



# FLOT Lines

Flotilla 74, Brandon

District 7

USCG Auxiliary

Issue 4 2024







# FLOT Lines

Newsletter Flotilla 74, Brandon  
Dorothy Riley, Flotilla Commander  
Matthew Stephen, Flotilla Vice Commander  
Meeting: Second Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m.  
3006 South Kings Ave., Brandon, Florida

## Flotilla Staff Officers

**Tanner Piliego**  
Information Systems

**Earl Abbott**  
Diversity

**Christopher Hunt**  
Communications  
Member Training

**Kelly McMahon**  
Finance

**William Sage**  
Human Resources

**August Miller**  
Navigation Systems  
Materials

**Brett Skaggs**  
**Secretary of Records**

**Dottie Riley**  
Publications (Editor)  
Public Affairs

**Matt Stephen**  
RBS-Partner Visitation  
Vessel Examinations

Background photo: Steve Williams, Dean Bell, coxswain, and August Miller aboard "Ms. Daisy," Flotilla 74, Brandon Auxiliary facility. USCG Auxiliary photo by George Papabeis

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*We're on the web!*

[www.cgaux74.org](http://www.cgaux74.org)



<https://www.facebook.com/groups/Flotilla74/>

A dolphin surfaces near a channel marker in Tampa Bay. USCG Auxiliary photo by George Papabeis

Cover photo: Flotilla 74, Brandon members Chris Hunt (forward) and Brett Skaggs (rear personal watercraft) conduct Vessel Examinations Sunday, Sept. 15. USCG Auxiliary photo by Matthew Stephen





## From the Helm



Dorothy Riley,  
Flotilla Commander

Forgive me for not writing the usual motivational piece. I feel compelled to address another matter.

We experienced the impact of three major storms in as many months. Some devastated flotillas and their members with hurricane-force winds, record-breaking rain, and storm surge, while others skirted around us with high winds and torrential rains but left no lasting

damage. Sometimes, the destruction depended upon which side of the bay our members resided, whilst at other times, nothing more than which side of the street we lived on was the determinant.

These storms brought home the significance of our ties and what we owe to each other. Owe? Yes, through our membership in the Auxiliary, we have responsibilities to the Auxiliary and our fellow members.

**The first responsibility is to respond to Everbridge. This is not optional.** It is critical. Imagine receiving an email from the Director of the Auxiliary that one or more of our members are not accounted for! Let there be no mistake- the Coast Guard is concerned for our safety. Daniel Helou, District Captain-West made every attempt to locate our "missing" members when Bill Sage and I could not reach them. This is embarrassing as all our members must do is respond by phone or email! Every member took an oath to abide by the governing policies of the Commandant of the Coast Guard, and as volunteers, the Commandant requires little from us. Responding to Everbridge is one of the few demands the Coast Guard makes from us.

When none of our efforts ended in locating the last missing member, I drove to his home to contact him. Chris Alexander joined the Auxiliary and Flotilla 74, Brandon, in 2010. He was the flotilla's Communication Systems officer for many years and maintained our social media pages. When I went to his home and talked to his neighbors, I learned that Christopher died from an illness this summer. Hearing this filled me with dismay, frustration, and shame. I did not know he was ill, let alone that he died!

I experienced dismay because Chris, a fourteen-year flotilla member, was outside our fellowship circle. He did not contact any of us, and we did not call or speak to him. He was not a part of our community of interest, activity, or experience. While he was a member, he was not our friend, our fellow, and that was our failing. I had a similar feeling when fellow member Ron Matz died. All our members except one couple did not attend his memorial or funeral, and after twenty years of service to the Auxiliary, Ron deserved better! I do not exclude myself from this scolding. I am no less culpable.

**Fellowship is the fourth cornerstone of the Auxiliary.** If this is our best representation of fellowship, our flotilla will flounder. How do we build stronger bonds? A 'buddy system?' Getting serious about developing a strong, functioning mentor program? Holding meetings away from our building? (When we held our staff meetings at 'The Village Inn,' we had fun and enjoyed each other's company. We bonded.)

Our active members are such great people. I do not want to lose anyone due to disregard or indifference. We must fix this, and I am open to your ideas! Ω

"Friendship between team members isn't just a nice bonus, it's a powerful catalyst for success. When colleagues build genuine connections, they create a supportive and collaborative environment where everyone feels comfortable sharing ideas, taking risks, and working together towards a common goal. This sense of camaraderie boosts morale, increases productivity, and fosters a sense of shared ownership that leads to exceptional results. A team built on friendship is more resilient, innovative, and, ultimately, more successful."

## From the Helm

This has been a rough three weeks with back-to-back storms. Fortunately, the flotilla sustained only some superficial exterior damage. The county restored power to our building, and we held our first meeting at the flotilla in a few months.

Two members completed the personal qualification standard for vessel examiner and are awaiting it to be reflected in the Auxiliary Data System. Elections are approaching fast, so please attend the November meeting.

Thanks to all who helped the flotilla, your friends, neighbors, and family clean up after the storm. Efforts like these reinforce our connections to each other and our community. A special thanks to Brett Skaggs and Chris Hunt, who cleaned up the storm debris around our flotilla.

