



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
Silver Spring, MD 20910

OFFICE OF OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC RESEARCH

JAN 23 2009

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

Dear Dr. Cunzo:

Thank you for your letter requesting the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR) endorse the Annex Rules under the *UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage*. I appreciate your recognition that OAR already supports and uses the Annex Rules in conducting marine archaeological research. We take great pride in executing all our research endeavors in a responsible manner for the benefit of society.

As you know, the U.S. has yet to ratify the Convention, and therefore NOAA is not in a position to formally adopt the Annex Rules in any legal capacity. However, as your letter acknowledges, OAR and our partners in the National Ocean Service (NOS) have been actively involved in the drafting of these rules, which although not binding, represent an important and internationally recognized set of principles for managing activities related to exploring for and conducting research on underwater cultural heritage resources. We support and accept these provisions, recognizing their importance for ensuring long-term preservation of these resources. We also encourage non-destructive efforts and strongly support activities that promote education pertaining to the resources, as well as cutting-edge techniques used to preserve them *in situ*.

OAR does officially reference the Convention and Annex Rules when soliciting for proposals to further NOAA's marine archaeological goals and objectives, as the following excerpt from the Office of Ocean Exploration and Research's (OER) National Announcement of Opportunity for fiscal year 2008 demonstrates:

“Ocean Exploration endorses the Annex Rules of the UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage and supports these guidelines on maritime archaeological expeditions.”

OER ensures that scholars responsible for reviewing marine archaeology proposals understand the Annex Rules, and comment on the proposal's methodologies and management measures.


As you mention in your letter, the National Sea Grant College Program has done an excellent job of engaging the nation's top scholars in interdisciplinary endeavors that merge environmental science with environmental policy and law. This includes, but is not limited to, the establishment of The National Sea Grant Law Center in 2002, which conducts research and



education in support of the marine community, including marine archaeologists. The National Sea Grant College Program has been, and will continue to be, an extremely effective national leader for ensuring that activities that may impact the marine environment are conducted in a responsible manner.

Again, thank you for your letter, and please do not hesitate to contact me or the directors of the Office of Ocean Exploration and Research, and the National Sea Grant Program if we can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,


Richard Spinrad, Ph.D., CMarSci
Assistant Administrator