

Dive to the Wrecks Rosalia and Fanny

By: George Silvestrini



Dive Group at Tulista Boat Launch.

We gathered at the Tulista boat launch in Sidney on a beautiful warm, sunny day. Sea conditions were flat calm so you could not ask for anything more except for maybe some underwater visibility. On this trip was Jacques Marc, Paul Spenser, Warren Bush, Kail Pawson, Chris Mills, Adrian Bill and George Silvestrini. Our charter boat today was the MV Inde from Frank Whites Dive Shop, skippered by Keith Karlsson. We quickly loaded our gear and posed for our group picture when one of us commented “and that was the last time they were seen...”.

The first dive was at the south east side of Discovery Island to the site of the Rosalia to relocate the ships anchor and search for any other artifacts. Our marker buoy missed the mark so Jacques and Paul had to place another marker. Visibility was extremely poor and kelp pretty much covered the bottom making finding anything a challenge, especially in the shallower depths.

Back in 1989, the UASBC located a collection of brass pins, a few scattered iron deck knees, and some copper sheathing in the vicinity of Sea Bird Point. Most of the brass and copper had been salvaged in 1968 explaining why little

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wreckage could be found. However, the large anchor remained on site and was visited in 1990 and again in 2018. It was worth relocating and in that regard this dive was successful.



Belgian Barque Rosalia off Malta in 1847.

Painting by N. Cammillieri.

Barque Rosalia

A bit of history... Rosalia was formerly a Prussian barque launched in the 1840's. Her estimated age at the time of wrecking was 20 years. Her approximate length was 115 feet and tonnage 300 tons.

In 1868 the Rosalia had a load of 140,000 board feet of lumber and 56,000 of shingles destined for Hawaii. She was being towed by the steamer Isabel from Burrard Inlet to the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Opposite Sand Heads the Fanny was becalmed and needing a tow. Sailing ship, Fanny, hailed the Isabel for a tow. Captain Pamphlet of the Isabel agreed. As the Rosalia was already in tow, some juggling of vessels was necessary. The Isabel dropped the Rosalia to tie the hawser to the Fanny, the larger of the two ships. The Rosalia, in turn, was attached to the stern of the Fanny. All three vessels continued their way toward the Strait of Juan de Fuca. The weather was fine until 11:00 p.m., when a stiff breeze sprang up. At the same time the vessels left the lee of the San Juan Islands. By midnight, the wind had changed direction and was blowing strongly from the southeast. Hampered by her tows, the Isabel became cranky in the rising seas. To reduce the drag and thinking it a safe enough manoeuvre, Captain Pamphlet requested the Fanny to cast off the Rosalia.

Unfamiliar with the coast and without a pilot on board, Captain Endeiza had no idea where he was. After beating about until 5:00 a.m. he dropped an anchor in 45 fathoms of water. The anchor was lost, and his vessel was driven ashore on the south end of Discovery Island. Grounding in an exposed location, she received the full sweep of the wind and waves and before day dawned her bottom was completely out. All hands got off the ship safely. The day after the wrecking the Rosalia was reported lying on her port bilge, her head toward Burrard Inlet. The steamer Fly visited the wreck on March 23rd and reported the vessel had gone to pieces, her rigging, loose timbers, and cargo floating in the surf. The March 25th edition of the Colonist noted that the Rosalia had been beaten to fragments.

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A year later, Gustave Dussol launched a suit for damages against the Isabel's owners, Captain Stamp, and the Vancouver Island Spar & Lumber Company. He contended that negligence on the part of Captain Pamphlet resulted in the loss of the Rosalia. After 41 days of litigation the jury decided in favour of the defendants, stating that Captain Pamphlet was not guilty of negligence and did not cause the loss of the Rosalia. Rather, they found that the master of the Rosalia neither possessed nor used much skill. If he had, the Rosalia would not have been lost.

The wreck of the Rosalia, with all her cargo and appointments was valued at \$14,000 and was auctioned to R. Broderick for \$430. On March 30th, several rafts of lumber were saved from the wreck and towed to safety. A final raft of lumber is towed into Victoria harbour 20 April 1868. Soon after the vessel disappeared entirely.



Fanny would have looked like this Quebec built Ship Peter Joynson 956 tons.

