



News

NEWS RELEASE – *for immediate release*

Media Contacts:

Ali Ryan Hansen, Communications Director, DSL: 503-510-6860, ali.r.hansen@dsl.oregon.gov

Josh Mulhollem, Waterways Stewardship Manager, DSL: 971-600-8935

Lieutenant Shaun McQuiddy, Columbia County Sheriff's Office: 503-366-4611

Frank Manning, President and COO of Diversified Marina Inc: 503- 289-2669

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Agencies join forces, funds to remove nine hazardous vessels from the Columbia River

ST. HELENS, Ore. – The State of Oregon and Columbia County are partnering to remove a cluster of nine sunken recreational boats creating a hazard in the Columbia River near St. Helens – a cleanup made possible by leveraging state and federal funds.

“Our community members have been advocating for these boats to be removed for years and we know how hazardous they are, potentially leaking pollutants or floating into navigation channels,” said Lieutenant Shaun McQuiddy of Columbia County Sheriff's Office, “but there hasn't been funding until now.”

Though Columbia County Sheriff's Office was able to work with the Oregon State Marine Board to pursue boat owners and tag boats for removal, funding had not previously been available to raise, store, and dismantle the boats. The cost of removal—estimated to be \$236,000—is being covered by the state's new Abandoned and Derelict Vessel Fund and federal dollars from the American Rescue Plan Act.

“Partnering with hardworking entities statewide and Oregon State Marine Board to remove these sunken recreational vessels is a significant part of Oregon's new Abandoned and Derelict Vessel Program,” said Josh Mulhollem, Waterways Stewardship Manager at Oregon Department of State Lands. “Cleaning up these vessels was a priority for the Columbia County community and will have immediate benefits for everyone who enjoys spending time on the river.”

Diversified Marine Incorporated, the vendor awarded the contract for removal of the St. Helens cluster, will also be removing a 115-foot vessel from St. Helens later next month.

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Photos are available at: <https://oregonstatelands.box.com/s/jv3nxo7c53hkdhsk0twlogftij05ilft>

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