

Pacific States / British Columbia Oil Spill Task Force
Abandoned and Derelict Vessels Workgroup

*The Current State of Abandoned and Derelict Vessels
on the West Coast – White Paper*

FINAL



Point Estero (CA) Fishing Boat. *Photo provided by CA OSPR*

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This white paper is the product of the Pacific States/British Columbia Oil Spill Task Force Abandoned and Derelict Vessel (ADV) Work Group. This white paper is intended as an internal workgroup reference document, for the purpose of developing a “Blue Ribbon” model ADV program.

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Executive Summary

This white paper was created by the Pacific States/British Columbia Oil Spill Task Force (Task Force) Abandoned and Derelict Vessel Work Group (ADV Work Group). It provides a high-level overview of the problem of abandoned and derelict vessels (ADV) across Task Force jurisdictions and elsewhere, and summarizes measures in place and obstacles to address the problem. This document is intended for workgroup members (Task Force members and affiliates from state ADV programs) to help guide the development of a “Blue Ribbon” model program for all Task Force states and the province of British Columbia to comprehensively address the problem of abandoned and derelict vessels. This Blue Ribbon program could also be implemented in other jurisdictions lacking a comprehensive ADV program.

Some overarching conclusions include:

- The problem of ADVs includes both commercial and recreational vessels.
- The majority of ADVs are recreational, yet commercial vessels are typically larger and on a per vessel basis, can cost several orders of magnitude more than recreational vessels to remove.
- In addition to a steady stream of newly abandoned vessels, most states also face an increasing backlog of existing or “legacy” ADVs.
- In general, government policies have not been created to address this problem. For example, there are significant discrepancies between how abandoned cars and abandoned vessels are addressed.
- In the US, there is no comprehensive federal program. The few federal agencies that are involved in this issue (the US Coast Guard and the US Army Corp of Engineers) have limited roles.
- State programs vary widely. Only one (Washington) can be called comprehensive. Most state programs have insufficient funding to address ADVs.
- In Canada, the federal Abandoned and Wrecked Vessel Act is comprehensive yet underfunded, and this federal program takes precedent over provincial programs.
- No jurisdiction has a comprehensive outreach and education program associated with ADVs.

A program to address the ADV problem should include the following five elements:

1. Authority
2. Funding
3. Removal and Deconstruction
4. Prevention
5. Public Outreach and Education

While detailed analyses on the scope of the problem are limited, it is possible to estimate the magnitude. On average, each Task Force state or province has dozens of abandoned and derelict commercial vessels and hundreds of recreational vessels. Most of these are legacies of the past, but new vessels are abandoned each year. The average cost to remove a commercial vessel is typically around \$1 million. The average cost to remove a recreational vessel is approximately \$3,000. **The total cost to address the backlog of legacy vessels is estimated at over \$20 million for each state or province.** The cost to annually manage the on-going ADV problem per jurisdiction is predicted at about \$5 million per year.

Background/Context

The Task Force created the Abandoned and Derelict Vessel Workgroup (ADV Work Group) in 2018 with representatives from each of the six Task Force jurisdictions: Alaska, British Columbia, California, Hawaii, Oregon, and Washington. The purpose of forming the Work Group was to examine the issue of ADVs, focusing especially on solutions that have been attempted or implemented. The inquiry was focused on the member states and provinces of the Task Force, but it also extended to other states with well-developed programs and a review of federal programs in the US. This document summarizes the results of the review. It is intended to serve as a starting point for creating a “Blue Ribbon” model program consisting of recommendations that may be implemented by jurisdictions to address their own ADV issues.

This document examines the various government programs with respect to five programmatic elements:

1. Authority
2. Funding
3. Removal and Deconstruction
4. Prevention
5. Public Outreach and Education

Rather than provide exhaustive details on each program with respect to each element, this document focuses on the most developed programs and unique program elements that exist today. This white paper is not intended to be an encyclopedia of ADV programs, but rather a summary of the most significant and unique program elements across the various Task Force government agencies.

Definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms are defined.

Abandoned – the legal condition of the vessel, in terms of ownership.

Derelict – the physical condition of the vessel, in terms of seaworthiness. (Note: in Canada, the term "wrecked" is more commonly used.)

