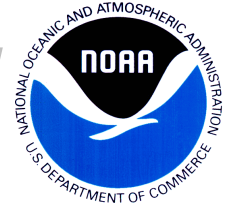




TOPSIDE



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The NDP Newsletter for NOAA Diving Supervisors and Divers

April 2003

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TRAINING SCHEDULE

Training requests are NO LONGER being accepted for the **May/June Working Diver and Divemaster** courses. Diver candidates already enrolled in this course need to submit their diving physical, training request form, and SEP measurement form to NDC as soon as possible in order to keep their training spot.


Training requests are being accepted for the **September 2003 Working Diver/Divemaster** courses. Please contact Laurie Barber if you would like to enroll in the September class or have any questions about requirements for any class being offered.

The following classes are scheduled for 2003:


Apr 29 - May 02	Diver Refresher	Seattle, WA
May 19 - Jun 06	Working Diver	Seattle, WA
Jun 02 - Jun 06	Divemaster	Seattle, WA
Aug TBA	Diver Refresher	Seattle, WA
Sep 15 - Oct 03	Working Diver	Seattle, WA
Sep 29 - Oct 03	Divemaster	Seattle, WA
Dec 1 - 12	EMT	Seattle, WA
Dec 15 - 20	Diver Medic	Seattle, WA



NDC STAFF ADDITION

LCDR Mike Lemon, NOAA, will be assigned to the NOAA Diving Center from May 1 - Nov 1, 2003. He will be assisting with the day-to-day operations at the Center, as well as with the diver training courses. Mike has both shipboard and scientific diving experience and is an excellent addition to the staff. Welcome Aboard, Mike! 

REBREATHER UPDATE

Representatives from NDC, National Undersea Research Program, Ocean Exploration, NMFS, USCG, and Delta P met in Silver Spring, MD last week to discuss the continued NOAA pursuit of a closed-circuit rebreather (CCR) for operational use. The next steps in rebreather testing and training/proficiency protocols were discussed. Included in this planning session was a presentation and product demonstration by AP Valve on their Inspiration CCR. 




DIVING CLASS PICTURES?

NDC is renovating and reorganizing diving class pictures taken at the end of each dive training class and displayed at NDC. This display is a tribute to all NOAA divers who have put up with the long days, crummy visibility, and many repetitive dives during training class. Unfortunately we are unable to locate end-of-class group photos for the following years and classes:


1987 - January (Key Largo), May (Seattle), and September (Seattle)

1988 - January (Key Largo), May (Seattle), and September (Seattle)


1989 - January (Key Largo), May (Seattle), and September (Seattle)

If any "well seasoned" divers have class photos for the above years, please contact Laurie Barber at your earliest convenience. Without your help we'll lose a little bit of NOAA diving history (Okay - and some bad 80's hair and clothes.....) 


NOAA DIVER ID CARDS

As mentioned last month, NDP would like to raise dive store awareness of NOAA diving certifications. Many dive shops, unfortunately, will not recognize the NOAA card for tank fills, equipment rental, etc. Currently, NOAA trained divers must also be issued a recreational dive agency certification in addition to their NOAA diver certification. This arrangement unnecessarily costs the Diving Program both time and expense and often times these recreational cards do not reflect the true level of training or experience that the diver has achieved. In response, the Director, NDP, has written an informational article to be distributed to dive equipment stores, as well as published in dive magazines. This article describes not only the NOAA Diver ID cards but also the NOAA Diving Program as a whole and NOAA diver certification levels. **NOAA divers can contribute to this effort by always using their NOAA Diver ID card first when proof of certification is needed.** Eventually we hope that all dive stores will make the connection between the NOAA Dive Manual they have on their shelves and the Diver ID card presented to them! 

CERT CHEAT SHEET

If you've ever had problems with keeping straight the Working Diver and Scientific Diver certifications, then check out the NOAA Diving web site. Newly added to the Training and Certifications/Dive Certifications section is the article "**Scientific vs. Working: Which is right for you?**". As the title implies, this article addresses some of the general differences between the two NOAA certifications. If you still have questions after looking at this article and/or elsewhere on the web site, then call NDC or consult your NOAA Diving regulations (NAO 209-123, also available on the web site - of course!). 

LUXFER CYLINDER UPDATE

For units that still have older Luxfer aluminum scuba cylinders.... Luxfer has announced a new trade-in program for cylinders made with the 6351 aluminum alloy. Luxfer cylinders manufactured from 1972 - 1987, and including some 1988 tanks, may be returned to Luxfer for a \$50 voucher (each tank) towards the purchase of new Luxfer 6061-alloy scuba tanks. Program details are available at the following web address: <http://www.cdnn.info/industry/i021209/i021209.html> 

DIVING SURVEY

As mentioned last month, the "**NOAA Diving Program Strategic Plan: 2003 - 2008**" and "**NOAA Diving Program Needs Survey & Assessment**" have been posted on the NDC web site as well as distributed to various line office, lab, and program supervisors. The intent of this survey is to help NDP determine how best to serve NOAA programs now and in the future. NDC is asking your help in facilitating this survey process by providing timely diving information to program supervisors, if asked. A copy of the survey is also being sent to all Unit Diving Supervisors, as well as all ships, to complete. All NOAA divers interested in contributing to this process are encouraged to complete and submit this survey located at www.ndc.noaa.gov, under the Reports and Publications section. As always, thank you for your assistance. 