

Michigan Underwater Salvage and Preserve Committee Minutes
GVS
February 27, 2013.

Tom Graff called the meeting to order at 1:15. In attendance were Sandra Clark, Terry Benoche, and Gail Vander Stoep. Terry Short, representing Wade Hamilton, and Rom Bloomfield attended by phone.

The minutes of the ----- meeting were approved as corrected on a motion by Bloomfield seconded by Benoche.

Reports

Short reported that there had not been a lot of enforcement activity beyond the normal patrols, checking in at dive shops and monitoring the internet. There are no active cases. DNR law enforcement has a new sonar side scanner (Kline 3900). It could be used on wrecks as added task for regular patrols. Request for use should be sent to Wade Hamilton.

Graff reported that no new permit applications have been received.

Discussion

The committee discussed shipwrecks and abandoned property revealed by low lake levels. Graff explained that private deeds to waterfront land may define ownership as going to the water's edge as opposed to the ordinary high water mark. In those cases, the private land owner would need to give permission for removal of materials. The group agreed on the need to develop "best practice" materials that would explain the importance of stewardship and leaving the materials intact.

Bloomfield discussed his work with Wayne Lusardi and Pat Labadie on initiating a Coastline Survey Initiative to record materials exposed by the low lake levels. The goal is to work with the Michigan Underwater Preserve Council to train people in on-land ship-wreck recordation and reporting. This would give people an active, positive step to take when they discover something. The material would become part of a central database that may over time develop patterns of debris that advance knowledge about wrecks. An organizational framework could have a single point of contact for each preserve, who could, in turn, provide names of people trained to do the surveys.

Graff alerted the committee that Representative McMaster is working on a proposal to expand intentional sinking on Great Lakes Bottomlands. It would include structures as well as ships and aircraft.

The committee also discussed the potential impact of planned emergency dredging on underwater resources.

Graff reported that the offshore wind turbine issue is currently on hold in Michigan.

Old Business

- Buoy

Clark reported that the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act as amended in 2011 extends to volunteers aiding in all responsibilities of the department. The act protects volunteers acting responsibly in performing a task. This means that registered and trained volunteers can assist with buoy setting and maintenance in the preserves. Wayne Lusardi will start a volunteer program in Alpena this summer to work out the details with the goal of extending the program to preserves statewide. The expectation is that trained volunteers could assist DNR in buoy setting and then handle annual maintenance (inspection and seasonal removal and installation) independently.

Bloomfield noted that the MUPC continues working on a CZM grant proposal to fund additional buoys. The program could include standardizing buoy guidelines and procedures, as well as guidelines for what buoys to use and doing a combined submittal for the necessary permits.

- Underwater Preserves

The committee discussed potential actions that would most assist the preserves in all aspects of their work: preservation, exploration, recreation and economic development.

- Web Site

Clark will share the list prepared by Vander Stoep with Graff.

- Criteria for Permit Application Review

Graff will try to look at a statement that explains the law in layperson's terms, focusing on the factors that are considered and the items essential for a complete application.

The meeting adjourned upon a motion by Benoche seconded by Clark.