



# TOPSIDE



NOAA Diving Program News - April 2009

## Announcements

### *Personnel*

- Steve Urick has been hired as Diving Safety Officer. His initial primary responsibility is to develop and implement a unit inspection program in accordance with the Corrective Action Plan.
- LT Sean Cimilluca has been appointed OMAO Diving Officer and Chair of the NOAA Diving Control and Safety Board.
- NDC is hiring a new Dive Center Manager. A vacancy announcement will be made in the near future. Dave Dinsmore will remain Diving Program Director.
- Two additional employees will be hired this fiscal year. The persons selected will be instructors, inspectors and equipment technicians. These vacancy announcements are currently being vetted through Workforce Management and will be announced soon.
- NDC has made arrangements with OMAO to receive support services from LTJG Bennie Johnson for the remainder of the fiscal year. LTJG Johnson will be working with NDC on a half-time basis. He will be assisting with the upcoming Working Diver class.
- Effective May 18, Ms. Josephine Evans will be joining NDC via the NOAA Rotational Assignment Program. Ms. Evans will be an additional full-time secretary for NDC over the next 6 months.

### *Other developments*

- An engineering study is underway for the redesign of the NOAA Dive Center. Several possibilities for configuration are being considered. The new NOAA Dive Center Manager will be tasked with overseeing this project.
- Following the May class, the NDC classroom is being converted into office space for 6 employees. During this transitional time, NDC will teach the academic portion of its classes elsewhere on NOAA's Western Regional Campus.
- NDC has solicited bids for the development of a new Scientific Diver Training Program. A contract will be awarded shortly.



## Diving Control and Safety Board



The NOAA Diving Control and Safety Board held a week-long meeting March 30 - April 3. L to R: Dave Dinsmore, NDP Director; Lt Sean Cimilluca, OMAO; Karen Kohanowich, OAR; Jules Craynock, OAR; Andy David, NMFS; Steve Urick, DSO; and Greg McFall, NOS. Not pictured are advisory member CAPT Jane Powers and newly appointed Executive Secretary LCDR Doug Schleiger.

### *Board news*

Jules Craynock is pending retirement as OAR LODO. The NDCSB welcomes Karen Kohanowich onto the Board as his replacement. Ms. Kohanowich is the Undersea Research and Technology Coordinator of NOAA's Office of Ocean Exploration and Research and vice director of NURP. She brings a wide range of diving and managerial experience to the table. More information about her will be forthcoming. Meanwhile, during this transition, she is a non-voting, advisory member. She is currently assisting the Board with developing a new Strategic Plan.



## Course Information

NDC will conduct the following training through CY 2009:

May 04 - May 22	Working Diver	Seattle
May 18 - May 22	Divemaster	Seattle
May 26 - May 30	Tethered Scuba	Seattle
Sept 14 - Oct 02	Working Diver	Seattle
Sept 28 - Oct 02	Divemaster	Seattle

To register for a class, please fill out NDC's Training Request Form and send it to Laurie Barber at [laurie.barber@noaa.gov](mailto:laurie.barber@noaa.gov). For more information, contact her at 206-526-6695.

# Unit Diving Supervisor Conference 2009



During the week of March 23-27, nearly 100% of the Unit Diving Supervisors in the NOAA Diving Program came together under one roof to discuss current events. The event was hosted by NDC staff and held off-site at the Hotel Nexus in Seattle. By all accounts, the conference was very productive. Everyone enjoyed the opportunity to meet personally and share information about NOAA diving. 

The conference opened with a meet and greet followed by opening remarks by all the NDCSB members. Dave Dinsmore gave two presentations: NOAA Diving Program: Past, Present and Future and Review of Decisions Made and Actions Taken. Steve Urick provided a status update on the Corrective Action Plan. Andy David presented an update on the performance plan language that all dive supervisors are now required to have in their plans. LT Cimilluca introduced a well-received concept called the UDS Corner that was created in response to a survey earlier in the year. It is a reorganized package of administrative material needed by UDSs. The content had been identically placed in a new section of the NDC webpage and on jump drives that every UDS received at the conference. The highlight of the day was a moving account by UDS Steve Baumgartner of the tragic events of last March and his lessons learned.

On Day 2, Rear Admiral Philip M. Kenul, Director, Marine and Aviation Operations Centers, addressed the audience with some of his thoughts about the Program and answered questions. This was followed by an in-depth review of dive regulations and policies by Dave Dinsmore, who also presented proposed programmatic changes to training, certification and proficiency requirements and solicited opinions. Ms. Nancy Briscoe, NOAA General Counsel for Environmental Compliance and Safety, provided legal perspective on several hot topics. She took questions from the group for the remainder of the day. Mr. Joe Duran, from the Safety and Environmental Compliance Office was present for the duration of the conference and provided many valuable insights. The group also benefited by getting the AAUS perspective from attendees Doug Kesling (NURC) and Board member, Capt. Nathan Schwark. In the evening, Greg McFall and Andy David held separate sessions for NOS and NMFS personnel.

On Day 3, the conference moved to NDC where Dave

Dinsmore gave a tour and Bill Gordon introduced the new tethered scuba equipment and procedures. After lunch, the UDSs rotated through four participatory stations: Hyperlite chamber dives and operations; tethered diving operations in the tower; a problem-solving workshop with Steve Urick and rescue exercises at the pier with LT Cimilluca. That evening, a banquet was held which was also open to local NOAA divers. Dave Dinsmore presented a number of awards to outgoing LODOs and UDSs. The guest speaker was Dr. J. Morgan Wells, Founding Director of the NOAA Diving Program. He fascinated the audience, many of whom had never met him, with many stories of a truly pioneering nature. A half-hour into the talk, after describing what might be a life-time of diving activity for many, he concluded recapping his teenage years! At the end of his presentation, the man who has spent more time underwater than any other person received a double standing ovation. For many, this inspirational evening was the highlight of the event.

On Day 4, NDC staff discussed operational issues, UDS responsibilities and equipment. Bill Gordon reviewed gas consumption calculations and reviewed NOAA diving procedures, focusing on tips for conducting skills evaluations. Russ Green, UDS for the Thunder Bay NMS, gave an enthusiastic presentation on the fascinating maritime heritage of the region making everyone want to immediately book a flight to Alpena, Michigan and go diving. UDS Ray Boland, from the Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center, gave an excellent presentation on rebreathers.

On the last day, topics included reciprocity, observer and volunteer divers, medical issues, and reporting and investigating diving accidents. LT Vanessa Hadley, a DMO on NOAA's Okeanos Explorer, reviewed doing 5-minute neurological exams. Shortly afterwards, we had some closing comments and called it a week. 