Thanks to all who endured this year and put in a lot of effort. Our team is growing stronger. Ω



Matthew Stephen  
Flotilla Vice Commander



Matthew Stephen at the Hillsborough County Florida Public Safety Operations Complex with Chad Chronister, Hillsborough County Sheriff. Stephen served at the center during both Hurricanes Helene and Milton. Photo provided by Matthew Stephen

We want you to serve our flotilla as a staff officer next year. Now is the time to think about what you want to do and how you can contribute. Staff officer positions offer 'on the job' training from friendly, helpful members who want you and the flotilla to succeed! We need multiple skills and positions: Public Education Instructor, Program Visitor, Vessel Examiner, Communication Services, Public Affairs, etc. Review the list of offices to get an idea where you might fit.

**We need you!**





## Articles of Interest

### Working together proves both productive and fun!

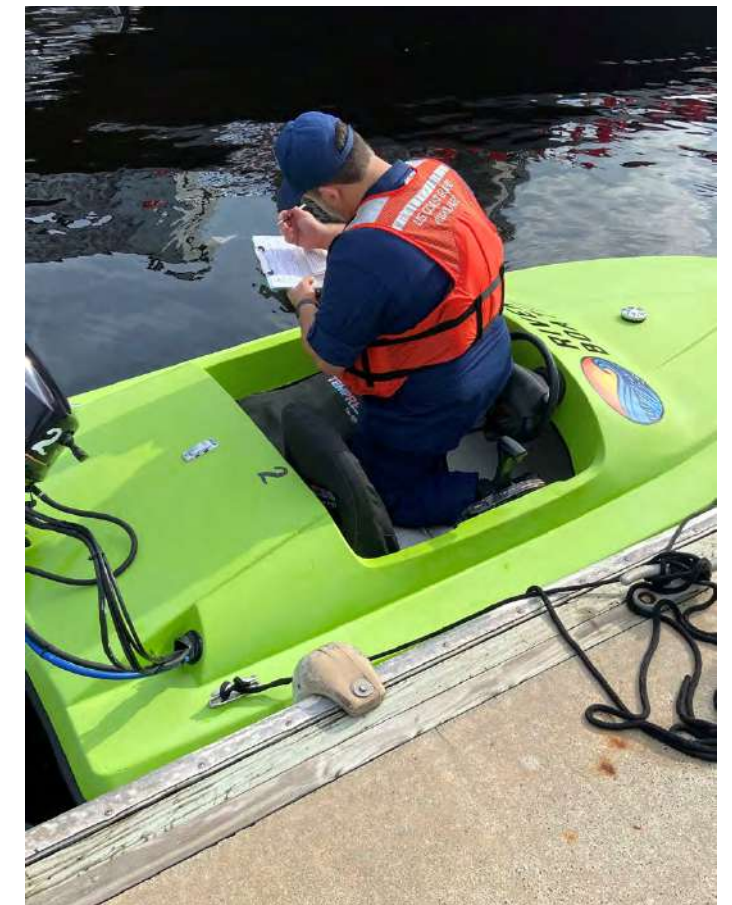
By Brett Skaggs



On Sept. 15, 2024, members Christopher Hunt and Brett Skaggs completed their Vessel Examinations training at the Riverwalk Boating Company behind the Tampa Convention Center. Matthew Stephen, Flotilla Staff Officer-Vessel Examinations (and Flotilla Vice Commander) supervised Hunt and Skaggs for the Vessel Examiner qualification process. They examined twelve vessels for safety compliance, including seven gas-powered rental boats, four electric conversion retro rental boats, and one tender boat, completing the minimum five inspections each. The flotilla's newest member, Vishrut Amin,

observed and helped record the information while the vessels were being examined. Special thanks to David Thomas with Boat Help, LLC for providing the contact information and everyone involved at the Riverwalk Boating Company for allowing us the time to perform these inspections. This was another great collaboration between the USCG Auxiliary and the boating community in the Tampa area, which ensured boating safety as a top priority. Ω

## Articles of Interest



Flotilla 74, Brandon Vessel Examiners inspect various types of recreational vessels at Riverwalk Boating Company in Tampa on Sept. 15, 2024. Top left: Christopher Hunt, top right: Matthew Stephen, and right: Brett Skaggs. Opposing page: a wide view of Riverwalk Boating Company.

Not shown is the flotilla's newest member, Vishrut Amin, who observed and helped record the information while the vessels were examined. USCG Auxiliary photos by Brett Skaggs and Matt Stephen





## Articles of Interest

### District 7 Training Conference: *If you were not there, then you don't know what you missed!*

By Dorothy Riley

You do not know what you are missing if you have never attended District 7 D-Train. It is great fun talking to members you may have interacted with via email but can now put faces to and see members you have not spoken to for a year. The fellowship is fabulous! The food is excellent, and the training is exceptional.

In addition to offering annual refresher training like Team Coordination Training and Risk Management, D-Train offered complete courses like cardiopulmonary resuscitation certification and qualified 11 new Public Affairs specialists.

This year's distinguished Coast Guard guests included Rear Admiral Douglas M. Schofield, Commander, District 7; LCDR Benjamin Tuxhorn, Director of Auxiliary, (DIRAUX) District 7; CDR Erik Neisse, and BOSN2 Brook Blount, Operations Training Officer, District 7. Every Coast Guard Sector was represented, including our own Captain Michael P. Kahle, Commander, Sector St. Petersburg.



