



DIVING WITH A PURPOSE MARITIME ARCHAEOLOGY PROGRAM “RESTORING OUR OCEANS, PRESERVING OUR HERITAGE”

Diving With a Purpose (DWP) is a volunteer underwater archaeology program that started under a partnership with members of the National Association of Black Scuba Divers (NABS) and the National Park Service (NPS) in Biscayne National Park. Biscayne National Park is the largest marine park in the National Parks System and has over 110 archaeological sites, approximately 43 of which are intact shipwrecks that tell compelling stories of the nation’s rich maritime cultural heritage. DWP trains experienced divers, including youths, to become underwater archaeology advocates. Through the program, divers are able to assist in the historical documentation and preservation of artifacts and wreck sites. The program helps to perform a Congressionally-mandated condition assessment of archaeological sites within the Park’s boundaries. DWP performs extensive underwater archaeological documentation of these shipwrecks; surveys their condition; and develops detailed maps of the wreck sites. The program also attempts to interpret and understand the historical context in which the ship existed. It’s important to document these historical sites while they still exist. The sites are subject to an ever changing environment both man-made and natural. Sites have been looted for their valuable artifacts, damaged by storms and time on the ocean floor. Documenting these sites will allow the rich history to be shared for generations to come. The shipwreck data collected serves as a vital educational resource for local communities that will tell the story of these vessels and the role they played in the nation’s maritime heritage.

DWP has expanded beyond the Park’s boundaries. DWP has collaborated with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) providing Nautical Archaeology Society (NAS) training and expeditions in the National Marine Sanctuaries. NABS and NOAA have created a website called “Voyage to Discovery” (www.voyagetodiscovery.org) which is a multimedia educational initiative highlighting African-American contributions to the country’s maritime heritage. DWP graduates have recently assisted NOAA with the identification and mapping of the shipwreck Hannah Bell in Key Largo and the documentation of a lost Tuskegee Airmen P-39 aircraft in Lake Huron. DWP participated in the search for the Guerrero, a pirate slave ship sunk off the coast of Florida and was featured in the PBS “Changing Seas” documentary series episode called “Sunken Stories”. DWP established a Youth DWP archaeology program and has added a Coral Restoration course. The DWP program is expanding internationally, with expeditions and training abroad. George Washington University, Smithsonian’s African American Museum, South Africa’s Iziko Museums and DWP, in partnership formed the African Slave Wrecks Project. Their exploration of the São José Paquete Africa was featured on “60 Minutes”. Over the last eleven years, over 300 people have participated in the program, most are repeat attendees. In addition to their volunteer hours, DWP participants pay their own travel and hotel expenses. Program fees pay for equipment, boat rental and crew. DWP participants each year patronize local hotels, businesses, shops and restaurants flowing thousands of dollars back in to the community.

The DWP Vision...

Diving with a Purpose (DWP) is a leading international organization that provides education and training programs, mission leadership, and project support services for submerged heritage preservation and conservation projects worldwide with a focus on the African Diaspora.

The DWP Mission...

Diving with a Purpose (DWP) is a community-focused nonprofit organization dedicated to the conservation and protection of submerged heritage resources by providing education, training, certification and field experience to adults and youth in the fields of maritime archaeology and ocean conservation. A special focus of DWP is the protection, documentation, and interpretation of African slave trade shipwrecks and the maritime history and culture of African-Americans who formed a core of labor and expertise for America’s maritime enterprises.



Accomplishments:

- *Since 2005, over 300 people have participated in the program, resulting in the training of over 125 maritime archaeology advocates, including 32 youths.*
- *Documented 16 shipwrecks including 18th & 19th century sailing vessels, WWII aircraft, accumulated over 12,000 volunteer hours in Biscayne National Park and National Marine Sanctuaries and conducted two Guerrero Slave Ship expeditions.*
- *Take Pride In America National Award by the United States Department of Interior.*
- *Professional Association of Diving Instructors (PADI) Specialty Course – “Archaeology Survey Diver”.*
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- *Featured in the Public Broadcasting System (PBS) Documentary Series “Changing Seas” Episode “Sunken Stories.”*
- *Established Youth DWP Maritime Archaeology Program.*
- *Coral Restoration Program*
- *NABS Foundation Science Divers (American Academy of Underwater Sciences Certified)*
- *Preserve America Steward Designation by First Lady Michelle Obama.*
- *Chairman's Award for Achievement in Historic Preservation from The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation*
- *Society for Historical Archaeology Community Engagement Award – Second Place – Youth Diving With a Purpose*



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