

Managing Cultural Resources with Other Land Uses

Module 1- Lesson 1

Welcome to “Managing Cultural Resources with Other Land Uses.” I’m Gary Stumpf. I worked for the Bureau of Land Management for nearly 30 years, most of that time as the Deputy Preservation Officer in the Arizona State Office. I’ve enjoyed serving as an instructor for various courses at the National Training Center during my tenure in Arizona, and at times I have been invited to speak to non-cultural resource specialists about what BLM does to manage its cultural resources. I have been asked to talk with minerals specialists, realty specialists and staffs in other programs about how they and the cultural resource personnel in their offices can work together to more efficiently process land use authorizations, develop land use plans, prepare environmental documents, and carry out other duties while complying with the laws and regulations that protect cultural resources.

This course is an outgrowth of those training presentations to non-cultural resource specialists. The objective of this course is for you to be able to work more effectively with your cultural resource colleagues to carry out the projects, land use authorizations and other efforts for which you are responsible.

The course is divided into two modules. The first module will explain what cultural resources are, describe the diversity of the cultural resources managed by BLM, consider why they should matter to you, and summarize the basic requirements of various historic preservation laws. We will also discuss the different ways in which cultural resources are managed, and how land uses can impact cultural resources.

The second module focuses on compliance. It will discuss the primary steps of the Section 106 compliance process and BLM’s alternative procedures for complying with Section 106. It will also explain how BLM consults with Indian tribes, the extent to which BLM is responsible for considering effects on non-federal cultural resources, what your cultural resource specialists need to know from you to help you with compliance work on your projects, and what you need to know from your cultural resource specialists about the processes they will follow to ensure your projects comply with historic preservation laws.

We’ll start this first module by explaining what cultural resources are.

First of all, what is culture? We often use the word as an adjective, describing someone who is knowledgeable about literature, music and the arts as a cultured person. Certainly, literature, music and the arts are elements of culture, but culture is much broader than that. It is, in fact, what separates humans from other species. Culture is that complex mosaic of values, beliefs, practices, customs, traditions, languages, symbols, and other things that make us human, that we learn and pass down from generation to generation, that tie us together as social groups, communities, and nations. Culture is the way humans adapt to their environment.

To the extent that we share an identity as Americans, we can speak of American culture. But within that, we also have cultural traditions that distinguish Irish Americans from Italian

Americans from African Americans. We can also speak of an Indian tribe as having cultural traditions that distinguish it from other groups and other Indian tribes. And, to bring it closer to home, we sometimes even hear people speak of a BLM culture that distinguishes the way we do things compared to other agencies.

Obviously, BLM does not manage culture in the broadest sense of that word. But then, what are these cultural resources that BLM *does* manage? Cultural resources are a very narrow slice of that enormous body of things we call culture. They are *places* representing human activities on the land – the material remains of humans adapting to their environment through time.

BLM manages the places where people have lived, hunted, gathered plant foods, practiced religious ceremonies, mined for gold, raised livestock, and carried out any number of other activities from thousands of years ago to recent historic times. These places may be archaeological sites containing artifacts left behind by the people who occupied the public lands before European settlement. They may be sites from the more recent past such as old mining cabins. But they may also be places of traditional religious or cultural importance that contain no artifacts at all, such as places where Indian tribes have traditionally carried out religious practices, or a spring traditionally revered for its life-sustaining water, or a mountain considered the home of dieties or ancestral spirits.

The term “cultural resource” was invented in the 1970s as an equivalent to the term natural resource, a term that was familiar to BLM and other federal agencies. The agencies were accustomed to managing natural resources, so it made sense to refer to the cultural places the agencies began to manage in response to the new environmental laws as cultural resources.

In BLM, the term cultural resource is synonymous with the term “cultural property,” and it is defined as a definite location of human activity, occupation or use. It includes archaeological, historic, or architectural sites, structures, or places with important public or scientific uses. We manage cultural resources by identifying them, recording them, protecting them, and using them for public benefit. BLM has a comprehensive set of manuals – by far the best and most comprehensive of any federal agency – containing policies and procedures for managing its cultural resources. We won’t go into the manuals in this course, but if you are interested in looking at them, you can find them in the 8100 manual series.

BLM justifiably points out that it manages the largest, most diverse and scientifically most important body of cultural resources of any federal land managing agency. These resources, which represent the BLM’s “Great Outdoor Museum,” span the entire spectrum of human experiences since people first set foot on the North American continent more than 13,000 years ago. This gives BLM a unique opportunity to document the full sweep of western prehistory and history, and tell the complete story of people on the western lands.

