

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

### **Module 6: Proactive Work in the Cultural Heritage Program**

In prior training modules, we've seen how cultural resource specialists devote considerable time to Section 106 compliance, tribal coordination, and related tasks. It can be a challenge to devote much time to proactive work. Yet that work is the basis for the cultural heritage program.

#### Legal Basis of Proactive Resource Management

Proactive resource management involves well-planned efforts to identify, document, protect, study, and interpret cultural and paleontological resources for public benefit. Proactive work isn't optional. It is mandated by several laws including the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, the Archaeological Resources Protection Act, and the Paleontological Resources Preservation Act.

Section 1 of the National Historic Preservation Act states that *“the preservation of this irreplaceable heritage is in the public interest so that its vital legacy of cultural, educational, aesthetic, inspirational, economic, and energy benefits will be maintained and enriched for future generations of Americans.”* Section 110 directs each federal agency to establish a program to identify, evaluate, nominate, and protect historic properties that are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

The BLM manages more than 5,000 miles of 11 National Historic Trails. In 1978, an amendment to the National Trails System Act of 1968 created National Historic Trails that have management requirements and are managed for both historical and recreational values.

Several executive orders emphasize the economic value of cultural resources in promoting heritage tourism. Executive Order 13287, known as “Preserve America,” directs agencies to support heritage tourism through partnerships and efforts to reuse historic properties. Executive Order 13195, “Trails for America in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,” calls for the protection, interpretation, and enhancement of historic trails to help promote heritage tourism.

Proactive work is developed and implemented in annual work plans that are consistent with program directives. The work has reportable accomplishment units funded by the cultural heritage program or units of the NLCS. Funds have also come through challenge cost share or special initiatives, such as the celebration of the Antiquities Act Centennial in 2006.

Field office specialists often have limited time to devote to proactive work. Much is accomplished through reliance on partnerships and support from volunteers. Proactive work must conform to standards and guidelines defined in BLM and Departmental manuals, with attention to guidance established by SHPOs.

Now we'll review the types of proactive work encompassed by the cultural heritage program. In the next training module, we'll describe in more detail the program elements that are associated with this work and how we measure and report accomplishments.

#### Resource Inventory

Inventory involves field surveys to find, document, and evaluate archaeological and paleontological resources. Inventories can consist of file searches that compile existing information on known resources; sample surveys; and surveys that involve intensive coverage of

certain areas or environmental zones. Activities focus on mapping and documentation of discovered resources, including their condition and environmental context. Back in the office, the information is summarized in reports and entered into GIS and standardized databases. Inventory work may be accomplished by BLM specialists, partners, or contractors.

### Monitoring

Monitoring involves inspections to assess the condition of specific sites or resources. The purpose is to identify and evaluate any damage associated with vandalism, erosion, or other activities and sources of deterioration. Through monitoring, we can assess the need for protective actions and evaluate their effectiveness. Law enforcement staff, park rangers, and volunteers can provide assistance in monitoring. For example, the Arizona Site Steward Program manages more than 800 volunteers who monitor the condition of thousands of archaeological sites on lands administered by the BLM and other agencies. Many states have similar volunteer programs. Such programs may not be practical in some areas, like Alaska, that have low populations and transportation challenges.

### Resource Protection

Efforts to protect archaeological and paleontological resources vary in scale and complexity. Detailed mapping and documentation can retrieve and preserve important information that may be threatened by damage or deterioration. Examples of protective measures include the following:

- Installation of signs warning of legal penalties for damage or disturbance;
- Installation of fences or other barriers;
- Closure of nearby roads or trails;
- Removal of graffiti from rock art and historic structures;
- Installation of erosion control measures; and
- Repair, stabilization, and maintenance of historic buildings and structures.

It's also worth noting that ARPA and other laws restrict the public disclosure of information, such as archaeological site locations, that could put resources in jeopardy. These restrictions include an exemption from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act.

### Recordation and Research Projects

BLM may approve scientific research studies of archaeological and paleontological resources as a legitimate use of those resources. Research projects could involve field inventories, detailed mapping and documentation, collection of artifacts and specimens, or excavation. All would involve analysis, report preparation, and curation of data and collections. BLM specialists may participate in such projects. For example, they may oversee trained volunteers in surveying an area, recording prehistoric rock art, or conducting oral history interviews.

