



AMERICAN SALVAGE ASSOCIATION NEWS RELEASE
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**DATE CHANGE: “WRECKS OF THE WORLD II:
HIDDEN RISKS OF THE DEEP” CONFERENCE TO BE HELD
JUNE 6-7, 2011, PROGRAM EXPANDED**

**Conference will address 8,500+ world-wide shipwrecks that may contain up to
20 million tons of oil, other hazardous materials**

Washington, DC – The American Salvage Association (ASA) and the North American Marine Environmental Protection Association (NAMEPA) will co-sponsor a conference, **“Wrecks of the World: Hidden Risks of the Deep (WOW) II”** on Monday, June 6 and Tuesday, June 7, 2011 at the Maritime Institute of Technology and Graduate Studies (MITAGS) in the Washington, DC area (Linthicum Heights, MD) USA. The conference will explore the myriad issues (pollution threat, impact modeling, risk assessment, oil removal and remediation, implications to the environment, legal, insurance and funding issues, next steps) related to the more than 8,500 sunken vessels in the world, many of them World War II-era. The program has been expanded to include discussion of the pollution threat posed not just by ship wrecks but also by the tens of thousands of abandoned oil wells that litter coast and offshore waters around the world.

The problem of potentially-polluting wrecks has long been discussed and recent incidents around the world have caused government agencies and responsible parties to look proactively at preventing catastrophic oil and other chemical releases from long submerged shipwrecks. These wrecks may contain as much as 20 million tons of oil and other hazardous materials. Sporadic or continuous leakages or potential sudden massive spillages from these wrecks pose a continual risk across the globe.

With the work that has recently occurred in the U.S. including remediation of the BEAUMONT off the Texas coast and the PRINCESS KATHLEEN on the Alaskan coast, anticipated work on the MONTEBELLO off of California and on the COIMBRA off of New York among others, as well as oil recovery from the wrecks of the ASIAN FOREST and the BLACK ROSE off the coast of India, not to mention the oil removal projects being considered by the Canadian, Korean and Norwegian governments, among others, wreck oil removal has come to the forefront of marine environmental concerns. The risk of oil and other hazardous materials seeping out of sunken shipwrecks is growing yearly, and the likelihood of leakage or even a massive spill occurring increases, as do the potential costs. Taking a proactive rather than a reactive approach

to mitigating this risk will save not only dollars in response costs, but also reduce the threat of environmental and socioeconomic damages.

From the viewpoint of environmental and economic impacts, there is little difference between oil spilling from a long sunken vessel and oil spilling from a modern day vessel casualty, with the exception that, while there is no way to predict the location or timing of the next major oil spill, potentially-polluting wreck sites are known and the probability of a spill event is quantifiable or even inevitable. There is ample evidence that there are a large number of wrecks in U.S. coastal waters and elsewhere around the world that are spills waiting to happen.

“The issue of spills emanating from sunken shipwrecks is an issue that the United States is greatly concerned about as the risk to the delicate marine environment continues to grow in importance,” said Mauricio Garrido, President of the ASA.

“The national and international implications for responding to these environmental threats are tremendous,” said Clay Maitland, Founding Chairman of NAMEPA. “We have an opportunity to mitigate the risks of these wrecks becoming environmental disasters fouling our marine environment.”

The conference program is being finalized, and further details are available on the ASA and NAMEPA websites at www.americansalvage.org and www.namepa.net.

The American Salvage Association is a trade association promoting professionalism and improving marine casualty response in American coastal and inland waters.

NAMEPA is an industry led voluntary, non-profit and non-governmental organization committed to preserving the marine environment through educating seafarers, port communities and children about the need, and strategies, for protecting this important global resource