



**U.S. Environmental Protection Agency**



**U.S. Maritime Administration**

This document is one section from the “National Guidance: Best Management Practices for Preparing Vessels Intended to Create Artificial Reefs,” published in May 2006. The reference number is EPA 842-B-06-002. You can find the entire document at <http://www.epa.gov/owow/oceans/habitat/artificialreefs/index.html>.

# **National Guidance: Best Management Practices for Preparing Vessels Intended to Create Artificial Reefs**

## **Considerations for In-water Uses of Obsolete Vessels**

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## Considerations for Other In-water Uses of Obsolete Vessels



Photo courtesy of Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission  
Diver exploring the ex-USS Spiegel Grove artificial reef.

## **DIVING OPPORTUNITIES**

The narrative goals set out under the section “Guidance for Preparing Vessels to Create Artificial Reef Habitat” also should be achieved while preparing a vessel for diver opportunities. For example, if preparation for diver use calls for the removal of wall paneling that will in turn expose any materials of concern that were identified in the aforementioned section, the respective narrative goals should be addressed (e.g., if asbestos is exposed once the panel is removed, the objectives of the asbestos narrative goal should be met).

Additional vessel preparation to support the in-water use of recreational diving may include:

- Removal of sharp and protruding objects along the divers' access path which could snag on divers' equipment or otherwise pose a danger to the divers.
- Removal of doors and access hatches and widening of openings to allow safe access for divers.
- Widening of corridors by removal of some wall paneling and provision of large openings in the exterior of the ship to allow light to penetrate and help ensure safe diver access.
- Sealing entrances into restrictive compartments such as the boiler rooms and engine rooms to help ensure diver safety.

When preparing the vessel for diver opportunities, careful consideration also should be given to vessel stability (for transport and sinking operations) as well as vessel integrity (for the life of the vessel once placed at the reef site).