No other federal land managing agency can make this claim. Why? Well, let’s think about it. The national forests are confined to certain elevations, and in fact, the Forest Service often refers to their lands as “sky islands.” The national parks represent relatively small areas designated for their natural beauty, or historical sites such as Civil War battlefields. BLM, on the other hand, manages everything from the driest deserts in the Southwest, to lush forests in the Pacific

Northwest, to frozen tundra in Alaska and virtually everything in between. The cultural resources on those lands reflect this great diversity of environments and the humans who occupied them. So referring to the public lands as BLM's Great Outdoor Museum is a pretty good way to describe the incredible cultural resource base we are fortunate enough to have under our jurisdiction.

BLM's cultural resources include everything from simple scatters of prehistoric artifacts, ancient mammoth kill sites, stratified cave deposits, giant ground figures etched in desert pavements, awe-inspiring Ancestral Puebloan villages and cliff dwellings, intriguing remnants of Spanish- and Russian-period exploration, lonely outposts of historic-era exploration and settlement, more recent historic sites associated with the trails that brought settlers and gold-seekers westward, lighthouses that guided ships at sea, evidence of mining and ranching, and even remnants of 20th-century military activities such as General Patton's maneuver areas. Some of the cultural resources under BLM's jurisdiction have been recognized as National Historic Landmarks and World Heritage Sites.

Approximately 21 million acres, or about eight percent of BLM's current surface acreage, have been intensively inventoried, or surveyed, for cultural resources since BLM began developing its Cultural Heritage Program. More than 328,000 cultural properties have been recorded in those inventories. Based on these figures, we can estimate that roughly 4 to 4.5 million archaeological and historic sites exist on the public lands today.

Let's take a look at a few examples of cultural resources.

When most people think of archaeological sites, they think of something like this, the restored ruins of Mesa Verde in Colorado . . .

or these ruins in New Mexico . . . or these in Arizona seen from above, which have not been restored but would nonetheless be recognizable by most people as an archaeological site.

but the truth is, most archaeological sites look more like this humble ring of rocks -- small, difficult to see, and easily overlooked.

or this larger ring of rocks used to anchor brush shelters that disappeared long ago.

or this, nothing more than a few cleared circles in the desert pavement, perhaps the floors of temporary brush huts built for sleeping by Native people traveling through the area, also difficult to see and easily overlooked.

or these small concentrations of fire-affected rock, the remains of stone-lined pits used for roasting plant foods.

and to take it even further, by far the majority of archaeological sites BLM manages look like this – nothing more than stone flakes on the surface of the ground, left over from making stone tools. These sites, that we call lithic scatters, range from a few feet across to many acres in size.

Some archaeological sites are not even visible on the surface of the ground. They may be buried many feet beneath the surface and would only be discovered if some kind of excavation revealed their presence. Here is an example of a buried site. The light-colored layer you see exposed in the face of this cliff is what we call a shell midden, the remains of broken clam, mussel and other shells left at a seasonal campsite by Indians living on the Oregon coast.

here is a trail still preserved in the desert pavement. Pieces of broken pottery can be found along it where pots were dropped by travelers, perhaps pots filled with water carried for their journey.

Here is another type of archaeological site. It was created by scraping away the darker desert pavement on the surface to expose the lighter soil underneath. We call these sites intaglios, or geoglyphs, and they occur in only a few places in the world. BLM manages several of them along the lower Colorado River. This one has a foot path around it formed by visitors circling a post and cable barrier around the figure.

In addition to geoglyphs, BLM manages large numbers of petroglyphs. These are a type of rock art formed by carving or pecking designs into the weathered surface of a rock to expose the lighter rock underneath. They can be geometric or curvilinear designs. They can also depict figures with human forms or, as in this photo, animal figures.

Pictographs are similar to petroglyphs but instead of being carved in the rock, the designs are painted on the rock with natural pigments.

BLM also manages more recent sites that date from the historic period like this old mining cabin. By historic period, I mean the time after the first European explorers began to document their travels with written records. We refer to the time before written records as prehistoric, and the time after as historic. Most archaeological sites BLM manages are prehistoric, although there are many cultural properties dating from the historic period that we would also call archaeological sites because they can be studied using archaeological methods. I use the terms archaeological site and historic site in this course because those terms are very commonly used. But please recognize that the meanings of those terms overlap.

