

## Shipwrecks Project Wins National Byway Award

**A** 1999 NYSG-funded study identified diving’s \$108-plus million impact on NY’s Great Lakes region’s economy, showing opportunity to interpret and market the region to divers. The interest of non-diving history buffs and three project awards are a bonus for the “Shipwrecks of the Great Lakes Seaway Trail Project.” New York Sea Grant (NYSG) Recreation and Tourism staff serve as advisor to the multi-faceted effort that spotlights the maritime heritage resources of the 518-mile coastal region of the St. Lawrence River, Lake Ontario, Niagara River and Lake Erie in New York and Pennsylvania.

In August 2009, at the National Scenic Byways conference in Denver, the Federal Highway Administration, America’s Byways Resource Center, and American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials presented the Great Lakes Seaway Trail, NYSG, and the New York State Department of Transportation Scenic Byways Program with an award recognizing the “Shipwrecks” project for partnerships, public outreach, community involvement, and innovation.

The project combined:

- underwater and land-based maritime heritage resources exhibitry



- an expert speakers series
- new Great Lakes Seaway Trail maritime-theme “outdoor storyteller” signage
- the Dive the Seaway Trail project
- online resources, and
- dovetailing with NYSG’s annual Great Lakes Underwater conference and the New York State Blueway Trail linking submerged heritage preserves with local recreation, attractions, greenways and byways.

NYSG staff coordinate Dive the Seaway Trail’s community-based stewardship of dive sites and underwater landscapes accessible from the series of roads that form an America’s Byway and a National Recreation Trail.

The “Shipwrecks” project received Upstate History Alliance and New York Governor’s Adventure Tourism awards in 2008. Media attention to the project included an Associated Press feature story.



Above: A diver explores *The Islander* near Alexandria Bay, NY; photo: Philip R. Church; far left: A Great Lakes Seaway Trail “outdoor storyteller” interpretive sign; left: diver & Oswego Maritime Foundation Submerged Cultural Resources Director Philip R. Church details diving gear for a “Shipwrecks of the Great Lakes Seaway Trail” program audience

This project meets the performance measures of Sea Grant’s Sustainable Coastal Development focus area.

New York Sea Grant Extension administration is located at 112 Rice Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853.

This project summary was written by Dave White, Coastal Recreation & Tourism Specialist,

315-312-3042, dgw9@cornell.edu, www.nyseagrant.org.