

Bottomtime:

The Newsletter of the Nova Scotia Underwater Council



Nova Scotia Marine Park System

marine parks

"...human need is of paramount importance, but (we have to) balance the human need for protein and fossil fuels against the greater danger of turning the ocean into watery deserts." (WS)

What do you think about a place to dive which is fully protected from fishing and yet accessible by all? Where the shore-side facility was designed to suit the Nova Scotia SCUBA enthusiast. There was parking free of conflicts with private property owners. Garbage was collected on a regular basis. Pathways were kept clear of debris and free of mud holes. Perhaps warm showers were available, with changing facilities and safe storage of personal belongings. Adjacent, there was a country restaurant with the "best" seafood chowder and homemade bread in the Maritimes. Attached was a motel with wash down facilities for SCUBA gear, a refill station, comfortable beds and inexpensive rates. There is even talk of a future hot tub or sauna!

At the wharf, there was a choice of facilities for charter boats, private vessels, small zodiacs and a buoyed area free of all boat traffic. Information signs outlined what is to be found in and around the sea, and reminding us of the importance of protecting what is there now. Novice divers might first experience that special feeling one gets in a wet suit in Atlantic Canada during a Spring checkout dive. Instructors and dive

masters would have an easy time overseeing their students. The more experienced might first try night diving or underwater photography in this partially protected area. The lucky ones may get a chance to visit the three metre tall bronze statue out on the sandy flats.

Private vessel owners use the concrete boat ramps for easy launching and retrieval. Charter boats equipped to professional standards outlined by the Canadian Coast Guard ferry divers to the out-lying islands and ship wreck sites. Charter boat captains are



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not only expert in their navigation skills, they are also sensitive to the needs of divers and the protection of the marine environment. Perhaps those captains are retired fishers with that respected knowledge of the sea that all divers wish to gain.

After departing the wharf, whether on a charter boat or not, whales and dolphins are often encountered feeding on the plentiful fish.

The dive sites were easily located by their permanent mooring buoys. These buoys are properly maintained and relocated to the dive site each Spring by diver volunteers. The dive was familiar to the group dive master so that pre-dive briefings were conducted professionally, confidently and with enthusiasm. Prior knowledge of the site characteristics assisted dive masters with matching various skill levels with the anticipated environment. Specific items of special interest were pointed out in advance and reviewed afterwards.

Underwater, the bottom was free of human interference. Large lobsters could be seen in numbers twenty times that found outside the protected boundaries (It's true!) Other invertebrates, whether they be juicy scallops or lowly sea urchins, lived unmolested in numbers controlled only by their natural predators. Lump fish to wolf fish posed for underwater photographers without fear. Schools of pollock and mackerel swam freely through the area. Perhaps a curious seal might tug on the divers fins without fear of being entangled in a net.

Fishers stayed clear with an acknowledgment that such a protected area is necessary, and beneficial to the sustainability of the adjacent near-shore fishery. Natural migration and "escapees" enhanced the fishery in the surrounding areas yet clear boundaries protected the breeding stock from harvesting. During times of less demand or the off season, fisheries managers and university researchers used these pristine situations to compare the extent of disturbance in unprotected areas.

Between dives, the vessels tied up on another mooring placed out of the weather in a protected bay. There were areas to stretch legs

and all those other things necessary to occupy that important surface interval time. Perhaps there might be a picnic table to rest at or a path to explore. Perhaps there was time to walk up to the lighthouse passed by on the way to the dive site. A view from the top of any lighthouse is worth the time to get there. That birds's eye view over the area just previously dived on would be a memory not soon forgotten.

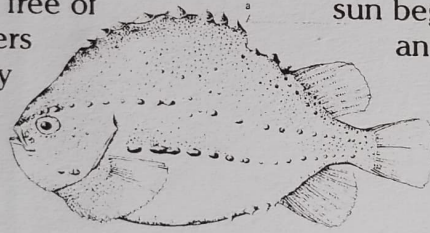
On the second dive, divers visited a group of scientists working on documenting a significant historic wooden ship wreck. As amateur underwater archeologists, they assisted with a new understanding of the importance of preserving and protecting historic sites. Underwater photographs and certificates of participation would outlast any souvenir wrongly taken from the sea floor.

On the return journey to the mainland, seabirds including puffins are beginning to feed again as the afternoon winds die down and the sun begins to set. Waters are calming out and the fog bank last seen in the morning is threatening to move in for the evening. Camaraderie onboard the vessel had peaked as plans were made to fill empty tummies with the local seafood chowder and freshly baked bread; and more talk of the hot tub.

