

# **PROCOM**

**Marine Survey & Archaeology**

29 Lohnes Drive, RR1 Blockhouse, Nova Scotia, B0J 1E0, Canada

Tel. (902) 530-2599, Email; [procomsurvey@hotmail.com](mailto:procomsurvey@hotmail.com) Website; [www.facebook.com/procomsurvey](http://www.facebook.com/procomsurvey)

November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2010

## **Law Amendments Committee**

Government of Nova Scotia

As a professional marine archaeologist who has worked in Nova Scotia for the past five years, I fully support the Government repealing the Province's *Treasure Trove Act* – replacing it with the new *Oak Island Treasure Act* – and, at the same time, also amending *the Special Places Protection Act*.

Doing both will bring Nova Scotia in line with the other provinces in Canada, and most countries in the developed world, when it comes to protecting underwater cultural heritage. And, the improved legislation is in keeping with the province's ongoing commitment to protect the marine environment and those who work in it. For example, Nova Scotia introduced new standards for occupational diving in 2006.

The stage is now set, so to speak, for Nova Scotia to develop a new standard for the field of marine archaeology. But, as I noted in my recent editorial piece in the Chronicle Herald, this can only be accomplished by the Province providing the necessary funding and resources.

The role, in my opinion, of the Government of Nova Scotia is to protect, preserve and promote its underwater cultural heritage. The benefits to the province and its residents in doing this could be substantial. It could mean more tourists, provide educational and employment opportunities for Nova Scotians and enhance the province's standing internationally.

Specifically, I would recommend the following.

That the Province

- require municipalities and developers to abide by the same policies and procedures for archaeology underwater as on land.
- enforce all legislation pertaining to the protection of underwater cultural heritage.
- develop a network of provincial marine parks.
- provide funding and resources for marine archaeology projects.

This province has one of the richest maritime histories in the world. All Nova Scotians can be proud of this. And, Government would be wise to take full advantage of all the opportunities provided by it.

Thank you for taking the time to review this submission.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rob Rondeau', written in a cursive style.

Mr. Rob Rondeau  
Senior Marine Archaeologist

 Print

CLOSE WINDOW

# The ChronicleHerald.ca

Published: 2010-11-03

## What marine archeology in Nova Scotia needs

By ROB RONDEAU

In July, Nova Scotia announced it would do away with its Treasure Trove Act; yesterday, legislation was introduced to make this happen. The act allowed treasure hunters to actively look for treasure on land and underwater. Most important, it allowed them to keep 90 per cent of what they found (the rest was supposed to be turned over to the province).

Doing away with the archaic act is long overdue! As Darryl Kelman, president of the Nova Scotia Archaeology Society (NSAS), said: "The proposed changes to the law bring the province in line with the rest of the country and the Western world."

Government opted for the changes after reviewing the lengthy Blackstone Report, which was started in 2005 by a Toronto consulting firm, the Blackstone Corporation, which specializes in resource management and tourism consulting. It recommended three options for Nova Scotia to consider when dealing with treasure hunting. Of course, doing away with the act completely, which the province chose to do, was one option.

While many consider the government's decision to repeal the act a "slam dunk" for conserving the province's underwater cultural heritage, we can learn a lot from the research done by the Blackstone consultants. They focused on several key areas, including possible legal ramifications, the potential need for institutional change, and how to improve protecting underwater cultural heritage. The three "scenarios" were weighed out against these criteria.

Hundreds of individuals were consulted for the report. Many are world experts in the field of marine archeology. How the science is done in other countries was also described in detail.

The report's writers concluded that Nova Scotia needs to make managing its underwater cultural heritage more of a priority. Doing away with the act, Scenario C, was said to "reflect an approach much more consistent with UNESCO (and) ... presents little risk of interference with the sovereign immunity claims of other countries."

The report also concluded that the province can learn from other jurisdictions — giving greater weight to protecting underwater cultural heritage through policy and legislation.

One concept that almost all stakeholders agreed to was the need for a full-time provincial marine archeologist. At present, only archeologists who have experience working on land are employed by the province.

The report also recommended better educating recreational divers about marine archeology and encouraged them to be "mobilized to search for underwater cultural heritage."