Unknown Chinese Artist

Fanny

For the second dive we headed north to the wreck of the Fanny. After a brief surface interval, we placed our marker on site and then tried to find the wreck. Today's mission was to collect data on the windlass and look for more artifacts. Again, visibility and thick kelp coverage made finding anything very difficult. Fortunately, on this site most of the wreck can be found by following the anchor chain. The site is about 10m deep and has a sand and rock bottom. The goal was to get improved GPS coordinates and complete photogrammetry on the windlass. Unfortunately, the Laminaria leaf kelp was so thick it was difficult to find artifacts. We were able to get improved GPS coordinates and we were also able to clean the kelp off the windlass and photograph it.

The Fanny was built in Quebec and launched in the spring of 1856. Ship-rigged, she measured 176 feet long, 35 feet wide, by 23 feet deep. Registered tonnage was 910 tons. She was carvel-built with timbers such as Tamarac, Oak, Spruce, and Red Pine.

On Thursday, 19 March 1868, the Fanny set sail from Nanaimo with 1330 tons of coal bound for San Francisco. Be-calmed off Sand Heads she joined the Rosalia as previously described. Minutes after the Rosalia was cast off, the Fannys

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hawser parted. Before her sails could be set, she was driven ashore on the east side of Discovery Island. Owing to her heavy cargo she settled quickly on the rocks and became full of water. The captain, crew, and four passengers escaped the wreck in the ship's boats. The Fanny and her cargo were not insured.

The Colonist reported that the passengers' baggage, sails, and a portion of the rigging were brought ashore shortly after the vessel wrecked. More of the rigging and some of her spars were recovered by the steamer Fly on 23 March. The Fanny and her cargo were auctioned off on an "as is, where is" basis. The vessel and cargo were knocked down to R. Brodrick for \$1100. Brodrick, in turn, sold the vessel to the Lowe Brothers for \$900 profit.

Captain Frain, under contract, stripped the Fanny of all things of value, including some of her anchors and chains. Later a hole reportedly was cut in the side of the wreck to salvage the coal.

The UASBC has been documenting this wreck since 1988 when scattered rudder pintels and a large Admiralty pattern anchor were found. The attached anchor chain led to the bow section of the large wooden wreck. The stern and midship sections were found in 1989.

The wreck was then surveyed in 1990 with further dives in 2024 and on today's dive.

The wreck is broken into three distinct sections. The bow lies in 9.7 meters (32 feet) of water at the channel entrance on a 1.9-meter tide height, while the stern and amidship portions are found within the bay to the west in 7.9 meters of water. Marine borers have reduced this once-proud ship to a pile of rusting deck knees, scattered drift bolts, and other ship's fastenings. Some wooden structural members still exist but these are buried in the sand bottom.

The bow section is perhaps the most fascinating part of the wreck. The key feature of the bow is a distinctive 3.6-meter (12-foot) bower anchor. It was likely dropped at the time of wrecking to try keep the ship off the rocks. It is still attached to the forward part of the ship by a stud link chain which runs 23 meters at 347 degrees from the anchor across the rocky reef and then drops on to the sand where it flows through a steel hawse pipe. Each link of the chain is 28 centimeters in length. From the hawse pipe 7.6 meters at 032 degrees the chain crosses over a jumble of rigging material consisting of several iron knees, 2 rigging blocks, a small winch and a carronade. The carronade is 1.15 meters long 35 centimeters in diameter at the breech end and 17 centimeters in diameter at the muzzle end. It has trunnions that are 12 centimeters in diameter. The bore is 10 centimeters in diameter. Preliminary research suggests the carronade was a nine-pounder built by the Carron Foundry in the early 1800s.

From the crown of the anchor, it is 30 meters at 148 degrees to the remains of the ship's windlass. The windlass was videoed to develop a photogrammetry model. Unfortunately, we didn't capture all parts of the windlass so a model could not be produced. We did take some basic measurements. The central shaft measures 4.1 meters long. The wooden elements are gone. The Iron Pawl-rim measured 1.1 meter in diameter and is 40 centimeters wide. The two purchase rims are present, and they measured 1.1 meters in diameter by 15 centimeters wide.

The midsection of the wreck is somewhat nondescript. It measures 40 meters in length by 12 meters wide and is made up of buried hull planking and a jumble of iron deck knees. The key feature of this section is a large timber measuring 9.7 meters long by 70 centimeters across. It is thought to be part of the rider keelson making up part of the central keel structure.

