

Fall 2025

The Trawler



Fripp Island Sea Rescue

Mary T. Jacobs, Communications Officer

Recently I was chatting with some of the FISR members and discussing missions. I met with Eric Roberts and asked him to write about the 4th of July mission. I know you will enjoy this interesting mission.

Independence Day Search & Tow by Eric Roberts

Here Margit and I were, kicking back watching the tube on the evening of Independence Day, after a nice holiday including an epic Golf Cart parade. The ActiveAlert app on my phone sounded off at 20:16 (yes, first responders use 24-hour time) with its bone-jarring “KLANG KLANG KLANG” — an actual recording of an old hose cart’s bell in New York City: “Boat out of gas near Fripp Bridge,” said the alert. I punched the “RESPONDING” button on the app and hurried down to the marina, where I met my fellow crewmen Paul Browne and Chris McSwain.

We had trouble finding the boat — it was not near the Fripp Bridge. A call from the Big Fripper returning after a sunset cruise alerted us to the boat’s location. In the fading light we found a 25-foot center console in Fripp Inlet, hard aground on the northeast shore of Old Island, with three souls from Georgia aboard. Turns out they weren’t out of gas (had a bad fuel

pump), but they hadn’t set an anchor, so they were pushed up against the bank by the stiff 20-25 knot easterly breeze and one-foot chop, after which the ebb tide left them high and dry about a foot above the waterline.

We couldn’t safely get them off their boat and into ours due to the conditions, and the oyster shells that would have sliced their feet to ribbons. But the next high tide wasn’t until 04:00, and the earliest they’d get enough water to float would be about 01:00. They said they’d try to get a commercial tow at that time, but we had our doubts about that as we headed back to Fripp Marina. Sure enough, my app alert went off at 02:00 saying the boat was floating again and they needed our help. So, I crawled out of the sack and headed back to the dock, joined there by Mike McDonnell and Paul Browne.

We weren’t the only crew team members awake and on hand for this mission. Clay Emminger with Beaufort Water Search and Rescue as well as Beaufort County 911 dispatch were monitoring this call out on our 800 Mhz county-provided radios. We located the boat, pulled them away from the bank with a bow-tow using their anchor rode, then converted to a stern-tow using a skiff hook

attached to their trailer eyebolt, and towed them the half mile across the inlet to Russ Point, where their truck and trailer awaited. They were very thankful for the middle-of-the-night assist so they could get started on their drive home to Georgia, now long overdue. We secured our workhorse Rescue 1 Boston Whaler Dauntless back at the marina at 03:15, ready for the next call.

Best practices for those unexpected boating situations:

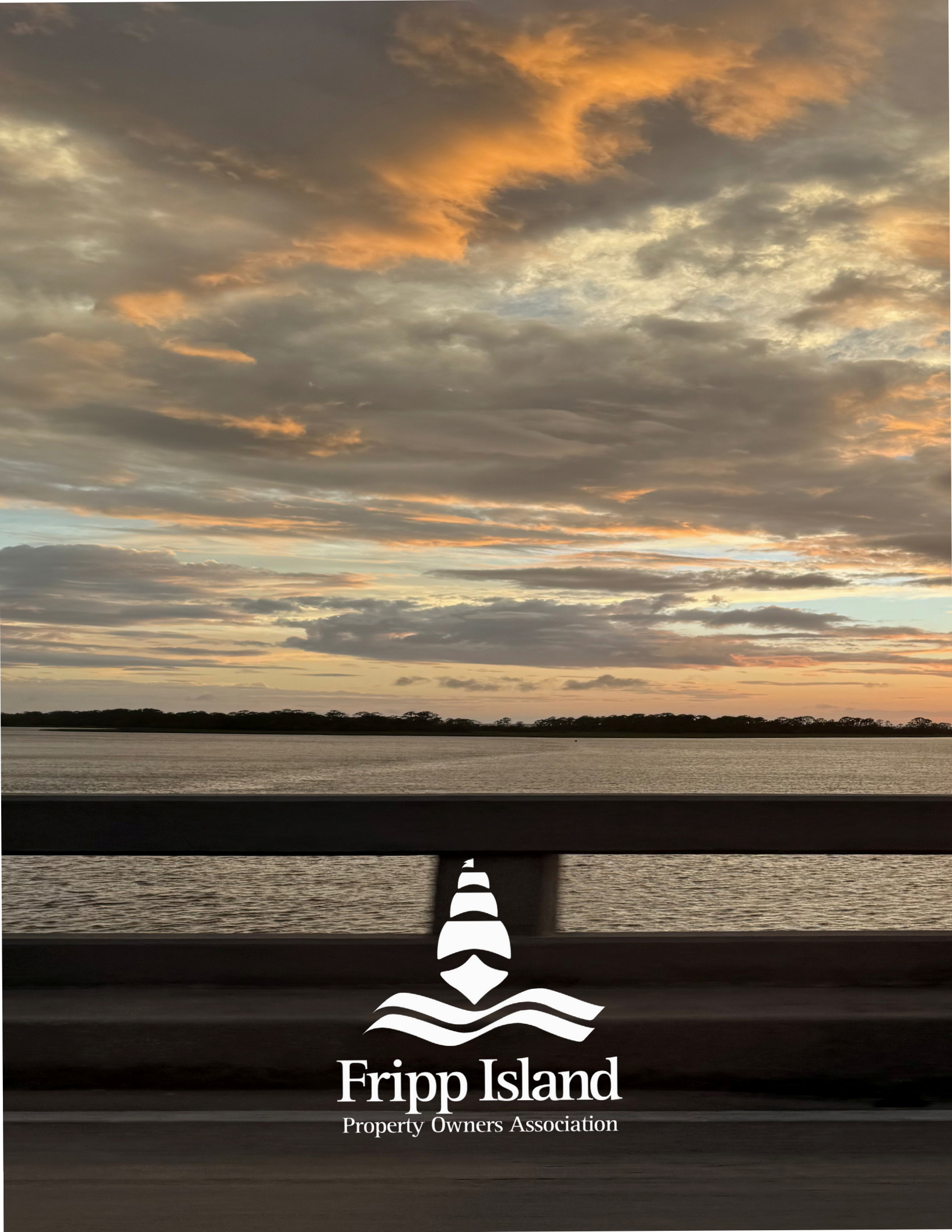
- **If your boat becomes disabled** in the water or grounded in a marsh, remain in the boat.
- **Drop and set the anchor** before your boat drifts to the shoreline.
- Familiarize yourself with the process of sharing your specific location with coordinates using your mobile phone, chartplotter, or visual aids.
- Always have sufficient food and water on hand for an extended stay

Want to Volunteer or Donate?

Fripp Island Sea Rescue (FISR) is a not-for profit volunteer organization that assist boaters in distress on the 100 square miles of waters surrounding Fripp Island and the neighboring barrier islands.

FISR is deeply grateful for the support it receives from the community. We receive no taxpayer funding and rely 100% on donations and grants. To volunteer, donate, or just learn more about FISR, visit us on Facebook at [facebook.com/FrippIslandSea Rescue](https://facebook.com/FrippIslandSeaRescue).





Fripp Island
Property Owners Association