Archeology Program

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

December 15, 2004 Archeology E-Gram

PUBLIC MEANING OF ARCHEOLOGICAL HERITAGE

"The Public Meaning of Archeological Heritage" conference was held October 27-28 at the University of Maryland Inn & Conference Center in College Park. Participants in the training explored the public meaning of archeological heritage from international, national and regional perspectives. Case studies focused on parks, museums, descendent communities and local communities. Because of the location of this training, many of the case studies were specific to the meaning and interpretation of African American archeological heritage in the middle Atlantic region.

A description of the four module curriculum, of which this training is Module I, may be found online at http://www.cr.nps.gov/aad/SITES/inspire/index.htm. Module II – "Archeology & Interpretation" – consists of two parts, Interpretation for Archeologists: A Guide to Increasing Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities <http://www.cr.nps.gov/aad/ifora/index.htm> and Archeology for Interpreters: A Guide to Knowledge of the Resource <http://www.cr.nps.gov/aad/afori/index.htm>, and trains archeologists and interpreters together in the skills and abilities needed to carry out effective interpretation of archeological resources.

PUBLIC ARCHEOLOGY IN THE UNITED STATES: A TIMELINE

Discover some of the major events in public archeology between 1784-2004 in this new web feature at <http://www.cr.nps.gov/aad/timeline/timeline.htm>. This timeline highlights key events throughout those years, including new legislation, the development of new organizations and public programs, significant publications, and interesting cases involving the protection and preservation of sites (both terrestrial and submerged) and collections.

ARCHEOLOGY & ETHNOGRAPHY PROGRAM CHANGES

The Archeology & Ethnography program has undergone several structural changes in recent months. First, A&E has been restructured into two independent programs – the Archeology program and the Ethnography program. Frank McManamon will continue as program manager of the Archeology program, and also as NPS Chief Archeologist and Departmental Consulting Archeologist.

Second, the responsibility for overseeing NPS compliance with the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) has been moved to the Office of Indian Affairs and American Culture (IAAC) in the Intermountain region. Park NAGPRA will be supervised by Cyd Martin, director of IAAC. Mary S. Carroll will continue as Park NAGPRA Program Lead and will relocate to Denver.

And finally, the Archeology program welcomes Martha Graham and Karen Mudar, both of whom transferred from the National NAGPRA program to the Archeology program effective November 15, 2004.

ARCHEOLOGICAL CYBERINFRASTRUCTURE

The NPS Archeology Program was represented at a three-day meeting sponsored by the National Science Foundation held to discuss development of a "cyberinfrastructure" for archeological data and information. A cyberinfrastructure for archeology will eventually involve common archeological data standards or "metadata" standards that will enable researchers and archeologists documenting archeological resources to

provide a common set of markers that will permit the comparison of archeological data and information among different projects and databases. The Reports portion of the National Archeological Database (NADB-R) is recognized as an initial necessary tool for identifying potential archeological information and data for comparative research and sharing.

More and more archeological data and information are available digitally. Effective means of accessing information and comparing data sets among different projects need to be developed and utilized. Projects already underway for specific data and information include the Chaco Digital Initiative (www.chacoarchive.org), led by Steve Plog at the University of Virginia, and the Digital Archaeological Archive of Chesapeake Slavery (www.daacs.org), led by Fraser Neiman at Monticello.

These days, public archeology projects create most of the archeological data and information. It is important that agency archeologists be aware of this aspect of archeological research, curation, and data management and participate in developing solutions to this challenge.