



INTRODUCTION:

Welcome back Nova Scotia Divers!

It's been a long time since our last newsletter; about one and a half years long. Since our last letter the council continued to make progress on various projects, most notably the underwater park, presentation of the Jane Biggs award, and planning for our third AGM with our second election.

Then everyone's world was turned upside down.

Plans and activities came to a grinding halt as public health restrictions were put in place and took the wind out of our sails. It would be convenient to say that is why you have not heard from the executive since then, but in all honesty, we cannot hide solely behind that.

After the initial, extended pause, everyone's focus shifted as we adjusted and settled into the current reality. The executive continued to communicate with each other throughout this period, but very little could be accomplished. We recently convened to discuss plans for rebooting the council and getting things back on track.

This is not so much a newsletter as it is a brief overview of what was discussed during the executive meetings and our plans for the future of the NSUC. Articles such as 'Tales from the Dive Site' and 'Diver Profile' will not feature in this edition but once things are back on track they will be brought back.

This edition will include updates on:

- Underwater Park
- Artificial Reef Project
- Annual General Meeting & Elections
- Jane Biggs Award

Underwater Marine Park:

A lot of progress was made on this front since the last newsletter: Fox Point Beach was selected as the site, required signatures from the adjacent land owner were obtained; and applications completed for DFO, Department of Lands and Forest and Transport Canada. A video survey of the sea floor was produced, as per a recommendation by DFO. As part of the application process, we also completed the design of park's layout, along with schematics showing dimensions and orientation with respect to the shoreline.

All that was left to do was plan for fundraising and find a place to build the pieces so that we could provide installation dates to the various regulatory departments. The arrival of Covid slowed things down for us, but once restrictions were slowly lifted, we reached out to DFO again to restart the process.



Unfortunately, our artist had to return to her home province for personal reasons which resulted in a long-term pause. However, all is not lost as we may have found another artist to take up the reigns. Discussions on that front are just beginning so hopefully there will be more news in the near future.

Artificial Reef Project:

The wreck project was not quite as successful as the progress made on the underwater park. After the discovery of asbestos on the Rupert Brand and discussing the cost of removal we decided to pause work on the ship, focus on more easily attainable projects such as the park, and then get back to the reef work later on.

Then, last summer, an opportunity presented itself with the possibility of sinking the Cormorant. The government announced a competition to remove the deteriorating ship from the Bridgewater waterfront. The NSUC partnered with the Canadian Artificial Reef Society and submitted an application and plan to clean and sink the Cormorant for the purposes of an Artificial Reef. Scouting dives and environmental assessments were conducted in the Lunenburg Bay area, and a suitable site in close proximity to the Saguenay dive site was selected.

After several disappointing turns in events with the tender process, the Cormorant's fate was left to RJ MacIsaac Construction, and is currently being dismantled in Sheet Harbour, NS. A heartbreaking end to what could have been an incredible conclusion to the former Navy Dive ship's life.

Nonetheless, the NSUC is moving forward and learning from our experiences. A new opportunity to resurrect the Rupert Brand project has presented itself. The proposal is to clean and sink the Rupert Brand in Mahone Bay somewhere near where it is thought the legendary pirate ship, the Young Teazer, had gone down. The story of the Young Teazer can be found on the brochure sent out to the NSUC and will be posted on our website and social media.

The Rupert Brand is obviously not a pirate ship and we would never consider placing it such that it would threaten a site of any archeological significance, but it would be prepared and sunk in honour of the Young Teazer; paying homage to a Mahone Bay legend.

Accomplishing this will be no easy feat and will require a lot of work, planning, and community support. We will also be approaching local businesses and the government for funding support. If you know of anyone that may be interested in supporting such a project, please reach out to the NSUC executives. More information will be provided at the upcoming AGM.

Membership:

Due to the events of the last year, previously paid members are not being asked to pay membership dues this year. Non-members are welcome to attend the AGM but in order to place a vote, membership dues of \$25.00 will need to be paid. All previously paid members will be considered **"In Good Standing"** and be able to participate in the voting.



