

Wisconsin's Underwater Heritage

Vol. 1 No. 1

A publication of the Wisconsin Underwater Archeological Association

January 1991

WUAA: a new voice for historic preservation

Welcome to the first newsletter of the Wisconsin Underwater Archeological Association!

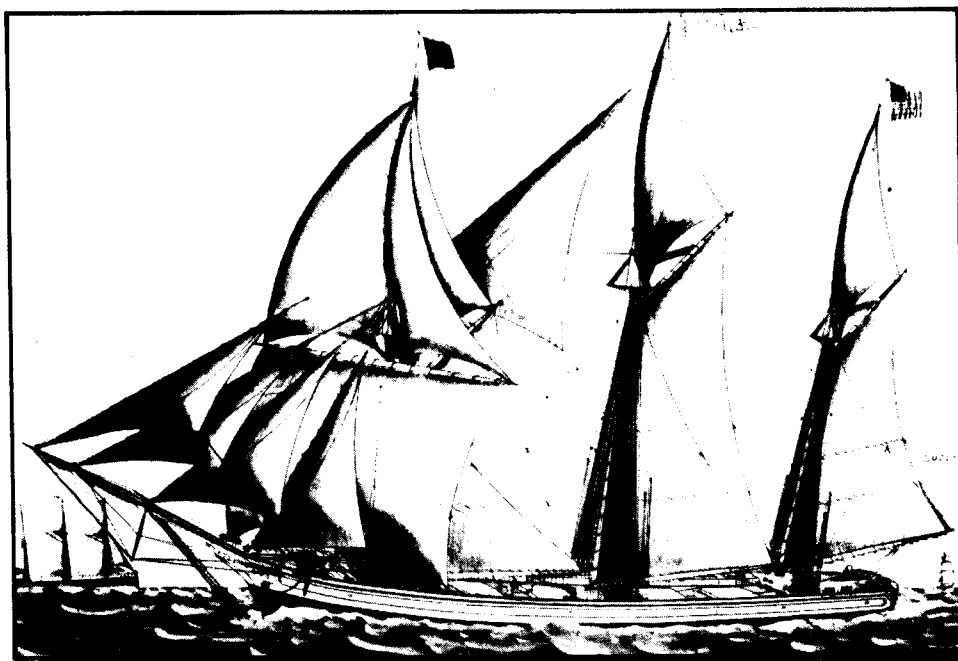
The WUAA is a newly-formed association that is dedicated to the preservation and protection of Wisconsin's underwater heritage. It was organized last spring by a group of state residents who had worked with the State Historical Society's underwater archeologist, David Cooper, on surveys of Wisconsin shipwrecks.

Cooper encouraged these individuals to form an organization that would help the Historical Society perform the mammoth task of studying and conserving Wisconsin's shipwreck and submerged archeological sites.

WUAA hopes to start functioning as an active research and conservation organization in 1991. During 1990, members have been meeting to hammer out organizational details. A statement of purpose was drawn up that specified six aims of WUAA:

- *promoting research and education in underwater (u/w) archeology in Wisconsin;
- *providing training in and information related to performing u/w site surveys;
- *distributing the results of sponsored projects to members and the general public;
- *working in cooperation with responsible organizations interested in u/w archeological resources;

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The wreck of the schooner Lucerne was part of a recent underwater survey in Lake Superior conducted by a team of volunteers under the direction of Dave Cooper, state archeologist. Providing volunteers for these types of surveys is one of the objectives of the newly formed Wisconsin Underwater Archeology Association. *Milwaukee Public Library Great Lakes Marine Historical Collection*

State's u/w archeology program needs the support of volunteers

**By David Cooper
State U/W Archeologist**

In January 1988, the Wisconsin state legislature provided initial funding for the State Historical Society to conduct a pilot study of state underwater archeological resources.

One of the purposes of the study was to improve the management of historic shipwrecks and provide information for the development of marine preserve areas for resource protection and recreation.

This pilot program was dovetailed with new state and federal efforts to protect and manage submerged cultural resources, by

means of the 1988 state Omnibus Historic Preservation Act and the federal Abandoned Shipwreck Act of 1987. This latter act charges the states with the protection of historic shipwreck sites. Revised state archeology law (44.47 Wis. Stats.) now provides for stricter penalties for those who damage or destroy u/w archeological resources and historical sites on state-owned lands (including the bottoms of the Great Lakes).

The study began with a detailed state-wide historical inventory aimed at identifying the types and locations of reported and potential

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Wisconsin's

Underwater Heritage

is published quarterly by the Wisconsin Underwater Archeological Association. Contributions are welcomed. For more information, call Bob O'Donnell at 414-722-8401 days or 414-722-8465 evenings.



Site survey critical step for historical research

Field surveys will be a major activity of the WUAA. This article is a general introduction to the art of surveying (note: readers are encouraged to submit articles that discuss more specific aspects of surveying for future issues of the newsletter).

