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NAUI Welcomes Ricki Orford, NAUI's New Executive Director

Riverview, FL – January 12, 2026 - The National Association of Underwater Instructors, Inc. (NAUI) is pleased to announce the appointment of Mr. Ricki Orford as our new Executive Director.

Mr. Ricki Orford is a seasoned diver who believes that diver safety and performance are the direct result of proper training, sound decision-making, personal responsibility, and strong team skills. With more than 1,000 dives across tropical and cold-water environments—including reefs, caves, and wrecks around the world—he brings a deep respect for diving as a craft that is learned deliberately and practiced over time.

In addition to his diving background, Mr. Ricki Orford brings more than 25 years of leadership experience in global public health. He has led complex, mission-driven organizations focused on strengthening systems, building local leadership, and delivering practical results at scale. This experience has shaped a leadership style grounded in listening, clarity of roles, accountability, and follow-through—qualities that are essential to a strong, member-led organization like NAUI. His appointment comes at an important time for NAUI and will help stabilize the organization as we move through a period of transition and position ourselves for long-term strength and growth.

Mr. Ricki Orford is a dive professional, an active technical and cave diver, and a certified EMT. He approaches both instruction and leadership as a learner first, committed to doing things properly and building real competence. He views diving and organizational leadership as team activities, where preparation, skill development, communication, and trust are non-negotiable.

As CEO, Mr. Ricki Orford's focus is clear: strengthening support for instructors and members, improving the quality and accessibility of training materials, and modernizing the systems instructors and NAUI service centers rely on every day. He is committed to growing NAUI globally while maintaining consistent standards and trust at the local level, and to ensuring NAUI is recognized for high-quality training, clear communication, and responsiveness.

Mr. Ricki Orford is honored to serve the NAUI community and looks forward to working closely with the Board of Directors, instructors, members, and partners to ensure NAUI continues to stand for independence, competence, and diver-centered education—both in and out of the water.

Please join us in welcoming Mr. Ricki Orford as he transitions into his new role on February 1, 2026.

About NAUI

Founded in 1960, the National Association of Underwater Instructors (NAUI Worldwide) is a nonprofit association dedicated to providing the highest quality scuba diver education and promoting the preservation and protection of the underwater environment. Learn more at www.naui.org.

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