

**CULTURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ON PUBLIC LANDS: A PUBLIC
EMPHASIS FOR A CHANGING INDUSTRY**

D. Andrew Stertz

D. Andrew Stertz, Ashley National Forest, Vernal, Utah 84078

WHAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT

The modern world has created many concerns that impact how CRM professionals conduct business. Managers' time is consumed with compliance activities related to laws that have become the bread and butter of the industry. The creation of new land uses and regulations have changed traditional expensive, labor-intensive excavation and recovery activities in favor of cheaper methods of surface documentation within a centralized, state-based catalog. Along with this is the idea that historic and archaeology sites are public resources. The complexity of establishing a value for them can become contentious because of the variety of public interests and perspectives.

There is no doubt that historic and archaeology sites capture the public's imagination like no other resource. The industry in the United States continues to branch out into specialized fields and managers require new skills to adequately administer them while budgets decrease.

This article focuses on the working realities of Public Lands Cultural Resource Management and how the public can be involved in the practice to cut costs, increase quality, and develop the future needs of the industry.

WHAT IS THE VALUE OF A CULTURAL RESOURCE?

The idea of value is related to the perspective of a consumer and the producer of a 'thing'. This concept has transcended economic systems from barterism to capitalism. Thomas F. King writes in his book *Cultural Resource Laws and Practice*, "The terms 'Cultural Resource Management' - which one might assume means managing cultural resources-is, in fact, used mostly by archaeologists and much more occasionally by architectural historians and historical architects, to refer to managing historic places of archeological, architectural, and historical interest and to considering such places in compliance with environmental and historic preservation laws [cf. Lipe and Lindsay 1974; Johnson and Schene 1987]" (King 1998:5).

The fact that historic and archaeology sites are legally comparable to natural resources lends itself to a question of their value. It is not hard to imagine under these legal circumstances that one would expect a Cultural Resource Commodity Exchange or Index much like oil or timber.

The reality of Cultural Resource value is very different from the ideas of markets and prices. Certainly there is an antiquities market that estimates and trades cultural materials. Most professionals deplore the antiquities black-market and consider it on the fringe of cultural resource management. The reason I mention it is to explicitly state that this type of value is a reality, but isn't a valid measure of worth in the context of this article.

The statement by King that the term Cultural Resource Management is mostly used by archaeologists and historians gives a clue to what kind of value these resources have,

i.e. scientific research. E Steve Cassells breaks down this concept further in his book *The Archaeology of Colorado*, when he states, “Perhaps one of the most misunderstood aspects about scientific research is the goal of science. It is not the purpose of scientists to try and prove particular theories. When one really tries to prove something, objectivity may suffer. Science is about understanding. It is about tearing apart a clock to see what makes it tick” (Cassells 1983:36).

The value of understanding through scientific research holds a large amount of water with historians and archaeologists but it is a professionally centric view. The rise NAGRPA shows that scientific value isn’t and shouldn’t be the only consideration Managers must estimate. David Hurst Thomas writes in *Archaeology Third Edition*, “One of the key challenges for those charged with managing America’s cultural resources is to find accommodation between the scientific and ethnic concerns” (Thomas 1998:605).

Cultural Resource Managers and Native Americans are only two groups in a vast arena of the public that has a stake in how valuable cultural resources are. James Oliver Horton states in *CRM Magazine*, in the article On-Site Learning: The Power of Historic Places, “For people of all ages, a visit to a historic site can stimulate interest in history, make it real, and thereby generate learning. In a recent study of popular uses of history, Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen explain that most Americans not only care about but are actively engaged in activities that allow them to feel connected to the past. Moreover, Americans tend to feel that connection most when visiting historic places and believe that they are more likely to discover ‘real’ or ‘true’ history at museums and historic sites than in a classroom” (Horton 2000:4).

Suggesting that the public values of cultural resources vary isn’t an epiphany to any Cultural Resource Manager. The complexity of public estimations of these resources’s value is the responsibility of CRM professionals and the public’s perspectives must be weighed carefully. A result of incompetent assessment could be expensive litigation.

