

U.S. Department of
Homeland Security

United States
Coast Guard



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United States Coast Guard

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14 June 2011

Dr. William B. Lees
President, Society for Historical Archaeology
9707 Key West Avenue
Suite 100
Rockville, MD 20850

Dear Dr. Lees:

Thank you for your request that the US Coast Guard incorporate the UNESCO Convention on the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage Annex rules (the Convention) into our agency's rules and policies. As you know the Convention has not been ratified by the United States, and the Coast Guard may not treat the guidelines or other provisions as mandatory provisions. The substance of the Convention's policies regarding the protection of maritime cultural resources, however, will in many cases, further the interest of the Coast Guard. Our existing policies are, to the maximum extent practicable, consistent with those of the Convention.

The Convention's policy is viewed as a general guide for managing the Coast Guard's submerged cultural resources. The policies are in line with the professional standards and ethics of administering submerged cultural resources as well as with the Sunken Military Craft Act. The rules focus on preservation and protection, especially through non intrusive/destructive means. The U.S. Coast Guard's management of its submerged cultural resources is generally passive due to a lack of resources. For this reason these rules compliment the program's management of these resources. The Convention also promotes the non disturbance of human remains which is mandated in the Sunken Military Craft Act but also directs treating submerged cultural resources that contain human remains as gravesites, with respect and dignity.

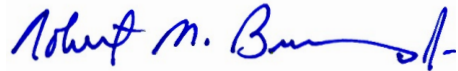
The Convention's guidance regarding professional standards of fieldwork requires sound methodology, funding, a timetable for the proposed project, the inclusion of qualified professionals, a proper conservation plan of any removed artifacts, and the timely dissemination of the project results in educational and other popular media. Because of our limited resources, should the Coast Guard recover or permit the recovery cultural material, the general adoption of these rules will promote the successful conclusion of a project and minimize potential conflicts between the partners involved. The Convention's rules also promote safety and mandate an environmentally conscious work plan, in line with the Coast Guard's missions of safety at sea and marine environmental protection.

We will utilize the substance of these guidelines in future formulations of policy or guidance. The Coast Guard certainly hopes that the Society will continue its efforts in protecting and

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conserving submerged cultural resources. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robert M. Browning Jr." with a stylized flourish at the end.

ROBERT M. BROWNING Jr., Ph. D.
Historian
By direction

Copy: Edward Wandelt (CG-47)
Francis H. Esposito (CG-0942)