

Proactive Management Examples

Hello, I'm Connie Stone. I served as a cultural resource specialist in Arizona's Phoenix District for more than 20 years. I currently work in the Arizona State Office on renewable energy projects.

Welcome to this module in the "Fundamentals for Managing the Cultural Heritage Program" training series. In this presentation, I'm going to describe some examples of proactive cultural resource management from the Phoenix District. I'll also offer some advice on implementing these types of projects and programs.

Proactive management involves active and well-planned efforts to identify, protect, and manage cultural resources for their scientific, cultural heritage, and educational values. Proactive work is mandated by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, the Archaeological Resources Protection Act, and other laws.

For example, Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act states that each Federal agency shall establish a preservation program for the identification, evaluation, and protection of historic properties.

In many field offices, the work associated with Section 106 compliance is more urgent, and it consumes more time and attention. At the same time, we are expected to set and meet annual accomplishment targets for inventory, data collection, site protection, interpretive development, monitoring, and public outreach.

In the Phoenix District, we've always had a heavy workload of Section 106 compliance for the lands, minerals, and range programs. We manage two field offices and two national monuments, all of which contain unique and significant cultural resources. Over the years, the number of archaeologists declined while the workload increased. Yet we still managed to accomplish proactive work-with a little help from our friends-and we took pride in those accomplishments. Here are a few examples for your consideration.

The Arizona Site Steward Program was the first effort to establish a well-trained corps of volunteers to monitor and protect archaeological sites. The Program recently celebrated its 20th anniversary. Currently, more than 800 volunteer site stewards monitor the condition of thousands of sites on federal, state, and county lands. They also assist the BLM and other agencies in site documentation projects and public outreach events.

Each year, site stewards devote thousands of hours to the Phoenix District, where they monitor 80 to 90 archaeological sites. The program is managed by the State Historic Preservation Office under the terms of an interagency agreement.

BLM and other agencies contribute funding that's been used to support a program manager position, a training program, database management, a newsletter, and other expenses. Volunteer regional coordinators help to coordinate the efforts of local volunteers. This organizational model reduces the associated workload of agency archaeologists.

We can benefit from this program without a lot of effort. For example, the Phoenix District uses a group volunteer agreement with the program through the SHPO, rather than an individual agreement with each volunteer. Of course, we've found that the more we are actively engaged in working directly with the site stewards, the more effective is the volunteer program. It's great to work with such enthusiastic and dedicated volunteers. They make an important contribution to our cultural heritage program.

For more information on the Arizona Site Steward Program, check out its web page and newsletter on the Arizona State Parks website. It now includes a video message narrated by Harrison Ford, who portrayed Indiana Jones in the Raiders of the Lost Ark movies. As the Program's most famous volunteer, Ford advocates for a more responsible approach than the image conveyed by Indiana Jones.

Now I'd like to describe an on-the-ground interpretive project developed by the Lower Sonoran Field Office near Gila Bend, Arizona. The Painted Rocks petroglyph site is a mound of basalt boulders that contain hundreds of prehistoric petroglyphs. In addition to its impressive rock art, the site is conveniently located along the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail. In the 1770s, Anza led an exploratory expedition across the Arizona and California deserts to San Francisco. The Anza trail later served as a route for pioneers and the Butterfield Overland Mail Company and stagecoach.

The Painted Rocks site was ideal for interpretive development. The site was already known to the public and was easily accessible from an interstate highway. It was part of state park land that reverted to BLM ownership in the 1980s. There was already some nearby development of roads, restrooms, and camping facilities. The petroglyphs are easy to view from a short and level hike around the rock knoll. And the site conveys an interesting story about human activities and the struggles of long-distance travel through many centuries.

Hard work, creative funding, and partnerships were the keys to a successful interpretive project. Volunteers helped to map and document the condition of the petroglyphs. BLM used a transportation enhancement grant from the state to upgrade the recreational facilities and to construct an interpretive trail.

The BLM archaeologist worked with a contractor to design and produce new interpretive signs. Indian tribes were given the opportunity to review and contribute information for the signs. An artist from the Tohono O'odham Nation provided artwork, and the first sign on the trail includes versions of the text in the O'odham and Spanish languages. Partners included the National Park Service and the Anza Trail Coalition of Arizona. The Painted Rocks project illustrates a productive working relationship with the BLM recreation program.

Another example is the interpretive development of the Harquahala Peak Smithsonian Observatory. This structure is part of a district listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It's on the summit of the highest peak in southwestern Arizona. The nearby Harquahala Mountain Back Country Byway is a popular destination for off-highway vehicles. The structure was a solar observatory established by the Smithsonian Institution in the 1920s.

It was not the typical dome-shaped building. The scientists constructed a two-story adobe building, which they later covered with corrugated metal for protection against the harsh weather. It housed living quarters and instruments used for measurements of solar intensity. In their spare time, the researchers constructed a croquet court near the building. The observatory was in poor condition by the late 1990s, in spite of prior stabilization projects.

BLM used deferred maintenance funds to repair and stabilize the structure. BLM operations staff completed much of the stabilization work, under the watchful eyes of archaeologists. Off-highway vehicle grant funds from the State of Arizona were used to install a loop trail, benches, parking, and interpretive signs. A State Heritage Fund grant supported the rehabilitation of the historic pack trail. An interpretive brochure was produced with cultural heritage program funds.