Most importantly, the good folks at Blackstone commented that "improper archeological practices — i.e. continued, unauthorized treasure hunting — can be minimized/eliminated by good laws, policies, operational structures and appropriate levels of funding."

Under the existing Special Places Protection Act, anyone caught removing artifacts without a heritage research permit can be fined up to \$10,000 and/or risk going to jail.

But simply quashing treasure hunting isn't going to adequately address better protecting underwater cultural heritage.

What's now needed is a co-ordinated and systematic approach to improve marine archeology in the province — both in the public and private sectors.

The good news is that this is already happening to a certain extent. For example, NSAS held its first course in marine archeology this past June — with more than a dozen people, many of them scuba divers, participating.

Other groups, such as the Gorsebrook Institute at Saint Mary's University, have taken an interest in Nova Scotia's underwater cultural heritage. Earlier this year, it held a symposium examining the socio-economic impacts of treasure hunting in the province.

In fact, a big problem in the past, in my opinion, has been a lack of interest on the part of academia. Despite the fact that Nova Scotia has one of the richest maritime histories in the world, no university here offers a graduate degree program in marine archeology. The first step, again in my opinion, should be training qualified people in this province who can work as marine archeologists!

Likewise, marine archeology shouldn't be the personal purview of the professional. I favour developing a provincewide system of marine parks that would be accessible to the public. Such a system would also boost tourism in Nova Scotia.

The fees charged divers visiting sites would help manage them. Requiring divers to register with a park, or a designated dive tour operator, would also help stop the illegal removal of artifacts.

And all Nova Scotians should be better educated as to their underwater cultural heritage. After all, it belongs to them — not just a specialized few. It's also something they should value and take pride in.

Rob Rondeau is a marine archeologist who lives on the South Shore.

CLOSE WINDOW  
© 2008 The Halifax Herald Limited

# Marine Park Proposal for the wreck site of the British Warship, the *Auguste*, located at Aspy Bay, Nova Scotia

Written by;

Mr. Rob Rondeau

Marine Archaeologist

ProCom Diving Services

Box 419, Hardisty, Alberta, T0B 1V0

tel. (780) 888-1880

email; rob@procomdiving.com

October 11th, 2006

## Introduction

The shipwreck site of *the Auguste* has been described as being one of the most important marine archaeological sites in Canada (Robert Grenier, Parks Canada, 2005). Because of its historic and cultural significance the wreck site deserves to be recognized and preserved as Nova Scotia's first marine archaeological park.

## History

The wreck of the *Auguste* occurred during one of the most turbulent periods in this country's history. Aboard ship were exiled French military officers, aristocrats and civilians enroute to France - deposed by British Military Forces after the fall of "New France" in 1760.

When the *Auguste* ran aground, what is today, Middle Harbour Beach during a violent storm on the afternoon of November 5th, 1761, one hundred and fourteen of its passengers and crew died. Only seven survived. The three-masted ship was quickly smashed to pieces in the pounding surf. In just a few hours it was gone!

Over time, the wreck site was covered by the shallow, sandy bottom of Aspy Bay. It wasn't until 1977 that a team of divers, working with Parks Canada, found what was left of the *Auguste*. Of the thousands of pieces of wood, metal, rope and cloth which made up the sailing ship, almost nothing remained. "The divers found only a few pieces of armament, equipment and rigging. In general, metal objects had survived, but everything else had vanished!" (The Wreck of the *Auguste*)

However, these few pieces tell an important, and often poignant, tale about those aboard. The "Cross of St. Louis" found must have belonged to one of the ship's more famous passengers, one of the brothers La Corne. Other objects speak eloquently of the passengers' station in life and their situation at the time of the voyage. Silver tableware, shoe buckles, small swords and elegant personal effects were also found.

And, many coins were found during both the 1977 and 1978 excavation seasons - including a large number of gold coins: Spanish escudos from Brazil and gold gunieas from England. Most of the French coins were dated 1726. Other mint dates ranged from the middle 17th Century to within only a few years of the *Auguste*'s sinking.



