

On Wednesday, August 23, Kevin Magee went diving out of Barcelona, NY, with Osprey Dive Charter. The weather was a bit stormy, and the skies were overcast with scattered rain showers. Seas out to the dive site were rough at about 2'-4' with large swells, but this was no problem in Jim Herbert's large crew boat. Furthermore, as the trip progressed, the seas began to calm to 1'-3' and the sun came out, leaving only a moderate wind and a slight current to worry about.

The dive was on the "Smith," a tugboat that foundered in 1930 in 165' of water off the tip of Long Point. It sank while under tow to another port to be refurbished. Unlike most (metal) tugboats, this one looks different. It was built in 1881 and made out of wood, and its construction and layout looks more like a wide, short wooden steamer than a tugboat.

The mooring line is attached to the bow, which is pointed east. The bow is almost completely out of the mud, allowing for easy inspection of the whole front end of the ship. The stern slowly slips towards the mud, but the deck is above the lake bottom at all points, leaving only the silt deposits covering it. On the bow is a large winch, air scoop, and a hatch opening with steps going down into the interior.

In the center of the ship is the intact wheelhouse and engine. The wheelhouse is half-filled with silt, but visible is its magnificent wheel and brass chadburn. Around the wheelhouse and engine is a fair amount of debris from the cabin and railings which used to surround them. The engine itself is easily visible and quite large, occupying almost half of the ship's length. The smokestack is still present although fallen on top of the engine, and inside the stack can be seen the inner liner, which is half filled with silt. A burbot fish was noticed as having taken up residence inside. On the side of the stack is a beautiful whistle, a rare sight on wrecks.

The stern has another smaller hatch opening with some piping and fittings visible down below, although the overhead space is much lower than at the bow. The stern is far enough out of the mud to see a very rare thing: the name and registry port of the ship ("SMITH, MONTREAL") are still visible painted in white letters on a black background. Divers have rubbed away the zebra mussels to make this more visible, but it is astounding that it has survived at all.

Overall, the dive was very enjoyable. The wreck has several interesting and rare features (wheel, chadburn, whistle, painted name), and three 2'-3' burbot were seen on various parts of the wreck. Visibility was a respectable 50'-80', and lighting conditions were slightly dim with a flashlight helping at the beginning of the dive but not necessary towards the end when one's eyes got used to it. Bottom temp was 41 deg. F, and the thermocline was at 65'. Bottom time was 20 minutes, run time was 48 minutes, and max. depth was 160'.