Peter Stone writes in his report Applying the Message to the Medium in *The Archaeology Education Handbook: Sharing the Past with Kids*,

“Public Support for Archaeology...there is not one public sitting ‘out there’ waiting expectantly for archaeologists to present the findings of their latest excavations or research project. Rather, there are many publics with varying needs and interests and we need to tailor our work to each if our expectation of public interest is to be met. This is not news to anyone who has been involved in public archaeology for more than a few weeks. However, it is certainly my experience that it is new to many, if not the majority, of archaeologists. We tend to lead lives cocooned in an environment of like-minded people” (Smardz, Smith 2000:281).

The value of a cultural resource can never be truly measured, but its estimation is reliant on the professionals who must cope with increasing public demands, emotions, beliefs, and interests. This responsibility is fraught and cannot be done without public involvement or knowledge of the public needs.

WHY ARE CULTURAL RESOURCES ON PUBLIC LANDS SPECIAL?

Accurate and sensitive assessment of cultural resources is more important on public lands. The reason for this is because they are held in trust by the government for the people. Federal and State agencies hold vast amounts of cultural resources. They operate under the legislative mandates known as Section 106 and Section 110. James F. O'Connell and Robert G. Elston write in their article History, Theory, Archaeology, and the Management of Cultural Resources: Commentary in *Models for the Millennium: Great Basin Anthropology Today*, "Section 106 requires that the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation have an opportunity to comment on all federal undertaking that affect cultural resources listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. This produces the familiar sequence of inventory, evaluation, and mitigation accomplished by agency or consulting archaeologists" (Beck 1999:264).

Section 106 is law mandated to all projects using state or federal funds. Section 110 is specifically directed at federal agencies. O'Connell and Elston write, "But Section 110 of NHPA requires each federal agency to establish a program for the proactive discovery, evaluation, and management of significant cultural properties" (Beck 1999:264).

The existence of section 110 implies that Federal Public Land Agencies have a special obligation for the future protection and discovery of cultural resources. Cultural Resource Managers on Public lands have two obligations that allow them the opportunity to shape the industry in very dramatic ways. The first is that they are mandated to implement programs for the discovery and protection of Cultural Resources and the second is that they manage these resources on behalf of the American people.

The major question is how can this be done with decreasing budgets? The answer is to put the people to work.

WHAT IS THE CASE SO FAR?

The case built so far is that the value of a cultural resource is varied according to individual perspective. There is no doubt that these resources capture the public's curiosity unlike any other resource. The law has linked cultural resources with natural ones but they are not viewed as a fiduciary commodity. The determination of the value of resources rests with CRM professionals and as a result they must make decisions based on many factors. The estimation made must be in accordance with the public's involvement and needs in mind. The law designates that projects using funds from the state or federal governments must follow Section 106 process. Section 110 addresses the special obligations of Federal Public Land managers to implement a program to protect and discover cultural resources on the people's behalf. A question posed was how could it be done with shrinking or non-existent funds? The answer is putting the people to work.

CAN THE CASCADE OF CRITISM BE DAMMED?

The major criticism of putting the general public to work is the inability to maintain professional standards. There is the concern that vandalism will increase as public access increases. The other side of the vandalism issue is public awareness of the problem. When is the last time you've seen a pothunter awareness advertisement?

The idea that public skills are not anthropologic skills and therefore are inferior is another example of the same protectionist ideology that led to the exclusion of women and others. If there is any academic discipline that can handle the vast spectrum of public diversity it should be anthropology. Michelle Hegmon writes in her article *Setting Theoretical Egos Aside: Issues and Theory in North American Archaeology* in *American Antiquity*, "I argue that North American archaeology is, overall, characterized by considerable tolerance of theoretical diversity, and it may be that some of this open-mindedness stems from the broad anthropological training that most archaeologists receive" (Hegmon 2003:216).

The fact that North American Archaeology is tolerant of diverse theory also shows that it can easily be tolerant of diverse skills. Theory is fundamentally a larger problem than technique.

