

# *Rodanthe Harbor*



# *Rodanthe Harbor*



# *Manns Harbor*



# *Manns Harbor Canal*



# *Manns Harbor*



*Abandoned and Derelict  
Vessels and Debris Study  
Coastal North Carolina*

March 1, 2007

by

Judith A. Hills

Planning Director

Eastern Carolina Council  
discusses this growing situation

Man-made debris and abandoned and derelict vessels dot the North Carolina coastal landscape.

They range from:  
small sailboats  
large rusting steel trawlers  
as well as barges, etc.

The US Coast Guard was asked to participate in this study and they too agree that the level of difficulty to manage this increasing problem is high.

This study not only attempted to map and locate abandoned and derelict vessels but to review the laws and programs run by several states that are affected by this same problem.

It is noted in this report, that if North Carolina experiences a significant wind / tidal flooding event, the number of abandoned vessels and debris could easily mushroom overnight.

When a boat has blown away during a storm & owner has no insurance, he may choose to abandon the boat rather than deal with costly relocation of a damaged vessel.

In reference to assistance from the  
USCG:

The USCG may send a Marine  
Safety Team to check out the  
vessels or debris.

The USCG may only become  
involved if:

- ▶ The vessel or debris is an environmental hazard (e.g., leaking oil)
- ▶ The vessel or debris is a hazard to navigation

The involvement of the USCG does not necessarily mean they will agree to remove the debris or vessel. It merely means that they will review the circumstances and will make a determination if it meets one of their two criteria.

The USCG may call upon the  
US Army Corps of Engineers  
(USACE) to remove the debris  
or vessels if it is blocking a  
navigable channel

USACE has the authority under  
33 CFR 245

The NC Wildlife Resources is supposedly looking into the possibility of filing felony charges against owners of abandoned boats according to an article in The State Port Pilot dated January 24, 2007. The difficulty might be in establishing ownership.

Some boats are in such a decomposed state that it may be difficult to establish ownership.

# North Carolina State Government

Chapter 75A of the NC General Statutes is entitled, “Boating and Water Safety”

This statute does not address *abandoned* vessels

# **North Carolina State Government**

**NC GS Chapter 76 is entitled  
“Navigation” and refers to items left  
...however, the key here is this  
section only applies to “Navigable  
Waters”**

This report reviews several states and it's policies and procedures to address this problem....some have plans and procedures....but sadly most have .....no funding

**Removal of these items are  
costly**

# South Carolina has developed a long term strategy which includes:

- Aggressively establishing ownership of these vessels
  - Establishing a recurring funding source for removal when there is no responsible party
    - Educate its citizens
  - Ensure availability of proper disposal options
- Working relationship with local, state and federal agencies as well as public input

As slips become less available, other options of mooring such as “off shore” mooring and coming to and from shore by “dingy” will become an option. The effort to use the vessels becomes less desirable, boat is put up for sale, months go by with no buyer, boat begins to deteriorate, luster of ownership fades still more, the owner may just abandon it and move on. This is the new upcoming problem on the horizon.

# Commercial Boats

## Reasons for Abandonment

- Owner can't sell the vessel
- Owner owes dockage and can't pay
- Owner can't find dockage that they can afford
- Owner owes for repair bills and can't pay
- Commercial market gone "soft"

