

Michelle Slate – for PDRA President



I, Michelle Slate, am running for President of the Piedmont Diving and Rescue (PDRA) association for 2025-2026. Below is information regarding my involvement in the PDRA and the reasons that I am so committed to the success of our organization. When elected again for 2025-2026 I will dedicate the same amount of time and energy to the office of PDRA President that I have exhibited over the past two years as president. **Vote for me** in-person at the PDRA General Assembly on **Sunday, October 27, 2024** or through absentee mail-in ballot that you can find under the Members tab at www.ncpdra.org.

DIVE EXPERIENCE:

My dive experience includes over 600 dives throughout the world from Australia to Bonaire, Hawaii to Dubai, Maldives to the Red Sea, and several hundreds of dives within the PDRA quarries. I have been diving since 2008 and my diving adventures started at Lake Norman Quarry with my Open Water training. I've dove single tank, sidemount, and now two different rebreathers. I've spent hundreds of hours training and building time in many different configurations at the PDRA quarries. Having the quarries in our "relative" backyard is invaluable as a perpetual student of diving.

PDRA INVOLVEMENT:

- **Current President** - I have served as President of the PDRA since being elected in October 2022.
 - **Lake Norman Quarry** - The biggest challenge for the organization is the eradication of the zebra mussels at Lake Norman Quarry. Over the past year since the discovery of the zebra mussels, I have worked hand in hand with the North Carolina Wildlife Resource Commission (NCWRC). As of August a grant has been awarded that will help fund the eradication of the mussels at Lake Norman Quarry. The close partnership with the NCWRC helped get us to where we are today including confirmation that American Quarry and JMR Quarry did not show evidence of zebra mussels. Working with state organizations brings its own unique challenges and at the request of the NCWRC I have been the single point of contact over the past year. I also worked closely with the NCWRC to design cleaning procedures for equipment that is used at locations with a known zebra mussel population. You can see these signs both at American Quarry and JMR Quarry. I am committed to seeing the PDRA through the eradication phase and the reopening of Lake Norman Quarry. There is still a long road in front of us to make this happen.
 - **American Quarry** – In December of 2023 I worked with one of our members to secure a lumber and dock material donation valued over \$10,000 and the materials were delivered to American Quarry in January 2024. In the spring of this year, I started to visit American Quarry more frequently as the PDRA expected a heavy inflow of members that would normally visit the Lake Norman Quarry. I coordinated multiple workdays over several months with dozens of volunteers from our membership to accomplish the improvements

that you can see today and listed below. Many thanks to those members that have given their weekends to help! There are future plans to improve all the entryways.

- ✧ New floating dock with entry stairs built by volunteers from donated lumber (note that only about one-quarter of the lumber donation has been used)
 - ✧ Small retaining wall built and new stairs built for walk-in entry
 - ✧ Pontoon boat cleaned and put back in place over the pit
 - ✧ New maps printed and new rope signs placed in the quarry for ease of navigation
 - ✧ Assembly building cleaned and organized
 - ✧ New picnic tables built for use by members, instructors, and students
 - ✧ Parking area expanded with dedicated scuba shop trailer parking
 - ✧ 1,500 pounds of scrap metal taken to local recycling
 - ✧ Picked up and burned brush and trees
 - ✧ General grounds clean-up including removal of unneeded materials
- **JMR Quarry** - The quarry managers at JMR have recently painted the building and built 6 new picnic tables. Since the completion of the dock a few years ago there is not a lot of capital improvements needed at this time, but there will be a future effort to replace ropes and potentially print larger maps. Anyone that was at the 2024 Treasure Hunt can attest to the great condition of JMR Quarry.
 - **Treasure Hunt** - I obtained all the prizes for the 2023 and 2024 Treasure Hunts. The partnerships that I have created with Shearwater, Dive Rite, Piranha Dive Manufacturing, DAN, local dive shops and other connections in the diving industry helped me gather the donations and discounted diving items. I've been told this years prizes were the best set we've ever had as an organization. I have coordinated the printing and sales of the Treasure Hunt t-shirts since 2018.
 - **PDRA communications** – I prepare and send all PDRA emails to membership as well as maintain the official PDRA Facebook page. I coordinate feedback from the board of directors for official PDRA communications. I manage the PDRA email box and take phone calls from members, dive shops, and instructors when there are questions. I triage questions as needed.
 - **Former Secretary and Board of Director** – Served as Secretary during Tim Stafford's presidency of the PDRA. Also served multiple years on the board of directors before becoming a PDRA officer.