Starting in 2001, another group of divers excavated the site under the Province's *Treasure Trove Act*. For the next three years they dredged and airlifted out the primary wreck site - uncovering more coins and jewelry. Unfortunately, valuable archaeological information was lost (including the location of many cannons) as a result of the excavation techniques and methodology used.

In 2005, a new survey project expanded on the archaeology done by the Parks Canada team in the 1970s. Areas north and east of the original wreck site were explored. As the archaeologist-of-record during the 2005 survey season, I often commented, "It's not so much about knowing where a wreck is. It's about knowing where it isn't!"

Archaeological excavations conducted in 2005 and 2006 showed that little remains of the *Auguste* today. The three most significant artifacts remaining *insitu* are three cannons.

## Why A Park?

Although all historic and archaeological sites within the Province of Nova Scotia, including sites underwater, are protected by law, shipwreck sites such as the *Auguste* are vulnerable to looting, vandalism and uninformed souvenir collecting by sport divers.

There is a growing understanding and appreciation of these unique public-owned resources. "Shipwreck parks are a relatively new phenomena as a means of education and preservation through recreation." (Della Scott-Ireton, Florida Bureau of Archaeological Research)

In addition to being an important historic site, the shipwreck of the *Auguste* is also a popular tourist destination. As a marine park, it would only become more so!

Following the lead of several other states, Florida created its first marine park in 1987 - on the site of the shipwreck of the *Urca de Lima*. This Spanish merchant ship was wrecked along Florida's east coast near, what is today, Fort Pierce during a hurricane in 1715. Since most of her cargo had been recovered by the Spaniards, modern salvage efforts were only marginally successful. In 1983 and 1984 the last salvage permits were granted on the site. In 1985 the wreck's surviving hull structure was carefully mapped and recorded by archaeologists at the request of city officials.



A stone monument marks the site of the *Urca de Lima*, Florida's first marine park.

widely distributed to encourage public visitation and participation in the maintenance of this unique piece of Florida's maritime heritage. (Della Scott-Ireton, Florida Bureau of Archaeological Research).

The *Urca de Lima* was designated Florida's first Underwater Archaeological Preserve in 1987. Its popularity led to the creation of an entire system of marine archaeology parks in the State, which now includes 11 shipwreck sites dating from the 18th to 20th Century. In 2001 the *Urca de Lima* was listed on the U.S. National Register of Historic Places.

I believe that creating a similar type marine park on the site of the *Auguste* in Aspy Bay would be just as successful!



Diver with Cannon No. 2 during the 2005 excavation season (see site map).

Local waterfront businesses joined with city, county and state officials to enhance the wreck with replica cement cannons to replace those removed long ago. An official bronze plaque, embedded in a cement monument attached to a large mooring buoy, was positioned near the wreckage to mark the site and to prevent anchor damage. Interpretive brochures, thousands of which have been circulated, were

## What's Needed

One of the main advantage with the Auguste site is that a number of cannons are known to exist. Three remain on the wreck site itself. As for the ones moved between 2001 and 2004, these are reported to have been dumped close by though. They could easily be returned to their original location. Another cannon was also removed by the Parks Canada team in the 1970s. And, several others are believed to have been removed from the site by persons unknown.

An anchor also exists for creating a mooring (the Kismet Anchor - see the site map below) for boats. The only thing that's needed underwater to complete the park is a monument.

