

Michigan Shipwrecks



An estimated 6,000 vessels were lost on the Great Lakes with approximately 1,500 of these ships located in Michigan waters.

Michigan History Center
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What Lies Below



The Great Lakes have provided transportation for Michigan's inhabitants for hundreds of years. Thousands of vessels from canoes to car ferries and steamers to modern ore boats have sailed these "inland seas" and unknown numbers still remain - settled on the lakes bottom in watery graves. They lie in shallow water and in the deepest reaches of Michigan's 38,000 square miles of the Great Lakes bottomlands. These are unique and irreplaceable resources.

Structures and Artifacts



Shipwrecks are a wood and steel chronicle of the history of naval architecture on the lakes. The pilings of thousands of abandoned docks tell of a time when transport by water was as important as transport by land. While these abandoned resources are collectively owned by the people of Michigan, relatively few individuals have direct access to them. Unfortunately, some of these persons can and often do damage or even destroy artifacts that are important to Michigan's history.

Cold Fresh Water



The cold fresh water of the Great Lakes keeps wrecks exceptionally preserved even after decades underwater. However, special care must be taken to ensure that these resources remain for generations to come.

Shipwreck Locations



Michigan Shipwrecks Web App



The William Young shipwreck located in the Straits of Mackinac Underwater Preserve.

Use this interactive map to:

- **Find** shipwrecks, lighthouses, boating access sites, and download data (.kml, .shp, .csv)
- **Search** for shipwrecks by name or location
- **Customize** background to navigational charts, imagery or street view
- **Print** a PDF map designed by you

This map is a work in progress. Its purpose is to provide an opportunity to explore and connect with many of the shipwrecks in the Great Lakes. We hope that it will provide a glimpse into Great Lakes maritime heritage to all who want to get wet or stay dry. We do not guarantee its accuracy and it will change over time as wrecks are discovered.

[Link to the Michigan Shipwrecks Web App](#)

Underwater Preserves



In 1980, Michigan adopted laws protecting the shipwrecks on its Great Lakes bottomlands in order to ensure that they remain for future generations to study and enjoy. It also created a system of volunteer-managed Underwater Preserves. Today there are thirteen preserves around the state. One, [Thunder Bay](#), was designated a National Marine Sanctuary in 2000.



[Link to EGLE-Shipwrecks website](#)

[Link to Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary website](#)