Auxiliary distinguished guests included Commodore Alex Malewski, Past National Commodore; Commodore John Holmes, District Commodore, District 7; Commodore (e) Martin Goodwin, District Chief of Staff (yes, he will be our new District Commodore!); and Daniel Helou, District Captain-West. Division 7 was represented by Dean Hoskin, Division Commander; Anthony Hooper, Division Vice Commander; and David Rockwell, Sector St. Petersburg Auxiliary Coordinator.

Having gotten the 'house-keeping' tasks of listing distinguished guests out of the way, let's talk more about D-Train. Friday afternoon was the district annual business meeting when the new District Commodore, District Chief of Staff, and District Captains are elected. While COMO (e) Martin Goodwin will be next year's District Commodore, Murray Price will become the new District Chief of Staff. Many of us are already familiar with Goodwin, as he has set up a lot of member training for District 7 members.

Friday Night was the Commodore's Banquet. This is the formal dinner for Auxilia-

## Articles of Interest

ry members and usually includes the frocking of the new District Commodore and excellent food.

Training modules began first thing Saturday morning. This year's courses covered various topics and qualifications- something for everyone from Recreational Boating Safety workshops to Operations, Public Affairs, Navigation, Marine Safety, Leadership Development, Auxiliary Data System, Auxiliary Paddlecraft, and many other classes. The course offerings were so extensive that they covered two total pages in fine print. Classes continued on Sunday morning between 8 AM and 3 PM.

Outside the ballroom were the tabletop displays. My favorite was the Aids to Navigation display, and other displays included Diversity, Sea Scouts, Auxiliary Data System, and Auxiliary Paddlecraft, to name just a few.

The Coast Guard Exchange store was set up in a large room on the mezzanine where members could purchase uniforms, insignia, and other merchandise. Also, District 7 members could get new or replacement ID cards on the spot. How convenient! The most famous event was 'Fun Night.' The theme this year was 'Grease-the movie.' It was both casual and, as the name states, outrageously 'fun.'

Yes, most attendees are district and national officers, but that is because it often takes a few years to talk newer members into attending. There were, however, quite a few new members, including from our division. Please attend next year. It will reinforce your sense of purpose and commitment to the Auxiliary experience. Ω



**Page 8-top: John Frassanito, District Staff Officer-Navigation Systems, displays aids to navigation buoys and bridge lights in one of the most creative table-top exhibits.**

**Page 8-mid-page: Daniel Helou, District Captain-West, sang beautiful renditions of the National Anthem and Lee Greenwood's "God Bless the USA." Behind him are Commodore John Holmes, CDR Erik Neisse; COMO Alex Malewski, Past National Commodore; Martin Goodwin, District Chief of Staff, District 7; and standing to the right, Natalie Bunting, Auxiliarist of the Year.**

**Page 8-bottom: Sue Hastings, DSC-IS, and John Robbins presented several classes on how to access information in the Auxiliary Data System.**

**This page, top: Daniel Helou, District Captain- West, with his wife, Kimberly, and Dean Hoskin, Division 7 Commander, and his wife, Linda, dressed for the Friday night Commodore's Banquet.**

**Mid-page: Saturday's fun night theme was "Grease, the movie," everyone came dressed for the part and danced the night away. USCG Auxiliary photos by Dorothy Riley**





# Articles of Interest

## News and Program Updates from our Staff Officers

### August Miller, Flotilla Staff Officer-Materials

I ordered and received 50 Vessel Safety Check Decals, 50 Vessel Safety Check forms, 25 paddlecraft Vessel Examination forms, and five recycle litter bags.

### August Miller, Flotilla Staff Officer-Navigation Systems

I attended the District 7 Navigation System workshop from May 24 - June 26.

### William Sage, Flotilla Staff Officer-Human Resources

We continue to have interested people contact us. We hope to see a few more interested people soon. The three on the E-Responder report are:

1. Huberto Llanes – Just received his member number.
2. Vishrut Amin – Just received his member number.
3. Toshiya Arciaga – Tosh submitted his application and dues today. He is interested and will be attending our staff meeting as well as business meetings. He will be engaged with the flotilla and also work with the medical/health unit giving eye exams when needed.



On Sept. 15, 2024, members Christopher Hunt and Brett Skaggs completed their Vessel Examinations training at the Riverwalk Boating Company behind the Tampa Convention Center. Matthew Stephen, Flotilla Staff Officer-Vessel Examinations (and Flotilla Vice Commander) supervised Hunt and Skaggs for the Vessel Examiner qualification process.

Other prospects: Carlos S. is delaying joining for some reason. Matthew G. is working on his application. Brian R. is non-responsive

Cheyenne J. is in high school. She wants to join and has parental permission, and she is working on completing the application.

### Matthew Stephen, Flotilla Staff Officer-Partner Visitations

Nothing to report for this September as I was busy with family affairs.

Challenges: I am still the only Recreational Boating Safety Partner Visitor at our flotilla and am working on getting another member qualified.

Dorothy Riley, Flotilla Commander, administers the member oath to Vishrut Amin at the meeting of Flotilla 74, Brandon on Oct. 15, 2024. USCG Auxiliary photo by Brett Skaggs



# Articles of Interest

## News and Program Updates from our Staff Officers

### Matthew Stephen, Flotilla Staff Officer-Vessel Examinations

I qualified two new vessel examiners, Chris Hunt and Brett Skaggs. They are waiting for their qualification to appear in the Auxiliary Data System.

