

# Marine Debris

OFFICE OF RESPONSE AND RESTORATION • NOAA'S NATIONAL OCEAN SERVICE

## NOAA Marine Debris Program and Abandoned & Derelict Vessels



Abandoned and derelict vessels (ADV) threaten our oceans, coasts, and waterways by obstructing navigational channels, causing harm to the environment, and diminishing commercial and recreational activities. Assessing, removing, and disposing of these vessels requires significant financial and technical resources, which many states and territories lack. In addition, a number of federal agencies have different mandates and authorities to respond to abandoned and derelict vessels.



A derelict vessel can be a hazard to the environment. *Photo courtesy of D. Helton, NOAA OR&R.*

In order to bring together the expertise of states and territories in responding to this issue, the NOAA Marine Debris Program coordinated the first national workshop in September 2009 to discuss the topic. The goals of the workshop were to (1) identify and document best practices for preventing, removing, and disposing of ADVs; (2) enhance communication among states that have ADV programs and those looking to build them; (3) identify areas of need for technical assistance; and (4) share information on federal agencies' ADV interests and resources.

The Program also coordinated field assessments of derelict vessels, including two fishing vessels in American Samoa in 2008 and a barge in Fairfax County, Virginia, in 2009. The American Samoa report assessed the feasibility and options for removing two vessels and a debris field from a third vessel based on hull surveys, setting, local assets, and disposal options. The Virginia survey consisted of an engine room survey, structural analysis, and a survey of local assets for removal and disposal. The final report of the assessment provided a number of removal options for the local constituency to consider.

**Marine debris is**  
any persistent solid material  
that is manufactured or  
processed and directly or indirectly,  
intentionally or unintentionally,  
disposed of or abandoned into the  
marine environment or the  
Great Lakes.

## PARTNERS

- Federal Agencies (NOAA, U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Federal Emergency Management Agency, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Navy)
- Coastal States and U.S. Territories
- Sea Grant Law Center
- National Association of State Boating Law Administrators
- Alice Ferguson Foundation

## BENEFITS

- Highlight the negative impacts of ADVs on natural resources
- Share successful practices for vessel removal and disposal
- Develop methods to better prevent vessel abandonment
- Improve understanding of state laws related to ADVs
- Identify gaps in federal agency mandates and authorities



Abandoned vessels can also be a hazard to safe navigation. *Photo courtesy of D. Dipre, Florida FWC.*

## CONTACTS

Neal Parry  
Program Analyst  
NOAA Marine Debris Program  
Neal.Parry@noaa.gov

Kris McElwee  
Pacific Islands Program Coordinator  
NOAA Marine Debris Program  
Kris.McElwee@noaa.gov

For more information visit  
[www.marinedebris.noaa.gov/projects/](http://www.marinedebris.noaa.gov/projects/)