Commercial/Recreational – the original intent of the vessel usage as built (e.g. an old tug converted to a houseboat would be a commercial vessel.).

Section 1. Authority

Authority refers to the legal authority of a governing agency to declare a vessel “abandoned” and thus remove and dispose of it. Most jurisdictions have sufficient authority to declare vessels abandoned or derelict. In nearly all states, multiple state agencies, local municipalities, and (in Alaska) even private owners of tidelands, may declare vessels abandoned or derelict and subject to removal. There is typically a notice requirement, such as a 10 to 30-day notice posted on a vessel, before an agency can take possession of the vessel. This waiting period is often waived if the vessel poses a threat to navigation, human health, or the environment, allowing the state to take either temporary or permanent possession of the vessel.

The authority of federal agencies is restricted to certain situations. The US Coast Guard will respond to vessels spilling or threatening to spill oil or hazardous substances. However, once the pollution threat has been removed, they will typically cease involvement. This can mean returning a raised vessel to its original location in the waterway. On occasion, the US Coast Guard will take a vessel to a nearby port or shipyard for disposal.

The US Army Corp of Engineers will only remove a vessel if it is a threat to a major navigation channel, or within their authority zone around a dam or other infrastructure.

Conclusion

It is important for responding agencies to have legal authority to declare vessels abandoned. It is also important that this authority, or a legal process to declare a vessel abandoned, extend to landowners in cases where waterways or tidelands are privately owned. It is also important that the authority loophole illustrated by the *Point Estero* example is addressed and that federal and state authorities and funding structures are better aligned.

Program Loopholes: Authority



In 2017, the *Point Estero* ran aground near Cayucos State Beach, California. The US Coast Guard removed the oil but then departed. Vessel removal costs were estimated at \$70,000. The uninsured owner walked away. The vessel was not eligible for the state’s recreational ADV program, and there is no commercial program. Both the county and the State Lands Commission have authority to remove the vessel, but no funding to do so. As of 2019, the vessel remains.

Section 2. Funding

While most governments have authority to address abandoned and derelict vessels, few have sufficient funds to do so. Sufficient funding includes:

- 1) a reliable revenue collection mechanism, possibly separate for recreational and commercial vessels; and
- 2) a mechanism for distributing the funds in a timely manner to contractors or local or state agencies for vessel removal, vessel turn-in, or other program elements.

Revenue collection

The following three Task Force Jurisdictions have revenue collecting mechanisms in place for funding aspects of ADV management.

The state of Washington has a well-established program for revenue collection. The state collects a \$3 annual fee on recreational vessels at registration, and a \$1 per linear foot annual fee on commercial vessels at registration. The fees collected in Washington are then housed in a single account which can be accessed for response to either commercial or recreational vessels. In contrast, several other states do not require state registration for commercial vessels, instead relying on US Coast Guard documentation. Because many commercial vessels only visit a state a few times a year, the collection of fees from commercial vessels requires the delineation of which vessels are subject to the fee. In Washington, the following vessel types are subject to a commercial vessel fee:

- Vessels used exclusively for commercial fishing purposes
- US Coast Guard documented vessels used primarily for commercial purposes such as charter, time-share boats, tugs and barges

Oregon collects fees on recreational vessels for titles and registration and deposits \$150,000 per biennium into an ADV fund. These funds may be used for both recreational and commercial vessel removal.

California also collects revenues specifically for ADV programs, though it is limited to only recreational vessels. California raises funds primarily through a surcharge on marine fuel. This effectively shifts the tax burden from boat ownership to boat usage. Those who use their vessels more pay more. Because the fuel surcharge is sometimes paid by commercial vessels buying fuel at the same source, commercial vessels can save their receipts and apply for a refund at the end of the year. Thus, while some commercial vessels (smaller ones) may pay the fee, they can be reimbursed.

Other states

Like Washington and Oregon, Texas and Florida make no distinction between commercial and recreational vessels in terms of removal for their ADV programs. Funding for their programs

comes from a variety of sources, such as legal fines and penalties, leases, grants. The revenues go into a fund that may be used for commercial or recreational ADV.

