

Derelict Trap and Trap Debris Cleanup Events

Frequently Asked Questions

1. *Why do I need to get permission to remove derelict traps?*

Traps are private property and there are severe penalties for tampering with a trap, line or buoy, or the contents of a trap that does not belong to you.

2. *Can I remove derelict traps while I am out fishing?*

No, you must be participating in an organized group event that has authorization from the FWC to remove derelict traps. Individuals are not eligible to receive authorization to remove derelict traps. Tampering with a trap, trap contents, line or buoy without written permission from the trap owner is a felony and may result in fines and the revocation of your fishing privileges.

3. *What can be removed during a derelict trap and trap debris removal event that has been authorized by the FWC?*

Volunteers may remove all “trap debris” and “derelict traps” during an authorized event, as well as other marine debris.

4. *What is a “derelict trap”?*

A trap is considered to be derelict if:

- a. It is in the water during the closed season for that fishery;
- b. It is a “fishable trap” in the water during the open season for that fishery that lacks more than two of the following:
 1. Buoy
 2. Line
 3. Current Commission-issued trap tag
 4. Current license

5. *What is a “fishable trap”?*

A fishable trap has 6 intact sides, and at least two of the following:

- a. Buoy
- b. Line
- c. Current Commission-issued trap tag
- d. Identification (for recreational traps)

6. *What is considered “trap debris”?*

Trap debris is any piece of a trap, or any combination of trap pieces that do not make up a fishable trap.

7. *Is authorization needed to clean up trap debris that has washed up on the beach or in the mangroves?*

Local, state, or federal governmental entities, nonprofit nongovernmental organizations, fishery participant organizations, or other community or citizens groups may remove trap debris from shoreline areas landward of mean low water, and from mangroves or other shoreline vegetation

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when they organize, promote, and participate in coastal cleanup events for the purpose of removing marine debris.

8. ***I want to organize a cleanup in my area, what steps do I need to take?***

- a. **Read the rules and regulations** regarding these events before planning an event. This information can be found on the following website: www.MyFWC.com/marine...
- b. **Identify a focal area**, where there is a large number of traps that appear to be derelict or abandoned.
- c. **Select a boat ramp or staging area** near your focal area. Contact the property owner for permission to use this area and for permission to place a dumpster on the property.
- d. **Get input from your community** to see if there will be any willing volunteers, including local fishing and boating clubs.
- e. **Select a date** to hold your event and a backup date should you encounter inclement weather. These events can take some time to organize, receive approval and implement. The best time to hold an event is when the season is closed for the trap fisheries in your area. The stone crab fishery is closed from May 16 to October 14 each year state-wide, and the spiny lobster fishery is closed from April 1 to August 5 each year state-wide. For blue crab seasonal closures, please refer to the following website (www.MyFWC.com/marine...).
- f. **Contact local waste management** contractors or dumpster rental companies to make arrangements for disposal. Traps must be transported to a landfill or waste transfer station on the same day as the event, or may be stored in a secure area until they can be transported to a landfill. Some local agencies or businesses may be willing to donate a dumpster for this type of event.
- g. **Apply for authorization** from the FWC to conduct your event by completing a Derelict Trap and Trap Debris Removal Event application form. This application form is available online (www.MyFWC.com/marine...) and upon request (send inquiries to: Cleanuptraps@MyFWC.com or call 850-487-0554).

9. ***What do we do with derelict traps and trap debris removed during an authorized event?***

Derelict traps and trap debris must be disposed of on the same day they are collected, or stored securely until they can be taken to the nearest landfill or waste transfer station. Approved methods include (but are not limited to):

- a. Renting a dumpster to be located at the boat ramp or staging area that will be collected on the same day as the event.
- b. Loading the derelict traps and trap debris onto a trailer for immediate transport to the local landfill or waste transfer station at the end of each day of the event.
- c. Moving the traps to a secure (locked, limited-access) area if they cannot be transported to a landfill or transfer station on the same day they are removed. Traps may not be left unattended or in an unsecure area overnight.

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Frequently Asked Questions

10. *Some of the traps we recovered during the closed season are in pretty good shape. Can we sell them or give them back to their owners?*

No, traps that remain in the water during the closed season are illegal and must be disposed of once they have been removed.

11. *How will volunteers be trained prior to participating in a derelict trap removal event?*

It is the responsibility of the event coordinator to train volunteers on how to identify and remove derelict traps and trap debris during an event. It is important that volunteers understand the difference between types of traps (blue crab, stone crab, spiny lobster, etc.), what is considered to be a derelict trap by law, and what they are allowed to remove during the event. More information on volunteer training can be found online at www.MyFWC.com/marine...

12. *I'm volunteering at a cleanup event in my area – what should I bring with me?*

While every event may be organized a little differently, some items you may want to bring with you on the day of the event are: sunscreen; clothing that can get wet and dirty; sturdy boots or shoes for smashing traps; and sturdy gloves for handling traps. Check with your event coordinator to find out what equipment will be supplied and what items are needed.

13. *What methods for removing blue crab traps have worked best in the past?*

Events that have used airboats along with larger support vessels have been the most successful in shallow water areas. Airboats can remove traps from shallow areas and transfer them to the larger support vessels to be taken back to the staging area for disposal.

14. *How much does it cost to organize a cleanup event?*

The budget below includes cost estimates for many facets of the event, although partners or sponsors sometimes absorb certain expenses. For example, volunteers or local agencies may provide boats and fuel, equipment, and personnel at no cost to the sponsoring agency or organization. Also, local merchants may donate food, merchandise, coupons, or other items for give-away bags. However, calculating the total estimated costs, even when some things are donated, helps the sponsor of an event to track what actual costs might have been incurred. This is especially useful if donated time or items are to be used as match for grant funding.

Estimated Budget for a One-Day Event

<u>Staff and equipment:</u>	
3- 5 environmental staff - coordination, planning and participation (~ 75 hours at varying rates: \$20/hr used here)	\$1,500
1-2 boats (includes fuel, mileage, etc.) @ \$150/boat	\$150 - \$300
Equipment (buckets, shovels, tarps, pliers, etc.)	\$200 estimate

Derelict Trap and Trap Debris Cleanup Events Frequently Asked Questions

<u>In-kind and volunteer labor:</u>	
132 hours @ \$11.19/hr (22 volunteers X 6 hours)	\$2,269
<u>In-kind equipment:</u>	
5-12 boats (includes fuel, mileage, travel, etc.) @ \$150/boat	\$750 - \$1,800
<u>Donated items:</u>	
Dumpster (delivery, haul and fuel fee - Dumpster is often donated)	\$292-\$442 (varies by vendor)
Trap disposal/tipping fees	\$60
Lunch (estimated @ \$5 per person)	\$110
TOTAL ESTIMATED COSTS	
	\$5,331 - \$6,511

Budget information and example budget reproduced from GSMFC Publication 154 Guidelines for Developing Derelict Trap Removal Programs in the Gulf of Mexico (2008).

If you have any additional questions, please contact the Derelict Trap and Trap Debris Removal Program at (850) 487-0554 or Cleanuptraps@MyFwc.com.