

Abandoned and Derelict Vessel Working Group
27 January 2016
Charleston, SC

The kick-off meeting of the ADV Working Group was convened by DHEC on 27 January 2016. The following document highlights major discussion points that were raised during the meeting.

In attendance:

Mr.	Wes Wilson	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Ms.	Sarah Latshaw	NOAA Marine Debris Program
BM1	Sean Olson	U.S. Coast Guard
CWO	Chris Ruleman	U.S. Coast Guard
Sgt.	Chad Womack	City of Charleston
Sgt.	John Gobel	Beaufort County Sheriff's Dept
Sgt.	Sean Hethington	Town of Mt. Pleasant
Lt.	Dan Maddock	Charleston County Sheriff's Office
Mr.	Chris Carter	City of Georgetown
Sgt.	Scotty Hille	City of North Charleston
Ms.	E.V. Bell	S.C. Sea Grant Consortium
Mr.	Rick Devoe	S.C. Sea Grant Consortium
Mr.	Andrew Wunderly	Charleston Waterkeeper
Captain	Gary Sullivan	S.C. DNR
Captain	Gentry Thames	S.C. DNR
	Patrick French	City of Charleston
	Dan Ferrell	U.S. Coast Guard
Sgt.	Andy Fitch	Charleston County
	Elizabeth Tichenor	U.S. Coast Guard
Ms.	Suzi Durant	National Marine Manufacturers Assoc.

Dan Burger, Director of Coastal Services Division for DHEC-OCRM welcomed the ADV Working Group Members and provided a brief programmatic overview of OCRM and the basis for convening the Working Group. Mr. Burger explained that while past ADV removal efforts have been successful, funding opportunities for such initiatives is limited, unpredictable and time-intensive. Further, implementation of grant-based removal efforts often incur administrative lag and are constrained by contract conditions. Mr. Burger explained that DHEC is limited in its jurisdictional authority to prevent and remove ADVs, while enhanced authority is vested in other state and federal agencies and individual municipalities within the eight county Coastal Zone. For these reasons, DHEC is working to identify inter-governmental jurisdiction and procedural challenges and opportunities for policy innovation that result in the prevention and timely removal of ADVs.

Mr. Burger then invited each participant to introduce themselves, explain their experience with ADV and identify any goals or expectations they have for the Working Group. Introductions led to a broader discussion from which common themes emerged.

Major Environmental and Public Safety Challenges:

- Hazard to safe recreational and commercial navigation
- Water quality degradation
- Break away vessels damage public and private property
- ADVs scar marsh and damage shellfish
- Physical removal process is more difficult and costly when vessels are submerged

Law Enforcement and Jurisdictional Challenges:

- ADVs become dumping grounds, potential for illegal activities
- ADVs are often in possession of individuals who do not hold title or proof of ownership
- ADVs may be moved across jurisdictional boundaries, interrupting investigation and enforcement processes

Boating Infrastructure:

- Difficulties associated with permitting and establishment of mooring fields
- Differentiation of “Anchorage” and “Mooring Field” and associated rules and management responsibility
- Ambiguity/lack of definition for “tended to”

Vessel Inventory

- Numerous federal, state and municipal authorities maintain inventories and databases of ADV
- Federally-registered vessels are monitored by U.S. Coast Guard and agencies participating in Project Seahawk (port security)
- DNR conducted a coast-wide inventory in 2008
- DHEC maintains inventory and collects crowd-sourced reports via MyCoast application
- Charleston Waterkeeper collects and maintains reports via Google Earth
- Town of Mt. Pleasant maintains a spreadsheet
- City of Charleston maintains photographic records and files
- North Charleston has begun photographing and tracking vessels
- City of Georgetown maintains photographs and files

Vessel Identification and Tracking

- SC DNR explained that vessel titling and registration are separate processes; Titling is associated with proof of boat ownership; registration is typically filed annually in the state of primary use.
- Registration does not convey proof of ownership.
- Up to date registration is required if the vessel is moved within state waters.
- Possession of title is necessary for sale/transfer. However, title is not required if boat is to be removed/destroyed.
- Federally-registered vessels may travel inter-state and inter-country. Federal registration must be updated annually.
- Inquiries by municipal officials regarding registration are handled ad hoc by SC DNR and USCG
- Marinas are valuable partners in monitoring efforts and may provide an option for temporary storage of vessels under investigation

The Working Group then discussed opportunities to improve inter-governmental coordination through the identification of gaps in statutes, laws, policy and information. At a minimum, federal, state and municipal officials must promote a common understanding of vessel ownership and registration, transient vessel monitoring, rules and regulations associated with mooring fields, anchorages and special anchorages.

In summary, the Working Group agreed that a more comprehensive and coordinated approach is necessary to transition from removal of ADVs to the prevention of recreational vessels becoming derelict. Ideas were then circulated for upcoming meeting agenda items.

For the next meeting, DHEC will produce a map that depicts counties and municipalities that have ADV ordinances, providing contrast to those that do not. This map may be used to determine where gaps in jurisdictional authority may be exploited by derelict vessel operators.

DHEC will also coordinate with Working Group members for presentations on specific topics, including vessel titling and registration; mooring field establishment and management; management and monitoring of anchorages and special anchorages; local case studies of challenges and best practices.

-###-