

# Engaging the Public

**I**t's Old, It's New, It's the Coolest Thing to Do! The tag line for *ZiNj*—a hip new magazine for readers young and old—just about sums up the profession's enthusiastic public education ventures over the past 10 years. *ZiNj* is one of many initiatives that are literally transforming the way archeologists do their work.

The study of ancient civilizations has always held a romantic fascination for people, but archeologists often left sharing the science to writers, filmmakers, and other interpreters. That has changed dramatically during the last decade. Now, engaging the public is considered one of the ingredients in good science. The process forces archeologists to make their research relevant. If they can't communicate its importance to the public, how can they expect public support?

These efforts span a wide front. In 1990, the Society for American Archaeology established the committee on public education to provide a forum for professionals to share ideas and guide their development. The committee's quarterly newsletter, *Archaeology and Public Education*, has been an invaluable tool for spreading news about success stories, partnerships, events, and research. The National Park Service, in cooperation with other Federal agencies, has distributed over 150,000 copies of "Participate in Archeology," a brochure summarizing the many ways the public can get involved.

All of the agencies have established education programs or initiatives in their heritage divisions. In 1991, Congress established the legacy resource management program for the Department of Defense to enhance the care of its natural and cultural resources. Public education has become an integral part of legacy projects across the country.

The Bureau of Land Management sponsors many events through its Adventures in the Past program, as does the Forest Service through Windows on the Past. Other agencies' initiatives make heritage resources accessible to the public through interpretive sites, publications, opportunities to do field work, and other projects.

Increasingly, public education is going beyond passive interpretation such as site signs, interpretive trails, and living history presentations. In the past, although archeologists collaborated with interpreters in these kinds of projects, they rarely got involved personally with site visitors. These efforts will continue to be important, but times have changed. The public of the '90s wants to be part of the process, not just fed the results. People are fascinated with how the science is done, not just the end product. They want to see archeologists face to face, to ask questions and challenge theories. The demand has led to a proliferation of programs involving the public in ongoing research.

Programs like the Forest Service's Passport in Time give individuals and families the chance to do a variety of tasks, from lab work to stabilizing decaying adobe

structures. While these projects result in valuable research and management accomplishments, the real benefit is increased awareness of the science of archeology.

This translates to public support. More and more, the public sees these opportunities as "learning vacations," a concept that organizations like Earthwatch and the Smithsonian's Expeditions have employed for some time with great success.

Another hallmark of public programs in the '90s are initiatives to reach school children by educating their teachers. The Bureau of Land Management's Project Archeology and Intrigue of the Past focus on building archeology into existing curricula and training teachers to impart not only the subject matter but enthusiasm for the past as well. Teaching with Historic Places, a National Park Service program, makes good use of the 61,000 listings on the National Register, showing students that history happened in real places and letting them experience that sense of place and time. The results of these efforts will multiply as classrooms full of young children come to realize that artifacts are not simply things, but clues to wonderful stories.

Meanwhile, *ZiNj*—a cooperative venture among several Federal agencies and the Utah Interagency Task Force—delivers the message directly, through home and school subscriptions aimed at kids six to thirteen. Like the old "Bullwinkle" show, the magazine has its share of parents and teachers vying for a glimpse over their shoulders.

Whether prompted by a professional image problem, widespread looting, demands from baby boomers for continuing education, or simply the evolution of the sciences (consider astronomy's Carl Sagan), public education in archeology is in full swing. Altruism probably plays a role in the trend. Most archeologists believe that improving our understanding of the past leads to a greater concern for the present and future. This has become even more apparent lately as agencies are having to answer tough questions about ecosystems encompassing the land they manage.

So why all the enthusiasm for public education? Will it curb the rapid disappearance of artifacts at the hands of collectors? Will it lead to stronger laws and better enforcement of current ones? Will it foster the stewardship of the nation's heritage? The answer to all of these questions is yes, to varying degrees, but education alone won't accomplish these things single-handedly. Law enforcement, research, and protection will also be necessary.

But again, the public is key. Whether looking into family genealogy, visiting classical Greek ruins, or participating in an excavation, people are fascinated with the past. That's one reason why laws protecting antiquities were passed in the first place. Public support will be equally critical in the coming years.

Professional archeologists are lucky to be making a living at what is only a romantic fantasy for most. The least they can do is share the excitement. The following programs do just that.

—Jill A. Osborn  
U.S. Forest Service

## Making a Difference

The Imagination Team is one of the best-kept secrets at the Bureau of Land Management. Assembled in 1991 under the umbrella of the Bureau's Adventures in the Past initiative, the team is coordinating the agency's heritage education program from its home base at the Anasazi Heritage Center in Dolores, Colorado.

