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*Preserving America's Heritage*

## ***Diving With A Purpose* Receives Chairman's Award for Helping Federal Agencies Accomplish Submerged Resources Stewardship Responsibilities**

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Diving With A Purpose (DWP), a program that creates trained volunteer marine advocates to assist in the stewardship of heritage assets in National Parks and National Marine Sanctuaries, and introduces young people to maritime-linked careers, was honored by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) today with the Chairman's Award for Achievement in Historic Preservation.

DWP, the National Association of Black Scuba Divers (NABS), the National Park Service (NPS), and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA's) National Marine Sanctuaries are the program partners and were the recipients of the award which took place as part of the ACHP's summer business meeting.

“This public-spirited response to a national need by a cadre of professionals who wanted to more than recreate with their diving hobby started with the search for the slave ship *Guerrero* and is now helping federal agencies fulfill key stewardship provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act across the country,” said Milford Wayne Donaldson, FAIA, ACHP chairman. “It is bringing more people, most importantly young people, into the ranks of active participation in historic preservation and helping America better understand its full, rich story.”

DWP began this program in 2003 after finding Biscayne National Park lacked enough trained divers to work with government archaeologists in fulfilling essential heritage stewardship needs in public waters. Beginning with the training five NABS divers, DWP also began to work with nearby Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, then other NPS and NOAA sites. Since it began, DWP has trained more than 100 people who have documented 14 shipwrecks and contributed more than 15,000 hours in Biscayne National Park and in National Marine Sanctuaries. Its Youth Diving With A Purpose program began in 2013 and has involved 25 young people as underwater archaeology advocates. The program was recognized as a Preserve America Steward by First Lady Michelle Obama in 2014.

DWP volunteers now work across the nation and occasionally internationally, and with the Department of State and Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC), as well as its original federal partners. Both the program and its volunteer efforts are growing exponentially. They are now involved in efforts such as the search for planes related to the Tuskegee Airmen lost in the Great Lakes. They have formed an association with the NMAAHC to document and find artifacts for its collections and public education efforts. They are assisting in National Marine Sanctuaries and with the NPS Submerged Resources Center.

The *Guerrero*, incidentally, sank in 1827. It's resting place and remains have not yet been identified, although the general area in which it was wrecked continues to be searched.

ADVISORY COUNCIL ON HISTORIC PRESERVATION

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Tribute was paid at the ACHP awards ceremony to Brenda Lazendorf, the sole marine archaeologist at Biscayne National Park at the turn of the century who was deeply involved in the search for the *Guerrero* and whose appearance in a documentary prompted NABS official Kenneth B. Stewart to contact her. DWP originated in that 2003 meeting. Lazendorf died due to cancer in 2008.

Those present and taking part in the awards ceremony in the penthouse at the Department of the Interior included the following:

Kenneth B. Stewart, President and Program Coordinator, and a founder, Diving With A Purpose Stewart was accompanied by two of the three-year participants in the Youth Diving With A Purpose program who are working toward instructor status:

Rachel Stewart, 19, is a freshman at Tennessee Tech University majoring in Environmental Engineering. She is a Master SCUBA Diver and is from Nashville, Tennessee.

Julian Perez, 19, is a freshman at Texas A&M at Galveston majoring in Ocean and Coastal Resources. He is a NOAA Scientific Diver and is from New York, New York.

Jeffrey Dooley, President, National Association of Black Scuba Divers

Brian Carlstrom, Superintendent, Biscayne National Park

David A. Gadsby, Archaeology Program, NPS

Charles Lawson, Cultural Resource Manager, Biscayne National Park

James P. Delgado, Director, NOAA Maritime Heritage Program, Office of National Marine Sanctuaries

Brenda Altmeier, Maritime Heritage Team Lead, Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary

Matthew Lawrence, Marine Archaeologist, Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary

***About the ACHP:*** An independent federal agency, the ACHP promotes the economic, educational, environmental, sustainability, and cultural values of historic preservation and advises the President and Congress on national historic preservation policy. It also influences federal activities, programs, and policies that affect historic and cultural properties. See [www.achp.gov](http://www.achp.gov) for more information.