

# In the Public Interest

**T**here are Indiana Jones movies, Jean Auel books, articles about Mayan ruins in airline magazines, and visits to Mesa Verde National Park. That's what the public sees, but just below the surface archeology has a lot more to offer. Stories about how our ancestors adapted to different climates, different landscapes, different family arrangements. There's a unique association with the past when we stand at the very spot where people lived and laughed and cried centuries ago. The archeological record offers evidence that they were born, solved problems, prospered or declined, and lived through it.

The Historic Sites Act of 1935 declares that "it is a national policy to preserve for *public use* historic sites, buildings and objects of national significance for the inspiration and benefit of the people of the United States" [emphasis added]. But what is public use?

Archeological sites are frozen bits of time from which scientists glean the secrets of the past. For instance, a layered site representing 15 slices of time over the past 12,000 years can be analyzed by a team of archeologists, zoologists, botanists, chemists, and soil scientists to provide data about how the climate varied, how the plants and animals changed, and how the people adapted. This information can be invaluable as we look at coping with today's changing environment. But someone must convert the dry scientific detail into a narrative of everyday language for the public to benefit directly.

In some instances, different uses come into conflict. A site may have more than one public. Native Americans value "medicine wheel" sites for their spiritual values and wish to have them left undisturbed and relatively inaccessible. Scientists, representing the research community, believe that these sites merit investigation. It's up to the private owner or public land manager to decide which use is most appropriate.

However, many uses are compatible, particularly the staged excavation and analysis of a site, followed by its stabilization and interpretation for the public. The Shared Beringian Heritage Program, reported in this section, is an excellent example of compatible scientific, socio-cultural, and public use, as is the Fort Huachuca rock art project. The article on the Four Corners Heritage Council

details how the public benefits when the science of archeology supports heritage tourism.

The Bureau of Land Management allocates archeological materials on its lands to scientific, management, sociocultural, and/or public uses. Sites assigned to management use are those that have little important information, or whose information has been recovered. Such sites are used as "guinea pigs" for measuring site erosion or compaction rates.

Peer reviews of archeological projects, such as those performed through the National Park Service departmental consulting archeologist, ensure that the science is being done in the public interest. One article in this section summarizes several of these reviews.

So what is public use? The following articles illustrate.

—Ruthann Knudson  
National Park Service

## Hands Across the Strait

For years, politics worked to keep the United States and Russia apart. Now, in an exciting multidisciplinary research program, scientists on both sides of the Bering Strait are looking at links between the two nations.

The Shared Beringian Heritage Program is bringing together Russian and American scientists, resource managers, and Native peoples in a long-term study of traditional lifeways, biogeography, and landscape history on the Seward and Chukotka Peninsulas. The geographic focus is an abandoned early 20th century reindeer herders' winter village, Ublasau, located at the Arctic Circle in the Bering Land Bridge National Preserve.

The program's first phase, initiated in 1991, brought together researchers from the Alaska Region of the National Park Service, the University of Alaska at Fairbanks, the Fish & Wildlife Service, and the Institute of Ethnography from the National Academy of Science in Moscow. With the cooperation of the community of Shishmaref, Alaska, the researchers studied the eth-

noarcheology and history of reindeer herding and its effects on the region's lifeways, architecture, and ecology. To understand continuity and change in the local culture, the scientists studied a series of archeological sites linked by geography, time, and oral traditions.

The research represents a completely new direction, says Park Service archeologist Jeanne Schaaf, "by emphasizing not only the history and social effects of reindeer herding but the



Painting by James Kivetoruk Moses, probably based on his childhood experiences in Alaska (photo by F-Stop Photo/courtesy Alaska State Museum, Juneau).



McPhee Pueblo site, part of the Dolores Archaeological Project peer review (courtesy Dolores Archaeological Project).

role of herding in Native human ecology at the local family level.”

For information contact the National Park Service, Alaska Regional Office (Attn: Jeanne Schaaf), 2525 Gambell, Anchorage, AK 99503, ph. 907-257-7663.

