

Date: March 11, 2025

To: E. Stolzenberg, Acting Director, Office of Marine Safety

From: Liam LaRue, Chief, Investigations, Office of Marine Safety
Rob Jones, Deputy Chief, Investigations, Office of Marine Safety

Subject: Recommendation to close out investigation regarding fire at the
Goose Pond Colony Marina, Scottsboro, AL

Casualty no.	DCA25FM008
Casualty type	Fire/Explosion
Vessel(s)	5 boats
Vessel type(s)	Yacht/Boat (recreational)
Location	Goose Pond Colony Marina, Scottsboro, Alabama 34°34.85' N, 86° 4.8' W
Date	December 3, 2024
Time	0433 central standard time (coordinated universal time -6 hours)
Injuries	None
Damage	\$1,529,000 est.
Environmental damage	200 gallons of gasoline, diesel fuel, and lube oil
Weather	Visibility 10 mi, overcast, winds northeast 5 kts, air temperature 30°F, morning twilight 0646, sunrise 0715
Waterway information	Marina

AUTHORITY:

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) has authority under Title 49 *United States Code* 1131 to investigate and establish the probable cause of any major marine casualty occurring on or under the navigable waters, internal waters, or the territorial sea of the United States or involving a vessel of the United States.

CASUALTY DESCRIPTION:

On December 3, 2024, at 0612 local time, a recreational vessel owner at Goose Pond Colony Marina in Scottsboro, Alabama, called 911 to report that several recreational vessels were on fire at marina dock 6. The Scottsboro City Fire and Police Department, Hollywood Fire Department, Scottsboro-Jackson County Rescue Squad, Jackson County Emergency Management, Highlands Emergency Medical Service, and other local agencies responded to the fire. When the first firefighting units arrived at 0618, five recreational vessels were on fire.

During firefighting operations, two recreational vessels' mooring lines failed due to the fire; as a result, the vessels drifted from their slips and subsequently grounded on the nearby shoreline, where they were extinguished. At 0645, the Scottsboro City Fire boat arrived to assist. Three recreational vessels were still burning at their slips; they eventually sank in about 10 feet of water. The fires were extinguished when the vessels submerged.

There were no injuries. Seven recreational vessels moored at the marina were destroyed in the fire, and an additional ten recreational vessels nearby sustained minor heat and fire damage. Oil and gasoline sheens were present post incident. About 200 gallons of oil were released from the boats. Containment booms were later deployed to contain fuel and debris pollution. Damages exceeded \$1,529,000.

INVESTIGATION:

The Scottsboro City Fire Department Chief, an Alabama State Fire Marshal Deputy, and investigators from the NTSB gathered factual information about this casualty.

The Deputy Fire Marshal from the Alabama State Fire Marshal Office conducted the investigation into the origin and cause of the fire in accordance with NFPA 921: Guide for Fire and Explosion Investigations. The Deputy Marshal determined that the fire's area of origin and cause is undetermined. No physical evidence was collected from the scene.

The Deputy Fire Marshal determined there were no indications of criminal activity or evidence of arson. Fuel and oil leaking from the damaged vessels prevented local authorities from conducting an on-scene examination: the priority of the authorities was to remove the vessels from the water to prevent further environmental damage. Once the boats were secured on shore, the on-scene exam was postponed, allowing insurance companies priority on the origin and cause investigation.

CONCLUSION:

The preliminary investigation found that the vessels involved in the fire were state-registered vessels used for recreational purposes and were moored at the time of the casualty. The US Coast Guard will not produce an investigation report. There does not appear to be any commercial maritime operational or design nexus. Therefore, we have determined that this casualty does not warrant continued investigation and recommend we close this investigation.

Director's Concurrence

for Eric Stolzenberg, Acting Director, Office of Marine Safety