

Wisconsin Shipwreck Coast National Marine Sanctuary Accomplishments

Fiscal Year 2021

On August 16, 2021, Wisconsin Shipwreck Coast National Marine Sanctuary became our nation's 15th national marine sanctuary. Nominated in 2014, the 962-square-mile sanctuary provides stewardship for 36 historic shipwrecks with exceptional archaeological, historical, and recreational significance. Twenty-seven sanctuary shipwrecks are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Co-managed by NOAA and the state of Wisconsin, the sanctuary expands on the state's 30-year management of these historic sites, bringing new opportunities for research, resource protection, education, and community engagement. In partnership with local communities, the sanctuary provides a national stage for promoting heritage tourism. The collection of shipwrecks in the sanctuary represents vessel types that played a central role in building the nation between the 1830s and 1930s. Research suggests that another 60 shipwrecks may yet to be discovered.



Visit <https://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/wisconsin/> for more information.

Exploring the Newest National Marine Sanctuary

Utilizing grant funding from NOAA's Office of Exploration, a team of federal, state, academic, and commercial partners explored Wisconsin Shipwreck Coast National Marine Sanctuary using three coordinated autonomous mapping platforms. Equipped with magnetometers, side scan and multibeam sonars, and cameras, these tools collected data throughout the sanctuary. The data will be used to characterize lakebed habitat and identify submerged cultural heritage resources such as shipwrecks.



A student deploys an autonomous underwater vehicle in the sanctuary. Photo: NOAA

Ensuring Safe Sanctuary Recreation Through Real-time Data Buoys

With a grant from the Great Lakes Observing System, three Sofar Ocean Technologies "smart moorings" were installed in Wisconsin Shipwreck Coast National Marine Sanctuary. This data will provide improved weather and wave forecasts, lake temperature model and forecast development, upwelling forecast development, and improved satellite remote sensing validation. The project aims to improve public safety and make live data available to a variety of area stakeholders, including charter and commercial fishers, recreational boaters, and other on-water activities.



A diver swims over *Henry Gust* in the newly designated sanctuary. Photo: NOAA

Education Above and Below the Waves

As part of a 2021 Ocean Exploration grant, the sanctuary partnered with University of Wisconsin Sea Grant and the Wisconsin Maritime Museum to tap into their educator networks and create a hands-on learning experience for 20 educators. Researchers from around the country engaged educators from Two Rivers, Manitowoc, Milwaukee, and Green Bay. The teachers explored new avenues for bringing marine technology and archaeology into their classrooms. Equally important was the days' networking opportunity, an important first step in building new sanctuary-educator partnerships that can create educational opportunities for students.



Sanctuary researchers connect with Wisconsin educators. Photo: Wisconsin Maritime Museum

Looking Ahead

- National marine sanctuary advisory councils are community-based advisory groups established to provide advice and recommendations to sanctuary superintendents and serve as liaisons between their constituents and the sanctuary. In 2022, Wisconsin Shipwreck Coast National Marine Sanctuary will recruit and select members for its new Sanctuary Advisory Council.
- In 2022, NOAA will conduct a siting study to determine where and how the sanctuary will have a presence in coastal communities. The report will include stakeholder input on considerations including a sanctuary office, exhibits, vessel operations, and infrastructure to support the sanctuary's mission.



The National Marine Sanctuary System is a network of underwater parks encompassing more than 600,000 square miles of marine and Great Lakes waters. The network includes a system of 15 national marine sanctuaries and Papahānaumokuākea and Rose Atoll marine national monuments.