

Wisconsin Historical Society: Arctic Shipwreck in Manitowoc County listed in National Register of Historic Places

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Manitowoc, Wis. – The Wisconsin Historical Society has announced the listing of the Arctic Shipwreck in the vicinity of Manitowoc, 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.

The Arctic, built in 1881, and sunk in 1930, is a tug that seems to straddle the two tug categories: harbor tug and lake tug. Although its construction identifies it as a harbor tug, unique to this vessel is that historic documentation indicates that the strong hull construction of the Arctic allowed for participation in tasks set for wrecking tugs. Historic documents indicate that the Arctic participated in tasks designated for both harbor and lake tugs. Whether this suggests that the Arctic was a hybrid harbor tug-lake tug vessel, or that the Arctic was built unusually strong for a harbor tug, or that the strength of the Arctic that allowed her to serve as both a harbor and lake tug was not unusual at the time – the answers to these questions are unknown because we simply do not have the comparative data from historic period Wisconsin harbor tugs. These are questions future archaeological study may answer.

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.