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News Release

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Kaibab National Forest archaeologist honored with statewide award

Williams, Ariz., June 4, 2015—For Immediate Release. A Kaibab National Forest archaeologist was recently recognized with a prestigious statewide award in public archaeology by the Arizona Governor’s Archaeology Advisory Commission.

Neil Weintraub, zone archaeologist for the Williams and Tusayan ranger districts, was named the 2015 “Professional Archaeologist” of the year by the commission for his significant contributions to the protection and preservation of, and education about, Arizona’s non-renewable archaeological resources.

“Neil’s commitment to public archaeology and education goes way beyond what is required of a federal archaeologist,” said Ann Howard, deputy state historic preservation officer and the person who nominated Weintraub for the award. “His dedication, commitment and enjoyment of sharing the stewardship message and ethic with the public make him stand out.”

Weintraub has been an archaeologist with Kaibab National Forest for 25 years. As part of his duties, he surveys National Forest lands for cultural resources, identifies and documents the sites that are discovered, and then ensures they are monitored and protected.

The Kaibab National Forest is particularly rich in historically and culturally significant resources, with more than 10,000 archaeological sites recorded on the forest. These historic properties, which Weintraub has helped locate and manage over his quarter-century-long tenure, are related to a long history of human occupation and use of the Kaibab National Forest dating back at least 12,000 years.

But it was for much more than his standard job duties that Weintraub was singled out by the Arizona Governor’s Archaeology Advisory Commission for excellence. Weintraub provides dozens of outreach and interpretive programs annually, reaching hundreds of people, including children, with his stewardship message. He also oversees many of Kaibab National Forest’s volunteer partners including Grinnell College interns, Arizona Site Stewards, rock art researchers, Passport in Time participants, and individual volunteers, who contribute thousands of hours each year toward the management, protection, documentation and interpretation of heritage resources across the forest.

“Given our challenging multiple use mission, protecting and preserving these sites would be nearly impossible if it were not for the relationships and mutual trust that have been built with our partners over many years,” Weintraub said. “We have countless examples in which permittees, seasonal employees, volunteers, local residents or others have told us about previously undiscovered sites. We investigate their discoveries by walking the landscape with them and having them help us with archaeological documentation. Forging these relationships has always brought mutual benefits, as I have often learned

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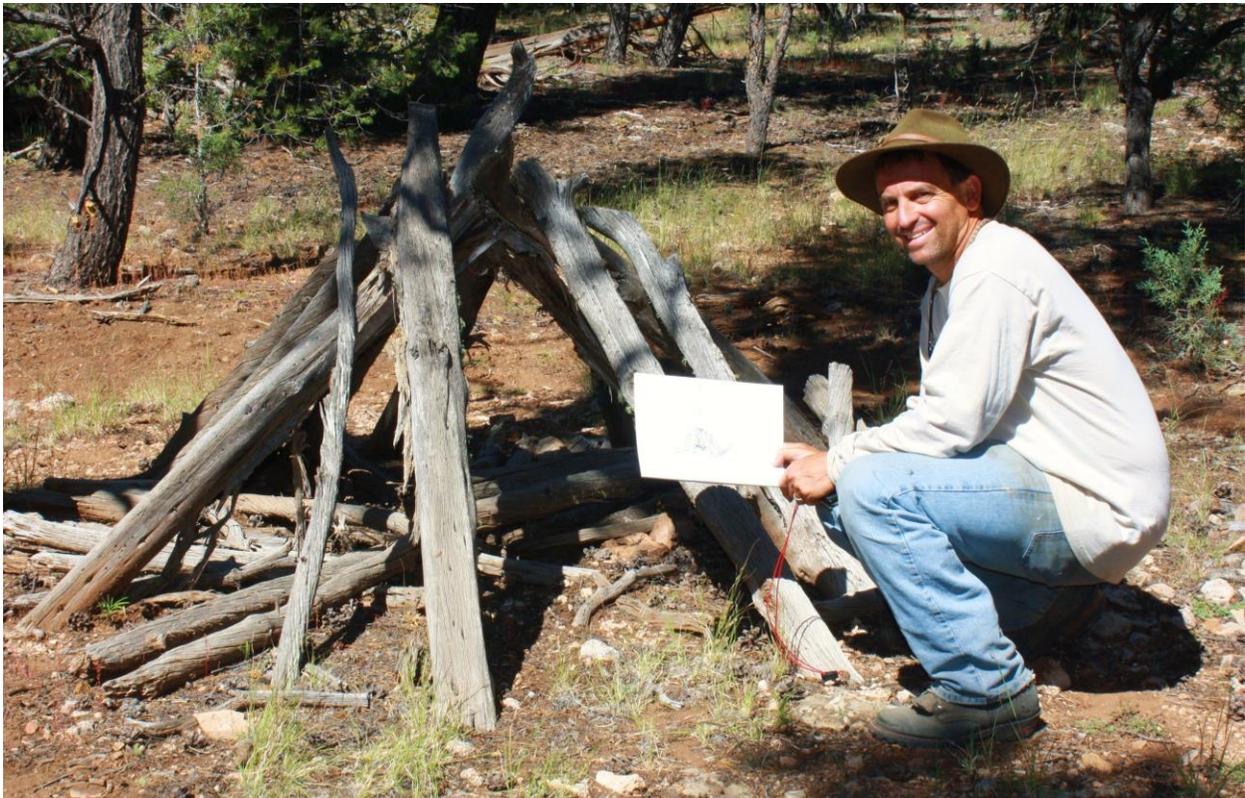
more from them than they do from me. Most importantly we have all those extra eyes helping us protect and preserve these ancient, fragile places.”

Weintraub’s contributions go beyond even cultural resource preservation, though, to a broader commitment to community, which Howard made sure to point out in her nomination of him. Specifically, she included Weintraub’s long-term work as a volunteer with the northern Arizona’s Big Brothers Big Sisters organization. She described how he always finds ways to get the youth involved in the program interested in Arizona’s precious past.

“Neil has a never-ceasing enthusiasm for raising the awareness of the citizens of Arizona, especially the children,” Howard said. “Making children sensitive to the fragility of our state’s non-renewable heritage resources is absolutely critical to the future protection and preservation of Arizona’s cultural resources.”

Weintraub was presented with his award in mid-May at an awards luncheon in Flagstaff as part of the 2015 Arizona Historic Preservation Conference.

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Archaeologist Neil Weintraub kneels next to a brush shelter discovered on Kaibab National Forest.



Archaeologist Neil Weintraub shows kids how to make a split twig figurine during a youth camp.

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Archaeologist Neil Weintraub uses a GPS unit to locate cultural sites on Kaibab National Forest.

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