



Archeology Program

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



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President of the Archaeological Institute of America affirms support for public archeology in the U.S.

In the September/October 2004 volume of *Archaeology*, Jane C. Waldbaum, noted the important role that federal archeology programs have in protecting archeological resources in the United States. If you missed this column when it first came out, it is available on-line at

<http://www.archaeology.org/0409/etc/president.html>.

NPS archeologists honored for outstanding service

Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton presented Gary Cummins, manager, Harpers Ferry Center, and Thomas D. Thiessen, Supervisory Archeologist, Midwest Archeological Center, with meritorious service awards on February 2, 2005. Meritorious service awards are the second highest honorary recognition granted to employees of the Department of the Interior. Gary began his Park Service career as an archeologist; Tom has been a valued member of the Midwest Center's staff for many years.

Conservation Service Award presented to NPS staff and other members of the Operation Indian Rocks Interagency Task Force

Secretary Norton presented the Conservation Service Award to Assistant U.S. Attorney Margaret Stanish, a federal prosecutor, and to members of her task force, including Todd Swain, Special Agent, National Park Service. Members of the "Operation Indian Rocks" task force investigated and prosecuted a looting ring that stole Native American artifacts from archaeological sites. Law enforcement recovered more than 11,000 artifacts and convicted the defendants under the Archaeological Resources Protection Act. An article by Todd Swain on Operation Indian Rocks is on-line at <http://www.death-valley.us/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=907>.

National Park Service contributes to training on Iraq cultural heritage

The National Park Service assisted the Getty Conservation Institute (GCI) the World Monuments Fund (WMF) in the successful GCI-WMF Iraq Cultural Heritage Conservation Initiative's training program. The training concerned best practices in the stewardship of Iraqi cultural heritage. It was held for staff of the Iraq State Board of Antiquities and Heritage in Amman, Jordan, in November and December 2004. Tim Whalen, Director of GCI, and Bonnie Burnham, President of WMF, specifically acknowledged the contribution of Phil Wilson of Salinas Pueblo Missions National Monument as one of the trainers in their letter thanking the National Park Service for its assistance. Phil provided instruction in condition assessment methods and techniques for archeological and other kinds of heritage sites. In developing this training program the GCI and WMF benefited from discussions with Dr. Terry Childs of the Washington Office's Archeology Program about the methods and techniques the NPS has developed for site condition assessment. They also used aspects of the Archeological Site Management Information System (ASMIS) in developing the training program for the Iraqis.

Upgrade to the Archeological Sites Management Information System (ASMIS)

The Archeology Program released the latest version of ASMIS, the database tool for the inventory and management of National Park system archeological sites. ASMIS is used at the park, center, and regional levels for documenting and reporting important resource management information, and to assist park managers in planning the park's annual operations and strategic, multi-year programs. At the national level, ASMIS data about the number and condition of archeological sites is used to respond to strategic

planning performance, heritage assets audits, and a 2004 OMB cultural resource audit. This newest release includes various changes and improvements, many of which respond to management needs that have developed since the last upgrade.

Tracking the maintenance and treatment of NPS archeological sites

The National Park Service is developing a database, tracking system, and standardized procedures for the maintenance of its assets (e.g., visitor centers, storage buildings) and heritage assets (e.g., archeological sites, historic buildings). The goals of this endeavor are to conduct condition assessments to determine maintenance needs and costs, to determine asset valuations, and to perform efficient capital planning and budgeting over the long term. Archeological sites require maintenance, such as condition assessment, stabilization, documentation, and other treatments, and therefore need to be carefully folded into the procedures developed. A servicewide panel of NPS archeologists and superintendents met with contractors and representatives of the Park Facilities Maintenance Division on February 8-10, 2005, to discuss how best to adapt the procedures and database to the unique needs and characteristics of archeological resources. Although the dialog and work has just begun, several positive outcomes are envisioned such as better maintenance of more archeological sites and more accurate estimates of maintenance costs for archeological resources.

New book on evaluating archeological significance published

Barbara Little, archeologist with the Archeology Program in the National Center for Cultural Resources, is the co-editor of *Heritage of Value, Archaeology of Renown: Reshaping Archaeological Assessment and Significance*, published in 2005 by the University Press of Florida. Authors urge a re-thinking of evaluation, a core concept in cultural heritage management, in chapters on site assessment in the U.S., Australia, the United Kingdom, South Africa, Brazil and the Netherlands.

Expertise provided on archeological curation for the state of South Carolina

Archeologist Terry Childs participated in a Blue Ribbon panel established by the State Archeologist to evaluate and improve the South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology's Curation, Loan, and Access Policy for archeological collections. The result of two and a half days of work by the panel was a final policy supported by archeologists across the state. All travel expenses for this meeting were paid for by the state of South Carolina.

Archeology Program archeologist provides expertise in Egypt

Archeologist Terry Childs participated in a joint expedition of Boston University and University of Naples (Italy) colleagues in January to excavate an ancient port on the Red Sea that dates to the Middle Kingdom. Childs provided expertise on the excavation and interpretation of the early copper smelting technology revealed at the site, which is little known.

Archeology E-Gram, distributed via e-mail on a regular basis, includes announcements about news, new publications, training opportunities, national and regional meetings, and other important goings-on related to public archeology in the National Park Service and other public agencies. Recipients are encouraged to forward *Archeology E-Grams* to colleagues and relevant mailing lists and new subscribers are accepted. Contact Martha Graham, Archeology Program, NPS, at (202) 354-2110, martha_graham@nps.gov.