



## NEWS RELEASE

U.S. Department of the Interior  
Minerals Management Service  
Office of Public Affairs

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### **Deep Wrecks Project Receives Prestigious Cooperative Conservation Award**

*Unique team garners recognition from Department of the Interior*

**WASHINGTON** – Members of the Deep Wrecks Project, a collaboration of federal agencies, private companies and universities, were recently honored for their contribution to science at the 63<sup>rd</sup> Department of the Interior Honor Awards Convocation. Acting Secretary of the Interior Lynn Scarlett presented the Cooperative Conservation Award to the Deep Wrecks team, which was among 55 other recipients being awarded for their service.

The Cooperative Conservation Award recognizes cooperative conservation achievements that involved collaborative activity among a diverse range of entities including federal, state, local and tribal governments, private for-profit and nonprofit institutions, and other nongovernmental entities and individuals.

“Today we honor private citizens who heard the call of duty. They embody the concept of cooperative conservation and partnership,” Secretary Scarlett said at the event in the Sidney Yates Auditorium of the Main Interior Building. “Regardless of where or how they serve, all of today’s awardees have inspired us with their service.”

The Deep Wrecks Project convened to conduct an investigation of six ships that were sunk by Hitler’s U-boat activities during World War II in the Gulf of Mexico and provide historical, archaeological and biological research.

The biological aspect of the study was meant to discover whether or not manmade artifacts function as artificial reefs in deepwater. Although the study is ongoing, preliminary findings show that artificial reefs can serve as a positive habitat and replace hard-bottom areas where they are lacking.

The archaeological aspects of the study sought to document and identify the status of six ships sunk during World War II, including the submarine U-166, a process that requires historical research and field investigation.

**(MORE)**

The Deep Wrecks Project has far-reaching ramifications for deepwater oil and gas exploration and production. The results of the biological research serve to prove that deepwater shipwrecks and platforms in the Gulf of Mexico can and do serve as artificial reefs. Archaeologically, the study is one of the most comprehensive deepwater shipwreck investigations ever conducted.

Members of the Deep Wreck Projects Team include:

**Federal Agencies**

**Minerals Management Service**

Jack B. Irion, Ph.D.

Daniel (Herb) Leedy

**National Oceanic Atmospheric Association**

John McDonough

**Universities**

**Montana State University**

Dennis Aig, Ph.D.

**University of West Florida**

William Patterson, Ph.D.

**The University of Alabama**

William W. Schroeder

**Texas A&M University at Corpus Christi**

Thomas Shirley, Ph.D.

**Non-Profit Organizations**

**Consortium for Oceanographic Research and Education (C.O.R.E.)**

Reginald Beach

**Partnering Anthropology with Science and Technology Foundation (P.A.S.T.)**

Annalies Corbin, Ph.D.

**Private Companies**

**C&C Technologies, Inc.**

Robert Church

**Droycon Bioconcepts Inc.**

Lori Johnston-Hill, M.Sc.

**Sonsub, Inc.**

Robert J. Keith

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