

Barge under tow sinks

MANZANITA (UPI) — A 110-foot barge and crane being towed to Nehalem Bay overturned and sank in the Pacific Ocean a half-mile off Cape Falcon Saturday, Coast Guard officials said.

The tugboat Betsy-L was pulling the barge and crane, owned by Brusco Dredging Co. of Longview, Wash., when the barge overturned around 7 a.m. and began to sink in 72 feet of water. The tug was not damaged and its crew of four was not injured, Coast Guard officials said.

The value of the equipment lost was not available from the Coast Guard, the dredging firm or Knappton Towboat

Co. of Astoria, owner of the Betsy-L.

A spokesman for Knappton who declined to give his name said the barge and crane were being towed to Nehalem Bay for construction work when the barge started taking on water from an apparent leak and began to list.

At that point, the crew decided to head for port, but the barge partially submerged before they could reach shore, he said.

The tugboat crew "got hold of it again and were trying to bring it back up to the Columbia when it apparently drifted north, ran aground and sank completely" around 2 p.m.