

Ethnography

Ethnographic resources are tangible or intangible aspects of a cultural system, past or present, that have been identified as significant to a recognized ethnic group. They include both natural resources, such as wildlife and plants, and cultural resources, such as obsidian and other minerals, that have traditional uses.

As mandated by the American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978, the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, and NPS policy, we are required to manage all of Yellowstone's resources in a manner that expresses knowledge of and respect for American Indians. However, we lack sufficient knowledge about the traditional uses of the park and their meaning to contemporary groups to ensure the protection of culturally significant places, objects, and resources. Among the unsolved mysteries is a collection of obsidian artifacts found in Ohio that came from Yellowstone in about A.D. 330. How and why did people without domestic livestock or wheels move hundreds of pounds of rocks so far? Were the first Americans drawn to Yellowstone for material gain, aesthetic enjoyment, and spiritual values not so different from those that have been drawing people ever since?



RECENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Tribal contacts. American Indian groups affiliated with the park (Black-foot, Confederated Salish and Kootenai, Crow, Eastern Shoshone, Nez Perce, Northern Arapaho, Northern Cheyenne, Shoshone-Bannock, Gros Ventre/Assiniboine, Kiowa, and some Lakota tribes) have been identified and are consulted regularly regarding issues such as the handling of human remains and archeological sites of special interest. In response to their requests, the park entrance fee has been waived for affiliated tribe members who are participating in traditional activities at places that have been historically used for such purposes and that have been sanctioned in writing by the tribal chair.

Ethnographic overview. An independent consultant was hired to interview members of affiliated American Indian groups and conduct the research necessary to identify ethnographic resources and areas requiring further study. This work was completed in March 1998, with a final report expected by 2000.



FOR THE BENEFIT AND ENJOYMENT OF ALL?

The establishment of Yellowstone National Park contributed to the expulsion of American Indians from the area. Before it was designated as a park, the area was a homeland for the Sheepeaters, a small band of Shoshone. Other Shoshone, as well as Crow, Blackfeet, and Bannock, used the area on an intermittent or seasonal basis. An 1852 treaty established the east side of the Yellowstone River as Crow reservation and the west side as Blackfeet, but the treaty of 1868 pushed the Crow to land north of the 45th parallel, which runs just inside what is now the park's north boundary, and the Blackfeet were driven even farther north. Although an 1882 treaty moved the Crow reservation beyond the park boundaries, American Indians continued to hunt in the park into the late 1880s.

Program Needs

- **INVENTORY AND PROTECT ETHNOGRAPHIC SITES.** The park needs funds to document the location, condition, and significance of sites, natural features, events, and objects that have subsistence or religious value to American Indian groups associated with the park. Once information is gathered, plans to monitor and protect these sites can be developed.
- **STRENGTHEN WORKING RELATIONSHIPS WITH AMERICAN INDIANS.** The park will establish a Consultation Committee on American Indian Concerns to provide a forum for resolving issues and an opportunity for American Indians to participate in decisions made about ethnographic resources in the park. These relationships will also enrich the interpretive program at Yellowstone.





ETHNOGRAPHIC RESOURCES

STEWARDSHIP GOALS



Professionally trained staff oversee a program to inventory, protect, and interpret ethnographic sites and other resources.



Affiliated American Indian groups are regularly involved in protection and interpretation through informal discussions and, when appropriate, formal consultations.

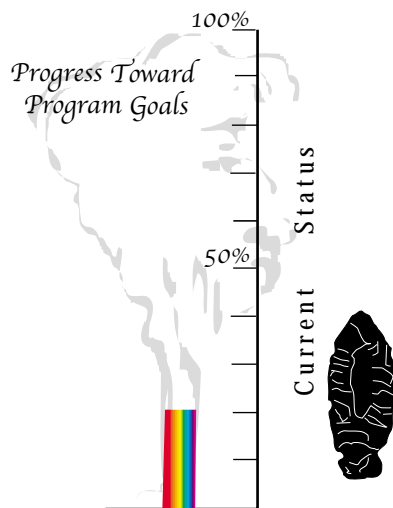
CURRENT STATE OF RESOURCES/PROGRAMS



Yellowstone's ethnography is little known or interpreted. Results of a recent overview are complete and will be used to direct a program to preserve these resources.



Recent strides have been made in establishing regular contact with affiliated American Indian groups.



1998 FUNDING AND STAFF

Recurring Funds	
Yellowstone N.P. Base Budget	\$ 25,200
Staff	0.5 FTE

The human resources and funding necessary to professionally and effectively manage the park to stewardship levels will be identified in the park business plan.