Of other states that collect fees for a recreational ADV program, Maryland charges a 5% tax when a recreational vessel is purchased and titled in the state. This raises sufficient funds for removal of recreational ADVs in the state. They have no funding or program for commercial ADVs. Mississippi funds their ADV program with funds from tideland leases.

Funding practicalities

Washington, Oregon, and California all have programs in which state funds are given to local or other state agencies for vessel removal. In all three states, the receiving agency must contribute 10% of the removal cost, but this is usually covered by a staff-time contribution. Thus, the actual cost of contracting with a salvor is paid with state funds.

Two more significant funding-related obstacles are: 1) delays in the granting and contracting processes, during which time a vessel may sink or break up making the salvage considerably more expensive, and 2) requirements for local agencies to front the money and seek reimbursement later, which may preclude their participation. Both of these issues are especially problematic with California's recreational ADV program. In Washington, on the contrary, agencies must front the money, but can get a guarantee of reimbursement. Additionally, Washington has a process whereby local agencies can quickly hire pre-vetted contractors.

Funding adequacy

The cost of vessel removal is highly variable, with a distribution heavily skewed toward relatively inexpensive removals. A small, floating recreational boat that can be put on a trailer and hauled to a dump may cost as little as \$100 to remove. As vessels get larger and cannot be put on a trailer or sinks, the removal costs increase by several orders of magnitude. **The average cost to remove a recreational vessel, based on data from Washington and California, is about \$3,000. The cost to remove a large, sunken commercial vessel can reach over \$1 million.**

Washington collects its fees, as described above, from approximately 250,000 recreational vessels and 1,700 commercial vessels, raising about \$800,000 per year. The ADV program receives an additional \$250,000 per year from other sources, bringing their total annual budget to a little over \$1 million. Washington has found this sum to be insufficient. The removal of a single commercial ADV can quickly exhaust funds otherwise available for recreational ADV removal.

Oregon's revenue collections raise only \$150,000 per biennium for both recreational and commercial ADVs, making the state dependent on special allocations for any large vessel removal.

California raises about \$2 million per year through its fuel surcharge and some additional budget appropriations earmarked exclusively for recreational vessel removal and a recreational vessel turn-in program. California has likewise found this amount to be insufficient, rationing its grants among participating counties and local agencies. At the same time, many jurisdictions in California do not even apply for the grants, due to the obstacles described above, suggesting that the funding need, for recreational ADVs only, is likely many times the current budget. Experience in Washington and California suggest that **an annual budget of at least \$4 million is required to meet California's need for recreational vessels alone.**

It is important to note that more funds are needed in the short run to address the backlog of legacy vessels. Once these are addressed, a smaller amount of funding would be required annually to address the regular flow of new ADVs, which ideally can be minimized thru vessel turn-in programs and other preventative measures.

With regard to commercial vessels only, California estimated it needed \$30 million to address a backlog of 52 commercial ADVs in just the Sacramento/San Joaquin Delta. The analysis assumed the state could not feasibly address all 52 vessels in a single year, and thus proposed the legacy cleanup be spread over several years. The analysis also estimated that in the Delta commercial vessels are abandoned at a rate of about two per year. This would suggest that California, in addition to the removal of legacy vessels, would need at least \$1 million annually, and probably \$2 million, to address the annual stream of commercial ADVs. Other states and provinces would likely need a similar or lesser amount, depending on their relative number of vessels.

Removal Challenges: *Occupied Vessels*



Occupied vessels are another hurdle. People who would otherwise be homeless may inhabit derelict vessels. They may or may not claim ownership. They often live in boats that are in various states of disrepair, do not have the ability to handle sewage appropriately, and are financially and/or mentally unable to maintain them. Concentrations of these vessels, such as in Portland, Oregon or Richardson Bay, California, are associated with increased crime and pollution. In stormy weather, occupied vessels sometimes sink, resulting in drownings. Efforts to remove these vessels are complicated by community concerns regarding the homeless.

Conclusion

Funding is a major obstacle in most states. Very few states have funding for both recreational and commercial ADV programs and few states have dedicated funding just for recreational ADV programs. And many states have no dedicated funding at all. For most states, funding is limited and insufficient to meet the annual need, let alone a large lump sum to address the legacy vessels.

