

Michigan Underwater Salvage and Preserve Committee
Wednesday, August 19, 2015
Michigan Historical Center
5th Floor, Board Room
Lansing, Michigan 48915
Meeting Minutes

Committee Members – Present

Brian Abbott – Public Member
Robert Campau – Public Member
Sandra Clark – Department of Natural Resources (DNR)/Michigan Historical Center
Tom Graf – Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)/Water Resources Division
James Nowak – Public Member
Dave Shaw – DNR/Law Enforcement Division (LED)

Committee Members – Present Via Conference Call

Terry Begnoche – Public Member/Whitefish Point
Ron Bloomfield – Public Member/Michigan Underwater Preserve Council (MUPC)
Wayne Lusardi – DNR/Michigan Historical Center

Staff

Michelle Davis – DNR/Michigan Historical Center

Members of the Public

Daniel Friedhoff
Gail Vander Stoep
Bruce Lynn

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 12:58 p.m. A quorum was present.

Introductions

Three new members with terms expiring August 17, 2016, were introduced to the Committee:

- Brian Abbott is the owner of Nautilus Marine Group International LLC and has more than 20 years of experience in project management, underwater engineering inspections, hydrographic surveys, and acoustic imaging. Brian represents the general public with experience in recreational scuba diving and replaces Peter Lindquist.
- Robert Campau is the Chief Executive Officer of the Michigan Realtors Association. He represents the general public and replaces Gail Vander Stoep.
- James Nowak has 20 years of experience of experience with the Charlevoix County Sheriff's Department as a reserve officer and dive team member. Jim represents the general public with experience in recreational scuba diving and replaces Peggy Kurpinski.

Approval of Agenda

Clark made a motion to approve the agenda without changes; the motion was seconded by Campau, and was unanimously approved.

Approval of Minutes

Bloomfield made a motion to approve the February 4, 2015, meeting minutes as presented; the motion was seconded by Clark, and was unanimously approved.

Public Comments

Bruce Lynn, Executive Director at the Great Lakes Shipwreck Museum, updated the Committee on the *Comet* safe project. The recovery permit is valid through December 31, 2015, with no restrictions on the additional number of times a permit can be applied for. At this time, recovery of the safe is not expected in 2015. Work will continue on funding, finding a conservation plan that preserves the safe and its contents, and ways of making this an educational opportunity on underwater preserves. Ultimately, the goal is to have the safe on display, on a rotating basis, at the Great Lakes Shipwreck Museum, the Michigan Historical Center, and Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary. The question was asked if there is an outline of what is expected from a conservation plan. Graf explained the normal procedure is for the plan to be presented to the Committee and reviewed in depth to determine its effectiveness. Outside sources may need to be contacted to ensure appropriate techniques are followed.

Committee Reports

Law Enforcement

Shaw reported that officers have been checking dive boats. Also, there are two situations that require further investigation: a covert operation located on the east side near Lake Huron, and one in the Frankfort area on Lake Michigan where individuals keep going out into the Lake at odd times, especially during the night, or in foggy conditions.

Lusardi lead the dive on the wreckage of a World War II 1944 P-39 aircraft that went down in Lake Huron north of Port Huron. Shaw appreciated the sharing of information between the divisions and offered law enforcement assistance if needed in any future operations.

Shaw mentioned that during September, law enforcement will work with Enbridge on their mock disaster response plan.

New Permit Applications

No new permits applications have been received. A question was posed on the process one should follow when requesting a new permit. Graf responded that the process is outlined on the DEQ webpage. It was explained that the permit process is co-managed by DEQ and DNR, and approval by both departments is required to move forward.

Old Business

Centralized Buoy Project

Clark reported that formal communication has been received from the Corps of Engineers on the mooring buoys that remain unapproved. Shipping lane concerns continue to be the main point of contention. A discussion ensued and the Committee agreed that Clark will draft a response to the Corps of Engineers recommending approval of the proposed 19 subsurface buoys at a depth of 35 feet and withdrawing the request for the remaining 10. The next step will involve seeking approval from the Coast Guard. Once permit approval has been completed, Coastal Zone Management grant application will be the next step, especially for those sites that need extra resources to assist with buoying the wrecks. The Committee also agreed that having a detailed procedural manual is a top priority.

New Business

The shipwreck *John V. Moran* was recently found off shore in Lake Michigan near Grand Haven. Graf noted it is important to let the DNR and DEQ know when a shipwreck is found, preferably before the information is released to the public. The State Archaeologist maintains a public, state-operated database for shipwreck locations in the Great Lakes and also maintains a list of "undiscovered" shipwrecks.

Clark reported that National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) recently changed how underwater sanctuaries can be nominated. The new process begins with a local area indicating its interest in being on the inventory of potential sanctuary sites. NOAA has expressed an interest in having at least one preserve in each of the Great Lakes. Clark traveled to Marquette and Houghton with NOAA's Ellen Brody last month to begin discussions on possible locations for a new preserve. There was a good response in both communities. Michigan law limits the number of underwater preserves possible, but exempts the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary.

Member Updates

Friedhoff reported they are trying to get all of the moorings off from the shipwrecks in the Straits. The Straits of Mackinac Shipwreck Museum is now open and has some great artifacts and audio displays.

Bloomfield reported on trying to re-establish connections with Keweenaw divers.

Begnoche reported a normal number of charters and increased tourism/visitation at Whitefish Point.

Lusardi reported on the Port Huron airplane project. The next project is to establish seven mooring buoys on shallow water wrecks in the portion of the Black River located in Alcona County. Lusardi also noted that he spent a few weeks working with two graduate students documenting a couple of schooners near Alpena.

Clark reported on the current project involving land-based interpretive signage about the various shipwrecks throughout the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary. A Michigan Department of Transportation grant is supporting the project. The intent is to raise awareness among tourists, visitors, kayakers, snorkelers and other community members.

Campau made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 2:11 p.m.; the motion was seconded by Clark, and was unanimously approved.



Tom Graf, Chairperson