The interpretive signs focused on the nature of the scientific work and the challenges of living and working in the remote and rugged conditions on the mountaintop. A BLM volunteer traveled to the Smithsonian Institution to review the detailed correspondence between the scientists and their colleagues in Washington. BLM published the letters as a volume in its Arizona publication series. They offer compelling personal accounts of a unique aspect of Arizona history.

The Agua Fria National Monument was designated in 2000. Its many archaeological sites include spectacular rock art and pueblo villages inhabited between AD 1300 and 1450. National monument status directed public attention to the monument's mesas and canyons. Volunteer site stewards stepped up their efforts at monitoring. We competed successfully for challenge cost share funds for surveys, site documentation, and research projects. Challenge cost share requires a matching contribution from one or more partners, which can consist of volunteer labor or donations to cover project expenses.

Between 2001 and 2009, the total value of contributions from our partners exceeded 250,000 dollars. Unfortunately as of late 2011, the status and potential availability of challenge cost share funds is uncertain. The key point is to pursue whatever funds are available from a variety of sources. Regardless of where you obtain funding, it's important to cultivate partnerships.

To be competitive, develop well-written project proposals that are feasible and consistent with BLM strategies and resource management plans. The BLM Partnerships website offers further information and resources on partnership development. In the Agua Fria, we found that our volunteers' passion for rock art provided a fertile ground for productive partnerships.

Our partners in rock art documentation and research projects included the Arizona Archaeological Society and the Deer Valley Rock Art Center, which is affiliated with Arizona State University. We made special efforts to promote the area's scientific research potential. Scientists from the Museum of Northern Arizona and Northern Arizona University completed the Pueblo la Plata Mapping Project. They produced a comprehensive volume on the archaeology of the national monument, called "Perry Mesa and Its World."

At the same time, archaeologists and ecologists from Arizona State University worked together on an innovative project called Legacies on the Landscape. This project is examining the long-term effects on the landscape of prehistoric occupation and land use.

The Agua Fria National Monument is an active area of research projects that are transforming our knowledge. These projects are also contributing to public education as compelling examples of science in action. All of these projects involved experienced volunteers or students under the direction of professional archaeologists.

In many cases, the BLM's funding supported graduate students who participated in fieldwork, volunteer supervision, analysis, and report preparation under the guidance of university professors and museum researchers.

BLM archaeologists conducted project oversight and participated to the extent possible. Several masters' theses and doctoral dissertations have been completed or are in progress. We worked with the universities and museums through the system of Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units. The CESU system was created through a Memorandum of Understanding among the BLM, other Federal agencies, universities, museums, and other partners.

It is a national network of institutions engaged in cooperative research efforts. The CESU system is divided into regions. However, a BLM office can work with an institution outside the boundaries of its region. Each CESU region has a host institution, which plays a central role for administrative purposes.

There are advantages to working with partner institutions through the CESU system. One can take advantage of existing cooperative agreements between the Department of Interior and CESU partners. The administrative fee charged by CESU partners is lower than the amount that would be charged under a standard assistance agreement.

Through CESU websites, agencies can solicit project proposals and share progress reports on projects. For more information on the system of Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units, visit a national or regional CESU website. Many partnership projects will require assistance agreements.

So what's the difference between an assistance agreement and a contract? Contracts are used to acquire property or services for the direct benefit or use of the Federal government.

Assistance agreements have an added dimension. They require substantial involvement between the government and its partner during the course of the project. For example, BLM archaeologists may be actively involved in the fieldwork.

Agreements are also used to accomplish "a public purpose of support or stimulation authorized by Federal statute"-for example, Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act. These projects further the goals of the cultural heritage program.

It's important to note that the awarding of assistance agreements, like contracts, requires a competitive process. Prospective partners must submit proposals that address the BLM's statement of work. BLM will then fund the bidder who submits a proposal that best fits our needs and funding.

The National Training Center offers courses on assistance agreements. They clarify the responsibilities of serving as an assistance representative, a role similar to that of a contracting officer's representative for a contract. I highly recommend this type of training, given that the procurement process is never easy.

When you prepare a budget estimate for a project, or when you need to report the value of volunteer contributions, helpful information is available at a website called independent sector dot org. This website calculates the current dollar value of volunteer labor, which exceeds 20 dollars per hour.

I'd like to conclude by mentioning some of the public outreach efforts in the Agua Fria. Our cultural heritage program volunteers were instrumental in establishing an organization called the Friends of the Agua Fria National Monument.

Under BLM guidance, they now offer public tours of archaeological sites. They also feature the monument in educational events associated with Arizona Archaeology Awareness Month.

In 2006, the monument celebrated the Antiquities Act Centennial by hosting the Agua Fria Festival. More than two thousand people attended the event, which featured site tours, educational exhibits, hands-on activities for children, and Native American dance performances.

Finally, I offer a word of caution-expect unforeseen complications when you plan big events. Good partners and occasionally a big backhoe will help you overcome obstacles. The benefits of productive partnerships far outweigh the time and attention that you will devote to them in your proactive management efforts. In the process, you can accomplish good things for the cultural program - while having fun!

Thank you for attending this training program and happy trails to you!

Links:

[CESU](#)

[Independent Sector](#)