

Introduction

The Columbia River Derelict Vessel Task Force is a forum of stakeholders whose mission is to identify and mitigate the harmful effects of derelict vessels, barges, and houseboats along the upper, middle and lower Columbia River and Willamette Rivers in the states of Washington and Oregon.

Background

Derelict vessels, barges and houseboats on the Columbia and Willamette Rivers create a public safety and environmental threat to Oregon and Washington. This threat became a reality in January 2011 when the former WWII Liberty Ship Davy Crockett was the subject of an illegal ship scrapping operation near Camas, Wash. During the illegal salvage, the vessel split in half and began leaking an unknown amount of oil into the Columbia River. The U.S. Coast Guard, Washington Department of Ecology, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality and a host of other federal and state agencies responded in what turned into a \$22 million dollar cleanup.

Objectives

- Inventory derelict vessels, barges, and houseboats along the Columbia and Willamette Rivers.
- Determine derelict vessels, barges, and houseboats that pose actual or potential pollution threats and hazard to navigation.
- Prioritize and remove all pollution, hazardous materials and navigational threats from identified derelict vessels, barges, and houseboats. Prioritize and facilitate the removal of vessels that do not pose an immediate threat of pollution or hazard to navigation through the task force collective authority.
- Conduct regular, intense, coordinated surveillance for prevention of pollution, hazardous materials, or navigational threats stemming from derelict vessels, barges, and houseboats.
- Develop a list of law and policy areas for investigation where existing rules and policies could be changed to facilitate the reduction of current and future derelict and abandoned vessels.



- Identify opportunities to align Washington and Oregon laws addressing derelict vessels with the goal of moving toward a consistent regulatory regime on the Columbia River.
- Maintain effective communications with state and local agencies, Coast Guard Auxiliary, and federal partners.

Vessels of Concern Database

To capture information for vessels of concern inventory, the task force created a multi-agency reporting form and reporting process. In addition, a password protected, shared dataset was developed using the Socrata platform (data.oregon.gov). This dataset reflects all the data fields in the reporting form and it has the ability to display the vessel's location on a map. Additionally, the dataset features a calendar function for scheduling multi-agency patrols, an area to record patrol summaries, and allows users to upload multiple, date-stamped photographs.

Membership

Representatives from the U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, Oregon State Marine Board, Oregon Department of State Lands, Oregon Department of Justice, Washington Department of Ecology, Washington Department of Natural Resources, and the Columbia County and Multnomah County Sheriff's Offices are regular contributors to the Derelict Vessel Task Force.

