

PAPAHĀNAUMOKUĀKEA



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GROUNDING SAIL BOAT GETS RECYCLED LIFE

(Pearl Harbor, Hawai‘i) A team from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the U.S. Navy returned to Pearl Harbor today with the remains of a 33 foot-long, steel-hulled sailboat that ran aground on a reef off Kure Atoll in late 2006 or early 2007.

Papahānaumokuākea managers, enlisted the support of the Navy Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit (MDSU) 1 and USNS *Salvor*, tasked by Commander, Pacific Fleet, to salvage the sailing vessel *Grendel* last week and bring it to Honolulu to be recycled. Naval assistance was requested for the salvage operation to help prevent environmental and ecological damage to the reef in Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument.

The SV *Grendel* was last seen with its solo captain in Fiji in October 2006. The wreckage of the boat was discovered in about 10 feet of water in June 2007.

Scott Godwin, a resource protection specialist for Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument, NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, led the project, guided MDSU-1 to the SV *Grendel* and provided oversight as divers removed large quantities of sand and debris from the sailboat and began attaching lift bags to the hull. After the boat was refloated, it was towed into deeper water and lifted by crane onto the deck of *Salvor*. USNS *Salvor* is operated by the U.S. Navy’s Military Sealift Command and is crewed by a total of 30 civilian and Navy personnel. *Salvor*, enroute to her base of operations in Pearl Harbor, stopped at Midway and Kure Atolls for the salvage mission on her return from a six-month long deployment in the Western Pacific.

“This is not only an outstanding example of governmental and private-sector cooperation, but provides a tangible outcome that will prevent degradation of pristine reef environments in Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument and furthers the commitment to reuse and recycle” said Godwin. Other partners in the multi-agency mission included the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, whose staff at Midway Atoll coordinated the removal of 8000 pounds of metal from the Midway scrap yard; and the Hawai‘i Division of Land and Natural Resources/Division of Forestry and Wildlife staff at Kure Atoll who coordinated the removal of 6000 pounds of derelict fishing gear from the dock at Kure.

The steel hull, other metal from the SV *Grendel*, and the metal from Midway Atoll were transported to Schnitzer Steel Hawaii Corp. for recycling. Derelict fishing gear from Kure Atoll was taken to Covanta Energy’s H-POWER Plant to be burned to produce electricity. Both Schnitzer Steel Hawaii Corp. and Covanta Energy are private-sector partners in the Hawai‘i Marine Debris Removal Program.

The Navy divers used this opportunity to practice their salvaging as an innovative readiness training evolution (IRT), which allow for improvements in military readiness while providing quality services to the community. For MDSU-1 the project provided real-world training in a relatively non-threatening environment.

This successful cooperative venture between monument management and the Navy can be a model for future efforts to remove marine debris from the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. Marine debris poses serious danger to marine life and the entire ecosystem and is accumulating in the monument faster than authorities can remove it.

Papahānaumokuākea is cooperatively managed to ensure ecological integrity and achieve strong, long-term protection and perpetuation of Northwestern Hawaiian Island ecosystems, Native Hawaiian culture, and heritage resources for current and future generations. Three co-trustees – the Department of Commerce, Department of the Interior, and State of Hawai‘i – joined by the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, protect this special place, which is now being considered for inscription as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. For more information, please visit www.papahanaumokuakea.gov

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