### Peer Review for the Public

For years, science has regulated itself through review of projects by a scholar’s peers. Over the last decade, in the public interest, the National Park Service has brought the process to Federal archeological projects.

The peer reviews are carried out by the departmental consulting archeologist, chief of archeological assistance division. The DCA’s office reviews projects to aid agency decision-making as well as check the quality of conservation and interpretation.

The review’s primary purpose is to evaluate projects relative to archeological practice and legal compliance. There have been seven reviews since 1981.

The first was the Bureau of Reclamation’s Dolores Archaeological Project in southwestern Colorado, an eight-year, \$8 million effort to recover archeological materials that would be submerged when the McPhee Dam was built across the Dolores River. The Central Arizona Project, another multi-year, multi-million-dollar Bureau of Reclamation project, was the subject of a DCA peer review in 1986.

In 1987 the Bureau requested a review of its Jackson Lake project in Wyoming’s Grand Teton National Park. During reconstruction of a dam across the Snake River, the lake had been drawn down to its pre-1916 level, exposing many archeological sites and scattered artifacts.

The Fish & Wildlife Service, in 1988, asked the DCA to conduct a peer review of an emergency discovery project at its Stillwater Marsh, Nevada, Wildlife Management Area. Four years earlier, flooding by the Humboldt River had inundated the marsh’s National Register district, with its many burial sites. When the waters receded in

1985, many human remains were exposed. The service developed a recovery/reinterment program with the Bureau of Land Management, the Navy, the Fallon Paiute-Shoshone Tribe, the state, and the county that was implemented with the help of contractors. The DCA team commended the memorandum of understanding drawn up by the various parties, but recommended that more attention be paid to deterring looting and vandalism and to letting the public share the valuable research compiled by the project.

The 1989 peer review of the Corps of Engineers Libby Dam project, on the Kootenai River in northwestern Montana, was requested to clarify agency responsibilities under Federal Indian laws. In addition to the Corps, the project involved the Forest Service, the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Reservation, and the Montana State

Historic Preservation Office. The peer review identified the need for better agency-tribe consultation, and supported the establishment of a tribal curatorial facility.

In 1990, a peer review of the Soil Conservation Service’s Alkalai Creek project, in North Dakota, identified problems in contracting practices and in complying with the National Historic Preservation Act, as well as the need for additional archeological expertise.

This year the Department of Defense requested a peer review of the Central and Northern Great Plains Archeological Overview, a multi-year compilation and synthesis of archeological information for an 11-state area. The reviewers pointed out the national benefits of such overviews, recommending that others be conducted around the country.

Peer reviews for public archeology will continue to be important for agencies wishing to improve both research and preservation. Additionally, peer reviews can improve the public’s awareness of the valuable contributions these projects make to understanding the archeological record.

For information contact Dr. Francis P. McManamon, Departmental Consulting Archeologist, National Park Service, Archeological Assistance Division, P.O. Box 37127 (Suite 210), Washington, DC 20013-7127, ph. 202-343-4101.

### Rock Art for the People

While stone tools, pottery sherds, and bone fragments are the pillars on which archeologists build their arguments about past human behavior, the visual impact of prehistoric rock art speaks more eloquently of Native American culture to the American public. It offers the public insights into the thought processes of Native American artists, how they conceptualized their universe and their spiritual relationship with the environment.

The Fort Huachuca Rock Art Legacy Project entailed a number of tasks to evaluate, interpret, and conserve two rock art sites in Garden Canyon. Fort Huachuca, located five miles from the Mexican border in southeast Arizona, was built in 1877 to protect mining and ranching interests from the Apache and to ensure an American presence in lands recently acquired from Mexico.

Both of the rock art sites are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. One, surrounded by a chain link fence since the 1970s, has remained graffiti-free. The second, until the legacy project, was covered with charcoal scrawls. With legacy funds, the marks were removed and the pictographs at both sites recorded and photographed. In the process, archeologists discovered that the rock art represents at least two distinct time periods.