The criticism of a reduction in standards is illegitimate on several levels. The changing of regulations and the rise of CRM has resistance because of the belief that standards will deteriorate. William J. Cannon writes in his article *My Life as a Used Site Salesman* in *Models for the Millennium: Great Basin Anthropology Today*,

"In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Congress passed various federal laws regarding what have become known as cultural resources and cultural resource management (CRM). Within the archaeological community, there was considerable debate and concern over whether CRM work at the federal agencies could result in good archaeology. There were fears that survey work, site evaluations, site mitigations, etc., would become rote tasks performed by bureaucratic archaeologists who had no skills or ability in conducting proper archaeological research. Seminars, such as the six reported in the Airlie House Report [McGimsely and Davis 1977], were held where archaeologists employed by universities, contractors, and government agencies debated these issues and made recommendations on how to ensure that CRM archaeology was 'good' archaeology. Today, while many of these same issues and questions remain, the dire predictions of many have not come to pass. Archaeology in North America has survived and even thrived on CRM during the last 20 years. While it was argued by some that financial waste and nothing but worthless reporting of archaeological sites would take place, in fact, valuable research has been accomplished from CRM work. One need only look at the number of archaeologists at professional conferences who work for federal agencies or CRM firms, and the number and quality of research reports related to CRM work presented at these meetings" (Beck 1999:256).

The intransigence towards change shouldn't exist in the spirit of Americanist Archaeology defined by Binford and Taylor. Furthermore it has the potential to isolate CRM professionals from the public that they desperately need to know.

The quality of work conducted on the Ashley National Forest through the Passport in Time program is a shining example of increases in the quality research and understanding of the area's past through volunteerism. This program has generated wonderful new ideas on future projects using better technologies. The 2004 P.I.T Carter Road Metal Detecting Project is one example of this.

The quality of work is reliant on the mid level managers. The real issues concerning quality are not 'is the public capable of conducting sound research?' but 'how is the program constructed to insure quality?' This concept in its basic form is training.

WHAT WILL MAKE THE PROGRAMS WORK?

The first step for planning a program is establishing an objective. Realistic questions must be asked before other planning steps can be answered. Suggestions for a beginning are to ask: Is this program going to be long or short term? Is this project for research, fieldwork, conservation, education, staff development, public relations, etc. Regardless of the objective, a sector of the public can be found to fit. The general public is overwhelmingly diverse.

The second step is to understand the legal and supervisory obligations the program manager has. The program for all the value will be worth nothing if it is illegal and causes your agency to be sued.

Dr. Byron Loosle at the Ashley National Forest has run public oriented programs in his twelve years as Forest Archaeologist. They are the previously mentioned Passport in Time program, which he has run since 1991 and his Intern program, since 1994. Both programs have different objective, but often contribute to each other. Both of these programs require a volunteer agreement. This is a simple form that covers the legal bases for the agency.

The Passport In Time is a nationwide program that is oriented towards public relations and research. The types of projects vary and attract different segments of the public, but the objective is consistent. The Intern program focuses on the compliance work with skill development. The quality of work is supervised directly by him and his professional crew leaders. The program emphasizes constant training and improvement, which contributes back to the quality of work. Both fulfill the requirements of Section 106 and Section 110.

The cost of the intended program is another factor to consider. Assessing the financial hurdles will determine the overall feasibility and size. This assessment might require a reevaluation of your objectives. In *Interpretation of Cultural and Natural Resources* by Douglas M. Knudson, Ted T. Cable, and Larry Beck, they state,

“...One of the most common myths about volunteers is that their work is free. Volunteer programs never operate without cost. Unless the work is thoroughly planned and wisely managed, it can actually lower total productivity. Before initiating a volunteer program, administrators should carefully evaluate whether they want one enough to invest the necessary personnel, time and money to make it successful. Top management and the paid staff have to support it. If staff members see the volunteer programs as a threat to their own jobs, they will seldom provide enough support and acceptance to maximize productivity. The National Park Service figures it gets \$32 of work for each dollar it spends recruiting and training volunteers [Newman, 1993]” (Knudson et al. 1999:430).