Memorial Donations for Paul Miles:

On more somber note, the NSUC has extended our sincerest condolences to the family and friends of a former NSUC member that has passed away.

Paul Miles was an avid member and supporter of the original NSUC. He passed away on the 15th of March, 2021; he was 68.

His spouse Patricia Miles reached out to the NSUC asking if it was possible to have family and friends donate to the new NSUC in his honour. To date we have received approximately \$600 in donations in Paul's name. These funds will go directly to the NSUC Artificial Reef project, a program that we hope to make Paul proud of.



Annual General Meeting:

The NSUC AGM was another victim of the pandemic. Due to gather restrictions, we could not host one in 2020, but we do not want to postpone it any longer. **Plans are being finalized to host this year's AGM ONLINE on Thursday, May 6th, 2021 at 7pm.** The meeting link will be sent out the first week of May.



ELECTIONS:

In addition to providing updates on the artificial reef and park projects, we will be able to hold elections for the executive positions of President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary and Regional Director, as required by the NSUC By-Laws.

Consider this newsletter a call for nominations for all executive positions. Any NSUC member "In Good Standing" may email submit their nomination for:

- President
- Vice-President
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Regional Director

**A nominee must be a member of NSUC "In Good Standing" as per Article 11 of the NSUC By-Laws*

You can send the name of the nominee and for which position, to any member of the NSUC executive, or to info@nsunderwatercouncil.ca

Nominations must be received by: 24 April 2021

As these are extenuating circumstances, the NSUC executive has decided that in the interest of safety and to help maximize voter turnout, **the elections will be held during the AGM online.**

Until mass gatherings are permitted by Nova Scotia Public Health, we do not feel it would be appropriate to gather all voters in one place. However, we do feel that an election needs to be called has the current executive has been in office for 3 years; 1 year longer than NSUC By-Laws outline.

We hope that there are members of the NSUC out there that are willing to inject some new life and energy into the executive council!

GUEST SPEAKER:

While everyone wants to know the latest news, we are aware that online meetings can become a little dry after a while.

We are very fortunate to have **Jill Heinerth** to joining us for a presentation at this years AGM. Most Canadian divers likely know who Jill is, and perhaps have been fortunate enough to hear her speak, enjoy one of her films, or read one of her books. Those of you who have not gotten to enjoy one of her presentations, you are in for a treat. If you have enjoyed one of her talks already, we are sure you'll enjoy another!

<https://www.intotheplanet.com/> to learn more about her.



JANE BIGGS AWARD:

Another important part of the AGM will be the awarding of The Jane Biggs Award. Greg Croft of the Shearwater Scuba Club was the recipient of the award in the fall of 2019. Greg has been able to hold on to his well-deserved award for a bit longer than expected, but now it is time to honour a new recipient.

Winners of the award will have made significant contributions to the development, promotion, teaching, and/or understanding of diving in the province of Nova Scotia.

Any paid member of the NSUC may submit a nomination. In order to submit a nomination, you complete to the Jane Biggs Award nomination form, and send it to any member of the NSUC executive or to info@nsunderwatercouncil.ca

Nominations must be received by: 24 April 2021

FINAL WORDS:

It has been a difficult year for all of us. There is no denying the effect COVID-19 has had on all our lives and our society, but it now time for us to get ourselves back on track and work on improving the Dive scene here in Nova Scotia.

This council was founded with the Mission to IMPROVE and PROMOTE Diving in Nova Scotia. Whether it was through community engagement, Artificial Reefs and Underwater Parks, or helping promote NS Dive Tourism. We were only just finding our footing when the world had to shut its doors. But as we begin to see a light at the end of the tunnel, it is time to set Nova Scotia Diving up for a prosperous future.

We hope you will all join us in this mission.

Sincerely,
Your NSUC Executive Council

The Executive

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Cliff Andrews, Vice President -
Shelley Weeks, Treasurer -
David Pate, Secretary -
Vacant, Regional Director -

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