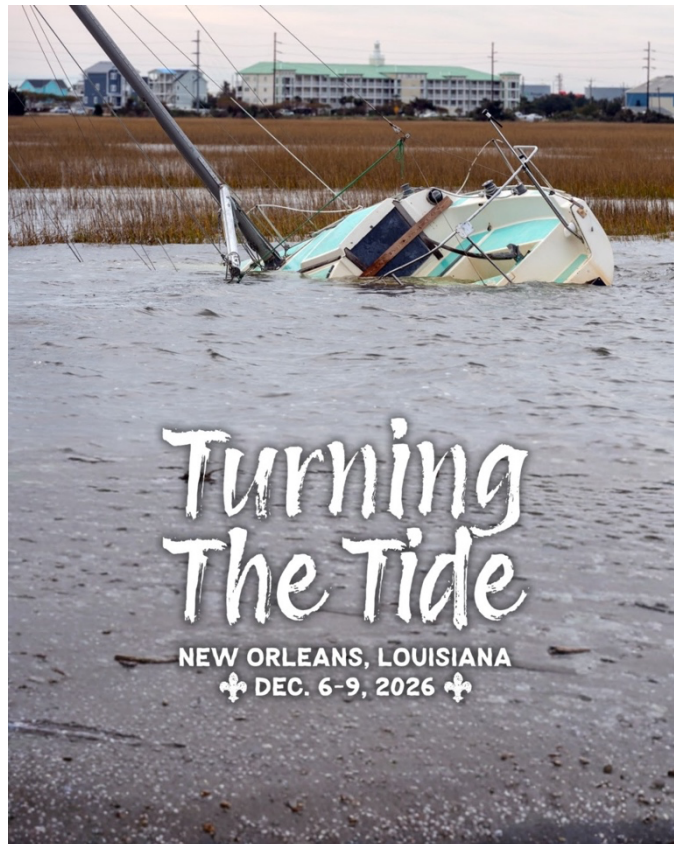


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**BoatUS Foundation Unveils Speaker Lineup for Turning the Tide
Conference on Abandoned and Derelict Vessels**

Presenters include state and municipal agency staff, boatyard operators, river keepers and industry leaders working on abandoned and derelict vessel removal and disposal



SPRINGFIELD, Va., Sept. 9, 2026 – Today, the BoatUS Foundation for Boating Safety and Clean Water announced its speaker lineup for its 2026 [Turning the Tide Summit](#). The four-day

event, which addresses the issue of abandoned and derelict vessels and disposal solutions, is set for Dec. 6-9 in New Orleans, Louisiana. The summit is currently open for registration.

The in-person summit tackles removal practices and programs, and what to do with abandoned and derelict vessels (ADVs), from proven disposal methods to cutting-edge technologies that are being used for safe disposal. The event will convene environmental experts, boating and waste industry leaders, and policymakers on discussions around removal and disposal of end-of-life vessels.

"This year's lineup brings people who've actually done the work, not just studied it," said Alanna Keating, BoatUS Foundation's director of outreach. "Their experience turns hard-won lessons into real solutions for communities dealing with this problem."

Confirmed speakers for the Turning the Tide Summit include:

- Chief Administrative Officer of Terrebonne Parish Consolidated Government [Noah Lirette](#), Louisiana: Speaking on new state laws and parish procedures that are closing the gaps that let derelict vessels sit for years.
- Product Leader of Owens Corning Composite Materials [Paul Salach](#), Illinois: Focusing on circular recycling solutions for end-of-life fiberglass and a hydrogen melting process that could cut emissions up to 95% at the company's France facility.
- Owner of TowBoatUS San Diego [Capt. Rob Butler](#), California: Breaking down the methods, risks, and obstacles nobody plans for when removing exposed ADVs.
- Restoration Manager of Lynnhaven River Now [Vince Bowhens](#), Virginia: Sharing lessons learned from three years of NOAA-funded ADV removal across coastal Virginia.
- Associate Editor of BoatUS Magazine [Kelsey Bonham Bailey](#), Massachusetts: Presenting her own two-year, \$16,000 boat disposal ordeal, logistical snags, and boatyard roadblocks included.
- Anacostia Riverkeeper [Trey Sherard](#), Washington, D.C.: Discussing how 25 ADVs were pulled from the Anacostia River, including vessels tied to the nation's first African American boating organization.
- Owner of Trident Dredging and Marine Construction [Roy Brown](#), North Carolina: Sharing field stories from years of ADV removal work and his take on why the problem is only getting worse.
- Grants Administrator from the U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Planning and Natural Resources [Brigitte Berry](#), U.S. Virgin Islands: Discussing ADV removal at St. Thomas East End Reserves, the territory's only marine protected area.
- CEO and Co-founder of ZULU Marine [Rusty Batey](#), Georgia: Walking through how drones, photogrammetry, and GIS mapping help plan low-impact removal routes before crews mobilize.

The cost to attend the four-day summit is \$400 for general admission, \$200 for nonprofit and government employees, and \$100 for students. Registered attendees get access to all sessions, a welcome reception, breakfast, and lunch for the duration of the conference. Interested attendees can register [here](#) ahead of the early bird deadline of October 1.

This summit is part of the BoatUS Foundation ADV Program, whose ultimate aim is removing and preventing ADVs from the nation's coastal waters and the Great Lakes. The program also

includes the creation of a [national database](#) to pinpoint locations of ADVs and track their removal. These efforts are supported by a 2023 grant from the [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration \(NOAA\) Marine Debris Program](#).

PRESS KIT:

- To view our press kit and additional resources, please click [here](#).

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 also 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.