Experience Shipwrecks

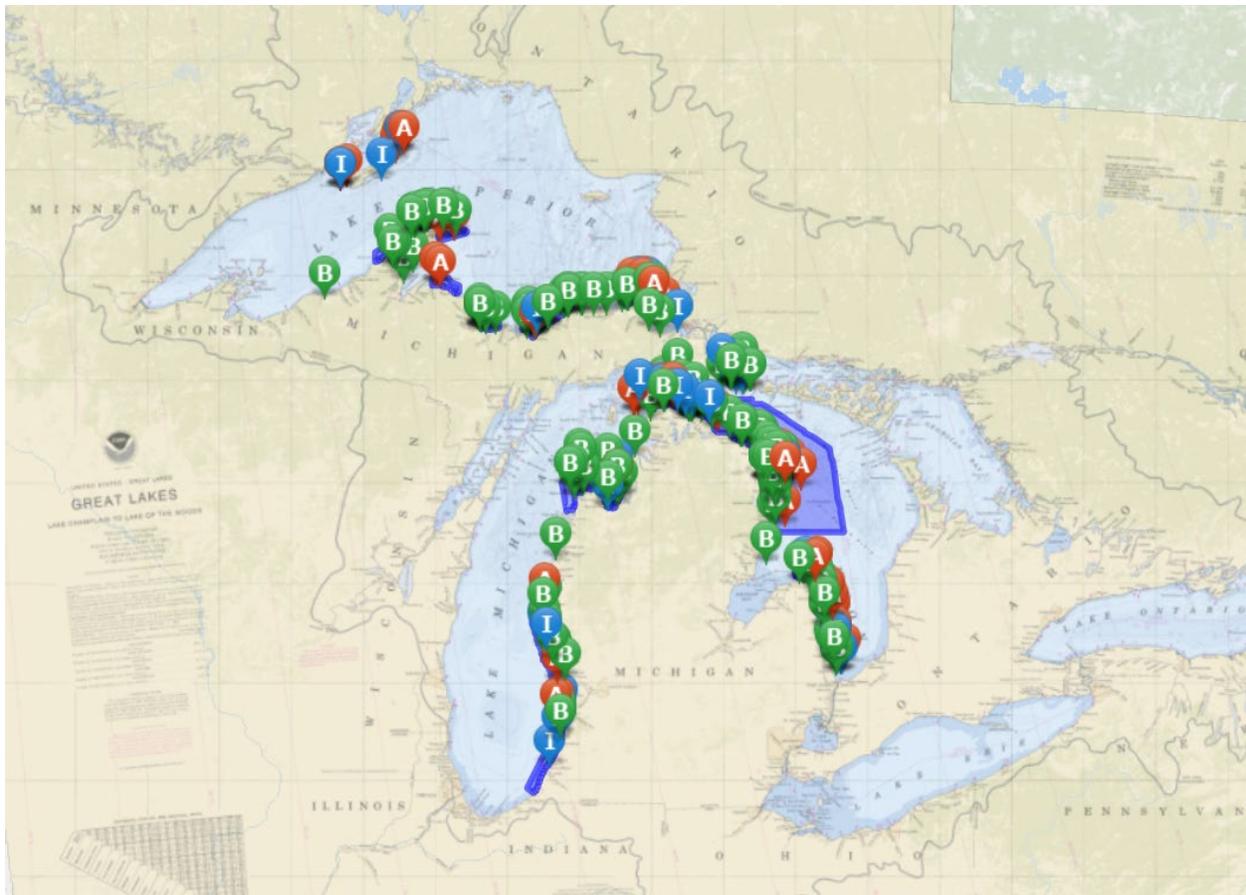


Take the Plunge

Dive By Difficulty



The Flora shipwreck in the [Grand Traverse Underwater Preserve](#).



The map shows the difficulty of diving at each shipwreck location as beginner (B), intermediate (I) or advanced (A).

Whether you are just getting started or you are an experienced diver, these locations offer a variety of opportunities to experience underwater history.