Knudson, Cable, and Beck lend helpful suggestions that will contribute to the program’s success. On planning they state that other considerations dealing with budgeting are promoting, training, schedules, and recognition of their efforts. They include items in the planning such as setting aside one coordinator for the volunteers, job descriptions, and a space for them to work and congregate.

In K. Smardz and S. Smith’s *The Archaeology Education Handbook*, Nan McNutt’s article *Assessing Archaeology Education* assert that there are five guiding questions for evaluating a program. These questions are, “What are the goals and objectives for this curriculum/lesson? How will I know what students are learning? What do students know about archaeology and what do they wonder about? Do the selected instructional materials clearly address the intended goals and objectives? How can the long-term effects of the program be evaluated” (Smardz, Smith 2000:204)?

The objectives involved in Archaeology education programs are essentially the same for training crews and the public in CRM research.

The final element to success deals directly with quality of research and a how promotions affect the duties of supervisors. Knudson, Cable, and Beck write specifically about interpreting, but I believe this transcends over into various aspects of CRM. They write, “In some cases, talented people develop their interpretive knowledge and skills until they become pretty competent. Then, they switch to another job that takes them away from their competency. That is similar to bringing up a minor league pitcher to the majors, letting him develop into top winning form for three or four years, then putting him on the bench to keep score and coach young pitchers-at the peak of his pitching skills-and paying him more for switching” (Knudson et al. 1999: 427).

WHO SHOULD BE RECRUITED?

There seems to be a complaint in CRM about the lack of critical skills training the traditional Anthropology programs. In *Archaeology Third Edition*, Robert G. Elston writes in *On Getting a Practical Archaeological Education*,

“Academic colleagues often tell me that there are so many other demands on student time made by core Anthropology curricula, that courses teaching the essential crafts of archaeology are difficult to introduce into existing graduate anthropology programs. But this is exactly the point. As archaeology becomes increasingly professionalized, higher proportions of postgraduates are following non-academic careers where the broadest possible anthropological education has less value than specific skills needed to practice contemporary archaeology. If core curricula are not adjusted to acknowledge this reality, anthropology programs cannot serve the needs of graduates, the public, or the discipline” (Hurst 1989: 570).

Robert D. Drennan writes in his book *Statistics for Archaeologists*, “...A good many students seem to embark on graduate study of archaeology equipped only with high school algebra- victims, perhaps, of the same kind of bad advice I myself received as a first-semester freshman in college, when my academic advisor scornfully dismissed the math course I intended to enroll in as irrelevant to my interests” (Drennan 1996: viii).

My experience with conducting cultural resource surveys with college interns from exclusively Anthropology backgrounds lead me to concur with Drennan and Elston that, essential skills are not being taught. This doesn't affect my outlook as a crew chief. I believe that one of the reasons for my position is to teach effective and sound field methods. As a result, the best recruit is a team-oriented person that is willing to learn. Theory, skills and technique can be taught to anyone with these traits.

Innovative sources within the public can be found that enhance CRM work. An example of this could be a GIS expert. Working with a clean slate can also help the quality of work because supervisors can instruct on local procedures and techniques without worrying about left over terrible ones.

In *Legacy Magazine*, Tapping a New Volunteer Market, Skot Latona writes, “Staff needed a new volunteer source and began looking at how traditions, habits, and policies limited vision to traditional market segment, leaving large sectors of the community under-utilized. Two non-traditional segments that surfaced were youth and adults with families. Each group had challenges-supervision and professionalism on the one hand, and competing family obligations on the other. It didn't take long to recognize that each group's barrier to volunteering suddenly became strength when paired together, and the Parent/Child Naturalist Team Program was born” (Latona 2003:12).

The difference in working with young adults at the junior to senior level in high school and the freshman and sophomore level in college isn't vastly different. The learning and professional capacities of a mature 16 to 17 year olds to immature 21-22 year olds are comparable. Maturity increases when students are held accountable for their research. The experience and references gained through CRM for young folks can steer students towards various studies in school and careers. A key ingredient for managers who wish to utilize the public must be skills in education techniques and good degree of patience.

