

## TowBoatUS and BoatUS Foundation Partner with Lynnhaven River NOW to Remove 10 Abandoned Boats from Virginia Waters

*Effort is part of larger initiative to remove up to 100 vessels and address growing abandoned and derelict vessel (ADV) issue*



*An image of an ADV removed from the Elizabeth River and crushed for disposal.  
Photo Credit: BoatUS Foundation*

**SPRINGFIELD, Va, May 19, 2026** – [The BoatUS Foundation](#), a national leader promoting safe, clean and responsible boating helped [Lynnhaven River](#) and TowBoatUS at ports [Gwynns Island](#) and [Portsmouth](#), remove 10 abandoned derelict vessels (ADVs) from waterways across Gloucester and Portsmouth, Virginia. This initiative is aimed at addressing navigational hazards and environmental impacts of ADVs on coastal Virginia waterways. The removals took place April 14–16 and are part of a broader effort to remove up to 100 ADVs in the area.

Lynnhaven River NOW's project brought together nonprofit, government and private partners to address the growing environmental and navigational risks posed by abandoned boats. This project is supported by a 2023 award from the [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration \(NOAA\) Marine Debris Program](#).

“Abandoned boats don’t just disappear. They become a burden on communities, the environment and local economies,” said Alanna Keating, Director of Outreach at BoatUS Foundation. “By connecting trusted partners, we are addressing the issue of ADVs and making real progress toward cleaner, safer Virginia waterways.”

Removing abandoned vessels provides immediate benefits to local waterways and communities. Left unattended, these vessels can leak fuel, create navigation hazards, and harm marine ecosystems and shorelines. Their removal enhances boater safety, safeguards natural habitats, and helps prevent lasting environmental damage.

TowBoatUS operators Chris Parker of Gwynns Island and Donald Duck of Portsmouth were contracted to do the removals, volunteering significant time and resources while working through a wide range of vessel conditions.

“Every removal is different, and often more complex than people realize,” Parker said. “Some vessels can be refloated and towed, while others need to be taken apart piece by piece. It takes time and coordination, but the impact on the community and the bay is significant once removed.”

“These boats pose real risks to navigation and safety,” Duck said. “We see how they can break free, damage property, or require emergency response. Prevention through proper insurance and responsible disposal can make a big difference.”

BoatUS Foundation also has a broader ADV Program, which includes the [Turning the Tide Summit](#) and a [national database](#) to track abandoned vessels nationwide.

Local leaders in attendance during the local cleanups included Gloucester County Administrator Greg Gentry, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality Coastal Zone Manager Jeff Flood, and Portsmouth Mayor Shannon Glover.

Anyone who encounters an abandoned or derelict vessel on a waterway is encouraged to report it at <https://boat.us.org/adv-database>.

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#### **ABOUT THE BOATUS FOUNDATION:**

[BoatUS Foundation](#) is supporting projects that were selected through their nationally competitive grant program for the removal of abandoned and derelict vessels throughout coastal and marine areas of the United States, including the Great Lakes, U.S. territories, and Freely Associated States. In an effort to help educate and prevent future ADVs, the Foundation created a national ADV database to track the scope of the challenge and measure success, document ADV prevention and removal activities to share with the public and support a national dialogue and education efforts on boating-related debris disposal. This project is supported by a 2023 award from the NOAA Marine Debris Program.

#### **ABOUT TOWBOATUS:**

[TowBoatUS](#) is the nation’s largest on-water towing and assistance service, with more than 300 locations across the United States. Captains are U.S. Coast Guard-licensed professionals who provide 24/7 on-water assistance including towing, soft ungroundings, battery jumps and fuel delivery. TowBoatUS also plays a critical role in supporting marine debris removal and response efforts in partnership with local and national organizations.

#### **ABOUT LYNNHAVEN RIVER NOW:**

[Lynnhaven River](#) works with residents, businesses, faith communities, schools, and community leaders to restore and protect Virginia Beach waterways and natural resources. LRNow believes that every community should have pure water, clean air, and access to open spaces for recreation. LRNow believes that every community should have pure water, clean air, and access to open spaces for recreation.