Section 3. Removal and Deconstruction

Vessel removal involves several steps. The first is simply locating and prioritizing ADVs through a tracking system. While smaller vessels can be put on a trailer and taken to a landfill, larger vessels and sunken vessels pose a much greater challenge. This section focuses on the considerable challenges associated with large vessel removal.

Tracking database

The first step to any removal plan is locating, assessing, and prioritizing the abandoned vessels. Washington maintains an inventory of ADVs which is updated quarterly and includes a system for removal prioritization. Oregon and California do not have comprehensive databases. Various state and local agencies, as well as the US Coast Guard Auxiliary, have conducted ad hoc surveys, but these have been limited to a few counties or water bodies.

Texas, Florida, and South Carolina maintain updated databases. Florida denotes ADVs that pose a threat to navigation. They also have a hotline for the public to report vessels. Likewise, South Carolina utilizes an app for public reporting. California is developing such an app for use by local law enforcement.

Large or sunken vessel removal

Assuming the necessary authority and funding, there are still a host of issues concerning actual vessel removal and deconstruction. When dealing with a large commercial ADV, potential challenges include:

- contracting
- liability during removal
- broadened project scope when additional vessels may be discovered during removal
- logistics of on-site deconstruction
- availability of shipyards
- permitting both at the removal and deconstruction sites.

During deconstruction, the disposal of hazardous and solid waste is an additional obstacle. Such waste may contain lead, PCB-laden paint, bunker fuel, and asbestos. In Oregon, many commercial vessels recently deconstructed had to ship the waste to Waste Management in Arlington, Oregon, further increasing costs.

The situation in Oregon is typical, where there is no permanently permitted facility for the deconstruction of large commercial vessels. Dry docks are limited, and none of them can accommodate oversized vessels, which must be deconstructed on site before being moved to a dry dock. While the state has a shipbreaking statute that gives the Oregon Department of State Lands the authority to allow shipbreaking activities in waters of the state, it can take months to get the permits required by local, regional, and other state agencies.

Because ADVs are often unstable and hold hazardous materials, there is the risk of a release during removal operations. Fears of liability have led one state agency in California to refrain from such projects. Procedures must be created to protect agencies and contractors from liability.

The US Coast Guard will often assist when oil or hazardous materials are involved. Even when there is a threat of an oil spill, they can access the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund, which provides funding for response. These funds, however, are limited to addressing the pollution threat. Once the oil is removed, the US Coast Guard may be obligated to cease involvement, even after deploying a crane barge to lift a vessel. In such instances, they may put the vessel back in the water, even though they have already incurred significant expenses to remove it.

Conclusion

A comprehensive vessel removal program must have a system of identifying, tracking, and prioritizing ADVs for removal. Addressing large ADVs is a complicated task, requiring a host of procedures and services to enable a successful removal operation.

Section 4. Prevention

The following three measures can help to minimize and prevent the abandonment of vessels:

- 1) tracking vessels to owners via registration,
- 2) requiring insurance and other measures to ensure the financial responsibility of owners and the seaworthiness of vessels, and
- 3) offering vessel turn-in programs for vessels prior to abandonment.

Vessel Registration

Vessel registration is a prerequisite to establishing ownership, requiring insurance, collecting a registration fee, and tracking the number of vessels operating in a single state. While some Task Force states (WA, OR, CA) require registration of recreational vessels, many states (e.g. CA) do not have a registration process for commercial vessels. Instead, they defer to the US Coast Guard Documentation process for commercial vessels. A Certificate of Documentation is required by the US Coast Guard for most vessels over five net tons (generally, over 25 feet long) that are engaged in commercial activity. It must be renewed each year. It must also specify a host port, although the vessel may operate commercially in multiple states and move through the year. While optional, recreational vessels may also apply for Coast Guard Documentation.

Enforcement of vessel registration is often neglected. While the driver of a car may be cited for out-of-date tags, this is less likely for vessels. In California, it is common to see expired “CF numbers” on vessels in a marina, and likewise for ADVs to have no registered owner. Moreover, because vessel registration data is purged every three years, there is often no registration history available for a given ADV.

