

Michigan Underwater Salvage and Preserve Committee
Wednesday, April 24, 2013
Michigan Historical Center
5th Floor, Board Room
Lansing, Michigan 48915
Meeting Minutes

Committee Members – Present

Terry Begnoche – Public Member/Whitefish Pointe
Ron Bloomfield – Public Member/Michigan Underwater Preserve Council (MUPC)
Gail Vander Stoep – Member representing Travel Michigan/Michigan State University

Committee Members – Via Conference Call

Peggy Kurpinski – Public Member/SCUBA Experience
Pete Lindquist – Public Member/Munising
Wayne Lusardi – Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary

Members of the Public

No members of the public were present

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m. A quorum was present.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the February 27, 2013, meeting will be approved at the next meeting.

Committee Reports

New Permit Applications

No new permit applications for underwater preserves or salvage have been received. Begnoche reported that he provided Graf's contact information in response to a Cheboygan area inquiry. Bloomfield asked about moving sand in a preserve 70 feet under. Lusardi and Clark said such an object is considered "embedded." Begnoche added that the application will lead to a dead-end since it asks what artifact is involved. Graf is the best person to make a determination and set limits on the scope of work. It might be that a dredging application to DEQ is needed. Sand embedment items should be sent to Graf's attention.

Discussion

The committee discussed HB4496 – Intentional Sinking Legislation. Clark provided the definition being used and noted that it is being tied to the dredging permit (disposal of waste) process. If located in a preserve, the action would be reviewed by this committee. If not, it would need a dredging permit from the DEQ.

Many comments and suggestions were offered on the document:

- Bloomfield noted that if there were a donation process, a legal title would be needed and where to get that title would be an issue. As proposed, the state would have to accept and take responsibility and assume liability for the intentionally sunk object.
- All things should have historic value except for play structures for divers.
- All things should be reviewed, not just in preserves.
- All matters should come before this committee.
- The liability issue was discussed. Vander Stoep said the difference is that if it is a natural thing (rock, grass, etc.) the state should not be liable. If it is something that was placed there, then it could be a liability if something happens.
- Begnoche suggested there should be a care plan that includes maintaining, retention and removing something if it becomes unsafe. Bloomfield suggested limiting the size and tonnage so it isn't so small that it will move around.
- To avoid confusion for the public, there must be something to distinguish between a recreational dive site and a historic preserve so people don't do things with historic, cultural or natural things that they would do with recreational things.
- Must plan ahead for an underwater park, which is distinctly different from a historic preserve. Each should be managed differently. Separation is important. It creates balance between recreation and historic preservation.
- An annual "operator" fee could be charged.
- Bottomlands could be leased for things.
- A recreational dive park makes the most sense since it is a potential tourist draw.
- People come to Michigan for the authentic experience, not a Disney World experience.

Clark urged everyone to attend hearings and contact legislators to be sure Michigan maintains the historic integrity of its preserves.

Old Business

Lusardi said an exposed wreck has been reported.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 2:45 p.m.