Working with the Bureau's state heritage liaisons, people in the field, and the division of cultural heritage, the team develops a wide variety of educational materials, from "Intrigue of the Past" teacher guides and student handbooks, to exhibits, publications, teaching kits, videos, magazine articles, and TV programming. In addition to producing all these products and more, the team provides guidance to the Bureau's state offices and field staff as well as the educational community.

The Bureau of Land Management is the steward of an estimated 5 million archeological and historic properties on almost 270 million acres of public lands in the western United States and Alaska. These lands provide a wealth of cultural resources for the team to draw on to promote stewardship values through education. The projects work to capture the attention of young people at an early age, sustain their attention through hands-on activities, and enhance their skills through increasingly more sophisticated learning experiences.

The Bureau's education effort emphasizes training teachers in archeology, paleontology, and heritage education. Building on research showing that young people learn most readily about things that are tangible and directly accessible to their senses (visual, auditory, tactile, and kinesthetic), the team is helping young people to learn about the rich, but fragile, record of our cultural heritage.

For more information on the Bureau's Heritage Education Program or the Imagination Team, write to Megg Heath, Chief, Heritage Education Project Manager, BLM Imagination Team, PO Box 758, Dolores, CO 81323.

## Passport in Time

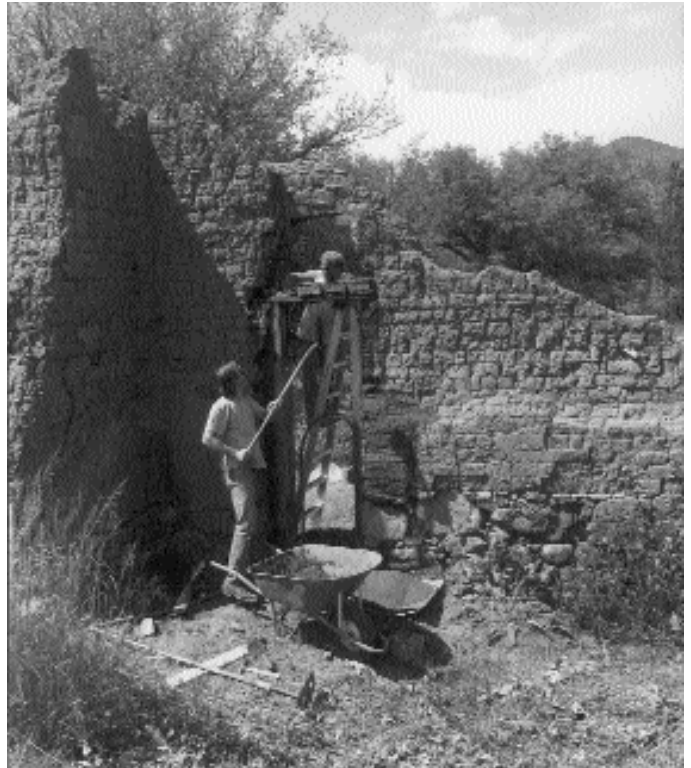
*"I found that a person can pack more living into two weeks than in the other fifty weeks of the year!"*

*"I learned as much in five days as I would have in several weeks in the classroom!"*

*"Our students told me that they learned great deal and had fun in the process—two qualities that lie at the heart of any good education!"*

*"We went to museums afterwards and the artifacts just came alive!"*

These are a few of the enthusiastic responses from volunteers in the Forest Service Passport in Time program. Through PIT, as it's called, individuals and families work with archeologists in national forests across the country. To date, the agency has sponsored over 300 PIT projects. Volunteers have helped stabilize ancient cliff dwellings in New Mex



Passport in Time volunteers stabilize an adobe ruin at Camp Rucker, Coronado National Forest (courtesy Coronado National Forest).

excavate a 10,000 year old village site in Minnesota, restore a 19th century hand-hewn log house in Florida, clean vandalized rock art in Colorado, survey sites in the Utah wilderness, restore mansions along the shores of California's Lake Tahoe, and excavate a 19th century Chinese mining site in Oregon.

The projects vary in length from a weekend to a month, or even longer in some cases, and there is no registration fee. *The PIT Traveler*, a free newsletter published in March and September, contains descriptions of current projects and a registration form.

There is no question that the volunteers allow the Forest Service to accomplish much-needed research in how people once interacted with the environment. The PIT travelers also contribute directly to preserving the sites that chronicle this human saga. However, the lasting benefit of PIT is in the public stewardship it fosters. Volunteers not only learn out prehistory and the science of archeology, they develop a sense of ownership and a vested interest in the care of heritage resources.

