



TOPSIDE



NOAA Diving Program News - January 2009

Happy New Year!

Happy New Year to all divers from the entire staff at NDC. We wish you a safe and productive year.

Annual Report

NDC has produced its Annual Report for 2008. In it, you will find highlights of last year's diving achievements throughout the agency, new diving statistics and a summary of NDC's own accomplishments. NDC thanks our Line Office Diving Officers, Unit Diving Supervisors and ship Diving Officers for submitting their summaries of unit activities and all the divers who have shared their photos and project information. The report is available at www.ndc.noaa.gov Reports & Publications.

Annual Unit Diving Inspection Checklists

The deadline for submission of the Unit Diving Inspection Checklist to NDC is January 30.

Annual inspections by units, sub-units and ships are required by the NOAA Diving Program. The inspection checklist standardizes guidelines for the condition and requirements of dive units/lockers to ensure unit operational readiness and safety. The intent of the inspection is to identify and address deficiencies. These forms should be sent to the Acting Diving Safety Officer, Steve Urick. Contact him at 206-526-6223 if you have any questions.

Annual Medical History Forms

This is a reminder to all divers that **Annual Medical History forms are due by March 1**. Many divers unnecessarily restate their past medical history on this form. The intent of this form is to obtain any new information from the past year for evaluation. Contact LT Cimilla at 206-526-6460 for questions. 

Coral Conservation



Dr. Margaret Miller epoxies a coral fragment during the set-up of the Aquarius Coral Restoration/Resilience Experiment to test for differential performance of corals from different sources (e.g., wild, cultured in field nurseries or laboratory) when transplanted for reef restoration.

Credit: Dr. Margaret Miller (NMFS/SEFSC)



Course Information

NDC will conduct the following training through CY 2009:

May 04 - May 22	Working Diver	Seattle
May 18 - May 22	Divemaster	Seattle
Sept 14 - Oct 10	Working Diver	Seattle
Sept 28 - Oct 02	Divemaster	Seattle
Periodically - TBA	Tethered Scuba	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. For more information, contact her at 206-526-6695.

Laurie's Corner



Important Announcement!

"TRI Air Testing kits are shipping out to all units over the next two weeks. NDC requests a 30-day turnaround on these samples. Beginning the 1st of April, Unit/Ships that still have TRI Air Testing kits will be billed directly from TRI Air Testing for \$750.00 per kit. If you need to make arrangements to have your kit longer, please let me know so you won't be charged. Thanks. "

First Graduating Class



The December 2008 Tethered Scuba class graduates were the first to be trained in the use of tethered diving techniques using two-way hard-wired communications. Three teams of three participated: NOS TIDES group; NOAA Ship *Delaware II* (2 divers, 1 tender); and NOAA Ship *Miller Freeman* (2 divers, 1 tender).

Back row, L to R: Andy Moss, NOS; ENS Charlotte Felkey, NOAA Ship *Delaware II*; Mark Bailey, NOS UDS; Kris "Big Mac" Mackie; NOAA Ship *Miller Freeman*; Jon "Rocky" Rockwell, NOAA Ship *Delaware II*; Second Row, L to R: Steve Hudziak, NOS; Matt Faber, NOAA Ship *Miller Freeman*; ENS Claire Surrey, NOAA Ship *Delaware II*; and Larry Phillips, NOAA Ship *Miller Freeman*. NDC Instructors, L to R: LT Sean Cimilluca; Steve Urick; Bill Gordon; and Jim Bostick.

NDC is very appreciative to the NOAA Ship *Rainier* for their outstanding support of this training event. 

Tethered Scuba training at NDC



On day 2, students were introduced to the communications equipment. Here, all divers practiced removal/reattachment of the Kirby-Morgan Supermask 48 pod several times before doing this underwater when switching to their RASSs.



Throughout the course, divers conducted 9 dives each using the gear. The non-divers, because they could only work top-side, had 12 rotations at that position and gained the most experience. Numerous rescues were conducted. Times were recorded for standby diver deployment, unconscious diver to the surface, backboarding and oxygen administration. As tenders gained proficiency, rescue times steadily improved.

