

Bay State Council of Divers

Meeting Minutes for April 9, 2008

Meeting held at the SSN's Clubhouse, Quincy, MA

Meeting called to order at 7:30 PM. (*Minutes taken by Mary Howard*)

Attendees:

Paul	Adler	East Coast Divers
John	Blackadar	SSN
Al	Bozza	NEADC / BSC VP
Jim	Brady	OCA
Steve	Coren	Attorney
Angelo	Correnti	SSN / BSC President
Theresa	Czerepica	SSN
Joseph	Donahue	SSN
Michael	Donovan	NSF
Ken	Hayes	MBD
Ted	Hotz	SSN
Mary	Howard	NSF / BSC Secretary
Chris	Hugo	MWDC
Robert	Kane	The Polus Center
Theresa	Kane	The Polus Center
Heather	Knowles	North Atlantic Dive Expeditions / Boston Sea Rovers
Matthew	Lawrence	SBNMS
Vin	Malkoski	MS DMF / Boston Sea Rovers
Holly	Martel-Bourbon	MA DMF / Boston Sea Rovers
Deb	Osborn	SSN
Michael	Prange	NEADC / BSC webmaster
Alan	Reilly	OCA
Paul	Sauvageau	NSF
Mary	Schroth	OCA
David	Trubey	MBUAR
Wally	Westphal	NEADC
Carl D.	Yngve	SSN

Clubs and organizations represented include:

Boston Sea Rovers

East Coast Divers

Massachusetts Board of Underwater Archeological Resources (MBUAR)

Massachusetts Division of Marine Fishers (MA DMF)

Mass Bay Divers (MBD)

New England Aquarium Dive Club (NEADC)

North Shore Frogmen (NSF)

Old Colony Amphibians (OCA)

South Shore Neptunes (SSN)

Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary (SBNMS)

The Polus Center

Guest Speakers: Robert & Theresa Kane

Robert & Theresa Kane of *The Polus Center for Social & Economic Development* contacted Angelo to see if the Bay State Council could help them with their project to assist disabled commercial lobster divers in Nicaragua. They have recently become involved with divers who have been injured with the bends while diving commercially for spiny lobsters. There are 1500 lobster divers in Nicaragua who have permanent disabilities from getting the bends while diving. Lobster diving on the Miskito (Atlantic) Coast is a \$40 million industry, second only to coffee. There is now severe overfishing in the area, the fishermen are exploited, thinking this is the only thing they can do. They dive too deep too often. There is no priority to get medical attention to injured divers early on. Sometimes they have to stay on the dive boat for over a week after injury until the trip is concluded before being brought to shore where they can get medical attention, losing the opportunity to get prompt treatment. There are no rescue boats for the injured at this time.

10 years ago The Polus Center (which has offices in Somerville and Amesbury), a non-profit dependant on state and federal funding, became an international organization, and now they are working in Central America, Columbia, Honduras. A group of about 15 from The Center traveled to Nicaragua last year and met with injured divers. The group would like to help the injured divers get out of hospitals and into shared living programs and would like to take the leadership to train these disabled divers, to help them start their own small businesses.

Businesses under consideration include:

- Prosthetic and wheelchair factories
- Small boat building to include:
 - building 4 rescue boats
 - teaching boat building
 - training in emergency rescue and staffing the rescue boats
 - using boats for other purposes/micro enterprise

Robert and Theresa have asked for input and suggestions and with understanding of the “diving” part of this project. A primary objective is to offer alternatives other than diving in such dangerous conditions. Responses/suggestions from the members present at the Council meeting are listed.

- Holly Martel Bourbon suggested contacting DAN, PADI, SSI, etc. for supplies such as oxygen for rescues.
- John Blackadar, in the interest of stopping more injuries from happening suggests that DAN should be able to help, he has name of CEO’s wife who might be able to help – maybe get oxygen kits for the boats.
- Paul Adler suggested checking out stories about Honduras stories in the past. Is there oxygen available? Maybe welding supplies. Or generator to make it. Check out the infrastructure to see if these are available.
- Decompression chambers may be available from places that have ones they don’t use any more. Maybe contact Dr. Fabian at Mass Eye & Ear. They have several chambers.
- Steve Coren noted that there are 3 approaches: community, commercial, legal – He suggests that a legal approach might have the greatest impact.

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission: Angelo recently attended a meeting. There is nothing current that affects scuba divers.

Boston Sea Rovers

Prices for Sea Rovers booths will be going up considerably for next year. In light of this fact, John Blackadar was asked by members of his Club (South Shore Neptunes) what the Club is getting out of having a booth at the show. Networking is a very important reason to be there. We should try to make it affordable for club somehow. Clubs are key and maybe they should find a way to be on the main floor? It is getting expensive for clubs to have separate booths.

Heather Knowles says the Rovers are sensitive to the fact that increased booth prices are hard for dive clubs, but it is also expensive for the Sea Rovers to run the show.

An alternative might be to have a group of clubs go in together on a booth, join forces.

Steve Coren asked what the price for the BSC booth would be, and said he can get the \$210 to \$300 price underwritten.

OLD BUSINESS:

Flag issue – Steve Coren:

There have been a lot of meetings on the North Shore about the Gloucester flag law which is more restrictive than the state law and requires that each diver tow a dive flag. The understanding within Gloucester enforcement is that the law is unenforceable. A ScubaPro representative was talking to John Blackadar and said that the Gloucester Assistant Harbor Master would not let them in the water without each diver carrying a flag.

