

## **The Cultural Heritage Program: A Course for Managers**

### **Module 1: Why does the BLM have a Cultural Heritage Program?**

#### Objectives

Hello, I'm Shelley Smith. I've worked for the Bureau of Land Management for over 35 years with the last 19 years in management positions. In my current capacity, I serve as the Deputy State Director of Natural and Cultural Resources in the Utah State Office. Prior to that, I worked for 13 years as a BLM Archaeologist in several district and state offices, and the Washington Office.

Thank you for your interest in "Understanding and Managing the Cultural Heritage Program." This course for BLM managers is designed to enhance your understanding of the cultural heritage program, its legal requirements, and the manager's role in accomplishing the program's objectives. This knowledge will help you to more effectively manage your employees and avoid legal pitfalls. It will enable you to take better advantage of the program's benefits and opportunities. Managers play a critical role in protecting and managing the most numerous, diverse, and significant cultural resources on federal lands.

The course content is designed to enhance your understanding of:

- The structure of the cultural heritage program and the nature of the resources that are being managed;
- The legal authorities that provide the foundation for the program;
- The work tasks accomplished by cultural resource specialists;
- The roles and responsibilities of managers in overseeing the program and consulting with Indian tribes, State Historic Preservation Officers, and others; and
- Opportunities to enhance public outreach, community relations, and interdisciplinary team work through the cultural heritage program.

In addition, this course establishes a foundation for further required training on the BLM's national Programmatic Agreement and state protocols.

#### Overview

Our course overview will begin with a description of the diverse cultural and paleontological resources that are managed under the cultural heritage program. Their important values are the basis for their protection under numerous federal laws and executive orders. Whether these resources are administered by field offices or units of the National Landscape Conservation System or NLCS, they are managed under the same laws and similar guidance, in accordance with the specific objectives and management prescriptions of individual Resource Management Plans.

Next we'll consider who is responsible for performing the professional work of the program and how it is structured, from field offices up through the Washington Office. This is the basis for understanding how quality control is maintained and knowing who to consult for advice in managing complex projects and resolving difficult issues.

Then we'll delve into the nature of the work in the cultural heritage program. What are the legal authorities that mandate it? What are the roles and responsibilities of the specialist and the manager? We'll begin by looking at a typical month in the life of a field office archaeologist. Then we'll review the sources that provide official guidance for completing the work in accordance with laws, regulations, and professional standards. We'll consider the range of work performed by the program specialists, as well as the role of the manager, beginning with Section 106 compliance. Finally, we'll consider the wide variety of proactive work that meets the directives and budget priorities of the cultural heritage program.

Then we'll review the importance of training to maintain professional skills in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The course concludes with a consideration of the benefits and opportunities inherent in the cultural heritage program.

### What resources are managed under the cultural heritage program?

Now we'll return to the question posed at the beginning of this training module: why does the Bureau of Land Management have a cultural heritage program? What resources are managed under the program, and why are they important?

The cultural heritage program manages cultural and paleontological resources that are protected under various federal laws. Only a small portion of the public lands has been surveyed for these resources. Even so, tens of thousands of locations have been found and documented. Many more remain to be discovered.

Cultural resources include diverse types of prehistoric archaeological sites and features. They range from small clusters of stone tools and artifacts, to pueblos of stone masonry with hundreds of rooms. A single field office might include the physical remnants of human activities carried out by successive cultural groups over more than ten thousand years. In these places, people constructed shelters, manufactured tools, hunted, gathered wild plants, farmed, and conducted rituals. They communicated through symbols created in petroglyphs and pictographs. People also modified the natural landscape by constructing such features as trails, canals, and agricultural terraces. In some cases, the natural environment was quite different than it is today. Cultural resources offer information about changes in the environment and climate over long periods of time, and about how humans coped with and responded to those changes.

Cultural resources also include diverse sites and structures dating to the historic period. Written records, in addition to archaeological sites, can help us understand the events and processes of human history within the past few hundred years. Historic sites include buildings, structures, and artifacts associated with settlements, homesteads, mines, railroads, commerce, and military activities. Roads, trails, dams, and canals represent the history of transportation, public works, and agriculture. Landscape modifications include such features as facilities constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps during the Great Depression. BLM also manages important World War II and Cold War era sites that date into the early 1960s, the era of the Beatles.

