

On Sunday, July 6, 2003, David VanZandt, Cindy LaRosa, and Kevin Magee again headed out on Dave's boat to go diving. The weather was sunny, hot at 95 deg F, and calm at less than 1' seas. The surface viz was still 10'-15' despite the previous day's storming, so Kevin did a quick live-boat dive on the "117th Street Wreck" to check the bottom conditions and see if conditions were still the same as Thursday's. Kevin discovered, however, that the water was clear down to about 5' off the bottom, upon which a stirred up bottom layer of 1'-2' viz was seen starting and obscuring the wreck's structure.

So, it was decided instead to head out 15 miles into deeper waters to the "Dundee" to see if conditions were any better. As they left the shore area, a fast-moving thunderstorm moved in from the west behind them to obscure Cleveland in dark clouds, rain, lightning, and thunder. The horizon ahead to the north was clear, however, so they kept going. The lake turned glassy flat (0' seas), and this continued all the way out to the site. They arrived just in time to see another boat leaving the wreck. It was later learned this was Pete Deegan and KB aboard Pete's boat "Land Escape." The air temperature had dropped to a pleasant 80 deg F away from shore, but black flies were also encountered in moderate amounts. Upon entering the water, a phenomenal 30'-35' of viz was encountered based on being able to see Dave's boat from bow to stern. The surface temperature was a warm 70 deg F.

Upon descending the water began to get noticeable cooler and the visibility started to decrease starting at a depth of about 30' and continued down to about 45', where visibility was only 5'-10' and lighting conditions were dim. The viz probably would have been better if the ambient light had been brighter. The water temperature on the bottom was 50 deg F, although no distinct thermocline was encountered. The wreck was explored, and a moderate encrustation of zebra mussels was seen on most surfaces, especially the metal ones. This very large wooden schooner has its collapsed bow to the west, which is close to where the anchor landed. The bow is most noticeable by its large standing bow post (stem) and anchor chains running through hawser pipes on both sides of it. A large donkey boiler and windlass can also be seen here. The sides, decking, and massive cargo hatches are intact, but the stern is broken up starting where the cabin would be attached. A max depth of 68' was seen, and visibility on the bottom of the lake was paradoxically better at 8'-10' than above on the deck where it was only 6'-8'.

Lunch was started after surfacing, but it was quickly interrupted by thundering and darkness from another thunderstorm moving in from the north on the Canadian side. The anchor and float markers were quickly hauled up, and the boat was started south. After about 5 miles, however, the sky cleared to the west and it was decided to turn in this direction to the "Admiral," a steel tug that sank in 65' of water in a December storm in 1942. The seas remained glassy flat as everyone geared up and entered the water under sunny skies. Surface viz was again a spectacular 30'-35', and upon descending the bottom viz was found to be

much better at 10'-15' with bright ambient conditions. The water temperature on the bottom was also noticeably warmer at 53-55 deg F, and just a hint of a thermocline shimmer could be detected at about 25'-30'. The wheelhouse and upper structures of the tug are heavily coated in zebra mussels, but the bottom levels, deck, and wooden gunwale are completely clear of any zebra mussels.

It was also discovered that the stern of the "Admiral" is now visible again. The gunwales are 1' or more off the bottom all the way around, the Dutch arch for guiding the tow cable is high off the bottom, and the interior deck and embedded tension wheel for the tow cable are all clearly visible, including the wheel's underlying mechanisms. These were all almost covered completely in silt in previous years. The good bottom viz made exploring the wreck's interior easy, and the tug was completely examined, including the fallen smokestack off to the port side.

Overall, it was an excellent day for diving, and the trip back to shore under sunny skies and flat seas was uneventful.