Since the project began, over 500 sightseers have toured the sites, most of them school children. This offered an unprecedented opportunity to introduce visitors to archeology.

Thus the project proved highly successful in meeting all of its goals: both sites are restored, recorded, accessible to the public, and protected for the appreciation of future generations.

For information contact Fort Huachuca, U.S. Army Information Systems Command, ASH-EE-B (John Murray), Fort Huachuca, AZ 85613-6000, ph. 602-533-3120.

## Putting the Pieces Together

Like a jigsaw puzzle, the Central and Northern Great Plains Archeological Overview Project required all the pieces to fit together before it could be called finished.

The project provides a context for managing archeological sites on land in 11 states between the continental divide and the Great Lakes, the Canadian border and central Kansas. A bioarcheology component is supported by the U.S. military, which has archeological management responsibilities on lands it administers as well as on lands underlying military air space. The support arose from the congressionally mandated legacy resource management program, which is extending the management of Defense cultural resources beyond strict compliance with Federal laws and regulations.

Because of the project's massive scope, regional directors were called upon by the Arkansas Archeological Survey and the Center for Advanced Spatial Technologies at the University of Arkansas to construct syntheses of their areas of responsibility. "Each such synthesis was based on a review of relevant paleoenvironmental, archeological, and bioarcheological data and the history of investigations in that region," says Charles Ewen, sponsored projects director for the Arkansas Archeological Society. "The project concluded with an integration of all the data sets to describe patterns of human use of the regions' resources over time. It provided a basis for evaluating information gaps and, thus, the significance of individual archeological sites found on military lands or otherwise affected by military activities. They can be used to plan archeological

inventory, investigation, and conservation activities anywhere in the U.S. central and northern Great Plains."

Although the overview is designed to assist cultural resource management on Department of Defense-affected properties, its information base, which encompasses all lands within the 11 states, is expected to find wide use beyond the military. The bioarcheology, to be detailed in a separate report, will use site-specific data to delineate past health patterns.

For information contact the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Construction Engineering Research Laboratory, Tri-Services Cultural Resources Research Center, P.O. Box 9005 (Dr. John Isaacson), Champaign, IL 61826-1305, ph. 1-800-USA-CERL x6749.

## Aligning the Four Corners

The Four Corners region of the American southwest is home to many of the country's most important cultural resources. Until recently, it was also the source of one of the nation's biggest administrative headaches, due to an array of political and land management boundary difficulties.

The Four Corners Governors' Conference, held in June 1990, was instrumental in solving the problems. The conference created a vision for the region, recommending a Four Corners heritage council that would bring together area agencies, Indian tribes, local communities, and private sector interests. The council would establish a comprehensive and coordinated approach to improving cultural resource management, research, public education and involvement, tourism, and cooperation with private landowners.

The governors signed a memorandum of agreement to launch the 12-member council, which consists of three gubernatorial appointments per state comprised of at least one Native American and one private sector representative. Supplemental agreements with the National Park Service and U.S. Forest Service provided for Federal agency representation. The Soil Conservation Service, among other agencies, has now joined.

So far, projects include establishing a heritage site recognition system that includes signage and marketing tools for public involvement and visitation; "Trails of the Ancients Heritage Byway Routes" connecting sites throughout the area; a comprehensive cultural resource interpretation project that includes American Indian perspectives; and a public relations and education plan to improve heritage conservation.

To document visitation at the area's approximately 16,000 sites, a program was initiated to inventory and assess the tourism industry in the region. The objectives are to define the industry, help detail public agency roles, establish partnerships to promote responsible use of sites, enhance the quality of the visitor experience, and promote rural economic development.

The project is being administered by the state of Utah through a grant from the Forest Service. The actual work, to be handled by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, is slated for completion this summer.

For information contact Mike Talcott, President, Four Corners Tourism Council, P.O. Drawer HH, Cortez, CO 81321, ph. 303-565-8227.