Challenges: Heat and storms.

General Summary: We currently have five qualified vessel examiners and hope to have a couple more soon.

### Kelly McMahon, Flotilla Staff Officer-Finance

We have 46 members. Eleven members are resigning, retiring or transferring. Twelve members have not yet paid, but several indicated they would pay at the October meeting. All other members are current in their dues.

### Dorothy Riley, Flotilla Staff Officer-Publications

Current newsletter is overdue due to illness (COVID) and storm activity. Ω

## Hurricanes Debby, Helene and Milton batter Tampa Bay.

By Dorothy Riley

According to meteorologist Kyle Hanson of Spectrum news, Hurricane **Debby** dropped a foot of rain in many spots. Torrential rain led to widespread inland flooding, particularly in Manatee and Sarasota counties. Myakka City saw the highest rainfall total of over 21 inches while places like Lakewood Ranch, Parrish, and Pinellas Park saw well over a foot of rain. The storm surge was two to four feet on our coast, and record flooding occurred on the Manatee and Alafia River.

Debby became a tropical storm on Saturday, August 3rd, as it was moving to the north, away from Cuba in the southeastern Gulf of Mexico. It gradually strengthened as it moved north, and its center passed approximately 75 miles to the west of the mouth of Tampa Bay on the evening of August 4th. Winds did briefly gust to over 60 mph at some coastal locations during the height of the storm late in the day on the 4th, but these winds were rarely sustained at tropical storm force (39 mph or higher).

Hurricane **Helene** made landfall as a Category 4 storm Thursday night, Sept. 26, in Florida's Big Bend region, and although the storm did not take a direct hit on the Tampa Bay area, it produced a storm surge that closed bridges, flooded roads, and surge that inundated coastal areas — especially in Pinellas County. Helene made a record-breaking seven-foot storm surge across the Tampa Bay region, where at least 11

people were killed in storm-related incidents. Sector St. Petersburg sustained damage from this storm.

Hurricane **Milton** flooded neighborhoods, flattened homes and knocked out power to millions of customers when it plowed through Florida on Oct. 9 and 10. Its path of destruction was uneven, though, and officials were working to make repairs in many areas.

Some places near the Gulf of Mexico and farther inland were inundated, though not to the degree that officials had feared. Many homes in the storm's path were leveled — by one early estimate, more than 120 were destroyed — while other structures nearby remained intact. At least 14 deaths have been linked to the storm.

The damage varied from one county to the next. The Tampa Bay region did not experience the disastrous storm surge many forecasters feared. Still, serious flooding along the Gulf Coast received as much as 18 inches of rain. Some areas were battered by strong winds, particularly barrier islands in the storm's direct path.

Three Division 7 flotillas were devastated by wind and flooding, and many members living in Pinellas County sustained severe damage to their personal properties. Several lost their homes and all of their personal possessions.

Let us keep all of them in our prayers. Ω





## Articles of Interest

### Flotilla 74, Brandon members clean up after Hurricane Milton.

By Dorothy Riley

Meteorologists predicted Hurricane Milton would make landfall over Tampa Bay. Fortunately for us, it landed farther south. Still, Tampa Bay residents experienced flooded neighborhoods, flattened homes, severe damage from storm surge, and loss of power to millions of customers when it plowed through Florida on Oct. 9 and 10.

We feared greatly for our flotilla. After all, Flotilla 74, Brandon, is a mobile unit that is always at grave risk during tropical storms. Milton blew off our facility's skirting and took down half of our carport leaving an electrical line on the driveway. Members Chris Hunt and Brett Skaggs took on the task of removing the collapsed sheets of roofing material, collecting and stacking the skirting blown all around the building, and getting an electrical line off the driveway. The line was live before the storm, so it was imperative to move it to avoid electrocution injury.

By the way, the electric service to the building was restored a week before Milton battered the building; fortunately, we had service after the storm. We were able to hold our October flotilla meeting in our building. Skaggs and Hunt also made sure that the water and electric service worked.

We are deeply indebted to Chris Hunt and Brett Skaggs. They are our Heroes of the Month! Ω



Brett Skaggs climbs the ladder to raise the fallen electric cable while Chris Hunt hold the ladder steady.



Brett Skaggs checks to roof for damage. Chris Hunt hold the ladder steady.



Brett Skaggs and Chris Hunt collect and pile the skirting and carport roof in front of the building.

All photos this page by Dorothy Riley

## Articles of Interest

### Member Matthew Stephen Responds to Hurricanes Helene and Milton for Hillsborough County.

By Dorothy Riley

During emergencies, auxiliary members volunteer at local and regional levels as well as for the Coast Guard. When Hurricanes Helene and Milton swept through Tampa Bay, Auxiliarist Matt Stephen assisted at the Hillsborough County, Florida Public Safety Operations Complex (PSOC). The center enables local government to monitor, prepare, and respond to emergencies and houses the county's Emergency Operations Center, Hillsborough County Fire Rescue administrative staff and training center, the Fire Marshal's office, Emergency Dispatch, and the Office of Emergency Management. Auxiliarist Stephen served 27 hours as a radio Net Control Operator conducting a net with our special needs shelters. This involved conducting hourly check-ins with the shelters.