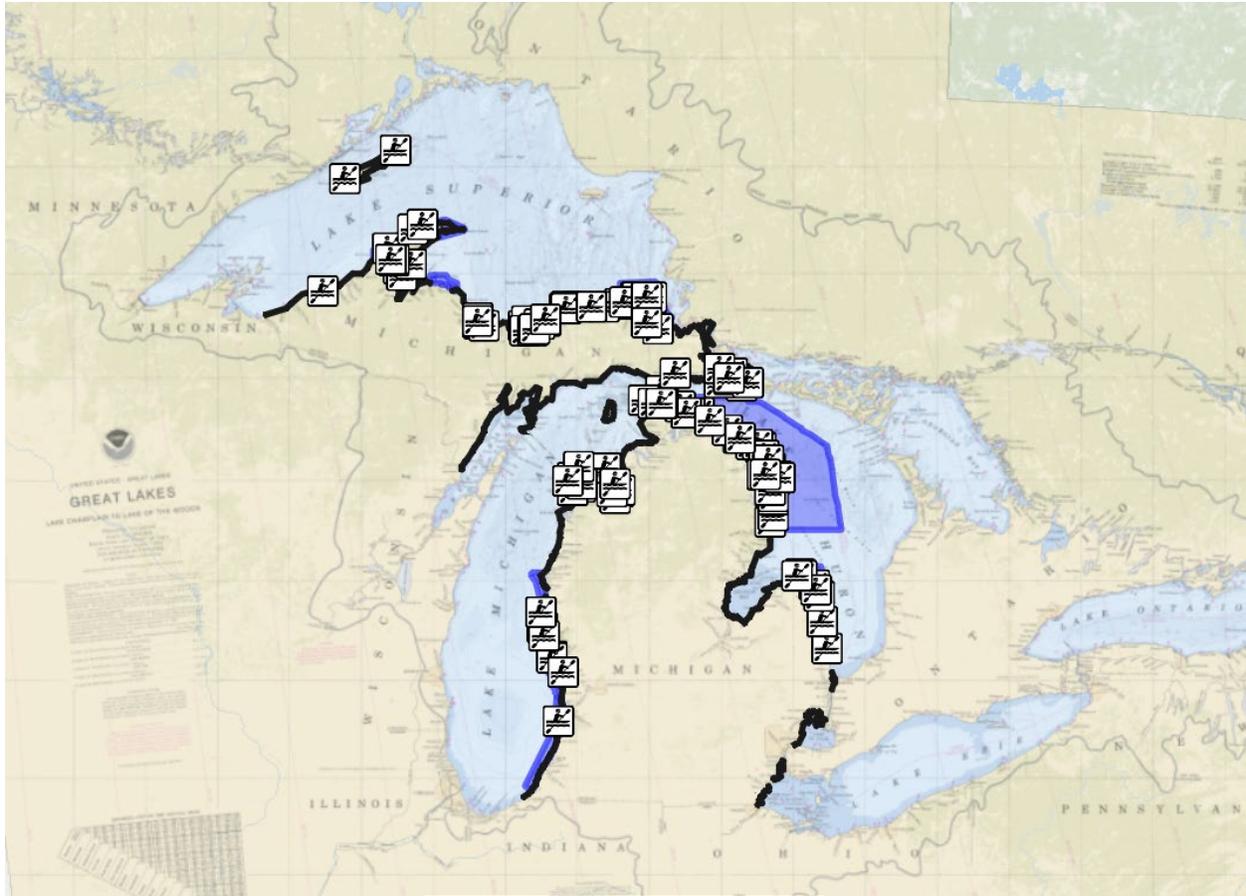
The Fred McBrier shipwreck in the [Straits of Mackinac Underwater Preserve](#).

Want to Stay Dry?

Paddle Sport Accessible Sites



Michigan shipwrecks provide awesome experiences to snorkelers, kayakers, and paddle-boarders.



Water trail information provided by Michigan Great Lakes Water Trails Working Group. To learn more, click on the link below.

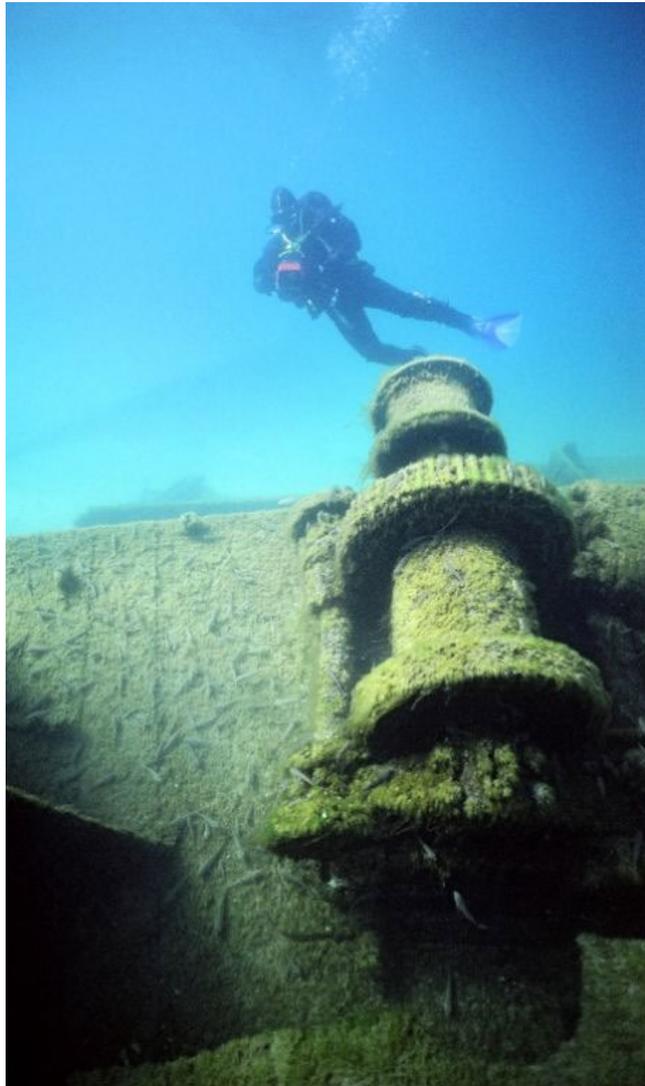
[Link to Michigan Water Trails website](#)