Where is this place or who do you know who has been there? As Nova Scotians, we are surrounded by it and most of us have been there. The trouble is the system is still piecemeal. There are small groups, throughout the Province, with the basic marine park concepts in mind: protection and preservation, education and recreation.

It is just not coming together! There is a Provincial Department of Natural Resources with the mandate and the will; they just need a push from us. As divers, who are really just lawyers, fishers, doctors, politicians, or educators with a little special training and equipment, we are the world's marine ecotourists. Let's push together as the time has come for a Nova Scotia Marine Park System.

For further information on what the Council is doing about this issue, contact your Area Director or Rick Welsford, President.



Harvesting Scallops Using SCUBA Equipment

marine life

The closure of the scallop harvest along the South Shore of Nova Scotia this Fall has re-ignited a debate as to who is to blame for the declining resource. Historically, SCUBA divers are often blamed by fishers for any localized decline. SCUBA divers have often pointed the finger right back at the fishers themselves. There is more than one good story about heated debate between SCUBA divers and fishers in Lunenburg County. Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) are apparently alarmed at the increase in license requests by divers in the last few years. A quick look at the data confirms that there has been an increase in licenses issued across Nova Scotia. In the area defined as the South Shore, there has also been an increase in commercial dragger licenses issued.

DFO are proposing public meetings early in the New Year with divers, recreational fishers and the commercial draggers to come up with an



“action plan” to preserve this resource. At a planning meeting held last Spring, only one diver attended along with the 19 representatives from the fishing industry. The goal of the next meeting is to establish a committee of all users to make recommendations to DFO. Allowable catch limits, area and season restrictions are to be considered. A continued closure is a real possibility and it may extend to any part of the Province.

We all have stake in the preservation and harvest of this resource and therefore should have a say in the handling of it. If SCUBA license holders do not speak up now, then they may be excluded from future decision making. Please contact your local DFO office to find out the date of the next meeting. Let's unite to voice our opinion and concerns to both protect our resource and protect our access to it.

For further information on the Councils involvement in this issue, contact your area Director, or David Williams, Director for the South Shore.

Do you need help with a diving project?

The Council is here to help you with your projects. If you think of something you would like to see happen, let one of the Executive know and perhaps we can help. Like to develop a dive site? How about organizing a beach clean-up? There are many ways we can help, either with communication, financial assistance, providing specialized expertise, or simply acting as an advocate in the community on your behalf. We have done it before. We are here to support Nova Scotian divers. Just let us know what you need.

***Congratulations to
Bob Semple and
Bob Ogilvie for
their efforts to
protect Finchley!***

**Membership renewal
is due now!**



Nova Scotia Underwater Council TREASURE HUNT 1996!

Special events

ber 1996: The tradition of the NSUC
re Hunt goes on uninterrupted since
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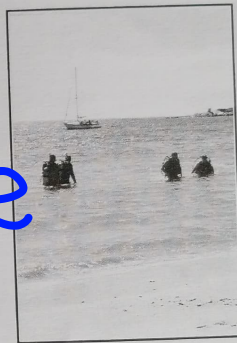
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The Nova
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beach for a whole summer day. Truly, it is a prov-
ince-wide sponsored event! Mr. David Allan (organ-
izer of the first three Treasure Hunts 1980-2) came
out of retirement to supervise the day. Thanks to
David and the volunteers, the largest diving event in
Nova Scotia was held safely and without incident
again.

This year's grand prize was a six night stay at
the Grand Barbados Beach Resort, for two persons,
provided by the hotel and the airfare by the Barba-
dos Tourism Authority (BTA). This was won by
Stephen Houghton, of Lower Sackville, Nova
Scotia. Congratulations and a special thanks to the
sponsors.

Note: This event is the largest, longest contin-
uous, and probably most complicated diving event in
Atlantic Canada that we know of. It requires volun-
teers who not only
contribute their time, but
also pass on the opportu-
nity to win the great
prizes and trips to the
Caribbean! If you can
help next year, we need
you now. Contact either
your area Director or the
Executive Director.



The next NSUC
Treasure Hunt:
Sunday, September
14, 1997



Nova Scotia Underwater Council

special events

September 1996: The tradition of the NSUC Treasure Hunt goes on uninterrupted since 1980! The weather was perfect and Crystal Crescent Beach was beautiful. Prizes were provided from dive shops from Yarmouth, Bridgewater, Lunenburg, Halifax, Dartmouth and Sydney, as well as from tour operators, independent dive instructors, The Park and even a pub.

The Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources supports us by allowing a few

hundred SCUBA divers overwhelm the nicest public beach for a whole summer day. Truly, it is a province-wide sponsored event! Mr. David Allan (organizer of the first three Treasure Hunts 1980-2) came out of retirement to supervise the day. Thanks to David and the volunteers, the largest diving event in Nova Scotia was held safely and without incident again.

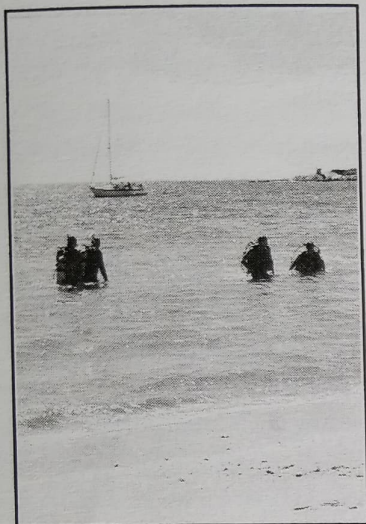
This year's grand prize was a six night stay at the Grand Barbados Beach Resort, for two persons, provided by the hotel and the airfare by the Barbados Tourism Authority (BTA). This was won by Stephen Houghton, of Lower Sackville, Nova Scotia. Congratulations and a special thanks to the sponsors.

Note: This event is the largest, longest continuous, and probably most complicated diving event in Atlantic Canada that we know of. It requires volun-

teers who not only contribute their time, but also pass up the opportunity to win the great prizes and trips to the Caribbean! If you can help next year, we need you now. Contact either your area Director or the Executive Director.



Council TREASURE HUNT 1996!



**The next NSUC
Treasure Hunt:
Sunday, September
14, 1997**



CPR Course Free to NSUC Members

health

As part of the ongoing safety component of the NSUC's commitment to safe diving, there are two CPR courses being offered in Windsor in the late fall - early winter. They are offered to members on a first come first serve basis.

The first 10 members of the NSUC who apply to the following fax number 1 (902) 757-2149 (Lynn Eric Hebb) will be confirmed as participants of the course. Please state your name, address, fax number, and the preferred date for the course. If non-mem-

bers wish to register, they may do so but must submit their \$10 fee and NSUC application form within one week to: Treasurer, NSUC, c/o PO Box 465, Windsor, B0N 2T0.

Transportation, meals and accommodation, if necessary, are not included.

NEXT COURSE:

Where: Windsor Regional High School, Rm. 28

When: Saturday, Dec. 14, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

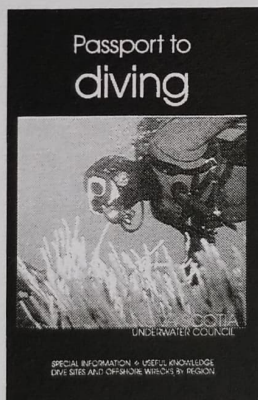
Instructor: Greg Faulkner

Level: Level C which includes CPR, AR and two-person CPR

Last call for submissions to: NSUC SCUBA Guide to Nova Scotia

The final draft of this updated book is being prepared for review in the New Year. If you have a favorite dive site or photograph which you would share with us, please contact the guide Editor right away.

Limited advertising will also be accepted to offset the book's printing costs. For detailed advertising information, please contact the Executive Director at the NSUC office.



Two outstanding organizations dedicated to SCUBA diving



The Cousteau Society



SCUBA Instructor Listing

Please contact the NSUC office with any corrections or omissions.

David Allen, Halifax 876-0555
Austin Baird, Bridgewater 543-8822
Brian Boye, Halifax 876-0555
Travis Carter, Bedford 835-6565
Mike Chambers, Halifax 454-4296
Darin Connors, Halifax 479-1631
Harry Dort, Bedford 835-6565
Gary Edwards, Halifax 876-0555
Gary Field, Halifax 479-2981
Tim Gay, Bedford 835-6565
Ken Jardine, Sydney 562-6061
Roland Lewis, Sydney 562-2457
Robert Mack, Fall River 860-0634
Dwayne McLaughlin, Windsor 798-8862
Gordan McVicar, Sydney 562-6975
Frank Meeks, Bedford 835-6565

Blaine Montroy, Bedford 835-6565
Roland Morrison, Dartmouth 463-3796
Tim Oickle, Lunenburg 634-3443
George O'Neil, Sydney 564-5671
Dennis Pitts, Bedford 835-6565
Jodi Pratt, Lunenburg 634-3443
Donnie Rodgers, Bedford 876-0555
Joe Rossiter, Lunenburg 565-3773
Joanne Shadbolt, Lunenburg 634-4822
Caroline Smith, Halifax 454-4296
Dale Smith, Chester 275-4471
Stephen Tate, Bedford 835-6565
Ralph Tomlinson, Lunenburg 634-3443
Rick Welsford, Mahone Bay 624-1557
Sean Wilkie, Lunenburg 543-9317



NSUC Membership

the council

The Nova Scotia Underwater Council has made several substantial changes to its membership fee structure for 1996. This revision comes after a year long process of reevaluating the goals and mandate of the Council, and attempting to discover how best to serve the diving community in Nova Scotia

Commercial Membership: Eliminated. All divers are eligible to be members of the Nova Scotia Underwater Council, and we believe that there should be no distinction between them because of how they earn a living.