Some of the things they look for during check-in are to make sure that they can hear each other clearly on the radio, that both their radios and communications equipment are functioning properly, and lastly, to see if any emergencies arise or if water or other necessities are required. Since these are special needs shelters, they require power for various medical equipment. Tampa experienced widespread damage and flooding, so, with that in mind, special needs shelters are a number one priority during a storm. During Helene, the county had one special needs shelter open and another two on standby. Ω

Top: Volunteers in the Hillsborough County, Florida Public Safety Operations Complex (PSOC) monitoring communication, power and flooding emergencies within the county.

Tampa Mayor Jane Castor poses with volunteer Matt Stephen.

Below: Matt Stephen with Florida Senator Jay Collins and other volunteers at the Public Safety Operations Complex. Photos provided by Matthew Stephen







Dated: 20 October 2024

Dear Members,

*I have just learned that many of our members were significantly impacted by the recent Hurricanes and subsequent flooding. It had been reported to me daily over the past week that no members required assistance. While that may be true, it has become clear to me that it doesn't mean everyone is fine.*

*Please know that I have spoken several times over the past week to BSX (Chief DIRAUX's office) at headquarters in Washington DC about the impact of the storms on our members in District 7 and other Districts where the storms made landfall and did major damage. We are all very concerned about your welfare and ask that you reach out through your leadership if you need assistance.*

*As Auxiliarists, we can request monetary assistance through the Coast Guard Mutual Assistance fund. They offer low-interest grants, and I know several Auxiliary members have used this service in the past and often their grants/loans have been forgiven. While they can't replace your home or major belongings, they offer some ready cash to use while you get back on your feet. You can apply easily online at <https://mycgma.org/>. I realize that many of you are still challenged by power and/or Wi-Fi, but perhaps a local member not affected can assist you.*

*Another, or additional option, is the Coast Guard Foundation. They provide emergency disaster relief to Coast Guard members, and I understand that assistance is extended to the Auxiliary. I know they are currently providing support to active duty/reservist families affected by the Hurricanes, so please reach out to them. They can be contacted at <https://coastguardfoundation.org/>.*

*Again, please know that I as well as the National Executive Committee and our Coast Guard leaders have you in our thoughts and prayers. It is difficult for first responders (including the Auxiliary) to ask for help, but this is the time. If you need it, please ask for it.*

*We need you, we care about you, and the Coast Guard can't do their jobs without you.*

Respectfully,

Mary Kirkwood  
National Commodore  
U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary

## Help for Individuals, Families and Businesses After a Disaster

Source: <https://www.myfloridacfo.com/division/ica/storm#checklist>

*Be sure to visit the webpage (link below title) to read about more resources and other helpful information.*

If you have been affected by a disaster, federal assistance may be available through the **Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)**. Assistance can include grants for temporary housing and home repairs, low-cost loans to cover uninsured property losses, and other programs to help individuals and business owners recover from the effects of the disaster.

Review FEMA's Florida Hurricane Helene and Florida Hurricane Milton webpages for more information on the assistance available, the application process, frequently asked questions and additional disaster recovery resources available. (<https://www.fema.gov/assistance/individual>)

The fastest way to apply for assistance from FEMA for individuals and families is through the FEMA website at DisasterAssistance.gov. You may also apply through the FEMA mobile app or by calling the FEMA Helpline at 800-621-3362.

### Keep Your Insurance Company Updated

If you must leave your home because of the

damage, let your insurance agent or company know your temporary address and phone number. They may need to reach you to ask additional questions or provide a status update on your claim. Take reasonable measures to properly secure your property and valuables from theft or vandalism if you vacate the home.

*Note: If you are insured through Florida's Citizens Property Insurance, be aware that the company denied 77% of all claims filed for damages resulting from Hurricane Debby. No information is available for claims resulting from damage by Hurricanes Helene and Milton, so be prepared to seek assistance through other agencies.*

### Hurricane Crisis Clean-Up Hotline

1-844-965-1386

Volunteer organizations will remove storm debris and assist with other storm clean-ups at no charge. For more details on specific assistance available, please call the Crisis Clean Up Hotline at 1-844-965-1386. Ω

Hurricane force winds drive the waves. Photo by Hans Isaacson on Unsplash





# Upcoming Changes to the Local Notice to Mariners and Light List.

***U.S. Coast Guard Navigation Center announces upcoming changes to the Local Notice to Mariners (LNM) and the Light List, as part of our efforts to modernize and improve the accessibility, accuracy, and overall user experience for mariners and other stakeholders***

## What Is Changing?

Notice: Changes to the USCG Local Notice to Mariners (LNM) and Light Lists

The U.S. Coast Guard Navigation Center announces upcoming changes to the Local Notice

to Mariners (LNM) and the Light List, as part of our efforts to modernize and improve the

accessibility, accuracy, and overall user experience for mariners and other stakeholders.

## More Changing?

1. Transition From Paper Charts: In January 2025, NOAA will discontinue the production of all paper charts. In alignment with this change, the Coast Guard

will transition from using NOAA Paper Chart Numbers and Editions/Dates for disseminating Marine Safety Information (MSI) to using Official Waterway Names.

