

Jay Woodward

Elizabeth River Derelict Vessel Removal Project, Hampton Roads, Virginia

Biography

- T.C. Williams High School class of '78, Alexandria, VA (Remember the Titans!)
- BS Biology, 1983, Mary Washington College, Fredericksburg, VA
- MS Oceanography, 1987, Old Dominion University, Norfolk, VA
- Hatchery/Field Supervisor, 1987-1989, Cherrystone Aquafarms, Cheriton, VA
- Fisheries Stock Assessment Technician, 1989-1990, Virginia Marine Resources Commission, Newport News, VA
- Environmental Engineer, 1990-present, VMRC
- Married with 2 boys and a Labrador retriever and living in Chesapeake, VA

Presentation Abstract

In response to an amendment to the 1996 Budget Bill, the Virginia Marine Resources Commission was provided \$200,000 in general fund assistance to assess and update a 1990 study of navigation obstructions in the Elizabeth River, and embark on a limited removal program. The Elizabeth River is one of the Commonwealth's most valuable waterways, serving as a vital transportation link for waterborne commerce and accommodating an increasing level of recreational use. As a direct result of that use, the waterway has experienced an accumulation of numerous obstacles and obstructions to navigation. These generally take the form of abandoned barges or vessels, or deteriorated structures (ie., piers, pilings, wharfs, etc.). The resulting study identified 148 vessels within this river and its 3 main tributaries possessing one or more derelict structures. Preliminary cost estimates (1989 dollars) for complete removal of all vessels and obstructions ranged from 2.5 to 4.4 million dollars.

To date, the Commission has provided a total of \$336,040 to the Cities of Norfolk, Chesapeake and Portsmouth for the removal of vessels originally inventoried in 1996. The removals were accomplished either through enforcement measures, volunteer salvage efforts or under contract to the respective localities. The initial vessels targeted for removal were the ones most visible to the public and which held the highest potential for successful

removal (ie, affordable, technically feasible, salvageable, disposable, etc.). Additional sites could be added and ranked for future consideration, once identified and inventoried.

In addition to the successful removals to date, difficulties encountered all along the way include obtaining adequate funding for the project, identifying the vessels and tracking down the responsible parties, prioritizing the removal efforts, and conflicts with potential historic resources.