As PIT grows, volunteers return year after year, sometimes to the same projects, sometimes traveling to new parts of the country, but always bringing incredible enthusiasm and commitment. Such hands-on participation fosters strong allies for managing the nation's heritage.

Information about PIT can be acquired from the PIT Clearinghouse, O. Box 18364, Washington, DC 20036, 202-293-0922.



## Touch the Past

Step inside a kiosk set up by the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management and literally at your fingertips are slides, maps, text, and moving images of archeology throughout the state of Utah. It's all done through the magic of a touch sensitive screen linked to a state-of-the-art laserdisc.

The multimedia program is part of a statewide "Electronic Recreation Opportunity Guide" sponsored by the Forest Service and the Bureau. Each stand-alone kiosk is equipped with a videodisc player, a personal computer, a printer, and a monitor with a special touch-sensitive screen. Up to 55,000 slides and 20 minutes of videotape can be stored on the disc. In some kiosks, phones automatically dial participating businesses and tourist offices for more information.

Visitors select from a menu of program options. Touching the screen moves through sites, artifacts, museums and programs they wish to explore. Information on 44 sites is included; options include paleontology, archeology, history, and museums. A message on site etiquette is also presented.

Touching a point on a map calls up a summary of that location. For places that are too remote, dangerous, and fragile to visit—an Anasazi cliff ruin, for example—a slide and video presentation gives viewers a taste of "being there."

In addition to providing information to the public, the system supplies tourism and land management officials with marketing research on visitor interests. Each screen touch is recorded in a database, documenting how the system is used and what topics and sites the public wants to know about. Officials can use these tallies to plan public programs and improve the system. For example, if only a few users select "paleontology," it may be because they do not understand the term, which can be changed to "dinosaurs."

For information contact the U.S. Forest Service Region 4, Cultural Heritage and Tourism, 324 25th Street, Ogden, UT 84401, ph. 801-625-5170.

## Intrigue in Action

Hundreds of teachers have employed the Bureau of Land Management's Intrigue of the Past activity guide in the classroom, with great success. Although the guide is self-contained, teachers often ask to participate directly in archeological research and fieldwork. Last year they got a chance to do just that.

With sponsoring help from the Utah Museum of Natural History, the teachers journeyed to rock art sites on Bureau lands in Mill Creek Canyon near Moab, Utah. There they spent four days in the fierce summer heat documenting the ancient images etched on the canyon walls. Under the direction of Sally Cole, an archeologist and rock art expert, the teachers learned an array of field techniques while they recorded 40 rock art panels and 16 associated sites. In the cool of the evening, around the cook stove, they talked about the canyon's ancient residents and future lesson plans long into the night.

Already, the teachers report being better able to communicate the excitement and importance of archeology to their students. The Bureau will use the information gath-



Recording rock art at an Intrigue of the Past site (courtesy Jeanne Moe).

ered over the four days to help protect these irreplaceable sites on public land. The project was so successful that the Bureau and the museum plan to repeat it this year.

For information contact the Bureau of Land Management, Utah State Office (Attn: Jeanne Moe), P.O. Box 45155, Salt Lake City, UT 84145-0155, ph. 801-539-4060.

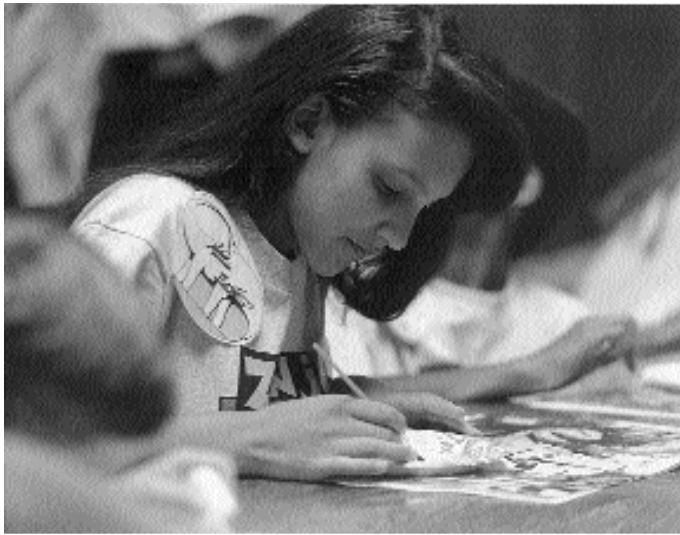
## A New Look at Old Stuff

"Hangin' with Dr. Bones," "Children of the Wild West," "Tales from the Site"—the headlines blaze across the pages of *ZiNj*, a kids magazine that's kicking up quite a bit of dust with its striking graphics, stimulating subject matter, and smart attitude.