Some resources are places of traditional cultural importance to Native Americans or other cultural groups. Such places may be ancestral archaeological sites, locations of important historical events, or areas that figure prominently in religious beliefs or oral histories. Some places may still be used for ritual activities, plant gathering, or other purposes. The boundaries

of some traditional cultural places are difficult to define. They may consist of mountains or other landscape features that don't include archaeological sites.

Cultural resources can consist of interconnected locations within a particular landscape. Labeled as cultural landscapes or historical landscapes, these areas typically include related sites in a relatively undisturbed setting that are associated with a particular time period, culture, or historical event. For example, a Civil War battlefield might be a historical landscape. The Agua Fria National Monument in Arizona contains an interconnected set of prehistoric pueblo sites from the 14<sup>th</sup> century, which represent a prehistoric cultural landscape.

Many cultural resources have special designations, including sites and districts that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Some locations are National Historic Landmarks and National Historic Trails. The national monuments administered by BLM include many that were designated, in large part, to protect their important archaeological resources.

It is important to note that the cultural resources are not limited to sites on the ground. These resources also include collections of artifacts and materials, as well as the associated data and records. The BLM has the responsibility to curate and maintain such collections, though many exist mostly outside of BLM offices and facilities. The BLM operates three of its own curation facilities in Montana, Colorado, and Oregon.

BLM also manages paleontological resources under the cultural heritage program. These resources include fossils of ancient animals and plants, the locations in which they are found, and the associated collections and data. Vertebrate fossils merit special consideration and protection. Cultural and paleontological resources actually have little in common, other than their antiquity. In rare instances, they occur together, where ancient people were hunting mammoths and other now extinct species.

#### Why are cultural and paleontological resources important?

Cultural and paleontological resources are important for the many values attached to them. They are also non-renewable, irreplaceable, and in many cases, are threatened by damage or destruction from human activities and processes of nature.

Cultural and paleontological resources are important for their informational values. They provide data useful for scientific, historical, and environmental research by archaeologists, anthropologists, historians, paleontologists, and others.

Cultural resources also have heritage values. Some places have ancestral or cultural importance to Indian tribes and other current communities that have historical connections to them. Strong ties and feelings can be associated with places that are linked to oral histories, as well as significant people, events, and activities.

Some resources represent unique or significant artistic qualities or technological innovations that are worthy of study or preservation. Others have commemorative qualities from their associations with important historical figures and events.

Educational values come from opportunities to educate citizens about archaeology, paleontology, history, science, and relationships between humans and the natural environment. Educational programs can be adapted to meet standards for teaching math and science. They can also provide interesting and enjoyable experiences that highlight the need to protect these resources.

Recreational values enable the development of “heritage tourism” opportunities that offer enjoyable and educational experiences to youth and the public. Interpreted sites can be linked into regional networks of visitor opportunities that support local economies through recreation and tourism.

Cultural resources provide a long-term perspective on how the natural environment has affected human land use, and how human activities have in turn affected the environment. This information can be useful in evaluating environmental trends and developing management strategies for habitat restoration and appropriate levels of land use.

These resource values are the basis for federal laws that protect them and require that they be considered in evaluating the effects of proposed projects and planning decisions. This legal foundation also mandates that these resources be actively protected and managed in a professionally responsible manner. In response to rampant vandalism of archaeological sites, the Antiquities Act of 1906 made it a crime to “appropriate, excavate, injure, or destroy any historic or prehistoric ruin or monument, or any object of antiquity, situated on lands owned or controlled by the Government of the United States, without the permission of...the Government.” The Antiquities Act was followed by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979, and the Paleontological Resources Preservation Act of 2009. In addition, the National Environmental Policy Act and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act explicitly cite the importance of considering and managing these resources.

In the next section, we’ll review who is responsible for performing and overseeing the professional work of the cultural heritage program.