

Woodwind II unable to be salvaged



The Woodwind II on Jan. 8 was being cut into pieces before being hauled to a landfill. Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

CAVE ROCK – Loud crunching sounds could be heard as a 50,000-pound excavator destroyed the Woodwind II. Grown men were somber witnessing the destruction of what was once a beautiful vessel that graced the waters of Lake Tahoe.

The catamaran broke from its mooring Dec. 11 during the windstorm at Lake Tahoe and became stuck on rocks near Zephyr Cove. While this is always a rocky area, it's even shallower with the lake level being so low.

That Zephyr Cove mooring field a few years ago switched from the typical concrete block type anchors to screw auger type anchors. The new ones are not as secure, according to boat owners.

It was expected to take several hours Jan. 8 to breakdown the entire 55-foot-vessel.

Much of the damage was to the starboard side. Punctures in the hull and pontoon damage were extensive.

“The crane is utilized to pull some of the components out,” Dan Rikalo with Connolly Crane Service told *Lake Tahoe News*.

All the pieces will be taken to the Carson City Landfill.

Diesel from the vessel was taken off a while ago to prevent any spillage into Lake Tahoe.

It was towed to Cave Rock boat ramp on Jan. 7, then hauled out of the water with a large tow truck by its rudders.

Kevin McMullen of Keefe Kaplan Maritime in Richmond was at the dock Thursday morning to get the mast.

“We will cut it up. The insurance company wants it cut up. I hope they save it. It’s a beautiful mast,” McMullen told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Steve Dunham, who operates Tahoe Cruises, could not be reached for comment. He is down to one boat – the Safari Rose. She is currently at the Tahoe City Marina. The original Woodwind, which was a trimaran, also met its demise when it washed ashore. An operating permit for a tour boat at Lake Tahoe is a coveted item, so it’s possible there could be a Woodwind III.