CAN PUBLIC LANDS CULTURAL RESOURCE MANAGERS REALLY CHANGE THE WORLD?

The answer is of course they can. The need for various kinds of skills and input in cultural resource management along with an effective program can have dramatic impact into the future of the industry. Skills can be taught to youngsters early such as site stewardship, methods, and theory. This will create a whole generation of skilled people who have been sculpted at an early age. If a manager can retain one skilled young adult a year, within five years that manager will have a cheap and effective CRM crew of professionals on their hands.

This idea occurred to me after the 2002 Mustang fire on the Ashley National Forest. I realized as I was hauling large straw waddles and other heavy, cumbersome materials up a steep canyon that you didn't need a genius to contribute to these kinds of projects. The Uintah County School system had given students Wednesdays off because of budget constraints. I thought if the right kinds of connections were established, certainly there is a young person that would be interested in gaining experience and my back was interested in teaching a student to haul straw waddles.

CONCLUSIONS?

The value of a cultural resource cannot truly be measured but professionals must try to establish one. The law considers these resources similar to natural ones. The public has a large interest in these resources and demand to be included in various ways. Public lands have a special obligation to research on behalf of the people. The realities of CRM require innovative approaches to solving complex problems. The answer in most cases is to put the people to work. The critics to this answer have the same criticisms that excluded women and others in the field. Quality and standards can still be maintained by the development of a thoughtful program and watchful mid-level managers. Programs should be developed with realistic objectives, controls, costs, and evaluations. The selection of personnel is dependent on projects and programs, but team-oriented, eager learners are the best. Cultural Resource Managers on public lands should consider developing the skills of the young because positive future impacts to the industry. The twenty-first century is here and it requires a new approach to this changing industry.

REFERENCES CITED

- Cannon, William J.
1999 My Life as a Used Site Salesman. In *History, Theory, Archaeology, and the Management of Cultural Resources*. Edited by Charlotte Beck, pp.256-260. University of Utah Press, Salt Lake City, UT.
- Cassells, E. Steve
1997 *The Archaeology of Colorado*. Revised Edition. Johnson Books, Boulder, CO.
- Drennan, Robert D.
1996 *Statistics for Archaeologist: A Commonsense Approach*. Plenum Press, New York.
- Elston, Robert
1998 On Getting a Practical Archaeological Education. In 1998 *Archaeology Third Edition*. By Thomas, David Hurst. pp. 570.Harcourt Brace and Company, Fort Worth, TX.
- Hegmon, Michelle
2003 Setting Theoretical Egos Aside: Issues and Theory in North American Archaeology. *American Antiquity*, Vol 68 N.2:213-233.
- Horton, James Oliver
2000 On-Site Learning The Power of Historic Places. *CRM* Vol.23, No.8: 4-5.
- King, Thomas F.
1998 *Cultural Resource Laws and Practice an Introductory guide*. AltaMira Press, Walnut Creek, CA.
- Knudson, Douglas M., Ted T. Cable, and Larry Beck
1995 *Interpretation of Cultural and Natural Resources*. Venture Publishing. State College, PA.
- Latona, Skot.
2003 Tapping a New Volunteer Market. *Legacy*. Vol 14 N.3: pp.12-17.
- McNutt, Nan
2000 Applying the Message to the Medium. In *The Archaeology Education Handbook: Sharing the Past with Kids*. Edited by Karolyn Smardz, Shelley J. Smith, pp.192-204. AltaMira Press, Walnut Creek, CA.

O'Connell, James F., and Robert Elston

1999 *History, Theory, Archaeology, and the Management of Cultural Resources*.
Edited by Charlotte Beck, pp.261-265. University of Utah Press, Salt Lake City, UT.

Stone, Peter

2000 Applying the Message to the Medium. In *The Archaeology Education Handbook: Sharing the Past with Kids*. edited by Karolyn Smardz, Shelley J. Smith, pp.280-287. AltaMira Press, Walnut Creek, CA.

Thomas, David Hurst

1998 *Archaeology Third Edition*. Harcourt Brace and Company, Fort Worth, TX.