Pro Dive

UNDERWATER NATURE TRAIL

Pro-Diving Services a Sydney based PADI 5 Star Training Facility has proposed an underwater nature trail to be constructed in Thompson's Bay between Clovelly and Coogee. This location is ideal as the bay has abundant marine life, both plant and animal, and is already a popular dive site.

The proposal for the Underwater Nature Trail was originated by Mr Rick Poole of Pro-Diving Services and Mr Denis Hunt, formerly a teacher at Marist Brother's High School Pagewood. Both are instructors and professionals in the diving industry.

Divers from the Pro-Dive Explorers Club, Marist Brothers High School Pagewood, and other interested groups will provide the labour for the construction of the nature trail.

The trail will be marked by a ½" diameter polypropylene rope secured to stainless steel ring bolts set into the floor of the bay. Points of interest will be indicated by plastic numbers located along the trail.

The nature trail will be entirely below the low water mark at depths of between 3 and 20 metres and will be about 500 metres long.

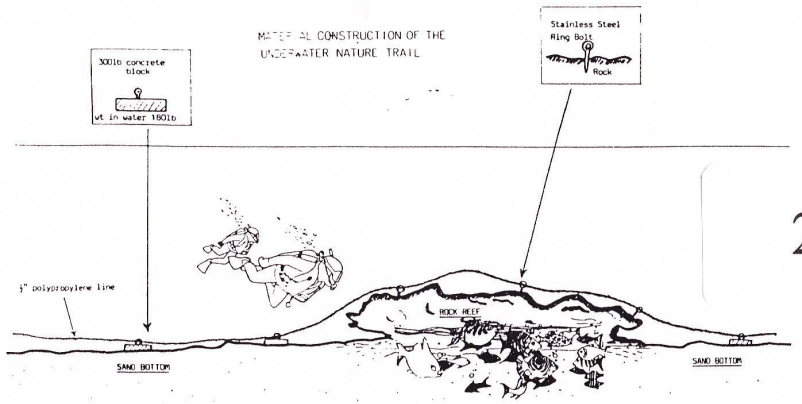
A waterproof Underwater Nature Trail guide card will be available for divers. This will give information about each point of interest such as rock formation, plant life, animal habitat, and ecology of the area, making the nature trail interesting and educational as well as great fun for beginners and experienced divers alike.

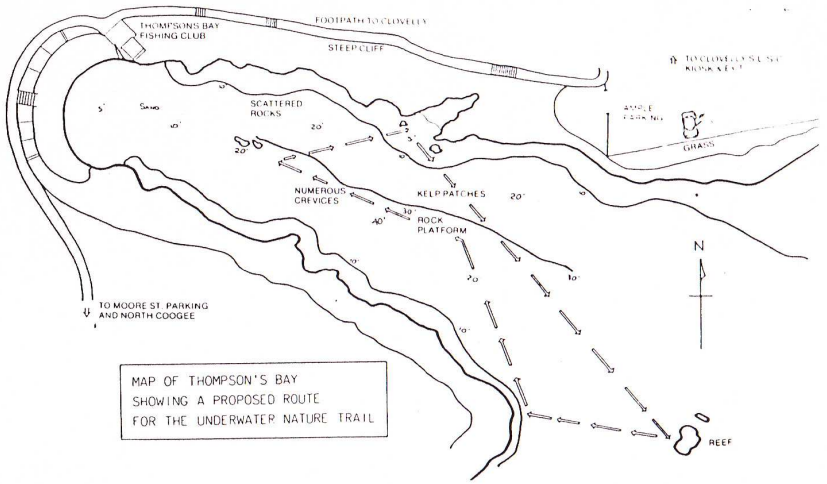
The trail will not cause any environmental damage to the bay and will not interfere with other activities such as boating, fishing, surfing and sailboarding in the area. While the number of divers using the area may increase, the Underwater Nature Trail will serve to improve their knowledge, understanding and appreciation of local marine life and their awareness of the need to conserve it.

It is hoped construction of the trail will begin in the near future. The work will be mainly carried out on weekends and will take about 8 weeks to complete depending on weather and conditions.

COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECT

The Pro-Dive Underwater Nature Trail is a non-profit community service project. At the request of the proposers, it has been integrated into the NSW Department of Planning and the Environment's Eastern Beaches Regional Environmental Plan but will be entirely constructed and maintained by volunteers at no cost to the NSW Government. The support of Mr Bob Carr, Minister for Planning and the Environment, and the enthusiastic assistance of Miss Sue Holliday, Deputy Director of his Department, are gratefully acknowledged.





MAP OF THOMPSON'S BAY SHOWING A PROPOSED ROUTE FOR THE UNDERWATER NATURE TRAIL

Construction of the Pro-Dive Underwater Nature Trail will be directed by Mr Rick Poole who has accumulated vast knowledge and experience of working underwater through his involvement in commercial diving and salvage operations.

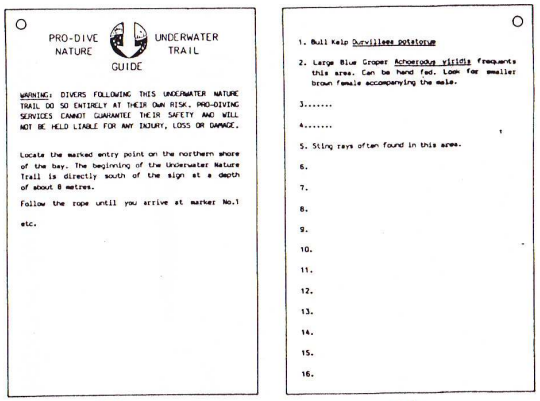
Rick has been involved in such projects as the salvage of HMAS Wollongong aground on Gabo Island, locating and raising the Pel-Air jet which crashed off Botany Bay, and recovering the fuel oil from the sunken Russian cruise liner Mikhael Lermontov in New Zealand, as well as numerous other salvage and diving operations in Australia, P.N.G., Fiji and the Pacific Islands. Participants in the Underwater Nature Trail project will have the benefit of the knowledge and expertise which he has gained over the years.

Coordinating the project will be Mr Denis Hunt. Denis is a graduate in Science and Education and taught in New South Wales and Queensland high schools for 20 years. He has introduced many school students to the sport of scuba diving which has become a popular activity in schools where he has taught.

As a member of staff at Gladstone Catholic High School on Queensland's central coast, he developed and implemented a course in Marine Science as a Multistrand Science course for students in Years 11 and 12. This was favourably received at both regional and State levels. Similar courses are now taught in several Queensland schools.

Denis was responsible for drawing up the formal proposal for the Underwater Nature Trail and submitting it to the NSW Government for approval.

These days, he is the manager of Pacific Commercial Diving Supplies Pty Ltd. ?



DIVER'S GUIDE CARD

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18 October 1987: page # 24 (*PADI Newsline Australia Vol 2 No 2* features the Underwater Nature Trail stating, "it is hoped construction of the trail will begin in the near future."