

18 abandoned vessels removed in Hancock and Harrison counties

Removal efforts increase boater safety, restore water flow and enhance local coastal habitats

OCEAN SPRINGS, MS, UNITED STATES, July 28, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Gulf of America Alliance, in coordination with the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources (MDMR), recently supported work to remove 18 vessels as part of an ongoing large-scale project across the Gulf Coast. This project is supported by the [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Marine Debris Program](#).

As part of this effort, abandoned and derelict vessel (ADV) removal in Mississippi began in the summer of 2024, with nine vessels each from Hancock and Harrison counties successfully removed to date. These removals account for approximately 411,000 pounds of debris cleared from coastal waters. The vessels varied widely in type and material, including sailing boats, fishing vessels, houseboats and recreational crafts made of steel, wood, fiberglass and aluminum.

The state's removal efforts are led by MDMR, which coordinates the [Mississippi Derelict Vessel Program](#). MDMR identifies and monitors ADVs, implements the legally required steps to declare vessels as derelict when ownership cannot be confirmed and contracts for their safe removal. Collaboration between agencies enhances the project by involving local citizens, as they know the history, people and have a unique insight into the areas where they live.

"When they [local citizens] are included in the vessel removal process, they feel ownership, pride and will become better stewards of their local waterways, parks and wilderness areas," says Roy Lipscomb, MDMR's Mississippi Derelict Vessel Program Coordinator.

An important benefit of removing an ADV is eliminating the danger it poses to boaters navigating



Derelict sailboats located in coastal Mississippi.

in unknown waters or during limited visibility. Their GPS will not show that there is an obstruction ahead, and vessels hitting submerged or partially submerged objects is a major factor in vessel accidents.

Beyond improving safety, ADV removal also restores natural water flow and supports healthier ecosystems. "The biggest benefit of the removal of an ADV in a small waterway is that the tidal flow is not impeded anymore," shared Lipscomb. "I have seen ADVs blocking most of a canal or bayou, then debris, logs and aquatic plants start to clog the waterway and basically stop the natural water movement."

About the Gulf of America Alliance

The Gulf of America Alliance is a regional partnership focused on enhancing the environmental and economic health of the region through increased collaboration. Led by the five Gulf states, our network includes over 165 participating organizations from state and federal agencies, local governments, communities, academia, non-governmental organizations and industry. Working with these partners, we address priority issues including coastal community resilience; data and monitoring; education; habitat; water resources; wildlife and fisheries; and marine debris.

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Christina Mohrman

Gulf of America Alliance

[email us here](#)

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