

Michigan Underwater Salvage and Preserve Committee
Wednesday, November 4, 2015
Michigan Historical Center
5th Floor, Board Room
Lansing, Michigan 48915
Meeting Minutes

Committee Members – Present

Brian Abbott – Public Member
Ron Bloomfield – Public Member/Michigan Underwater Preserve Council (MUPC)
Robert Campau – Public Member
Sandra Clark – Department of Natural Resources (DNR)/Michigan Historical Center
Tom Graf – Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)
Wayne Lusardi – DNR/Michigan Historical Center
James Nowak – Public Member

Committee Members – Present Via Conference Call

Terry Begnoche – Public Member/Whitefish Point

Staff

Michelle Davis – DNR/Michigan Historical Center

Members of the Public

Daniel Friedhoff – Straits of Mackinac Shipwreck Preserve
Debbie Chase – West Michigan Underwater Preserve

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 1:08 p.m. A quorum was present.

Approval of Minutes

Bloomfield made a motion to approve the August 19, 2015, meeting minutes; the motion was seconded by Graff, and was unanimously approved.

Public Comments

No public comments

Committee Reports

Law Enforcement

There was no update from Law Enforcement.

New Permit Applications

No new permits have been received. Graf offered to distribute the permit application to Committee members.

Old Business

Centralized Buoy Project

The centralized mooring buoy permits have been signed by the Department of the Army. Lusardi is working with the Coast Guard on the final step in the permit process for the buoys. A completion report and a copy of each signed permit are required to be on-board when installing or removing a buoy. Bloomfield agreed to discuss a standard process to be used by anyone installing or removing one of the buoys at the next Michigan Underwater Preserve Committee (MUPC). Bloomfield and Lusardi will work on a standard operating procedure, a volunteer waiver packet and a training process for all involved. Some preserves may be ready to install buoys in spring 2016. Bloomfield will talk with Matt Smar regarding the availability of Coastal Zone Management (CZM) grant funds for this project. Begnoche mentioned the importance of a press release for this project, especially to divers and the preservation of shipwrecks. Bloomfield and Clark agreed that a joint DNR/MUPC press release should be done once the Coast Guard approval has been received. A second release could report installation of the first buoy. Other ideas for funding the buoys were discussed by the Committee.

New Business

Clark reported on the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) process for nominating possible locations for marine sanctuaries to the NOAA inventory. One group in the Keweenaw and one at Whitefish Point are working on nominations. If a sanctuary is created, at no time during the process do the land, shipwrecks, or artifacts change ownership. A co-managed partnership between the state and federal government develops the sanctuary. The state and federal governments will also consult with the federally recognized tribes during the process.

Clark asked the Committee to think about topics/projects/tasks to take-up at future meetings. Lusardi suggested that a discussion on creating a preserve in an area of the St. Clair River to protect certain shipwrecks and property may be a one idea. The question was asked on how long does a vessel have to sit on state bottomlands in order to become state property, does it need to be deemed abandoned first. Graf stated it is based on individual status of each vessel and can be a very lengthy process that often ends up in court. Normally there has to be some type of expressed abandonment for ownership to be established. This is also a topic that could be taken up at future meetings.

Questions were asked about the application process for the intentional sinking of a vessel. Graf stated that the applications come to the DEQ for review and eventually come to this Committee for comment. A future discussion relating to the possibility of creating a process/roadmap/handbook for the appropriate handling of the intentional sinking of a vessel may be appropriate for a future meeting.

Member Updates

Lusardi reported on the P-39 Tuskegee Airman wreckage found in Lake Huron. He was able to work with a group on documenting and inventorying the wreckage. Currently, state and federal officials are working together to determine ownership. If proven to be state property, there may be applications for permits to move or remove artifacts. Currently, this is only the second P-39 that has been found in Michigan waters.

Lusardi also noted that three new buoy systems were installed at Thunder Bay.

Friedhoff reported the 501(c)3 application for the MUPC is almost complete and ready to be submitted.

Bloomfield congratulated Lusardi for being the recipient of the Association for Great Lakes Maritime History Award for Historic Preservation for all of his work done on behalf of the state.

Campau made a motion to adjourn the meeting; the motion was seconded by Bloomfield, and was unanimously approved.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sandra S. Clark". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Sandra Clark, Chairperson