Here is an example of an archaeological site that dates from the historic period. It is the remains of an arrastra, a type of mill used for crushing gold ore. It was powered by a horse or mule dragging a millstone around this stone-lined pit.

This is a more sophisticated type of mill for crushing ore called a stamp mill. Many kinds of mining equipment were left behind on BLM lands when claims were abandoned.

Here is another example of what we call an archaeological site, but it obviously dates from the historic period. We know this because it depicts a horse and rider, and horses were introduced by the Spanish explorers and settlers.

Would you think of this bridge as a historic site? It is. It was one of two remaining timber deck arch bridges in Oregon, and was listed on the National Register of Historic Places as significant for its association with historic logging activities.

Here is another kind of cultural property managed by BLM that you might not think of as a historic site. It is the remains of an old wagon road through the timber in western Oregon. There are many old trails, wagon roads and railroad grades on BLM lands. In fact, portions of eight National Historic Trails covering 3,500 miles cross the public lands.

Another kind of historic site on BLM lands. This one is an abandoned fire lookout.

We have seen archaeological sites, historic sites, and sites we could call both. What about those properties of traditional religious or cultural importance I mentioned? Here is an example of one, called Baboquivari Peak. It's neither an archaeological site, nor a historic site. But it is a place of great importance to the Tohono O'odham people in southern Arizona who believe it is one of two places where their deity I'itoi resides.

Here is another traditional cultural place. This prominent outcropping is traditionally important to the Mojave people along the lower Colorado River, and it has been determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places for its importance in maintaining the heritage and cultural identity of that Indian tribe.

This is Medicine Lake Highlands in northern California. It is a traditional cultural property listed on the National Register of Historic Places for its association with the spiritual beliefs and practices of several Northern California tribes.

I hope this gives you a little better idea of the diversity of cultural resources BLM manages and why the Bureau's cultural resource specialists are so excited about their jobs.

In the photos, we saw some examples of cultural resources that are places of religious and cultural importance to Indian tribes. These are not the archaeological sites and historic sites that most of you are accustomed to thinking of as cultural resources on the public lands. Because they tend to be less familiar and less recognizable to most BLM personnel, I'd like to spend a little time talking about these kinds of places.

Properties of traditional religious and cultural importance are places that are prominent in a particular group's cultural practices, beliefs, or values, when those practices, beliefs or values:

- are widely shared within the group,
- have been passed down through the generations, and
- have served a recognized role in maintaining the group's cultural identity for at least 50 years.

These are places important to modern-day living communities for sustaining a shared cultural legacy. The term "traditional cultural property" and the acronym TCP are widely used to refer to

such properties. BLM chooses not to include this term in its cultural program lexicon because it isn't defined in laws or regulations. But I'm using the term and acronym in this course because they are used commonly within and outside BLM, and they are the term and acronym you will most often hear when you are talking with State Historic Preservation Officers, company representatives, cultural resource contractors, and Indian tribes. When you hear "traditional cultural property," traditional cultural place," or TCP, it means properties of traditional religious and cultural importance.

The modern-day living communities to which TCPs can be important include Indian tribes but are not limited to tribes. TCPs can be places where other communities have traditionally carried out cultural practices important in maintaining their historic identities. There is even a parking lot in New Mexico that was considered to be a TCP and was determined eligible for the National Register because the local Hispanic community used it for generations for traditional dances that served as a focal point for maintaining the cultural identity and heritage of that community. So we can see that TCPs can be religious or secular.

Now let's look at Indian sacred sites. These are defined as "specific, discrete, narrowly delineated locations on federal land that are identified by an Indian tribe, or . . . authoritative representative of an Indian religion, as sacred by virtue of their established religious significance to, or ceremonial use by, an Indian religion . . ."

This definition comes from Executive Order 13007. We should recognize that it is at odds with the Indian traditional view you may have heard tribes express -- that the sacred is embedded in all natural phenomena, and that sacred sites are often not confined or precisely delineated. The Executive Order doesn't deny this more all-encompassing view of sacredness, but its definition of sacred site clearly focuses on the places that are *more important than others* for worshipping the sacred or conducting religious ceremonies, and it is those *special* places that BLM is directed to consider.

Notice also that this definition deals only with religion, not secular concerns, unlike traditional cultural properties, or TCPs, which can include a wide range of places that matter to people for both religious and secular reasons.