



United States Department of the Interior

MINERALS MANAGEMENT SERVICE
Washington, DC 20240

JUN 17 2008



Dr. Lu Ann De Cunzo, Ph.D, RPA
President, Society for Historical Archaeology
15245 Shady Grove Road, Suite 130
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Dear Dr. De Cunzo:

Thank you for your letter dated February 14, 2008, requesting that the Minerals Management Service (MMS) incorporate the *UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage Annex Rules* into our Agency's policies and procedures. The MMS supports the Society for Historical Archaeology's recommendation to incorporate the Annex Rules into our guidelines. As pointed out in your letter, the MMS has already established survey guidelines that are consistent with the Annex Rules by adhering to the Secretary of Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archaeology and Historic Preservation.

As there are currently no Federal laws that claim ownership of cultural resources beyond state waters, the MMS has the authority only to require its lessees to avoid an identified or potential resource with their lease activities. We do not have the authority to prevent other individuals or activities from impacting and exploiting resources which have been identified through our Section 106 compliance procedures. Historic shipwrecks lying within the Outer Continental Shelf can be, and have been, salvaged for their commercial value under Admiralty Salvage Law.

The MMS will reference the Annex Rules in our documents and guidelines, where appropriate, as the standard for the study and protection of maritime heritage. The MMS encourages the Society to continue its efforts in protecting and conserving submerged cultural resources. If you have any further questions, please contact MMS Historic Preservation Officer, Dr. Melanie Stright, at (703) 787-1736.

Sincerely,

Randall B. Luthi
Director