Family Memberships: Eliminated. All persons are members individually.

Individual Memberships: \$10. Over the years, the Council has attempted to provide more membership services by distributing dive slates, pins, and other paraphernalia. While useful and appreciated by those who received them, they had to be paid for, and one method of doing so was to increase the membership fees. The mandate of the Underwater Council is to "preserve, support, and promote diving and dive safety in the Province". One of the best ways we can think of to do that is by having as many divers as possible become part of the Council. That way, if there are safety issues or concerns, or important events that should be publicized, we can inform the widest possible audience. Many people thought our fees were too high, and that this prevented some divers from joining. Well, now hopefully, this should

not be a problem.

Newly Certified Diver: Free. (Yes, we mean it). If anyone needs to know impartial news about the diving community in Nova Scotia, it is the newly certified diver. We want to assist these people to enjoy their new hobby as much as possible, and we believe that it is vital that they become connected to the greater community. There is no better way to ensure they join than this. We hope you agree. Just enclose a Xeroxed copy of the newly issued basic certification card in place of the \$10 fee.

These are substantial changes, but we believe they are justified. In order to fulfill the Council's mandate "to cooperate and participate with... governments on projects and policies that lead to the recognition of sport diving as a significant recreational activity", we must speak with the largest voice possible. We must try to represent all divers, and advocate their needs. To do this, we need them as members.

The Executive of the Underwater Council has decided that it is important to take all of these necessary steps to ensure that occurs. We invite your participation. Questions on membership can be answered by contacting the Executive Director or your Area Director. Join the Council today.

**Beginning this winter, there are
new direct Halifax to Barbados
flights with Conquest.**

Bottomtime Newsletter Advertising

The editor of the Bottomtime will consider limited advertising in future issues of the newsletter. At the back of each issue, a special space has been reserved to acknowledge specific private or public support for each Bottomtime issue.

As a service to our membership, commercial brochures or flyers may be enclosed with the mailing of the Newsletter, for a reasonable fee. For

example, equipment sale flyers, certification course announcements, etc. can be inserted without editing by the Council (or responsibility for the content). Inexpensive copying or assistance for this service can be arranged with the Executive Director at the Council's office. Please note the dates of newsletter publication in another section of this issue.



Nova Scotia Underwater Council

Since
1971

Objectives

To be a representative body for the SCUBA diving community so as to preserve, support and promote diving and diver safety in the province.

To ensure training programs are given to a recognized level of quality, to foster and encourage the safe handling and usage of all approved types of equipment used in the sport of SCUBA diving.

To make available to all members information concerning safety, medical, technical and research data concerning the sport of SCUBA diving and SCUBA diving equipment.

To cooperate and participate with the government on projects and policies that lead to the recognition of sport diving as a significant recreation activity.

Board of Directors & Executive

Executive Director

Michael Haynes

Nova Scotia Underwater Council

c/o Sport Nova Scotia

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email: dromard@atcon.com

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Past President

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(902) 475-1187 (h)

South Shore Director

David Williams

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Passport to Diving

Dwayne McLaughlin

(902) 798-8862

This issue of **Bottomtime:**
The Newsletter of the Nova Scotia Underwater Council was published with financial support and services provided by the following organizations:

Nova Scotia Sport & Recreation Commission



Sport and Recreation Commission
Honourable Jay Abbass
Minister

Grand Barbados Beach Resort

Barbados Tourism Authority

The next meeting of the NSUC Executive will be held in Cape Breton early in the new year.

Bottomtime: *The Newsletter of the Nova Scotia Underwater Council* (ISBN 1100-2050) is published six times annually. Members of the Council are encouraged to submit to the editor photos (including captions) and articles of interest to the general membership. Deadline for submissions is the first day of every other month beginning January. Submissions, address corrections, comments or general suggestions should be sent in writing to:

The Editor

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P.O. Box 3010 South, Halifax, NS B3J 3G5; (902) 425-5605 (fax)



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