Insurance requirements and other prevention measures

In contrast to motor vehicles, most states do not require insurance for recreational or even commercial vessels (unless the commercial vessel carries passengers). Furthermore, "salvage insurance" for "wreck removal" above the value of the vessel is rare and not offered by many insurers. Thus, if a vessel is worth \$10,000, but sunken or stranded will cost \$30,000 to remove, the insurance will only cover \$10,000 for the loss of the vessel. At this point, the owner can walk away. California boat owners face a \$1,000 to \$3,000 fine for abandoning a vessel, plus removal costs, but can generally avoid even this by letting registration lapse, abandoning the vessel, and denying current ownership. Wreck removal insurance is likely rarely offered because there is no demand for such insurance, as boat owners can often abandon their vessel with impunity.

The state of Washington requires moorage providers (both private marinas as well as port districts) and long-term tenants (boats staying 30 days or more) to have insurance coverage at liability limits of at least \$300,000 per occurrence. This includes, at a minimum, general, legal, and pollution liability coverage. Thus, in any marina with long-term renters, both the marina and the boat owners are insured. However, Washington’s moorage insurance requirements do not require wreck removal. The state has had some success in getting insurance companies to remove vessels under the liability portion. For example, if the owner can be charged with a crime such as under RCW 79.100.110.1&2, then the insurance company will remove the vessel as a liability.¹ The state plans to address this issue in the future to include specific language requiring wreck removal.

Washington also has a secondary liability law, applicable to vessels over 65 feet and 40 years old. For such vessels, if a vessel inspection determines the vessel is not seaworthy, and that the value of the vessel is less than the cost to make the necessary repairs, the vessel can only be repaired or sold for scrap. If it is sold or transferred in an unrepaired condition, the seller may be liable if the vessel is later abandoned or becomes derelict. Under Washington’s secondary liability law, wreck removal insurance is required in the amount of \$300,000 for all vessels. Three vessels in Washington have triggered the secondary liability law in the past three years.

With motor vehicles, an abandoned vehicle on a public roadway will typically be removed in a few days through a government program financed through registration fees. There is no parallel program for vessels in any state.

¹ *Nootka* in Coal Creek Slough, Columbia River, DVRP# CZ12-001, in progress.

For many aging vessels that are sold for less than \$1,000, the owners have limited incentive to maintain or insure them, or to remove them should they become unseaworthy. Furthermore, such vessels are often purchased by those with limited boating experience. The problem is exacerbated by state and federal government policies that auction government surplus or publicly abandoned vessels, sometimes for as little as \$1.

Vessel turn-in programs

Washington, California, Texas, and Florida have vessel turn-in programs targeting recreational vessel owners. Both Washington's and California's programs are funded through the same mechanisms as their ADV removal programs.

In Washington, an owner must provide proof of ownership (or a marina must show documentation that they have legally seized the vessel); the vessel must be less than 45', derelict, and of minimal value; the owner must have limited financial means; and the vessel must be floating. If accepted, the owner can drop off the vessel with no charge. Washington reports that about 20 vessels are turned in each year.

In California, only the first criteria regarding proof of ownership applies. However, the vessel may only be turned in to participating local agencies, which are limited to a minority of the state's waters; the program does not exist in non-participating areas. About 100 to 200 vessels are turned in each year in California.

Conclusion

While all states require registration for recreational vessels, enforcement is variable and confused by the federal documentation process. Only Washington requires state registration for commercial vessels, making tracking such vessels at the state level difficult. Insurance requirements, particularly for wreck removal, are largely non-existent, thus promoting irresponsible behavior by the owners of older vessels. Insurance for wreck removal above the value of the vessel, and secondary liability for at-risk vessels, are important potential prevention tools in addressing the ADV problem.

Section 5. Public Outreach and Education Strategies

Public education and outreach efforts related to ADV programs focus on promotion of program elements (such as Vessel Turn-In Program (VTIP) events) through digital and traditional media. Some programs have public reporting mechanisms such as hotlines and mobile apps. However, most ADV programs do not have comprehensive public outreach/education programs associated with them, nor do they conduct target audience research. This may be a concern because barriers to reaching target audiences can vary greatly between jurisdictions. Most programs rely heavily on partnerships at the local level for public engagement.