One of the primary duties of an underwater archeologist is to develop useful, accurate and detailed descriptions of underwater sites.

These site descriptions are often used by people who will never see the site personally, such as other archeologists, historians and recreational planners. Site descriptions are also used by divers to locate and visual sites, and anticipate and plan for diving conditions.

On sites where visibility is restricted, a survey map may be the only way for a diver to visualize an entire site. Even if visibility is good, the mass of detail associated with even a simple wreck can overwhelm divers and obscure their recollections of what they saw. For this reason,

properly executed measuring and recording techniques help to make surveys a valuable tool for understanding and communicating to others the conditions of a site.

Underwater Archeology: an introduction

Of prime importance in conducting an u/w survey is a determination of the *exact location* of the site. Land starting points, precise compass headings, distances, Loran C coordinates, plat maps, and topographical and hydrological maps can all contribute to determining a site's location.

When conducting the actual site dive,

numerous *environmental conditions* need to be recorded. Dive conditions, such as depth, temperature, visibility, currents, and bottom time will help others to prepare for future dives and to visualize the site.

The *physical condition* of the site itself should also be recorded. For example, how badly deteriorated is the wreck? Is it shallow and badly damaged by ice movement? Is the wreck overgrown with weeds or buried in muck?

Preparing the *plan of the site* will possibly be the most difficult (and rewarding) portion of the survey. Documentation may include photos, videos, inventory of artifacts, sketches, and (of course) a properly measured map.

The final goal of an underwater survey is the *dissemination of information*. All of the information obtained needs to be brought together into a meaningful report, along with documentary research, and made available to other potential users.

REGIONAL NEWS

To become a truly statewide organization, WUAA needs to promote membership and local activities throughout the state. To achieve that goal, readers are encouraged to send news items to Bob O'Donnell, 119 Laudan Blvd., Neenah, WI 54956 or call 414-722-8401 or 8465.

Northwest

A team of archeologists, park rangers and volunteer scuba divers spent most of last July exploring 19th century shipwrecks and submerged 17th century fur-trading posts in the Apostle Island region of Lake Superior. Dave Cooper of the Wisconsin State Historical Society lead the team.

Northeast

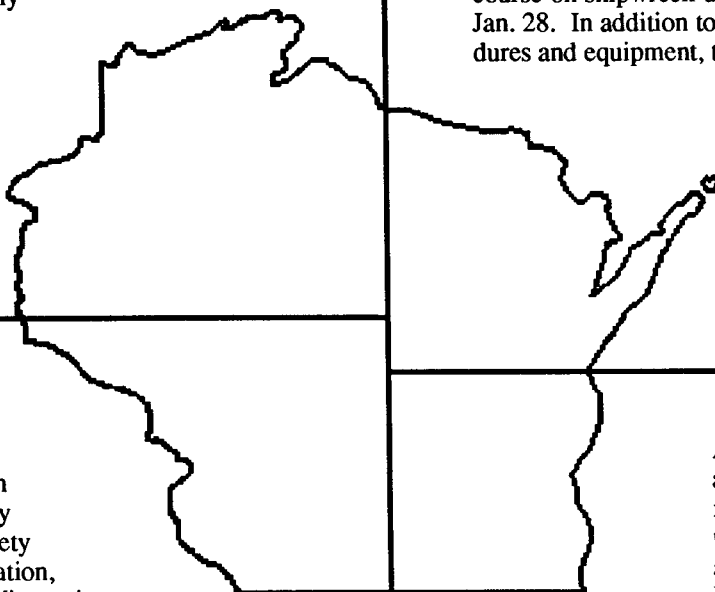
Bob O'Donnell and Craig Fink will be offering a 10 session course on shipwreck diving in Neenah beginning Monday, Jan. 28. In addition to information on wreck diving procedures and equipment, the course will also discuss the maritime history of the Great Lakes, ship construction, and an introduction to basic u/w archeology. For more information, call Bob evenings at 414-722-8465 or Craig during the day at Inland Seas Diving at 414-722-0051.

Southwest

The original group of WUAA members has been meeting on the third Wednesday of every month at 7 pm in Madison, usually at the State Historical Society building. For more information, call Dave Cooper of the Wisconsin State Historical Society at 608-262-0160, or Tom Villand at 608-221-1996.

Southeast

At our September meeting, there was a suggestion that another special meeting be held this winter. Ideas included touring the Milwaukee Marine Library and/or the State Historical Library. Readers who are interested in more information should contact Dave Cooper of the State Historical Society at 608-262-0160 days, or 608-274-0945 evenings.



WUAA will also promote education

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*disseminating information pertaining to u/w archeology; and

*promoting the conservation and *in situ* preservation of u/w archeological resources.

The WUAA has been meeting on the third Wednesday of every month at 7 p.m. in Madison—usually at the State Historical Society. Since Madison is not located near the geographic center of the state, the association has decided to schedule major semi-annual meetings in other parts of the state. The first such meeting was held last September at the Manitowoc Maritime Museum.