Planned courses

NDC Instructor Bill Gordon and NOS LODO, Greg McFall, will travel to Virginia on Jan. 19 to teach the second tethered scuba class to the NOS Field Operations Division at the NOS Atlantic Regional Office. This group has a critical need for the training in order to properly conduct their planned field operations.

In Seattle, NDC will teach the techniques to more divers in NOS and to a dive group from NOAA Ship *Rainier* the week of February 9. 



On day 1, students reviewed and practiced line-pull signals and deployment of standby divers.

Staying sharp on the skills



NOAA divers Laurie Bauer and Sean Corson show good buddy breathing technique as they practice their skills in a well-coordinated semi-annual training event.

NOAA divers from Silver Spring (NESDIS, NMFS, NOAA Headquarters, NOS, OCRM and ONMS) recently completed their first semi-annual skills checkout dive and assessment session. Although periodic proficiency dives have long been a requirement to maintain active status within the NOAA Dive Program, divers must now complete in-depth training sessions twice a year that include recovering an unconscious diver from the water. During each session, several diving basics were reviewed, and divers were challenged to improve their diving, safety and in-water rescue skills. Participants successfully recovered unconscious "victims" from the water and shared ways to become more efficient in these and other diving skills. In total, 25 divers participated in this training. Many divers expressed positive feedback and look forward to conducting the next bi-annual dive in the quarry where they will practice their skills in conditions that will be less than ideal. The divers appreciated the effort that went into organizing the sessions, the occasion to increase their skills and the opportunity to meet other divers in the NOAA Silver Spring dive community.

The sessions were organized and conducted by the three Unit Diving Supervisors in Silver Spring: Mitchell Tartt, Kimberly Woody and Kurt Zegowitz. For more information contact Kimberly Woody at (301) 713-3028 x229 or Kimberly.Woody@noaa.gov.

~ Kim Woody 

RASS Information

The following guidance from the **Transportation Security Administration (TSA)** was provided by OAR UDS Jules Craynock.

Compressed gas cylinders are allowed in checked baggage or as a carry-on **ONLY** if the regulator valve is completely disconnected from the cylinder and the cylinder is no longer sealed (i.e. the cylinder has an open end). The cylinder must have an opening to allow for a visual inspection inside. TSA Transportation Security Officers (TSOs) will **NOT** remove the seal or regulator valve from the cylinder at the checkpoint. If the cylinder is sealed (i.e. the regulator valve is still attached), it is prohibited and not permitted through the security checkpoint, regardless of the reading on the pressure gauge indicator. TSOs must visibly ensure that the cylinder is completely empty and there are no prohibited items inside.

Passengers considering air travel with a compressed air or CO2 system would be advised to consider shipping the system to their destination via a parcel service. This information, along with additional travel tips is found at www.tsa.gov <<http://www.tsa.gov/>>. Passengers may go directly to the tips about preparing for takeoff, the screening process, and procedures and guidance for special considerations that may assist in preparing for air travel at www.TSATravelTips.us

NDC recommends separating the valve from the cylinder, inserting a plastic plug that must be removed before inspection, and tagging the cylinder as empty. The cylinder will typically require a new inspection in order for it to be filled at the final location. 

A diver recently experienced his RASS cylinder valve 'on-off' knob falling off while in the water; the diver handled the situation properly but the event disabled his RASS. Please take the time to inspect your RASS cylinder valve knob to ensure it is properly secured to the cylinder valve.

* Inspection Procedure *- Inspect the retainer nut that is located inside the outer edge groove of the knob that holds the knob in place. A properly installed retainer nut will have a few threads of the 'male' connector threaded post exposed past the outer threaded edge of the nut. If the nut is loose use a small flat-head screwdriver and place the flat edge end into the retainer nut slotted groove and turn 'clockwise' to tighten.

If you have any questions concerning this procedure please contact Bill Gordon. If you need a replacement cylinder please contact Lisa Glover. 



Dive Smart ~ Dive Safe

