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Soviet Era Submarine May Become Underwater Exhibit

The Soviet era submarine currently on exhibit at the Maritime Museum of San Diego may gracefully end its years by becoming a man made ocean reef, according to an agreement between the museum, the submarine's owners and California Ships to Reefs (CSTR).

The three parties agreed in principle Wednesday that when the B-39 Foxtrot Soviet era submarine ends its stay at the museum, CSTR will oversee the process to sink the submarine and use it to create a rich new ocean environment.

"We anticipate sinking the sub in San Diego's wreck alley, where the *HMCS Yukon* is already a popular attraction and beautiful artificial reef," said Joel Geldin, CSTR's Chairman and CEO. "We are proud to announce this new agreement on the tenth anniversary of the sinking of *Yukon*, which has proven the economic and environmental value of man made reefs." Wreck alley is a popular diving area off Mission Beach where the *Yukon* and other wrecked ships are visited by thousands of people every year.

"The Maritime Museum appreciates the opportunity to show the San Diego community that the submarine's history does not end at the ocean's surface," said Dr. Ray Ashley, director of the Maritime Museum of San Diego (MMSD). "We're looking forward to working on this project with California Ships to Reefs."

The B-39 Soviet submarine has been part of the museum's fleet since 2004, but the museum is making plans now for its future as its first undersea exhibit. Enter CSTR, a nonprofit organization whose mission is to seek surplus ships and sink them, creating new artificial reefs for diving, fishing and other recreational uses.

"We will use the expertise and knowledge we acquired from San Diego's Project *Yukon* to make the submarine sinking a safe and environmentally sound project," said Geldin.

California Ships to Reefs is a 501(c)(3) non-profit public benefit corporation seeking to reef surplus ships as artificial reefs, bringing diving and fishing tourism to local ports in

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California and enhancing the ocean environment. For more information please visit the website <http://californiashipstoreefs.org>.

The Maritime Museum of San Diego is a 501(c)(3) Non-Profit Public Benefit Corporation whose purpose is to preserve the traditional knowledge, skills and folk culture of the enterprise of the sea; to provide a safe repository for material culture; and to illustrate how the maritime enterprise has touched and continues to influence our daily lives through innovative and engaging educational programs, exhibits, publications and cultural events. For more information please visit their website at www.sdmaritime.org.