The stern is defined by the ship's stern post with two gudgeons still attached. Measurements were taken on the most intact gudgeon. It is 108 centimeters long by 43 centimeters wide outside to outside. Internally, it is 38 centimeters wide which would be the width of the sternpost. The gudgeon hole is 10 centimeters (3 inches) in diameter.

Hopefully we can visit these wrecks again when there is better visibility since they are conveniently close to Victoria and suitable for divers of all skill levels.



Dive Into History

Come and Help Celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Underwater Archaeological Society of BC



When: Saturday 18 October 2025

Where: Royal Colwood Golf Club, Victoria, BC.

Come and take part in a weekend of fun!

The celebration kicks off with a mini conference at the Royal Colwood Golf Club from 1:00 - 5:00 PM on Saturday.

This portion of the celebration will feature an overview of UASBC accomplishments followed by several short 20-min-ute presentations on topics that range from UASBC specific projects, to the work of other maritime archaeology groups in Canada and the US, to government sponsored maritime archaeology work. The finalized schedule will be released soon.

The afternoon session will be followed by a buffet dinner and a keynote speaker.

Jonathan Moore Manager, of the Parks Canada Underwater Archaeology Team will speak to the history and evolution of maritime archaeology in Canada and his interactions with UASBC over the last 50 years.

On Sunday we will dive on the Panther and Robert Kerr, two of the first wrecks visited by the UASBC.



Ship Reporter similar to Panther



Robert Kerr in Esquimalt Drydock

It's going to be a great weekend! Participants will learn about UASBC accomplishments, more about local shipwrecks, the role of federal and provincial government agencies in protecting shipwrecks and shipwreck experts from across Canada and the USA will be in attendance.

The Conference fee is \$100 which includes the afternoon session, dinner and the evening keynote. The Saturday day session ticket can be purchased through the shop on the UASBC website. We will have special 50th Anniversary apparel for sale at the Saturday session.

The diving on Sunday will be \$100 for the two-dive charter. To reserve a spot contact Jacques jmarc@shaw.ca. We will have a limited number of dive spots.

If you are from out-of-town, Langford/Colwood have several hotels. The hotels closest to our festivities are the Holiday Inn Express and Solo Suites. More reasonably priced hotels can be found along Gorge Road.

We are expecting a sold-out event, so register early to avoid disappointment.

2025 Fall Diving Schedule

Saturday August 30th John Rosenfeld Documentation

We will be heading out to continue our search for and documentation of the sailing ship John Rosenfeld which sank off Tumbo Island in 1886. The UASBC visited this site last August and found several larger pieces of wreckage in 50-60 feet of water. The goal will be to relocate these pieces and document them. After checking out Tumbo Island Reef we will continue our search for the Cowper. There may be some current during these dives so divers should have some experience with current. This trip will depart from Tulista boat launch in Sidney.

Cost: \$100.00 per person. Maximum 10 divers.

Contact Jacques (250) 474-5797 or email: jmarc@shaw.ca.

Saturday & Sunday, September 27 & 28th Underwater Archaeology for Divers Course

The UAD course is a 20-hour long course and consists of 8 modules online, a pool session and an open water dive. Graduates receive a Certificate of Achievement for successfully completing the course.

The cost per person is \$250 for UASBC members and \$290 for non-members.

For more details or to register call Jacques (250) 474-5797 or email: jmarc@shaw.ca

Sunday, October 5th

On this trip we will visit the Nanette site on Race Rocks and the Barnard Castle in Pilot Bay. The Nanette was a wooden sailing barque that was wrecked on Race Rocks December 27, 1860. It eventually drifted off leaving much of its cargo on the bottom. The Barnard Castle was a coal collier that struck Race Rocks and sank in Pilot Bay in 1886. We will continue our radial survey on the Nanette. We want to check kelp growth on the Barnard Castle since we did photogrammetry. There may be some current during the first dive, but we will be using a live boat for pickup. We will depart from Pedder Bay

Cost: \$100.00 per person. Limit 7 divers.

Contact Jacques (250) 474-5797 or email: jmarc@shaw.ca.

