

**Aquatic Resources District Offices**

DNR manages 2.4 million acres of state-owned Aquatic Lands statewide—lands under the marine and fresh waters, and beaches. These mostly submerged lands offer aquatic habitat, navigation, commerce and public use and access. DNR’s aquatics districts provide on-the-ground management.

[www.dnr.wa.gov](http://www.dnr.wa.gov)

**Orca Straits District Aquatic Resources**  
919 N. Township St.  
Sedro Woolley, WA 98284  
**(360) 856-3500**



**Rivers District Aquatic Resources**  
P.O. Box 280  
601 Bond Rd.  
Castle Rock, WA 98611  
**(360) 577-2025**

**Shoreline District Aquatic Resources**  
950 Farman Ave.  
Enumclaw, WA 98022  
**(360) 825-1631**

**Emergency Contacts**

Sinking vessels; oil spills; spills of other hazardous materials—24-hour emergency response numbers in Washington State:

**Department of Emergency Management (State)** (800) 258-5990  
**Marine Emergencies Coast Guard Marine Safety Office**  
(206) 217-6232 *Seattle*  
(503) 240-9320 *Portland*

**Department of Ecology (State)** (360) 407-6300  
24-hour Spill Response Hotline  
**Derelict Vessel Removal Program (State)** (360) 902-1574 or  
Email: [dvrp@wadnr.gov](mailto:dvrp@wadnr.gov)



Removing derelict and abandoned vessels that threaten the health or safety of people and wildlife



WASHINGTON STATE'S  
**Derelict Vessel Removal Program**

In addition to vigorous use of commercial navigation through much of the state, the people of Washington have embraced recreation that involves sailboats and powerboats. However, an increasing number of recreational and commercial vessels are found abandoned or in such disrepair that they are in danger of sinking. In response to this growing problem, the 2002 State Legislature authorized many public agencies to remove and dispose of abandoned and derelict vessels.

As steward of the state’s 2.4 million acres of aquatic lands, the state Department of Natural Resources (DNR) manages the Derelict Vessel Removal Program (DVRP). DNR removes and disposes of derelict vessels, offers expertise to help other agencies with removal efforts, and reimburses them most of the vessel removal and disposal costs.

COVER PHOTO COURTESY OF BLACKWATER MARINE. TOP PHOTO BY MICHAL RECHNER

**What Damage Can a Derelict or Abandoned Vessel Cause?**

Derelict and abandoned vessels are more than an eyesore. They can be real threats. Pollution associated with vessels poses a risk to people and the environment. Contamination is mainly caused by fuel spills (gas or diesel), which occur when a vessel sinks or breaks up.

Drifting, beached, broken-up or sunken vessels can threaten human safety, be a navigational hazard and have an impact on aquatic habitats.

▲ The ‘Holiday’ was the first vessel removed under the program. Posing a significant threat to navigation, it was removed from lower Budd Inlet by DNR in 2003.

**Pollution associated with derelict and abandoned vessels poses a risk to people and the environment.**

Drifting, beached, broken-up or sunken vessels can threaten human safety and navigation, and have an impact on aquatic habitats.



Unmarked exposed portions of sunken boats can be navigation hazards, and if a collision occurs with sunken vessels just below the surface, serious injury can also occur.

### What Is the DNR's Derelict Vessel Removal Program?

The Derelict Vessel Removal Program has three main responsibilities associated with removing vessels up to 200 feet long.

**1 Remove and dispose of derelict or abandoned vessels** found in Washington State's waters. DNR removes vessels on a priority basis with those in danger of sinking or posing a threat to human health or safety highest on the list.

#### 2 Manage Program Operations

Reimburse authorized public entities up to 90 percent of the cost of vessel removal and disposal. The remaining 10 percent can be in in-kind services such as personnel time and equipment use provided by the public entity.

Manage the Derelict Vessel Removal Account

Provide guidance and assistance to authorized public entities and the public.

**3 Maintain the Derelict Vessel Inventory Database** that holds information on all of the vessels reported since the program began in 2002.

Derelict vessels may contain large quantities of oil or other toxic substances. If leaked they can injure or kill marine mammals, waterfowl and other aquatic life; and contaminate aquatic lands, nearby shorelines, and water quality.

Vessels that settle on the bottom can disrupt the aquatic environment, scouring or crushing sensitive habitats like eelgrass or kelp beds.

### What Can Authorized Agencies Do?

Authorized public entities take steps to address the derelict or abandoned vessel problem on aquatic lands in their jurisdiction:

- ▶ Send the reporting form to the Derelict Vessel Removal Program to establish the vessel status and receive priority ranking.
- ▶ Send pre-custody letters to owners of the vessel.
- ▶ Follow Derelict Vessels Act notice requirements and take temporary possession and custody of vessel.
- ▶ Remove and dispose of vessel, or contract with a private company or individual to do so.
- ▶ Seek from the vessel owner reimbursement of costs associated with removal and disposal.
- ▶ Apply to the DVVP for up to 90 percent of the associated removal and disposal costs.

If an authorized agency is unable or unwilling to undertake removal, it may ask DNR to take the lead.

Anti-fouling paints and other toxic coatings slough off the vessel and mix with sediments in the area. They can contaminate the organisms that feed larger fish and wildlife, and enter the food web that feeds people, too.

PHOTO COURTESY OF GLOBAL DIVING & SALVAGE INC.



Derelict vessels are removed from the water using the most environmentally sound methods available. Sunken vessels are raised using a combination of lift bags and high pressure pumping, and pollutants are removed and disposed of.

### What Are the Derelict Vessel Removal Priorities?

In order to protect the health of people, marine and fresh water ecosystems and wildlife, priority is given to removing derelict vessels that are in danger of breaking up or sinking. The program addresses vessels of 200 feet or less. Priority is assigned to the vessel based on criteria that classify the degree of threat for sinking, hazards upon public health, safety and the environment, or the threat to navigation.

### Where Does Program Funding Come From?

About \$400,000 is raised each year in the state, from a \$2.00 surcharge on the annual vessel registration fee and \$5.00 surcharge on the foreign vessel identification document.

The state's Derelict Vessel Laws are in Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 79.100.

Program information, guidelines, reporting, and application forms are on DNR's webpage:

[www.dnr.wa.gov](http://www.dnr.wa.gov)

Also linked are the Derelict Vessel Inventory, and the program funding account balance.

### Who Is Authorized to Remove Vessels?

Derelict vessels may be removed by Washington DNR or other public agencies:

- ▶ Port Districts
- ▶ City, town or county with ownership, management or other jurisdiction over aquatic lands
- ▶ Metropolitan Park Districts
- ▶ State Parks and Recreation Commission
- ▶ State Department of Fish and Wildlife