2. How You Will Access LNMs and Light Lists: The LNM and Light List data will now be available in a geospatial format, which will allow you to visualize information interactively on a map/chart. You can use your mouse wheel or the +/- buttons in the upper left portion of the screen to zoom in or out and navigate to your desired area on the map/chart. Once the area is displayed, you can generate a PDF of the LNM or Light List for that specific area, which you can then save and/or print. Alternatively, you can use a fillable form on our website to select your waterway by name from the Light List and generate the LNM or Light List.

3. LNM and Light List Data Refresh Rate: LNM data will be refreshed every fifteen minutes. Light List data will be refreshed every 24 hours. This will give you a much more up-to-date operating picture, designed to enhance your efficiency and improve safety in your area of transit or planned routes.

4. Elimination of Weekly Files: Weekly LNMs, Weekly Light List Correction Files, Daily Discrepancy Files, and the Summary of Light List Changes will no longer be published to focus on providing the most up-to-date and accessible format. In the near future, we will also publish an Application Programming Interface (API) for interested parties to access the data externally.

## Why Are These Changes Being Made?

The modernization of MSI delivery is designed to improve the U.S. Coast Guard's aid-to-navigation data management and dissemination capabilities. By providing frequent updates, geospatial visualization, and digital

access, we hope to achieve our goals of:

- **Enhancing Maritime Safety:** By delivering the most current and precise information, mariners can make better-informed decisions, reducing the risk of accidents and ensuring safer navigation.
- **Improving Accessibility:** The shift to geospatial visualization makes it easier for all users, from commercial mariners to recreational boaters, to stay informed.
- **Increasing Efficiency:** The integration of LNM and Light List data into a geospatial format to simplify the gathering of safety information and facilitate easy route planning.

## When Will These Changes Take Effect?

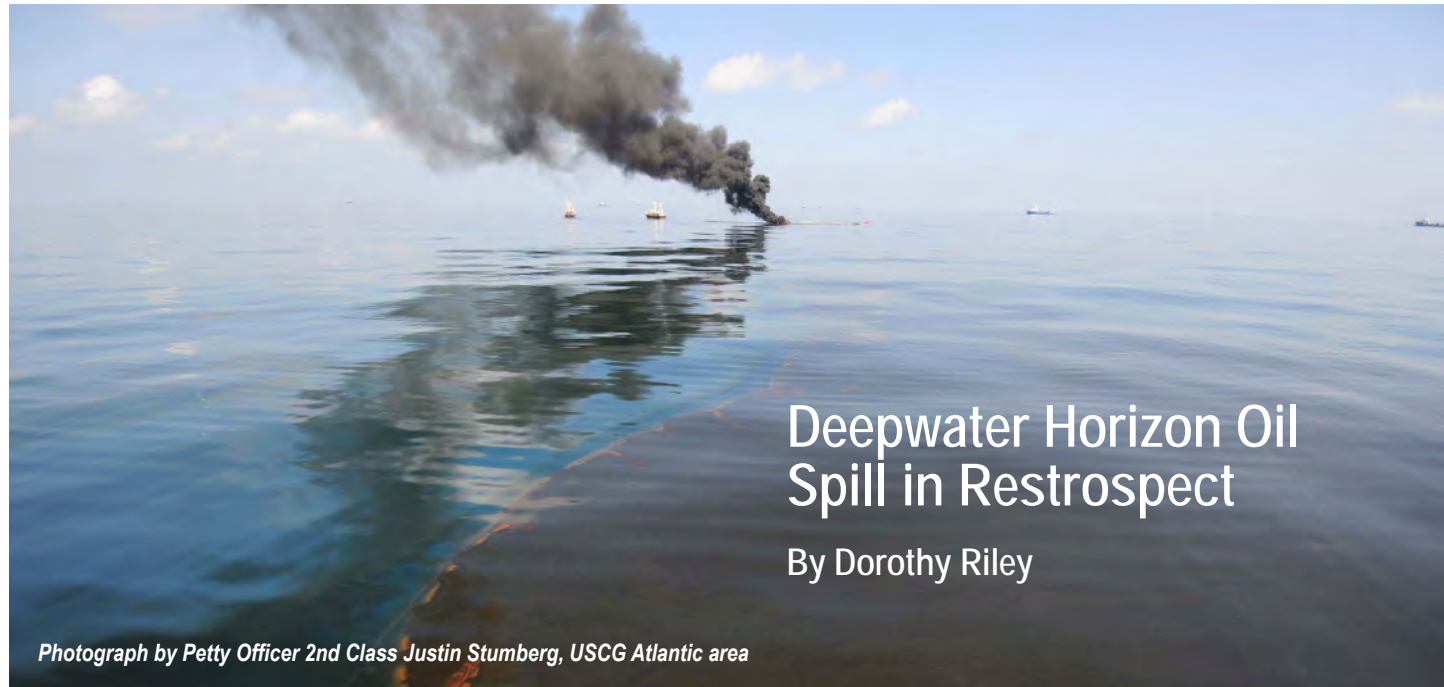
The transition to the modernized LNM and Light List platform (the Navigation Center website) will be completed by Monday, October 21st.