Sunday, October 19th Robert Kerr and Panther Wrecks

The UASBC turns 50 Years old on 9 October 2025. As part of our 50th celebrations we are doing dives on the Robert Kerr and Panther. The Panther was the site of the underwater Archaeology workshop that led to the creation of the UASBC. Both dives are shallow 30-50 feet and are suitable for all diver levels.

Departure location has not been confirmed but will most likely be Maple Bay.

Maximum 16 divers. Cost \$100.00 per person.

To register contact Jacques Marc (250) 474-5797 or email: jmarc@shaw.ca.

Sunday, November 9th Hampden 5433 Plane Wreck

On November 9, 2024, we placed an underwater memorial plaque on the wreck of the Hampden Bomber in Saanich Inlet. We will revisit the site to see how the plaque looks. Our second dive will be on a nearby reef. We will depart from Tulista Boat Launch in Sidney.

Charter cost \$100 per person. Limit 10 divers.

To register contact Jacques Marc (250) 474-5797 or email: jmarc@shaw.ca.

Victoria Exploration Speaker Series Fall 2025

**Meetings are held on the third Wednesday
of each month at 7 PM**

**For Further Information Contact: Craig Bellamy
cbellamy0275@gmail.com**



June 18, 2025 Victoria Meeting

September 17 - A Trail of Empty Bottles

Have you ever come across an old bottle while you were diving and wondered what it was used for and how old it is? Tom Bown is an expert on old bottles. Tom will explain how to identify and date your bottle. Feel free to bring a bottle find to the meeting as a discussion piece. Tom Bown is a volunteer research associate in archaeology at the Royal British Columbia Museum and is on the executive of the Archaeological Society of BC.

October 15 -RCMP Dive Program

Jay White will provide a brief overview of the RCMP dive program and training undertaken by RCMP divers, followed by the presentation of a case study of a float home fire and sinking where NAS techniques were used to excavate the scene to locate a missing person and determine what had occurred.

Sgt. G.E. (Jay) White is the RCMP National URT Training Coordinator responsible for training all RCMP Underwater Recovery divers in Canada. Jay has been diving for 42 years, including 26 years as a Police Diver and recently completed his 1600th police dive for the RCMP. He has been an instructor in the diving world for 37 years, and teaching police divers for 21 years. He is also a side-scan sonar operator and ROV pilot for the RCMP. Jay's RCMP dive career has seen him attend dive operations in every Province and Territory in Canada except for the Yukon.

November 19 - Fleet Dive Unit Operations

Petty Officer Cole Wood will provide an overview of Fleet Dive Unit operations and will talk specifically about searching for and dealing with Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) in Canadian waters.

Vancouver Exploration Speaker Series Fall 2025

**Meetings are held on the last Wednesday
of each month at 7 PM at the
Vancouver Maritime Museum (1905 Ogden Avenue).**

**For Further Information Contact: Tom Beasley
tbeasley@telus.net**

**September 24 - Connecting Coastal Arctic Communities Through Relational Archaeologies of Place
Presenter: Dr. Samantha Walker, UBC, Assistant Professor without review (Anthropology)**

Inuit often describe their homeland as nalunaqtuq (uncanny, ineffable) to convey how the land, water, and ice are in constant flux and inseparable from knowledge and identity. In this talk, Sam Walker explores how approaching people and places as mutual participants in the making of communities permits new perspectives on past social worlds and living heritage. She will discuss projects in the High Arctic Islands that integrate community-based archaeological research and non-invasive technologies to examine Tuniit/Paleo-Inuit (c. 2500 BCE–1350 CE) and Ancestral Inuit (c.1150–1600 CE) social structures and identities. She will also discuss the application of these methods in the community-based management of climate risks to heritage sites. The result is a collaborative research framework that addresses broader issues of intellectual authority, social agency, and heritage stewardship in a changing Arctic.

**Please refer to
WWW.UASBC.COM for latest Updates!**

Presidents Message

By: Keith Bossons



Hello Everyone,

I hope everyone is having a great summer.

The UABC turns 50 this year. This is a major milestone for our Society and we are planning a celebration this coming October. The event will be on the weekend of October 18 with speakers and a dinner on the Saturday and dives on the Panther and Robert Kerr on the Sunday. Complete details are provided elsewhere in this newsletter. We expect a big turn out for this event so book early to secure your spot.

