

VENTURING MAGAZINE

Venturing SCUBA by Mike Engiles

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Has your Crew ever had a great idea for a superactivity and had almost everyone want to do it, Advisors and Venturers? But, over the next several months people slowly fade away because of costs, family vacation schedule, college visits, etc??? This is often true for Crews that want to take SCUBA adventures. What if there was a regularly scheduled SCUBA-based camporee? What if there was a multi-state or open Crew to draw from a larger pool of divers?

[Editor's Note: *In the old Exploring Division before Venturing, this concept was known as "Clusters". Sea Scouting is the oldest and largest of these clusters. In a cluster, a group of Explorer Posts pooled their resources in order to pursue an activity that was too specialized or too difficult to recruit enough participants out of a single community. Instead, a group of Crews would pool their resources. Several Crews from California and Washington State are currently pursuing whitewater rafting in this fashion. They have sponsored whitewater based Kodiak Treks in the past and have won a permit to run the Main Salmon River in Idaho this summer. It is doubtful if a single Venturing Crew could ever marshal the resources needed to pull off such a superactivity.*]

SCUBAJAM-VA.ORG

A group of dive shop owners and scouters from Virginia got together with the idea to host a fun camporee-type weekend centered around SCUBA for Venturers. The goal was to give the Venturers a chance to dive with peers. The shops agreed to sponsor and provide professionals (Instructors and Divemasters) to supervise activities. Labor Day weekend 2010 was the first SCUBAJAM. Six Crews participated in various activities including Navigation, Search and Recovery, Scavenger Hunt, Buoyancy Challenge course (underwater limbo and balloon blowing) etc. Additionally, there were nearly \$5000 in prizes donated by shops, agencies, and equipment manufacturers. SCUBAJAM 2012 will be 31AUG-3SEP at Lake Rawlings VA with even more activities and prizes for participants. Besides the youth diving together, it provides a means to pull together the local Scout-Scuba community and units offer empty spots on trips to other units.



Scavenger Hunt Dive Briefing

Crew3000.ORG

Crew 3000 is a conservation scuba crew that was founded in 2010 and has members from many states. Its formation was a result of two separate crews, one from Connecticut and the other from Virginia that merging to form the first multistate scuba crew. The goal of Crew 3000 is teach and involve scouts and their families in ocean conservation. Most of our members learn to scuba dive, however, this is not necessary to join the Crew. The crew encourages Scout families to participate in their projects.



Successful kill and Background Buoyancy

Crew members usually meet at locations around the USA and the Caribbean where they join together to perform conservation projects or perform scientific study.

Members from Virginia and Arizona in the summer of 2011 went to Mexico where they were trained in the use of Hawaiian slings to cull lionfish as well as to dissect them to determine what they ate and to provide tissue samples to local research groups. (www.thetritonsociety.org/the-triton-award/bronze-medal-boy-scout/lionfish-expedition-to-puerto-aventuras/)

[Editor's note: *Lionfish are an especially aggressive invasive species of fish that have invaded the Caribbean over the past 10 years. They are popular aquarium fish, and were evidently introduced to the Western hemisphere by hobbyists. They are rapidly driving native fish species off the reefs of the Caribbean, destroying habitat in their wake. When I went diving on the coral reef off Roatan in 1988, there were no lionfish in the Americas. When I returned in 2010, we saw dozens of them despite local efforts to eradicate them. It is a losing battle off the east coast of Honduras.*]

Scouts, leaders and whole crews are invited to join Crew3000 on their adventures. Here are just a few of their planned activities for this year:

- **Coral Restoration Training** - March 1-5 in Key Largo
Come join us in learning coral restoration procedures, how to manage coral farms, learn about coral bleaching and disease. Divers who attend this trip will be certified to lead coral restoration dives. As with all of our trips, anyone interested in helping us with our conservation efforts is welcome to join us. Leaders from 6 crews in 3 states have already committed to this trip.
- **Creating the First Coral Farm in Mexico** - April 9-15 & 14-21 in Riviera Maya
Choose one of the weeks or come for both! During this time the Crew will be starting the first of many coral farms in the Caribbean Sea off the east coast of Mexico. We will explore Mayan cenotes, explore Mayan temples, and take zip line tours through the jungle.
- **Coral Restoration in Florida** - July 13-21 in Key Largo
Join us while diving and restoring coral sites throughout the Florida Keys. Several shipwreck restoration dives. Participate in REEF surveys and Dolphin research. All divers will fulfill conservation goals for the Triton Society Award. This is usually the cheapest trip of the year for us. As with all of our trips, anyone interested in helping us with our conservation efforts is welcomed to join us.

Other SCUBA Opportunities for Venturers:

- **Triton Award for Marine Conservation**
The Triton Society (www.tritonsociety.org) announced an award, similar to the Hornaday, for Marine Conservation at the National Scout Jamboree in 2010. A Venturer from CT learned about it and subsequently became the first person to earn the Bronze Medallion. Zach spent a week in Bonaire performing conservation work and assisting the Sea Turtle Club of Bonaire. He and his team helped clean the seaweed and other growth off the floats that protect the sea grass beds in Lac Lagoon.



Bob Tallent presenting award to Zach

These sea beds provide food for juvenile turtles. Additionally, the team used markers to identify where they had spotted invasive lionfish.

www.thetritonsociety.org/the-triton-award/bronze-medal-boy-scout/bronze-medallion-awarded-to-zach-zarillo/

- **PADI Dive to Adventure Scholarship**

The Professional Association of Dive Instructors offers a series of 5 scholarships that range from Open Water training materials for a Crew to individual awards for Divemaster and Instructor Training. The applications are due at the end of the calendar year.

www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/padischolar.pdf

- **Florida SeaBase Divemaster Academy**

The Florida Sea Base Divemaster Academy gives Venturers and Boy Scouts the opportunity to further their dive training by becoming a certified PADI Divemaster. The program is offered free of charge in exchange for working at SeaBase.

www.bsaseabase.org/Adventures/DiveMasterAcademy.aspx

The hope is that by opening trips and activities across unit boundaries that more Venturers get to participate. These larger groups provide some bargaining power for airline, hotel and diving costs to make the trips as cost effective as possible.