebris.noaa.gov/.

* NOAA is actively collecting information about tsunami debris and asks the public to report debris sightings to disasterdebris@noaa.gov.

* The Washington Department of Ecology has been distributing information about whom to call when citizens encounter debris. http://www.ecy.wa.gov/news/2012/itn01_debris.html

* Washington Department of Health believes it is highly unlikely any tsunami debris is radioactive. More at www.doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/Eme ... ate/TsunamiDebrisFAQ.aspx

* It is possible that containers with hazardous materials will wash ashore. Don't touch or try to remove the items. Call both the National Response Center at 1-800-424-8802 and state EMD at 1-800-OILS-911 (1-800-258-5990).

* If boaters encounter large debris item still in the water, call the National Response Center at 1-800-424-8802.