



# Collier County Government

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Derelict Vessels to be Removed from County Waterways

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The Coastal Zone Management Department will begin removing abandoned water vessels over the next few weeks near Cocohatchee, Marco River and Goodland Bay. Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission awarded the department an \$80,000 Derelict Vessel Removal Grant as part of its Florida Boating Improvement Program (FBIP). The grant required a \$20,000 cash match from Collier County.

“This project has been a collaborative effort with Coastal Zone Management Department, Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Marco Island Police Department, City of Naples Police Department and the Collier County Sheriff’s Office,” said Coastal Zone Management Environmental Specialist Pamela Keyes. “All of the involved agencies have really come together to help mark derelict vessels so they can be removed from county waters. Derelict vessels are defined as any vessel left, stored, abandoned, wrecked or junked upon the waters of the state and derelict vessels must be marked by local law enforcement before removal.”

If a vessel has a known owner, law enforcement will notify the owner to remove the vessel within 30 days. Should the owner of the marked vessel not remove it from the waterway, the case moves through the court system. Officials may also file a charge against the vessel’s owner to reimburse the cost of boat removal in an effort to reimburse tax dollars spent on the project.

If a vessel does not have an owner and is marked for removal, law enforcement can file a written report after ten days in order to have the vessel removed.

“It is very unfortunate that we have to use the taxpayer monies to remove derelict vessels from the waters of Collier County, which cause environmental and navigational hazards. That’s why we have taken such a strong stance on taking these cases through the court system to ensure just enforcement is brought to these defendants,” said Lieutenant Mitts Mravic from Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

The \$80,000 grant will pay to remove 12 abandoned vessels from Collier County waterways. Remove begins on March 5.

For more information, media may contact Camden Smith at (239) 252-5326.

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