For an organization like ours to still be growing strong after 50 years is quite an accomplishment. The UASBC has a tremendous legacy and we should all take the time to reflect on the members past and present who have contributed to this amazing story.

The Speakers Series events kick off in Victoria on September 17 in Victoria with a presentation by Tom Bown on how to identify and date old bottles. Next, there will be a presentation in Vancouver on September 24 where Dr. Samantha Walker will discuss projects in the High Arctic Islands that integrate community-based archaeological research and non-invasive technologies to examine Tuniit/Paleo-Inuit and Ancestral Inuit social structures and identities. More details on these events are provided elsewhere in this newsletter.

Finally, the fall dive schedule is out with the first dive planned for August 30. As usual, Jacques has done a wonderful job on planning and organizing the dive schedule for the fall. Full details are included in this newsletter, and you can sign up for the dives by going to our website.

All the best and enjoy the rest of your summer

*All the best
Keith Bossons
UASBC President*

**Please refer to
WWW.UASBC.COM for latest Updates!**

The Pioneer Steam Tug KASLO – An Unlucky Workhorse

By Michael Cone



Among the vessels that sailed the inland waters of British Columbia in the late 1800s, some were more prone to mishaps than others, and consequently, their careers were brief. This was true of the steam tug Kaslo, which was built in 1892 and burned to the waterline in 1900. In the 1890s, pioneer steamers on Kootenay Lake were piloted with limited instrumentation and few buoys and lighthouses to steer by. The captain's knowledge of the lake was critical in keeping these early vessels from grounding. Constructed entirely of wood, they were highly susceptible to fire from many sources: from intense flames raging in their fireboxes, improperly stored oily rags, candles and lamps glowing close to fabrics and woodwork, and sparks flying from their smokestacks. All created dangers that required constant vigilance on the part of the crew and a little luck.

In the summer of 1889, George Buchanan established a sawmill near the mouth of Mill

Creek, on the south side of Kootenay Lake's west arm, about 14 miles east of Nelson, in what is now known as Harrop. The machinery for his new Kootenay Lake Sawmill was hauled in from Kootenai Station, Idaho. Not long after the mill operations

were in full swing, George's older brother, James, a steam engineer by trade, joined the firm and was responsible for keeping the machinery running smoothly. A short time later, Robert Yuill, a well-known entrepreneur and trail builder, also joined the growing company. Before long, Robert and James decided to build a tug to handle log towing chores to the mill and provide general jobbing.

Construction of the Kaslo began at the Mill Creek sawmill early in 1892. She was first mentioned in the Nelson paper, *The Miner*, on January 9th, which noted that the new tug would be 65 feet long, draw about 5 ½ feet and would "swing a 4-foot propeller." The Kaslo's hull was described as being designed in "the fashion of the Grand Banks fishing schooner," which may have been true, given that the man responsible for modelling her lines was David Stephenson, a native of Saint John, New Brunswick. It was rumored that she cost \$8,000. Kaslo's final hull dimensions were 62 feet long, 13.5 feet wide and 6 feet deep. She was licensed to carry 15 passengers.

After being inspected in early September, the *Miner* expressed the owners' sentiments, saying "The only pity is that she was not in the water sooner. A great part of the season has been lost." When she steamed into Kaslo Bay for the first time on September 6th, 1892, she was saluted by the thunder of gunpowder.

Only a few months into her career, the Kaslo recorded her first mishap. It happened on January 29th, 1893, while she was working at Tom Procter's logging camp near the Outlet. One of her propeller blades struck an underwater object and broke, leaving her unable to move. Then, the unexpected happened. A sudden cold snap set in and lasted for days, freezing most of the West Arm. The tug's hull was soon encased in thick ice along the waterline, and she remained stranded for a few days before being freed by the sternwheeler *Nelson*.

Having begun 1893 with a mishap, the Kaslo closed the season with a far more serious misadventure. Contracted to deliver some packhorses to Lardeau, she left Kaslo mid-morning on December 12th with her barge and the horses. The lake was rough and there was a strong wind blowing from the south. Having barely made it across Kaslo Bay, the winter gale worsened, and as a safety measure, the barge was put out on a tow line astern. Suddenly, the 4-inch line started to unravel and while the crew was trying to secure a new line to the barge, the old line became entangled in the propeller, disabling the tug. Despite the crew's back-breaking efforts, nothing could be done to stop the Kaslo from crashing against the rocks. Later that afternoon, the steamer *Nelson* came to the Kaslo's assistance. However, the Kaslo's crew refused to accept the *Nelson's* tow line. The tug's hull was starting to take in water, and not knowing the full extent of the damage, her crew feared that if she was pulled into deeper water, she might sink.