## How to Access the New Features?

Starting October 21st, 2024, you will be able to access the updated Local Notice to Mariners (LNM) and Light List through the NAVCEN website, with a User Guide available to assist you. While legacy versions of these products will no longer be produced or posted after October 31st, previously available versions will remain accessible for download indefinitely. Additionally, users can now generate updated LNMs in real time, with data refreshed every 15 minutes. Ω







## Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill in Restrospect

By Dorothy Riley

Photograph by Petty Officer 2nd Class Justin Stumberg, USCG Atlantic area

The Deepwater Horizon oil spill occurred Apr. 20, 2010, in the Gulf of Mexico. An explosion on the oil rig led to the sinking of the rig and the release of an estimated 134 to 206 million gallons of oil into the ocean. The explosion killed 11 workers, injured 17 more, and covered about 1,300 miles (2,100 km) of the U.S. Gulf Coast in oil.

The spill dumped over 200 million gallons of oil into the Gulf of Mexico, making it the largest U.S. offshore oil spill in history. The spill caused massive harm to wildlife, including the deaths of around 800,000 birds and 65,000 turtles. Oil continued to sink to the ocean floor for over a year after the initial spill. It is estimated that as much as 20% of the spilled oil may have sunk to the ocean floor, damaging deep-sea ecosystems. The spill altered sediment accumulation on the sea bottom for years, affecting the delicate balance of marine ecosystems. Areas impacted by the spill experienced oxygen depletion due to oil-related processes, affecting marine life.

BP, the oil company responsible, paid \$65 billion in compensation to those impacted by the spill. It also underwent the largest natural-resource damage assessment ever during settlement negotiations.

Cleanup operations lasted for months, and the oil affected approximately 1,300 miles of the U.S. Gulf Coast. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) played a crucial role in restoration. They used the \$20.8 billion environmental damage settlement to support recovery efforts. NOAA applied lessons from the Deepwater Horizon spill to improve scientific support during future oil spills.

Restoration efforts have been extensive, covering everything from coastal marshes to deep-sea habitats. NOAA and federal and state partners lead the largest environmental restoration effort in the Gulf's history.

Fourteen years after the disaster, oil spill recovery and response remain complex, especially considering stronger Hurricanes, extreme weather events, and aging infrastructure. Ω

Seaman Ryan Roginski keeps a sharp look-out on July 5, 2010, on the bridge of the CGC Resolute as the 210-foot cutter steams by the dozens of ships clustered around the source of the BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill. U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 1st Class John Masson.



## Climate change triggered a mega-landslide in 2023 that caused Earth to vibrate for nine days.

Source: Science Daily, University College London, Sept. 12, 2024

A landslide in a remote part of Greenland caused a 200 meter (650 foot) mega-tsunami that sloshed back and forth across a fjord for nine days, generating vibrations throughout Earth, according to a new study. The study concluded that this movement of water was the cause of a mysterious, global seismic signal that lasted for nine days and puzzled seismologists in September 2023.

The study, published in the journal Science, concluded that this movement of water was the cause of a

mysterious, global seismic signal that lasted for nine days and puzzled seismologists in September 2023.

The initial event, not observed by the human eye, was the collapse of a 1.2 km-high mountain peak into the remote Dickson Fjord beneath, causing a backslash of water 200 meters in the air, with a wave up to 110 meters high. This wave, extending across 10km of the fjord, reduced to seven meters within a few minutes, the researchers calculated and would have fallen to a few centimeters in the days after. Ω

## Toxins contaminate fish and other marine life in Tampa Bay

By Dorothy Riley

“Forever chemicals” refer to a group of man-made chemicals known as per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), which are notorious for their persistence in the environment and human body. They do not break down quickly, leading to long-term contamination of soil and water sources. PFAS are used in various products, including nonstick cookware, water-repellent fabrics, and firefighting foam. Due to their widespread use and durability, they have been detected in drinking water supplies, raising concerns about potential health risks, including cancer, hormonal disruption, and immune system effects.

Regulatory efforts are underway to limit their use and contamination, but challenges remain in addressing their prevalence and ensuring safe environments.

In Tampa Bay, “forever chemicals,” specifically per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), have been detected in local water sources and sediments. These chemicals raise concerns about environmental and public health, as they are linked to various negative health effects. Efforts are being made to monitor and address contamination, but challenges persist due to the chemicals’ widespread use and persistence in the environment. Local authorities and communities are taking steps to raise awareness and advocate for better regulations and cleanup efforts related to PFAS in the region. Ω



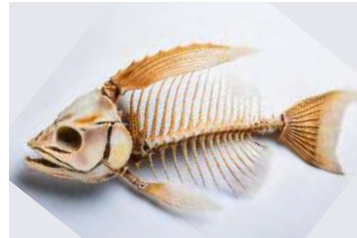
Drinking water samples being taken from Tampa Bay Water's Lake Bridge Water Treatment Plant in Hillsborough County. Jessica Meszaros / WUSF