Messaging strategies and barriers

Messaging about ADV programs often includes appeals to environmental quality and demonstrations of program effectiveness, such as maps showing past ADV removals and public

funds saved by vessel turn-in programs. However, messaging also depends on the values of the target audience. In Texas, for example, messaging emphasizes savings to taxpayers, beautification, and pest control over environmental benefits.

California does very little promotion and messaging. What is done is aimed at encouraging local governments to apply for grants to address ADVs, thus deferring outreach to the local governments.

A comprehensive communications or outreach strategy would identify the primary target audiences for messaging, and it would also conduct target audience research to determine the values and barriers of the audience. This information would inform more effective message development. ADV target audience research, however, appears to be practically non-existent. South Carolina is an exception to this: their active multi-agency ADV workgroup has conducted focus groups and gathered local perspectives regarding challenges/barriers and causes/factors.

Some information on barriers to communication is known or has been discovered as “lessons learned.” In Alabama, the Dauphin Island Sea Lab noted that barriers to outreach included locating ADV owners, old registrations, unique situations for every ADV, no land-lines (cell numbers aren’t available on county records), and many channels of information (e.g., many people no longer read the local paper).

Partnerships

Jurisdictions generally rely on local municipalities and organizations for outreach. This has some benefits, including use of established channels of communication and leveraging of existing target audience familiarity. Alaska’s ADV program partners with the nonprofit Alaska Marine Safety Education Association, which works with commercial, subsistence and recreational boaters.

Alabama’s Dauphin Island Sea Lab partnered closely with local groups, who were able to help recruit volunteers to catalog, guide, plant, and clean up. These partners also reached out through their contact lists.

Texas works at the county level to coordinate VTIP events. The county also provides removal equipment, reducing costs at the state level. Texas would like marine dealers to see the benefits of VTIP – for example, the “cash for clunkers” campaign removed older, more polluting automobiles off the roads and increased purchases of new vehicles.

Traditional media

In Texas, paid advertising in local newspapers for VTIP events is usually then picked up by free papers and talk radio. Staff have also been invited to discuss VTIP on talk radio. This method of outreach is considered to be effective for reaching ADV owners who will utilize VTIP events. News media cover VTIP events in progress, further raising awareness. People become more likely to report an ADV, and they know which areas are “ripe” for dumping.

In Alabama, the Dauphin Island Sea Lab (DISL) recently completed an ADV removal project, funded by a NOAA grant. Media coverage relied on existing connections with the media and involved the DISL PR director. Media coverage occurred mostly at removals near roads where media could easily access the site. Coverage was also beneficial to the contractors and community. Telling the story was important, and the coverage was shared/distributed. DISL also sometimes provides their own video to media.

Websites

Washington, Florida, and South Carolina have robust websites, with multiple pages dedicated to ADV. [Washington's website](#) content is oriented toward vessel owners, local agencies, and removal contractors. ADV website information in Florida is mainly focused on regulation, enforcement, and grants for municipalities. The [Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission](#) (FWC) has several webpages dedicated to the topic of derelict, abandoned and "at-risk" vessels. The website also includes a [map of ADV locations](#). South Carolina's Department of Health and Environmental Control has a [robust ADV website](#) that is friendly and oriented to the public, with focus on ADV impact to environment, recreation, and beauty. The site also provides data on removals.

In British Columbia, public education and outreach is limited. The BC Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations does have a short booklet available on their website, [Dealing with Problem Vessels and Structures in B.C. Waters](#).

Social media

Texas does extensive outreach via social media, press releases, and local events to promote their VTIP program. Once dates are set for a VTIP event, Texas General Land Office, the county, and Parks collectively advertise on social media and websites. Because the county has removal equipment, funds that would be spent on a removal contractor are instead used for paid advertising.

In Alabama, a partner of the Dauphin Island Sea Lab blogged and was active on social media.

Public reporting applications and hotlines

There are apps available for ADV reporting. Several states are signed up to use the "MyCoast" app, but South Carolina and Washington are currently the only states using the derelict vessel reporting feature offered by the app. This app allows public reporting of ADV, including location and photos. The app can collect a variety of different reports from mobile device users. Florida's "[FWC Reporter](#)" mobile app focuses on reporting wildlife issues, but it does have a non-wildlife issue reporting option that includes derelict vessels.