Committees were organized for writing by-laws, publishing a newsletter, organizing projects and conducting training. A tentative constitution and by-laws have been drafted. Future semi-annual meetings, which will be held each spring and fall, will feature speakers, training sessions and (possibly) social activities. The next such meeting is scheduled for April 1991.

Acting officers for WUAA were appointed at a November meeting. Regular elections will be held at the April 1991 meeting. A time and place for the meeting will be announced in the next issue of the newsletter.

Dues for individuals were established at

Upcoming Events and Activities

JANUARY

"Shipwreck Diving" -- Neenah -- 10 session course on equipment and procedures for shipwreck diving, including history of Great Lakes maritime commerce and shipwrecks. Course will begin Monday, Jan. 28, for more information, call Bob O'Donnell at 414-722-8465 or Craig Fink at 414-722-0051.

"Using Public Libraries as a Research Tool" - Milwaukee or Madison - For more information, call Dave Cooper at 608-262-0160

APRIL

Bi-Annual Statewide Meeting of WUAA - this will be the second state-wide meeting of WUAA. Speakers and location will be announced in upcoming newsletters.

\$15 per year, renewable on the anniversary date of when the individual joined.

Other topics to be considered at the April meeting include summer surveying projects, the establishment of different classes of membership (i.e., family, individual, etc.), and the possible establishment of local WUAA chapters.

The meeting in Manitowoc, which was attended by 33 people, was the high point for

WUAA in 1990. Participants listened to a presentation on the society's goals and suggested ideas for future activities.

This newsletter will be printed quarterly and will carry articles on WUAA activities, projects and surveys; other archeological activities in the state; other organizations, such as the Manitowoc Maritime Museum; and the technical aspects of u/w archeology, including training, education and research.

WUAA Membership Application



As a private, non-profit organization, the Wisconsin Underwater Archeological Association presents an opportunity for both individuals and organizations to participate in and contribute to state efforts in u/w archeological research and preservation. Dues are \$15 per year.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone: Day _____ Evenings _____

Since we are a new organization, we would like your input on the types of goals the association should have:

- ☐ Documentation of state underwater archeological sites
- ☐ Training individuals in u/w archeological methods
- ☐ Exchange of information between members
- ☐ Preservation of state underwater archeological sites
- ☐ Public education on underwater heritage
- ☐ Creation of state underwater preserves
- ☐ Others: _____

I would like to be involved in the following activities:

- ☐ Archival research
- ☐ Training in archeological methods
- ☐ On-site work - shoreside
- ☐ On-site work - underwater
- ☐ Association Committees:
 - ☐ Newsletter ☐ Organization
 - ☐ Training ☐ Membership
- ☐ Other: _____

Make \$15 check payable to "WUAA" and mail with this form to:

Wis. Underwater Archeological Association - P.O. Box 6081 - Madison, WI 53716

State seeks to preserve u/w history

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submerged cultural resources. This initial inventory was used to assess the potential for submerged cultural resources in given areas of state bottomlands to aid in planning archeological field survey.

Since 1988, the State Historical Society has conducted reconnaissance-level surveys, mapping and other documentation on approximately 30 different u/w archeological sites.

These sites have ranged from nineteenth century schooners to twentieth century fishing tugs. While much of this work has been conducted using simple sketching, mapping or photographic methods, joint projects with other institutions and governmental agencies have allowed the state's u/w archeology

Why divers need to be involved

Shipwrecks that have survived for hundreds of years are now in more danger from humans than the underwater environment in which they rest.

Artifacts removed without documentation and proper conservation treatment are lost forever, both as evidence of past life styles, and as physical evidence of our history.

Divers should consider the concerns of all potential users, present and future, when determining how they deal with historic sites. These sites are important recreational resources, fragile and nonrenewable.

The mystery and thrill of visiting a virgin sunken ship should be available to all divers, not just to the first finders. Future divers should have the same opportunities for exploration of our u/w maritime heritage as today's divers.

Enforcement of state laws is difficult on the open lakes and preservation relies on personal ethics and local efforts at site stewardship.

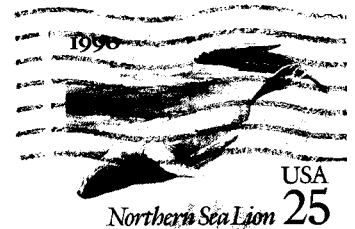
Now is the time when divers can make the difference, both individually and collectively, by taking the initiative in providing a future for historic shipwrecks and shipwreck diving.

program to access sophisticated remote-sensing equipment, infrared and microwave survey and deep remote-operated vehicle (ROV) technologies.

This systematic documentation and evaluation of our state's submerged cultural resources has been important in integrating

these resources into state and federal resource management and preservation programs. This submerged cultural resource inventory is also helping to define areas for consideration both as state marine preserves (based on the Michigan model) or as National Marine Sanctuaries.

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For those interested in
preserving Wisconsin's underwater history