



News

NEWS RELEASE – *for immediate release*

Media Contact: Ali Ryan Hansen, 503-510-6860, ali.r.hansen@dsl.oregon.gov

October 13, 2023

State Removes First Hazardous Vessel with New Funding

A 1930s fishing vessel came out of the Columbia River this week as work continues to tackle hazardous vessels in Oregon waterways

SALEM, Ore. – The Oregon Department of State Lands this week reached a milestone in ensuring safe and healthy waterways statewide by removing the first hazardous vessel with newly approved funding.

The FV Tiffany, a 200-ton former fishing vessel built in 1939, became a hazard when it sank and spilled fuel into the Columbia River near Rainer in 2021. The U.S. Coast Guard responded, cleaning up the fuel and refloating the vessel. DSL began monitoring the vessel while also seeking resources for removal.

“The FV Tiffany wasn’t just an eyesore,” said DSL Interim Deputy Director Chris Castelli. “More significantly this ship was a vehicle for toxins going into the Columbia River.”

Abandoned and derelict vessels (ADV) like the FV Tiffany often contain harmful quantities of oil, lubricant, and other toxic substances in the materials used to construct the vessel.

“Some samples taken from the FV Tiffany contained high levels of PCBs and lead which pose a threat to the aquatic environment and potentially even human health,” said Scott Smith, Spill Contingency Planner for Oregon Department of Environmental Quality.

The FV Tiffany is the first waterway-polluting vessel to be removed using new funding approved by the Oregon Legislature in June.

“Cleaning up vessels in the past meant using Common School Fund dollars,” explained DSL Director Vicki L. Walker. “Besides shortchanging Oregon school kids, lack of dedicated resources prevented the state from being able to proactively address the ADV problem.”

That changed with [House Bill 5029](#), with the Legislature providing \$18.8 million from the Monsanto settlement to begin removing vessels and developing a statewide program for long-term solutions.

Preventing vessels from becoming hazards that contaminate water, degrade habitat, damage property, and impede navigation is a priority. The state always seeks to have vessel owners pay for cleanups and will explore options for recovering expenses incurred, currently estimated to be \$1.42 million for the FV Tiffany. But focusing on prevention can help reduce the need for state-led cleanups.

The state's new Abandoned and Derelict Vessel (ADV) Workgroup, with over 20 members ranging from harbor masters to recreationalists, began meeting in September to help create a program framework, including proactive solutions.

In spring 2024, DSL will present the State Land Board with a report that includes a program framework addressing prevention, response, enforcement, education and outreach, and potential long-term funding needs and sources, as well as recommendations for legislative action in the 2025 Legislative Session.

About the ADV Workgroup

The ADV Workgroup provides input to state agency partners on near-term action for vessel removals, a program framework, and legislative solutions. Workgroup members bring a wide variety of perspectives and expertise, including ports, marinas, waterway recreation, environmental protection, vessel salvage, and local government. State agency partners are DSL, the Oregon State Marine Board, the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, and Oregon Parks and Recreation Department. [View the current workgroup roster here.](#)

Over the next few months, the ADV Workgroup will provide input on key elements of a statewide ADV program. ADV Workgroup meetings are open to community members and meeting agendas include time for community comments. Broad opportunities for community input are anticipated early in 2024. Meeting details and materials are posted on [DSL's website here](#) and announced via the abandoned and derelict vessels email notice list. [Sign up for ADV email notices here.](#)

###

Photos and video of the FV Tiffany removal are [available here on DSL's Box.com site.](#)

www.oregon.gov/dsl