“Take Nothing But Pictures, Leave Nothing But Bubbles”



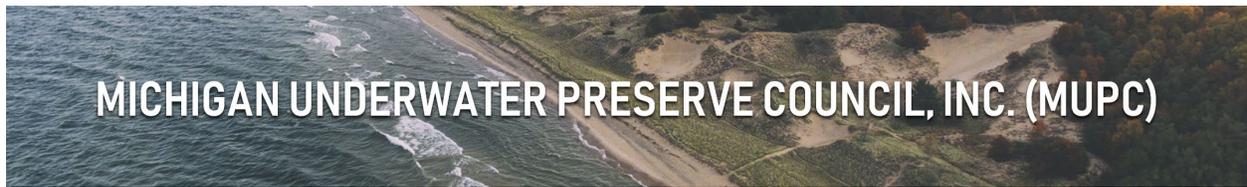
Preserve Our History



The Novadoc shipwreck in the [West Michigan Underwater Preserve](#).

Michigan law, [Part 761 Aboriginal Records and Antiquities](#), 1994 PA 451 as amended (MCL 324.76101), specifically provides for sport diving access to shipwrecks. The federal [Abandoned Shipwreck Act of 1987](#) (43 U.S.C. §2101 et seq.) requires that each state must allow "reasonable access" to shipwreck sites. "Reasonable access" is defined in the federal statute as "guaranteed recreational exploration of shipwreck sites". However, the right of reasonable access does not include the unfettered right to remove shipwreck artifacts. Sport diving and the collection of artifacts for sale or as personal souvenirs are not the same activity.

Michigan Underwater Preserve Council, Inc. (MUPC)



Get Involved



The Comache shipwreck in the [West Michigan Underwater Preserve](#).

Photo by Paul Chase.

[MUPC](#) is a private, non-profit, volunteer driven organization incorporated in 1989 to preserve and protect the Great Lakes shipwrecks in Michigan waters, to educate divers and non-divers on their history and to aid in their preservation. Its membership is drawn from all of Michigan's underwater preserves.

MUPC encourages the establishment of safe mooring buoys on shipwrecks located in Michigan's underwater preserves. Properly placed moorings make shipwrecks safely accessible to everyone. A priority for the future is to place permanent mooring sites off the shipwrecks to spare them from harm.

[Link to Michigan Underwater Preserves Council, Inc. website.](#)



Learn More



Diving into Resources

Additional videos and maps are provided by the [Noble Odyssey Foundation](#) and [Michigan Underwater Preserve Council, Inc.](#)

[Link to Noble Odyssey's Coastal Shipwrecks of the Great Lakes video.](#)

[Link to Sunken Treasure PBS Version video.](#)

Multiple state agencies were involved in the creation of this story map including the [Michigan History Center \(MHC\)](#), [Michigan Department of Natural Resources \(DNR\)](#) and the [Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy \(EGLE\)](#).

To learn more, visit MHC's [shipwreck website](#).

Questions

- For technical questions, email us at DNR-GIS@michigan.gov
- For questions regarding shipwrecks or underwater preserves, email the [Michigan History Center](#) at MHCinfo@michigan.gov.



MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENT, GREAT LAKES, AND ENERGY