



# TEXAS GENERAL LAND OFFICE

## JERRY PATTERSON, COMMISSIONER

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## PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Sept. 28, 2009

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### Patterson: Ike cleanup complete in the bays

*Texas General Land Office's removal of sunken vessels, beach and bay debris over*

**AUSTIN** — The unprecedented effort to clear the Galveston-area bay system of debris from Hurricane Ike is over, on time and under budget, announced Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson.

“This was a huge job, but I’m proud to say that Galveston Bay, East Bay, West Bay and Trinity Bay are cleaner now than they were before Hurricane Ike,” Patterson said.

After Hurricane Ike, the Land Office was faced with the huge logistical task of organizing the biggest beach and bay debris cleanup in state history. Patterson worked with Governor Rick Perry and Lieutenant Governor David Dewhurst to obtain emergency funding from the existing state budget to begin the work.

The first priority was to clear the beach and the surf zone of potentially dangerous rubble left behind from homes blown away by the storm. Then sonar was shot in the bays and 8,051 individual debris targets were identified — everything from refrigerators to ambulances to yachts. The total cleanup costs: \$10.9 million to clear the beaches and \$14 million to clear the bays. “That’s millions less than the initial estimates,” Patterson said.

Overall, 136,743 cubic yards of debris were hauled from the beaches in the Hurricane Ike-affected area. More than 1 million cubic yards of sand were sifted clean and returned to the beach.

In the bays, 30,452 cubic yards of debris were removed from beneath the waters of Galveston Bay, East Bay, West Bay, Trinity Bay and Sabine Lake.

Work then began on the task of identifying and hauling out every sunken boat wrecked by the storm and identifying and finding the sunken vessels’ owners.

“Fortunately, we’ve been working for years to gain the authority to haul up and junk sunken vessels,” Patterson said. “In 2005, the Legislature gave the Texas General Land Office the authority we needed to get the job done after Ike.”

Crews working for the Texas General Land Office recovered a total of 124 boats, including everything from small skiffs to 70-foot steel hulled behemoths. The GLO’s efforts reunited eight lucky boat owners with their ships. Seven sunken vessels were too big or too stuck to be hauled up whole and were demolished in place. Another 116 recovered vessels were hauled up and sent to the landfill.

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