

Wisconsin Historical Society: Alaska shipwreck in Manitowoc County listed in National Register of Historic Places

Posted on Tuesday, Mar 21, 2017

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

Contact:

Kara O'Keeffe

kara.okeeffe@wisconsinhistory.org

Two Rivers, Wis. – The Wisconsin Historical Society has announced the listing of the *Alaska* Shipwreck in the vicinity of the town of Two Rivers, Manitowoc County, in the National Register of Historic Places. National Register designation provides access to certain benefits, including qualification for grants and for rehabilitation income tax credits, while it does not restrict private property owners in the use of their property.

Early in 1879, while heading north from Milwaukee to Ahnapee (Algoma), Wisconsin for a load of lumber, she was caught in a gale and pushed ashore. An attempt to refloat the *Alaska* damaged the vessel; she was declared a total loss, and was left to rest in the quicksand south of Rawley Point. The *Alaska* was constructed in 1869 by Smith Neville, Sr. in Sheboygan, Wisconsin and operated primarily in the Lake Michigan lumber trade. The *Alaska* is an excellent example of a scow schooner built in Wisconsin, and provides historians and archaeologists the rare chance to study and document this unique vessel type.

The *Alaska* shipwreck site was discovered in May 2015, by ultralight airplane pilot, Suzze Johnson, during a flight over the site following a period of coastal erosion and sand movement that uncovered the wreck. The vessel has very good integrity with the bow, deck machinery, centerboard trunk, some rigging implements, and much of her hull structure intact. *Alaska's* stern, and portions of her lower hull and

associated debris field are covered by shifting sands, protecting many associated artifacts from looting and damage from divers and kayakers visiting the site. The study of shipwreck sites such as the Alaska contributes to our knowledge of ship construction and helps inform our understanding of historical Great Lakes maritime commerce.

The register is the official national list of historic properties in America deemed worthy of preservation and is maintained by the National Park Service in the U.S. Department of the Interior. The Wisconsin Historical Society administers the program within Wisconsin. It includes sites, buildings, structures, objects and districts that are significant in national, state or local history, architecture, archaeology, engineering or culture.

State and federal laws protect this shipwreck. Divers may not remove artifacts or structure when visiting this shipwreck site. Removing, defacing, displacing or destroying artifacts or sites is a crime. More information on Wisconsin's historic shipwrecks may be found by visiting www.wisconsinshipwrecks.org.