However, BLM staff rarely have much time to devote to pure research. Field schools and similar projects require considerable effort in planning, fieldwork, analysis, and reporting. Studies are often conducted by contractors or partners, such as universities or museums. Such projects may be funded through grants received by partners, cost-share arrangements with the BLM, or funds allocated in the annual work plan. The BLM specialist manages partnerships, oversees the permitting process, and reviews research designs, methods, and reports to ensure quality control.

These projects often involve assistance agreements. It's a good idea for resource specialists to pursue training to serve in the roles of assistance representative and contracting officer's representative.

Research studies offer benefits beyond the interests of the scientists who conduct them. They establish good working relations with universities and help to educate the next generation of archaeologists, historians, and paleontologists. Many studies provide environmental information that is relevant to current land management strategies. They can also provide information useful for designing protective measures, interpretive plans, and educational programs.

### Interpretive Development

Certain accessible sites may be allocated to public use, providing for on-the-ground interpretive development for public visitation and education. Such projects can help support local communities and businesses engaged in heritage tourism. They can also highlight community and family connections to local history through special events and publications. For example, former students attend annual reunions at the restored Fairbank School in the San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area in southern Arizona. The school serves as a visitor center for the historic site of Fairbank, once a thriving community in the midst of silver mines.

The first step is the development of an interpretive plan that describes in detail the facilities to be installed. These could include interpretive signs, kiosks, interpretive trails, parking areas, restrooms, benches, and road improvements. The interpretive plan also addresses outreach products such as brochures, websites, and information accessible by cell phones. Interpretive development of historic buildings may require condition assessments, followed by repair, stabilization, or restoration.

There are advantages and disadvantages to interpretive development. Visitor safety is an important consideration. Increases in visitation can risk damage to a site from wayward foot traffic, vandalism, and unauthorized collection of artifacts. Therefore, it is important to fully document the site prior to development and to implement monitoring and protective measures. In developing and implementing interpretive plans, cultural resource specialists typically coordinate with staff from the BLM recreation program.

### Public Outreach and Education

ARPA directs federal agencies to establish public education programs to convey the importance of protecting archaeological resources. A goal of the national PA was to streamline Section 106 compliance in order to devote more attention to public education and interpretation. Educational programs share information from scientific and historical studies. They enable citizens to participate in activities that support the preservation of archaeological and paleontological resources. Youth programs highlight lessons about math and science based on archaeology and paleontology.

In the early 1990s, the BLM established its Heritage Education Program. It produced a variety of educational publications and created the Project Archaeology program. Project Archaeology works with educators and other partners to offer workshops for teachers. Following the workshops, teachers can convey information to their students through publications that offer interesting lessons and hands-on activities. The materials are tailored to individual states or focus on specific themes, such as shelter.

Public outreach can take many forms:

- Giving public presentations or school programs;
- Conducting tours of archaeological sites;
- Participating in events offered during state “Archaeology Month” celebrations;
- Hosting reunions or festivals at such interpreted sites as historic ranches or schools;
- Hosting work days (such as Public Lands Day events) to clean up modern trash, maintain adobe walls, or otherwise care for archaeological sites; and
- Posting information on BLM websites and continually evolving social media outlets.

### Role of the Manager in Proactive Work

The cultural heritage program is one of many that a manager must oversee and coordinate. In what ways can a manager support proactive work in the cultural heritage program?

Here are some suggestions.

- Consider the full range of workload demands in establishing reasonably achievable targets, in line with the cultural heritage program directives for annual work plans.
- Support the pursuit of funding under special programs, initiatives, or sources such as challenge cost share and deferred maintenance.
- Ensure that the costs of Section 106 and other support work are paid by the benefiting subactivities. The cultural heritage program budget, primarily derived from subactivity 1050, is intended to fund proactive work, not Section 106 compliance work for other BLM programs.
- Ensure the availability of needed support from other program staff, such as recreation and maintenance/force account.
- Support the development and success of partnerships, internships, and volunteer programs. This may involve participating in meetings and special events.
- Be aware of reporting requirements, such as the Cultural Resources Annual Report, which the manager reviews, signs, and transmits to the State Office for submission to Washington. The annual report highlights the program accomplishments.
- Serve as the decision maker for approving plans, permits, and projects.
- Attend coordination meetings with the SHPO of the state protocol.
- Support training opportunities for staff and participation in professional organizations.

In the next section, we’ll devote attention to the applicable program elements and workload measures. We’ll also describe how cultural and paleontological resources are addressed in developing resource management plans.