Washington has hotlines for both reporting and for vessel turn-in. Florida and Maryland have hotlines for reporting ADVs. Florida adds them to a GIS database. Texas has a hotline that is activated during emergencies like hurricanes, which are a significant cause of ADV in that region. Initially, Texas also provided a phone number for ADV owners to make appointments to

turn in vessels, but they found that vessel turn-in events lasting 5-6 days, 8-10 hours per day, with no appointments/reservations, were just as effective. If these VTIP events become decreasingly utilized over time, they plan to employ a turn-in hotline for appointments. However, trying to get back in touch with callers after they leave messages is a challenge.

Ground-level promotion

Some outreach involves placement of flyers in neighborhoods (telephone poles, for example) to promote VTIP events at the local level. Texas includes flyers in utility bills. They would also like to see Parks institute a \$1 charge for registration of every boat in the state, with a flyer attached to the registration form to describe the program.

In Alabama, as part of a NOAA-funded project in the Dog River watershed, DISL placed regulatory signs at locations where ADV are commonly moored. Signs were also given to private property owners with ongoing ADV issues. They found that best way to reach ADV owners was to post a notice on the vessel for 30 days.

Speaking engagements

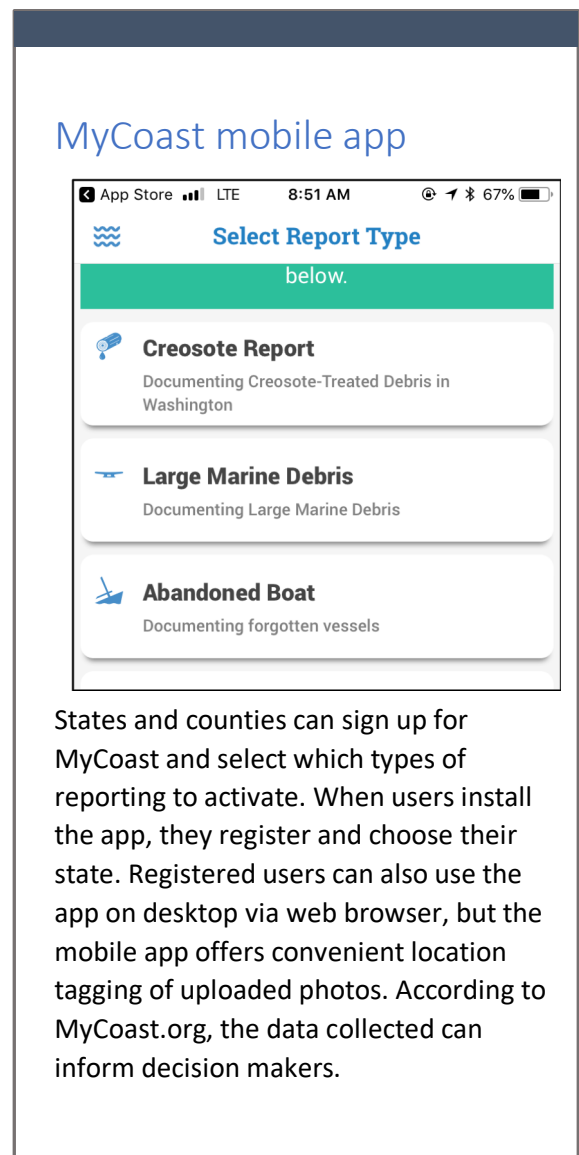
Washington takes advantage of public speaking opportunities with special interest groups. Alabama's Dauphin Island Sea Lab also presented at community meetings during their ADV removal project. Texas accepts speaking engagements, and they attend Clean Gulf, so their vessel turn-in program is considered part of a broader response program.

Events

Overall, ADV programs do not attend boater events like boat shows or festivals, which could be a missed opportunity to reach people thinking about buying a "fixer-upper," or boat owners of aging vessels who need regulatory information on vessel disposal.