In closing, I am committed to the PDRA including the success of the organization so that all our members can continue to have the valuable resources of the quarries within their reach. The PDRA needs someone that can dedicate the time required to office of the President. I am that person! My past involvement and relationship with NCWRC will be prudent to the reopening of Lake Norman Quarry and that is my number one priority! Vote Michelle Slate for PDRA President on October 27, 2024!

***** VOTE MICHELLE SLATE for PDRA PRESIDENT *****

Charles Whitley – for President

I hope this message finds you well. My name is Charles Whitley, Jr., and I'm thrilled to announce my candidacy for President of the PDRA. My family and I reside in Denver, North Carolina. Since becoming a member of the NCPDRA in 2015, after completing my open water dive certification at the JMR quarry in Blanch, I've been deeply involved in our diving community.

Currently, I have the honor of serving on the board, where I've gained valuable experience in supporting our members and enhancing our facilities. My professional background in the environmental industry has provided me with a strong foundation in environmental stewardship, project management, and regulatory compliance—skills that are crucial for leading our organization effectively. Furthermore, my experience and education in disaster and emergency management will benefit the membership of the PDRA.

It is no secret that we are in the midst of a crisis with the introduction of Zebra Mussels to our Lake Norman location. This has caused economic impacts on local dive shops and has unfortunately robbed our membership of the opportunity to dive at the PDRA's most popular quarry. While this incident was beyond the control of any individual, I am committed to leveraging my professional experience to ensure that the best interests of the PDRA membership are at the forefront of all initiatives, including working towards reopening the Lake Norman Quarry.

As president I look to particularly focus on facilitating capital improvement projects that embody quality craftsmanship and provide tangible benefits to our membership. These projects are vital to ensuring that our facilities not only meet but exceed the expectations of our divers, enhancing both safety and enjoyment.

I understand that while many of us enjoy destination diving in beautiful tropical locations, it's equally important to have a quality place to dive locally with other trained divers to keep our skills sharp. The NCPDRA has done an excellent job of providing and continually improving our facilities to enhance our diving experiences. I've always appreciated how our organization fosters a strong community atmosphere through events like treasure hunts, swap meets and even cleanup days.

I initially applied for the South District board position with the goal of giving back to the members of this organization, and I now look to do the same while serving in the role of President.

Thank you for your time, and I look forward to diving with you!

Craig Blaine – for Board of Directors (Central District) - incumbent

Hello PDRA members! I hope this finds you well. My name is Craig Blaine. My family and I live in Gastonia, North Carolina, which puts us close enough to enjoy the Lake Norman/American quarries which we most frequently. I have been a member of the NCPDRA for many years. I am also an active instructor. My son recently completed his open water certification and now we both enjoy diving together.

I understand most divers love destination diving in beautiful tropic locations and exploring new places. It is very important to me that I have a quality place to dive with other trained divers to keep my skills sharp while not on a trip. Additionally, I appreciate how the NCPDRA facilitates a community atmosphere through events such as the treasure hunts. The NCPDRA has done an excellent job of providing nice facilities and continually improving each location for the experience of their members. I have served on the board since 2021 for the central district board I have enjoyed being a driving force in working with the other board members to help make the PDRA to help make improvements where possible. I have an extensive background in serving the community as an Instructor/Instructor trainer teaching a wide range of courses from FA/CPR/AED to Aquatic courses for over 34 years. I am Paramedic and enjoy serving others and making a difference in their lives. Thank you for your time. I look forward to diving with you!

Robert Veitch – for Board of Directors (Central District)



Hello Everyone,
My name is Robert Veitch. I am a North Carolina educator and a fifth year PDRA member.
I want to contribute to our community which is why I'm seeking a position on the board.
If you vote for me, I promise two things, 1. To try and listen 2. To try and help the PDRA however I can.