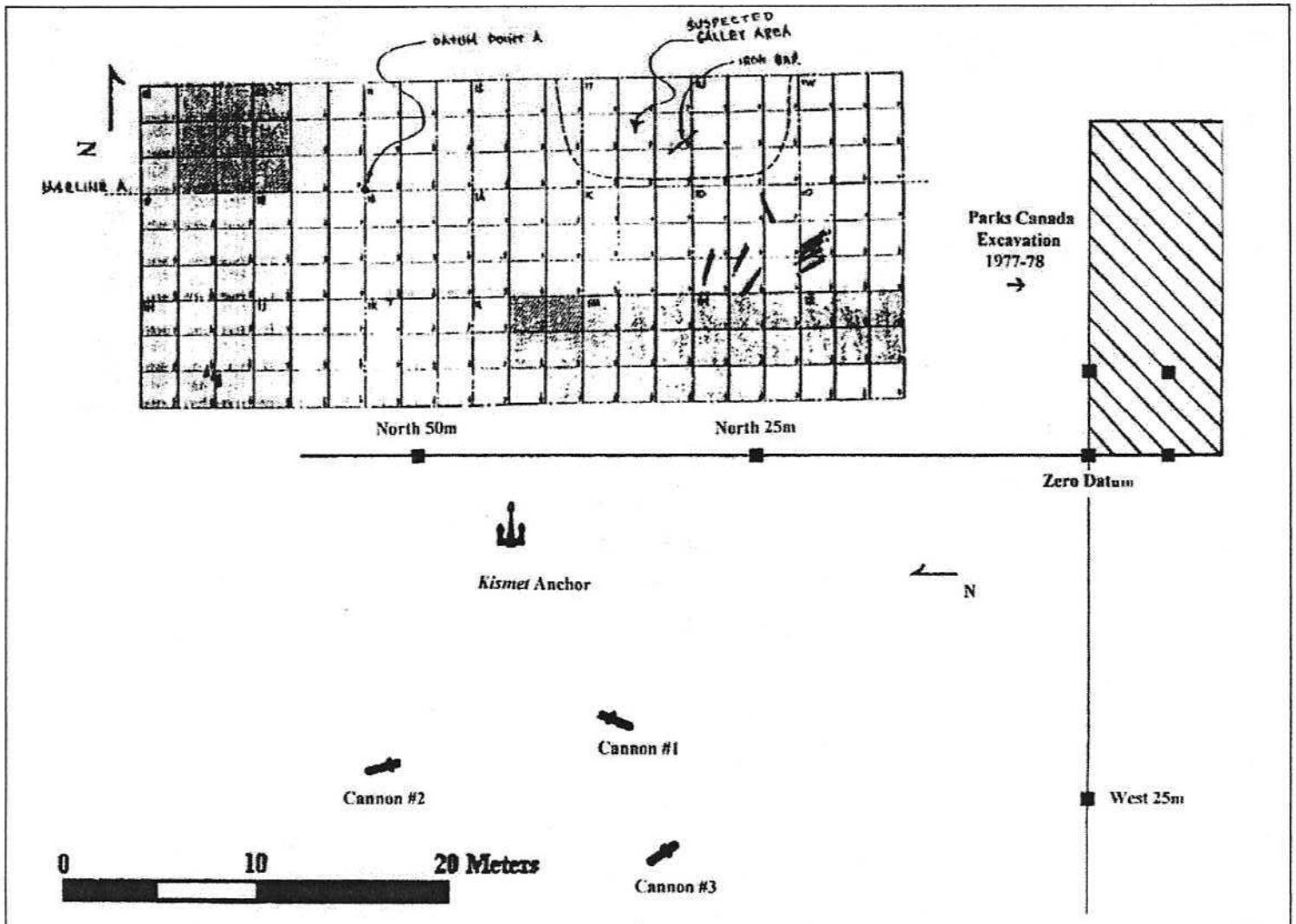
In order for the park to be successful, it would, of course, also need to be properly advertised and promoted.

## Where do We Go From Here

As was stated earlier, creating a marine park takes the co-operation of many stakeholders from different levels of government, the business community and the public. This isn't to say though that such a partnership couldn't work in Nova Scotia! In fact, Florida's success shows that, if everyone worked together, it could!

In addition to submitting this proposal to *the Honourable Len Goucher, Nova Scotia's Minister of Tourism*, I have also submitted it to *Ms. Sandy Hudson, Chief Executive Officer for Victoria County* and to *Ms. Heather Morrison, Chairperson of the North Highlands Community Museum*. While I've identified these three (and their respective organizations) as being key stakeholders, there are (and will be) many others.

Should any of you feel that what I've proposed has merit, I'd be happy to meet with you to discuss the proposal further. Likewise, I have information about Florida's marine preserve system which I'd gladly share with you. Please don't hesitate to contact me at your earliest convenience.



Site map of the shipwreck of the Auguste.