

NOAA Abandoned and Derelict Vessel Case Study



Friday Harbor Derelict Vessel Removal Project

Contributor: San Juan County Derelict Vessel Prevention Program

Project Overview

Reason for project: To intercede in situations where continued neglect by vessel owners increases likelihood of a vessel becoming derelict and a risk to the environment or to navigation.

Date project was first initiated: December 2013

Project duration: December 2013 - June 2015

Number of vessels removed: 8

Project Location

Location: Friday Harbor, San Juan County, Washington

Site Name(s): Orca Island and San Juan Island

General description of location: Group of islands off NW corner of Washington State

Average Site Depth: 60 - 120ft

Habitat/Substrate Type Impacted: Most of the bottom is either rocky or flat mud/sand areas with substantial eelgrass.

Jurisdictions: County authorities



Project Narrative

History: The San Juan Islands are considered by some as one of the last “outposts of rugged individualism” and many vessel owners consider state waters to be part of their private domain. Consequently when they are no longer physically or economically able to maintain their vessels they leave them moored, legally or illegally, and subject to the elements for years where they become derelict and in danger of sinking. The Prevention Program was initiated to maximize the effectiveness of limited funding available for ADV issues by removing vessels before they sink and preventing more costly removals.

Why was the project initiated? : To remove abandoned vessels in Friday Harbor before they become derelict and sink.

Who initiated the project? : San Juan County Derelict Vessel Program

Lead agency or organization: San Juan County Community Development and Planning Department

Other collaborators/stakeholders involved: Puget Sound Partnership, DVP Salish Sea LLC (Management Company), San Juan County, and Town administrations.

Funding source(s): EPA Grant awarded to the Puget Sound Partnership

Threats from ADV

Environmental: Waters and biota of the Salish Sea which surround the San Juan Islands.

Critical habitats involved: Numerous areas of protected eelgrass exist along the shores of San Juan Island and the hundreds of islands and rocky outcroppings in the local area. The viability of these eelgrass sanctuaries are fundamental to the maintenance of healthy salmon populations that use them as breeding grounds.



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Public safety and health: Hazards to navigation and contamination of local waters are the two biggest threats to public safety.

Navigation: They pose a potential threat to navigation

Commerce: San Juan County depends on tourism with over \$190,000,000 in revenues generated in 2014. The negative impact of an accumulation of ADV's would have a direct effect on the number of people visiting or living on the islands.

Other threats: The San Juan Islands are centrally located at the confluence of several major shipping routes to the ports of Seattle, WA and Vancouver, Canada and ADV's that pose navigation hazards may increase the expose our county to a significant risk of a major oil spill.

Summary of ADV Removals

Number of vessels removed: 8 vessels were removed by owners

Primary type of vessels removed: Cabin cruisers (3), sailboats (3), fishing trawler (1), launch (1)

Typical hull type of vessels: Wood (5), fiberglass (3)

Average size of vessels removed: 26.75 feet in length

Amount of acres restored via removal: N/A

Approximate removal cost per vessel: \$103 per foot (in 2014)

Other cost information: \$20,000 administration costs

Additional types of debris removed: Estimated 200+ gallons of fuel plus considerable amounts of property and material on board including propane, tanks, paint, Styrofoam, plastic bags, utensils, transmission fluid and other chemicals/fluids typically found on board vessels.

Vessel removal summary: 8 vessels were removed from local waters. 3 were demolished, 2 were put on the hard, 2 were removed out of county waters, and one contracted for a slip in an authorized marina.

Project Removal Actions

Start date: December 2013

End date: June 2014 – effort will continue if more funding becomes available.

Removal options considered: Dependent on the vessel owner.

Environmental Considerations: The protection of the Salish Sea waters, no new harm done.

Removal Methods: Towing companies and personal truck and trailer.

Authorities used to take Possession of Vessels: These vessels were removed by the owners

Permits Required: No special permits required. Local environmental permits for authorized demolition sites are mandatory.

Salvage Contractor(s): The Boat Works Orcas Island (for some removals) and the owners demolished the vessels themselves and disposed of them using San Juan Sanitation.

Contractor Selection Process: Bid

Vessel Disposal Process/Issues: No disposal facilities in local area that will take vessels over 40-50ft, which must be towed out of county at additional expense (ranging from \$2,000-\$6,000).

Project Challenges

Environmental: Protection of sensitive eelgrass habitats.

Geographical: Remote location and limited facilities for vessel disposal, which can increase the costs significantly.



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Weather/Seasonal: Weather did not present any challenges. Mild winter weather and water temperatures of 48-50 degrees F year-round allows for ADV removal activities to occur most of the year.

Funding: This project was initiated after receiving funding by an EPA grant. Continuing efforts to remove other vessels is contingent on new funding opportunities.

Lessons Learned:

The initial interaction of non-law enforcement agents increases the likely hood of owners taking responsibility for their own vessels. Under this prevention program the owner may remove the vessel from the water and is not allowed to put the vessel back in the water until it has passed a survey attesting to its seaworthiness. Another part of the Prevention Program involves entering the vessels in the DNR's Removal Program where costs are paid by the state (90%) and the county (10%). Regardless of the percentages the removal program is costly. The part of the Prevention program that targets owners before the boats become a hazard has proved to be an exceedingly cost effective. If owners do not heed prevention advice, local sheriff's department will then enforce state laws. Enforcement has previously been a problem since marine violations have not been a priority with law enforcement agencies; however, this is changing with the development of this prevention program. Funding is always difficult to secure, but the recent success of this prevention program has increased the possibility of its continued operation through county, town and private funds. It is precisely the ability to get the owners themselves to remove the vessels that provides so much leverage in extending the funds that are available for those vessels where the owners are not known, or have abandoned the vessels and are not cooperative. The program can be efficiently run by one person with access to a vessel for surveying and monitoring.

New tools, techniques or developments:

The development of a new Microsoft Access database was very effective in helping with program administration. This project assisted the Washington Department of Natural Resources in expanding and upgrading statewide data base to monitor inter-county violators of the abandoned and derelict vessel laws. Conducted education and outreach to local county and town councils along with state and federal representatives about the program.

Contact Information:

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Images:



Demolished by owner



Demolished by owner



Moved to owner's property



Removed from local waters



Demolished by owner



Removed from county by owner



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Owner convinced to move vessel to marina



Owner moved vessel to local shipyard

Vessels Removed

Vessel name	Vessel Type	Vessel ID	Time abandoned	Incident	Length	Hull material
N/A	cabin cruiser	WN9818JD	1 week	adrift	26	wood
Harmony	cabin cruiser	WN8905NG	1 year	abandoned	27	wood
N/A	sailboat	WN9040JC	5 years	abandoned	33	wood
N/A	launch	WN7690NG	2 years	abandoned	23	wood
Jenna	sailboat	WN7059KG	?	abandoned	22	wood
Gloria	sailboat	WN9488NG	2years	Illegally moored	25	FG
Zeus	trawler	BC1856566	1 day	Adrift	38	FG
Peggy Von	sailboat	WN9467NL	7 years	live aboard	20	FG