

Kitsap County Derelict & Abandoned Vessel Removal Program

Technical Advisory Committee Meeting #4

In-Person Attendees: Kirvie Mesebeluu-Yobech, Brittany Gordon, Jonathan Raine, Amy Smalley, Caleb Reese, Daryl Trask, Troy Wood, Jeff Zappen, Tami Griffey, Thomas Jury, Ellen Ross-Cardoso, James Strode, Bob Ballard, Rashni Ballard

Zoom Attendees: Jim Aho, Robyn Dally, Karin Olson, Michael Moore, Irene Weber

No roundtable updates

DNR 2025 Legislative Request-

In 2024, DNR had several requests for large very expensive vessel removals- 6 large vessels were submitted, totaling \$13.5M, and the biannual budget was \$10.3 M. So DNR is requesting funding from the legislature to remove these.

Pacific Producer- 170 ft, \$3M removal cost, leaking ammonia (which USCG removed), and then the boat started sinking so the USCG went back in to remove all the rest of the hazardous materials. At that point, it was sinking on top of a capped Superfund site- DNR would be liable for the superfund site cap if it sunk. DNR took emergency temporary possession to keep it from sinking on top of the Superfund site. Boat is in storage for \$120K/year.

WW2 Sub-Chaser- 110 ft, sunk, \$3M disposal cost. Located in Columbia River

CG-83527- 83 ft, \$3M removal cost. Sunk.

Cairdeas- 109 ft, \$1M disposal cost. Floating

Onondaga- 165 ft, \$2.5M, sunk. Located at end of Ballard Oil dock- property is being sold and DNR made a prior commitment to remove the boat.

O&M No. 1 aka Western Marine Construction. 101 ft. \$1M disposal cost. Sunk/beached. Former Army deconstruction barge. Prime salmon estuary habitat in Snohomish County.

Last biennium DNR removed >300 vessels due to watercraft excise tax.

Questions/Discussion-

Sunken boat removal can damage the habitat but the Ballard vessel is damaging other vessels that come into the dock and it has sunk other vessels there.

Steel-hull vessel- contractor can sell/salvage portions of the vessel to help lower their costs. Contractors were allowed to go on board the Pacific Producer and inventory the fish processing equipment. Got cost from \$10M to \$2.5M. Vessel is full of lead, asbestos, etc and has to go to a hazardous waste landfill.

Owner lost the boat to US Marshall but then re-purchased it at US Marshall auction, which removed all liens on the vessel. He then opened new liens to purchase fuel etc.

DNR is asking for funding for these specific large boats because if they don't, it would use up the entire derelict vessel account for the state and they wouldn't be able to help counties, ports, etc.

5 out of the 6 of these vessels were formerly federal vessels. DNR has been asking for federal support to help prevent these vessels from being auctioned- however, the federal government is required to try to recoup as much as they can when they decommission vessels. Example- the ice breaker that sunk in the Willapa River.

Could buyers post a bond? That's been proposed but there hasn't been much support outside the people who deal with this. DNR needs a lot of stakeholder support for this legislation- many of DNR's stakeholders are vessel owners, who don't like more restrictions on vessel ownership.

Federal government sent a 90 ft tug to a guy without a Captain's license.

We need to change statutes to cut off the federal pipeline. We need to raise the visibility of this to the point that Congress is willing to act.

Clarifications on hazardous waste/ Superfund cap in Thea Foss Waterway.

DNR fund includes vessel removal and also VTIP funding.

New fish ladder on Curley Creek at Banner Rd?

Is there a list of known issue vessel owners/repeat offenders? Troy suggests giving people flyers for VTIP program.

Troy is trying to get AG's office to work with local prosecutors to prosecute repeat derelict vessel owners. Typically if an officer tickets a vessel owner for abandoning a vessel, it usually gets dropped the first time. First offense is a misdemeanor. After that it goes up until it's a felony.

Posting a vessel does not automatically include ticketing. Tickets for derelict & abandoned vessels are not typically enforced.

Complex Process

- Identifying vessel ownership – in order to access DOL, you need to be registered and approved by DOL
- USCG – can provide information to include on the website on how to obtain vessel ownership – to be posted website (can create section on website for APEs)

Funding

- There's a loan program available today. Vessel owner can contact DNR to act as APE. Needs to be prioritized.
- Grants – DNR applied for NOAA Marine Debris Removal grant for 2024; will remove 7 vessels in south Puget sound and fund 6 VTIP programs over next 5 years

Enforcement

- USCG commits to the solutions. They now have in protocol to contact the Port and DNR about vessel that is dropped off at a public Port.
- Port of Bremerton has received a call – they have seen improvement with this challenge

Prevention

Discussion and focus groups

- Tracking database – ensure that private information taken from DOL are not shared on public database
 - o Statute in WA State for DNR to request for information about every vessel in every port or marina in Washington [Troy will check about legality of releasing the information]
- Focus Group - VTIP event – Ellen Ross-Cardoso, Michael Moore
- *DCD-Led Solutions-*
- Improve website and develop standard procedures to be shared on website

- Create guidance on how to assess habitat impacts for prioritizing vessels to be removed (supplement to DNR's prioritization guidance)
- Vessel tracking database (we need input on what this should look like, what info can be public vs what needs to be locked, what info law enforcement needs to post/ticket)
- VTIP Event Coordination
- Develop outreach resources and training for Ports, Cities, and other County departments
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- *Other solutions* (not DCD-led, but we can facilitate the meetings)-
- ****If you think you could lead development of any of these solutions please let us know! We do not have the resources/expertise to lead these at this time, but we can facilitate the meetings.**
- Improving resources for law enforcement
 - Funding/staffing full time marine units
 - Identifying docks for KSO (County purchase, or ILA with ports, etc)
 - Policy/legal changes to improve enforcement/prosecution (examples- consider civil penalties, consider local ordinances)
- Funding
 - How to get DNR more funding
 - Explore funding options for up-front costs such as revolving loan
 - Explore grant funding options
 - Explore long-term funding for law enforcement marine units

Tracking Database

- Boat US, received grant from NOAA Marine Debris Removal, plan to create a national database, have created a feedback request that will be sent out to interested parties to obtain information about what they want to see in the tracking database.
 - o New findings – Hawaii has an interesting removal program
- Brittany provided map of MyCoast map of abandoned boats
- Troy provided map of DNR Vessel Reporting map
 - o DNR webmap does not show
- Question –
 - o Does MyCoast have an app? Yes
 - o Suggestion for tracking database – add banner at the top of the vessel page when vessel is removed or addressed
 - o Tammy Griffey – KNAT has map; reports and information of sites need to stay on map for 6 years due to public disclosure law and retention requirements.
- Other comments – VtiP event held in Skagit County.
 - o Takes 6 months to set up a VTIP
 - o Has been 3 months since VTIP event and still receiving calls and inquiries
 - o DNR commits to hosting a VTIP event in Kitsap County
 - o Need County decision makers to make formal request and get the event scheduled and planned
- **Action Item – send email to TAG about list of actions and request for interest for focus group**