At some point if you want to change the law, someone will have to be “cited”. Defense becomes “the law is unenforceable”. The city will not act.

The BSC can suggest that divers state “I have the right to dive. How far into the water do you want me to go before you cite me?”, take the citation and then give up diving for the day. **Tell divers to ALWAYS BE RESPECTFUL**, nothing will be gained by not being. Gloucester could give up and drop the citation because the law is unenforceable. **If you get a citation, get it to the BSC or to Steve Coren (617-969-7139) ASAP.** Once a diver is refused the right to dive, then an attorney can request an interpretation of the law.

The Council could put out in writing that we are monitoring the law and believe it is unenforceable. Angelo will try to put a letter together, send it to Steve for his comment/input, for official/legal wording.

Website update

The website is getting a steady stream of a couple of hits a day. It now has a page of clubs and a page of shops. Michael just added two more shops this morning. Please check out the website at www.baystatecouncil.org. If you see something that isn't there that should be, see ADD site.

Sea Rovers asked that Michael add a mission statement. All clubs are invited to put a small blurb describing their clubs.

Next need is to have a listing of charters. There was a suggestion that we try to have their schedules as well. This seems difficult and a bit of a stretch for the BSC website. Maybe links to the Charters' sites would be better. This subject is tabled for now.

Treasure Hunt – May 18

Packets of flyers for the BSC Treasure Hunt were available for Club representatives to take. People were asked to take packets for local dive shops, and ask if the shop would give a raffle prize. Please let Al know after you drop off flyers so we can keep a list and not duplicate our efforts.

John and Roy talked to lots of people for prizes, including DAN and DUI. A list will be posted on the website with a thank you. We may send an emailed thank you. We have a lot of prizes already. Shops that give the biggest prizes will have those prizes held as “grand” prizes.

Get divers to come.

John Blackadar runs the safety diving group. Vin Malkoski and Ted Maney said they will help. Paul Adler will donate some safety divers (students). We need someone on the beach to count the objects and give out raffle tickets. Need people to help seed the area (sometimes safety divers do that). We still need to get a rubber boat for the safety divers to use.

Anyone who helps out gets raffle tickets except for Angelo.

Dive Community

Paul Adler would like to get all the dive shops and dive clubs that we can together here so that shops will feed clubs without feeling as though they are being used, set up a system through the dive clubs to get divers to work in harmony. Maybe have two meetings, one in this area and one in the western part of the state. Possibilities for this might be Ero Sundstrom in Leicester or Mark Potter at Mass Diving who has a big room. Or maybe further west to get the shops from Western MA. Try having one here first and see how format works. September or October when the season slows down.

Artificial Reef

A couple of dates had to be cancelled last year, but the BSC group and the Quincy Police will definitely get some work done this year.

Stellwagen Bank

Heather Knowles is the new diving representative on the Board.

The draft management plan will be coming out in the end of May for public comment. Be sure to read and comment on the draft plan.

Heather says that the website shipwreckdivers.org will be a place for the dive community to get information. She hopes the BSC will support them. They may link to the BSC website.

Soldiers Undertaking Disabled Scuba - SUDS

For injured soldiers returning to States and learning to dive. Wally Westphal will research the SUDS project and find out how we could promote such a project in this area.
www.sudsdiving.org

Oceanarium in New Bedford still moving along well; fund raising, money is tight. They will have an evening for the diving industry. The Oceanarium is all about education for our kids for the future.

Underwater Rescue Group

Group will be having a meeting this Thursday with detectives in Brockton. If we have a need for more than just a few divers, would like to be able to draw on anyone in the BSC. It is relatively easy diving. There is also a lot of surface support required for any of this type of work if you are not comfortable looking for a body. Roy will put together a letter and Mary will forward to people here.

Poster Project

Al Bozza is still working on **poster** of flag issue for educating boaters.

DMF – Vincent Malkoski

Legislation has been filed to allow spearing of stripers. This was filed by free divers, but would not be limited to free divers. This does not mean the legislation will pass.

Obit for James Cahill

Wally noted the passing of Jim Cahill, navy veteran, started dive shop.

CLUB ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Old Colony Amphibians – Alan Reilly and Jim Brady are glad to be invited to the BSC meetings. Clubs keep people in diving after they are certified. Hooking up with the BSC is important for the club. [Super Stop & Shops have a community room by contacting manager of store] - The past weekend OCA had a booth at Salt Water Fishing Show in RI, which is one of largest salt water associations around.

SSN – Will have a speaker next Tuesday, April 15 at 7PM – Frank Dudas.
Matt Lawrence of SBNMS will be their speaker on June 3.

NSF – John and Jay Ganson will give a presentation on Scapa Flow on 4/17 at 8PM.

NEADC – Tropical fish dive in September

- Jonathan Bird's premiere of Secrets of the Reef on May 31. Get tickets at www.secretsofthereef.com
- Dominica possible inter-club trip (when?)

- Fish ID class with Bob Michelson on June 18
- Great Annual Fish Count, July 19

OCA – Tune-up dive last weekend of April

MWDC – Wrecks tentatively scheduled for November 8

Action Items:

Angelo will draft a letter

Wally will research the SUDS project for implementation in our area.

Roy will put together a letter for the Underwater Rescue Unit and Mary will forward to people in attendance at BSC meetings.

Mary, email contact info to Robert@akacademy.com

Next Meeting

Next meeting will be held on June 11, 2008, 7:30PM, Neptunes' clubhouse.