Quick thinking by Bob Yuill, and his crew saved the day and prevented what would have otherwise been a serious loss. Using heavy timbers, a "Spanish windlass" was rigged on both sides of the tug's stern. A line was passed under the hull and was tightened by the windlass and slowly raised the Kaslo's stern high enough for the propeller and rudder to clear the menacing boulders beneath. According to *Bonner's Ferry's Kootenai Herald*, the wreck didn't "go down much because she is laying on a rocky beach, but her hull is considerably broken up."

It took a crew of five men three weeks to raise the Kaslo in January 1894. They did this by rigging ropes under her hull, both at the bow and stern, and then, with the tug positioned between two barges, she was slowly winched to the surface. The tension on the lines was sufficient to hold her upright while she was taken back to Kaslo Bay, where she was hauled up on the beach and repaired.

The big news of 1894 was the opening of the impressive Pilot Bay Smelter, which had been under construction for over two years. Early in 1895, it leased the Kaslo for towing barge loads of ore from the Blue Bell mine to the smelter.

During her career as a smelter tug, she was skippered by Captain Allan Lean. It was during this time that Kootenay historian Edward Affleck relates the story of an exchange between Captain Lean and smelter owner, Andrew Hendryx. One day, the captain burst into the smelter office and announced that he had lost a barge load of ore in the lake. When later confronted by Hendryx about the incident, the quick-witted captain acknowledged what had happened and then said, "it might have been worse." "How the devil could it be worse sir," snapped Hendryx. Captain Lean's reply: "Well, you might have had to try and smelt the damn stuff."

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The worst marine disaster on Kootenay Lake occurred on the evening of November 29th, 1898. Nine lives were lost when the little sternwheeler City of Ainsworth capsized in a winter gale shortly after leaving Pilot Bay. In the midst of the storm, Captain Allan Lean (formerly of the Kaslo) and two crewmembers managed to secure a lifeboat and after seeing that all the survivors were safely ashore, returned to Pilot Bay. There, they commandeered the Kaslo and went back to the scene to retrieve the other survivors huddled around a campfire on shore. Later, the Kaslo attempted to tow the capsized wreck back to Pilot Bay, but the sternwheeler sank en route.

Throughout most of 1899, the Kaslo sat idle at Pilot Bay. Her fortune changed for the better in October, when the CPR leased her to assist the tug Ymir in towing 12-car railway barges back and forth between Kootenay Landing and Nelson. Typically, railcars heading west to Nelson were full, while those travelling east were empty.

After being on the barge run for just under three months, the Kaslo's career ended abruptly in the early morning hours of January 14, 1900. While moored between two barges at the CPR barge slip at Nelson, flames were suddenly spotted around 3:30 am in the engine room. Within minutes, the engine room was completely ablaze, leaving the crew no choice but to abandon the burning tug.

Meanwhile, Captain Lean grabbed an axe and set out in a rowboat to try to scuttle the burning tug so that her machinery wouldn't warp in the heat of the fire and become worthless. He smashed holes into the hull's midsection, and she sank in four feet of water.

In the fall of 2016, a team from the Underwater Archeological Society of British Columbia (UASBC), consisting of John Pollack, Kathleen McGuiness, and Cathy McCuaig performed side scan sonar searches of the West Arm opposite the Nelson airport runway and further upstream beyond the city wharf. The team identified two large objects lying on the bottom of the Arm. UASBC scuba divers Bill Meekel and Brian Nadwidny undertook two dives to investigate the targets. One of the wrecks was found to be the charred remains of the Kaslo. This was confirmed with measurements and visual inspection. Up until then, it had been assumed that the old tug's burnt bones had simply deteriorated on the beach with time. This discovery brought to a close the story of the hardworking pioneer tug and allows her ghosts to rest peacefully.



The remains of the tug Kaslo as photographed and examined by Brian Nadwidny and Bill Meekel.

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