Conclusion

Comprehensive outreach and engagement programs that include partnerships with local agencies and organizations are essential for the success of ADV programs. The public seems most ready to engage in areas where ADV are public eyesores, hazards, or persistent nuisances to private land owners.



States and counties can sign up for MyCoast and select which types of reporting to activate. When users install the app, they register and choose their state. Registered users can also use the app on desktop via web browser, but the mobile app offers convenient location tagging of uploaded photos. According to MyCoast.org, the data collected can inform decision makers.

VTIP events appear to be the single most effective tool for increasing public awareness and engagement, as well as prevention and cost saving. Mobile reporting apps, like the MyCoast app², have potential for continuing public engagement beyond VTIP events.

Approaches to reaching non-compliant or unidentified ADV owners include posting a notice on the vessel, posting regulatory signage in dumping areas, and enforcement. Signage could also include reporting information. Utility bill inserts could also be effective.

Gaps in outreach and education still exist for certain groups. Reaching ADV owners and buyers is easier when registration and/or transfer of title at point-of-sale is required. Engagement with vessel dealerships, marinas, and at boat shows could be effective ways of reaching current and prospective vessel owners with vessel life cycle information that includes proper disposal and enforcement for non-compliance. ADV programs could also partner with other state agencies and organizations already doing recreational boater outreach and education.

Section 6. Conclusion

Abandoned and derelict vessels are a major concern across Task Force jurisdictions. This high-level review of state programs to address ADVs found the following:

- The problem includes both commercial and recreational vessels.
- The majority of ADVs are recreational, commercial vessels are typically larger and can cost several orders of magnitude more to address.
- In addition to a steady stream of newly abandoned vessels, most states also face an increasing backlog of “legacy” vessels.
- In general, government policies have not been created to address ADVs. For example, there are significant discrepancies between how abandoned cars are addressed and how abandoned vessels are addressed.
- In the US, there is no comprehensive federal program. The few federal agencies that are involved in this issue (the US Coast Guard and the US Army Corp of Engineers) have very limited roles.
- State programs vary widely. Only one (Washington) can be called comprehensive. Most state programs have insufficient funding to address the problem.
- In Canada, the federal program, which is comprehensive but underfunded, takes precedent over provincial programs.
- No jurisdiction has a comprehensive outreach and education program associated with ADVs.

A program to address the ADV problem should include the following five elements:

² During the Blue Ribbon phase of this project, the Work Group will investigate whether MyCoast is a tool that can be adapted for use across Task Force jurisdictions.

1. Authority
2. Funding
3. Removal and Deconstruction
4. Prevention
5. Public Outreach and Education

A comprehensive vessel removal program must have a system of identifying, tracking, and prioritizing ADVs for removal.

While detailed analyses on the scope of the problem are limited, it is possible to estimate the magnitude. On average, each Task Force state or province has dozens of abandoned and derelict commercial vessels and hundreds of recreational vessels. Most of these are legacies of the past, but new vessels are abandoned each year. The average cost to remove a commercial vessel is likely near \$1 million. The average cost to remove a recreational vessel is about \$3,000. The total cost to address the backlog of legacy vessels is probably over \$20 million for each state or province. The cost to address the on-going annual problem is likely closer to \$5 million per year for each jurisdiction.

Section 7. Next Steps

A “Blue Ribbon” or model program will be developed as a result of this white paper. It will address all five program elements identified above that should be addressed in a comprehensive state/provincial-level abandoned and derelict vessel program. Specifically, the blue-ribbon program will address:

1. ADV authorities, including:
 - Gaps
 - Recommendations regarding where authorities should reside
 - Recommendations regarding increasing the effectiveness of agencies with authority
2. Funding, including:
 - Gaps
 - Recommendations regarding necessary funding program elements (amounts, structure, sources)
3. Prevention
 - Gaps
 - Recommendations regarding prevention program needed (insurance, bonding, registration/enforcement, sales of ADVs)
 - Incentives
4. Legal Issues
 - Gaps

- Recommendations regarding deconstruction programs needed (wrecking yards, permitting, incentives)
5. Public Outreach and Education
- Gaps
 - Recommendations
 - Incentives and outreach tools

The anticipated date-of-completion for the “Blue Ribbon” Program is Summer, 2019.