"*ZiNj* is designed to engage kids on a number of levels," says editor Kevin Jones. "They're involved in all aspects of producing the magazine, from brainstorming about topics to writing, critiquing, and giving input to design. Although scientific advisors ensure accuracy, our 'real' advisory board is made up of kids from seven to fourteen."

The goal is to "share the delights of history and prehistory with kids," he says. "With appreciation and awareness come a sense of ownership, pride, and a desire to protect and preserve our national heritage." The *ZiNj* Education Project, a national science education program, was launched by a consortium of Federal and state agencies (the Utah Division of State History, the National Park Service, the Forest Service, and the Bureau of Land Management) to combat the growing vandalism of cultural resources. Early on, the project partners recognized that special emphasis should be given to educating kids so that the next generation could be part of a long-term solution to the problem. Kids, after all, are fascinated by ancient cultures and other "old stuff," and while it's mainly adults who damage sites, adult education is costly and usually ineffective if individuals are not receptive.

Youngsters, though, are another story. "If the subject is interesting and well-presented, they'll respond," says Jones. Many articles are written by authorities in their fields, not rewritten or diluted. This lends authenticity to the material by taking kids right into the world of real scientists. "We don't want to just know about a discovery, we want to know how it was made, how the research



A "ZiNj kid" at work (courtesy ZiNj magazine).

was conducted, what the personal observations and feelings are of those involved," he says. "We also emphasize what scientists would like to know

but presently don't. This supports open-ended inquiry and demonstrates the scientific method by encouraging kids to think about how we might go about investigating something as yet unknown."

ZiNj invites hands-on involvement through cutouts, collector cards, stickers, and more. Many stories feature outdoor activities, encouraging youngsters to visit museums, parks, and forests. The magazine also broadcasts calls for volunteers on scientific projects.

Speaking of broadcasting, ZiNj will be coming soon to the Saturday morning airwaves via a partnership with TV stations in Salt Lake City and Seattle. The program will have the same commitment to good science, lots of involvement by kids (with a young advisory board), and entertainment. Videos of the show will be made available to schools, museums, government agencies, and other organizations.

Do you know of a project or activity that might interest ZiNj readers? Would you like to contribute an article or idea? Do you know a youngster who'd like to write, send in a photo, or pose a question for Dr. What? Or do you just want to subscribe? If the answer is yes, contact ZiNj, 300 Rio Grande, Salt Lake City, UT 84101.

(By the way, ZiNj is short for *Zinjanthropus*, the name given by the Leakeys to an early hominid fossil found at Africa's Olduvai gorge in the 1960s.)



## Teaching with Historic Places

Places can teach! That's the idea behind Teaching with Historic Places, a project launched by the National Park Service and the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 1990. The program uses the National Register of Historic Places—which lists over 62,000 national, state, and local properties—to train educators and produce instructional materials for students. These properties, located throughout the country, reflect nearly every part of our history, including aspects not well represented in textbooks. The information on local communities is especially rich.

At the heart of Teaching with Historic Places is a core of short lesson plans by Fay Metcalf, an experienced and respected teacher and curriculum developer who serves as the series editor. Each plan includes background information, student objectives, copies of maps, photographs, and other primary documents, and activities to help students "put it all together." Designed for those who may never visit the sites, the lessons also make excellent pre- and post-visit units. They are adaptable for upper-elementary through high school grades.

One lesson plan investigates the early life of the Hidatsa and Mandan Indians, who lived in the Knife River villages of North Dakota. Through an activity (included as an insert in CRM 16, Number 2, 1993) students come to understand the relationship between historical and archeological evidence. Another plan, on the 17th century Saugus Iron Works of Massachusetts, guides students through the process of extracting information from photographs of excavated buildings and artifacts.

Other plans featuring archeological components, or whose information comes in part from archeological investigations, focus on Fort Frederica (Georgia), Awatovi Ruins (Arizona), and St. Anthony Falls flour mills (Minnesota). The last is part of an education kit on the theme of work in American history.

Currently thirteen plans can be purchased, with seven more available within the next few months. Nearly thirty more are in development. An "American Work/American Workplaces" kit is scheduled for later this year.

For ordering information, write to the Preservation Press, National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1785 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Washington, DC, 20036, or call toll-free 800-766-6847. For information on the program, or to propose a lesson plan for the series, write to Teaching with Historic Places, National Register of Historic Places, Interagency Resources Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127.



Minneapolis Mill Company Canal, one of the sites used in the Teaching with Historic Places program (courtesy Minnesota Historical Society).