# Marine Environmental News and Updates



## The Dead Zone: A Real Thing, and Not Science Fiction or Fantasy By Dorothy Riley

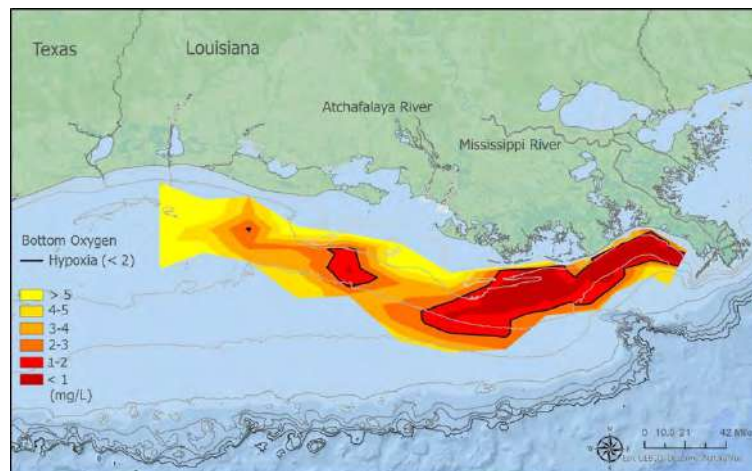
The Gulf of Mexico dead zone is where nutrient pollution—primarily nitrogen and phosphorus—flows along the Mississippi River from various sources (such as lawns, sewage treatment plants, and farmland). These nutrients trigger excessive algae growth in the water.

As these algae blooms thrive, they consume oxygen, leading to a severe depletion of oxygen levels in the water. This lack of oxygen makes it incredibly challenging for marine life to survive in the affected zone<sup>1</sup>.

Heavy rains and melting snows carry these nutrients downstream into the Gulf. Once there, the nutrients fuel algae blooms, which ultimately deplete oxygen. The consequences are significant: not only does this harm marine ecosystems, but also affects seafood production and tourism. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) estimates that the dead zone costs U.S. seafood and tourism industries around \$82 million annually. Louisiana, known for its seafood, is particularly impacted, as more than 40% of the nation's seafood comes from the Gulf of Mexico.

The dead zone's size varies from year to year. During the summer of 2018, it was approximately the size of Delaware. However, it's essential to recognize that even smaller dead zones remain a severe problem. Despite occasional variations due to factors like wind patterns, the underlying issue—nutrient runoff from the Mississippi River—continues contributing to large dead zones.

Organizations like "The Nature Conservancy" are actively working to mitigate the impact of the dead zone. Strategies include promoting efficient fertilizer use among farmers, reconnecting rivers to floodplains (which helps filter excess nutrients), and advocating for legislation that protects natural resources.



It is crucial to recognize the interconnectedness of the Mississippi River, its tributaries, and the Gulf. Collaborative efforts are necessary to find solutions that benefit both people and nature. So, while the Gulf of Mexico dead zone presents significant challenges, ongoing efforts exist to address it.

Read more about the Gulf

of Mexico Dead Zone:

The Nature Conservancy. <https://www.nature.org/en-us/about-us/where-we-work/priority-landscapes/gulf-of-mexico/stories-in-the-gulf-of-mexico/gulf-of-mexico-dead-zone/>. Ω

Dead Zone in the Gulf of Mexico - National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration <https://oceantoday.noaa.gov/deadzonegulf/welcome.html/>.

Dead Zone - National Geographic Society. <https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/dead-zone/>

*In addition to the cited source, this article used AI assistance for the fish image and composition.*

## Articles of Interest

### Let's end with a smile!

*I've just finished reading a book about the world's greatest basement. It was a best cellar.*

*It's my first week working at the bicycle factory, and they already made me a spokesperson!*

*My laptop caught pneumonia, apparently because I left Windows open.*

*I thought swimming with dolphins was expensive until I went swimming with sharks. It cost me an arm and a leg.*

*The main function of your big toe is to make sure all the furniture in the house is in the right place.*

*Horses have lower divorce rates because they are in stable relationships.*

*It's pretty obvious that if I run in front of a car, I will get tired, but if I run behind a car, will I get exhausted?*

*My teachers told me I'd never amount to much because I procrastinate so much. I told them, "You just wait and see!"*

*Ninety percent of bald people still own a comb. They can't part with it.*

*I've been experimenting with breeding racing deer. People have accused me of just trying to make a fast buck.*

*The other day I yelled into a colander, and I strained my voice.*

*What do you call a row of rabbits hopping backward? A receding hare line.*

*When I was a kid, we played spin the bottle with the girls, and if they didn't want to kiss you, they would have to give you a dollar. By the time I was 12, I owned my own home.*

*Trust a nudist - they are transparent and have nothing to hide! Ω*

AI image created by Adobe





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We are not a military force engaged in armed conflict. We are, however, the front-line of the struggle to save the lives of recreational boaters, and we face this great endeavor armed with Vessel Safety Checks, Public Education classes and all the other Recreational Boating Safety programs in our arsenal. Our newsletter banner serves as a reminder of this mission.

*FLOT Lines* is a publication of Flotilla 74, Brandon, District 7 United States Coast Guard Auxiliary, located at 3006 S. Kings Ave., Brandon. The Auxiliary an organization of dues-paying unpaid, civilian volunteers whose mission is to assist the U.S. Coast Guard in promoting boating safety. Articles may be reprinted with the express consent of the author or photographer with proper credit given to same. For permissions or for more information, please contact the editor, Dorothy Riley, SO-PB, Email address: [dottieriley@gmail.com](mailto:dottieriley@gmail.com)

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***When: 2nd Tuesday, 7 p.m.***

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***Why: Membership is more rewarding  
when you participate-  
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