

SHIPWRECK DETAILED IN SUBMERGED CULTURAL RESOURCES REPORT

In March 1999, winter storms at Channel Islands National Park, California, exposed approximately 10% of the wooden hull remains of the Pacific Coast lumber schooner *Comet* on the beach in Simonton Cove, San Miguel Island. This part of the ship had been exposed episodically since the wreck in 1911, most recently in 1984. However, no previous exposures had revealed as much of the well-preserved remains of the ship, considered to be one of the most intact wooden shipwrecks on the Pacific Coast. Recognizing the special opportunity to further document the site, the National Park Service sent a team of archaeologists and volunteers there in April 1999. They found the bow section of *Comet* virtually intact with machinery still in place

mounted on the decks. Immediately they set about meticulously recording the wreck in scale drawings, still photographs, and video.

The results of the five-day, intensive documentary effort are shared in “*Comet: Submerged Cultural Resources Site Report*,” Submerged Resources Center Professional Report Number 17, by



Matthew A. Russell. Published in 2004, this monograph is the final report from the 1999 field operations and discusses the results of both historical and archaeological research.

The report summarizes important baseline data regarding the site condition and its significance that can be used for management, interpretation, protection, and future research. The site preserves a regionally important vessel type—the lumber schooner—which is linked to the economic development of major metropolitan areas on the Pacific Coast. The documentary work also encourages regular monitoring of the site, particularly in winter months, to note new exposures when further documentation and study might be possible, and to identify signs of deterioration. This report is an articulate demonstration of the value of often dismissed beached shipwreck remains, particularly when approached with a comprehensive research design and systematic methodology.

The publication includes 36 photos and approximately 25 drawings, and is 95 pages in length. It is available from the NPS Submerged Resources Center in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

—Larry E. Murphy, Chief, Submerged Resources Center;
larry_murphy@nps.gov.