



Development of DoD Guidance for Archaeological Site Monitoring and Condition Assessments

Project
09-442

Background:

The purpose of this study is to provide recommendations related to archaeological site monitoring, preservation practices, and condition assessment strategies for archaeological sites on Department of Defense (DoD) installations.

Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act, Article 14 of the Archaeological Resource Protection Act, and Executive Order 13287 (Preserve America) call for federal agencies to not only inventory and evaluate archaeological resources, but also to monitor their condition. DoD installations tend to make inventory and evaluation tasks priorities at the expense of monitoring site condition, due to budget and staffing limitations. Those installations that do monitor site condition rarely do so in a consistent fashion: baseline mapping or photographs are typically not provided to monitors; monitors may change from one visit to another; and data on site condition are usually not reported in a standardized fashion. Since additional manpower dedicated to monitoring is not a practical answer, this study was initiated with the goal of compiling best management practices to ensure consistent data collection and to aid in prioritizing future site treatment actions. The end products of the investigation include procedures for identifying current and potential threats to sites and tools to assist current Cultural Resource Managers (CRMs) with monitoring tasks.

Objective:

The objective of the project was to provide methods which DoD installations can use to actively monitor the condition of archaeological sites on DoD lands.

Summary of Approach:

Versar, Inc. began the project by reviewing methods for site monitoring in place using volunteer monitors in several western states and land management agencies. Draft forms and protocols were developed from these. The protocols and methods developed in this study were evaluated in a pilot program at Marine Corps Base (MCB) Quantico, located in Fauquier, Prince William, and Stafford counties, Virginia. Baseline data were collected from a selected sample of archaeological sites, and follow-on site monitoring visits were conducted after a suitable period of time that simulated an appropriate monitoring interval. The purpose of the field work was to assess the protocols developed, evaluate the data collection procedures from a practical standpoint, and make any alterations in the procedures as might be suggested by the results of the field evaluation.

Benefit:

The products from this study will assist DoD CRMs to meet the requirements for site monitoring outlined in the National Historic Preservation Act, the Archaeological Resources Protection Act and DoDI 4715.16 in a more consistent and

streamlined fashion, and provide tools for CRMs to prioritize future site treatment actions.

Accomplishments:

The project developed specific forms for baseline data recordation, and follow-up site condition assessments. This study produced several key recommendations for implementing this program.

Staffing - Dedicated site monitors and monitor training are recommended. A specifically dedicated monitor can assure continuity between visits, over the lifetime of the program. Site monitors can be volunteers, but volunteers will require training and oversight.

Timing - The timing and frequency of site visits should be based on the monitoring needs of each site. For example – sites where active looting has been observed or suspected should be visited more frequently than other sites. In areas of the country with thick deciduous vegetation, Fall can be a good time to relocate and visit certain sites though leaf litter may obscure those sites that have erosion issues (like the WWI trenches).

Photostations - It is recommended that particularly important stations be marked (such as active looting pits) where recreating the perspective is necessary. The use of systematic stations (established from cardinal directions at specific intervals) is recommended for the general site conditions photographs. Note that stations established beyond 75 to 100m from the site may be difficult to relocate; stations should either be established closer to the site, or clearly marked in some way if they are genuinely necessary.

Data - Site monitoring data should be maintained in a database, so that monitoring programs can be adjusted according to what is found during monitoring visits. This will also facilitate incorporation of monitoring results into planning documents, such as Integrated Cultural Resources Management Plans, funding requests, and reports to headquarters and DoD.

Program - Site forms and monitoring protocols should be periodically revisited so that adjustments can be made as warranted by reported site conditions.

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