

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

### **Module 7: Planning, Tracking, and Reporting Accomplishments**

#### Implementing the Annual Work Plan

Like other BLM programs, the cultural heritage program faces the challenges of preparing the annual work plan, operating within the budgeted funds, and reporting accomplishments in a timely manner. The specific priorities of each office connect to the themes, special initiatives, and program directives issued by the Washington Office. Some states may also issue additional state-specific or program-specific directives or guidance. In addition, office priorities are consistent with the implementation plans that are tied to their Resource Management Plans.

Proactive work in the cultural heritage program is largely funded under subactivity 1050. Subactivity 1711 funds work consistent with the same program elements in national monuments and other units of the NLCS. Challenge cost share funds from subactivity 1770 have supported many projects accomplished with BLM partners.

Here is a quick summary of the core program elements and their associated workload measures.

Program element AE, Heritage Resources Education and Outreach, represents educational programs related to cultural and paleontological resources. Its workload measure is the number of programs, events, or products delivered.

Program element AJ, Consultations with Indian Tribes and Alaska Native Corporations, is measured by the number of face-to-face meetings and telephone calls for purposes of general government-to-government coordination and consultation. Be aware that project-specific consultations for proposed actions should be coded to the appropriate benefitting subactivity.

Program element BC, Areas of Heritage Resources Inventoried, includes work devoted to proactive inventories. Its measure is the number of acres of public land that are inventoried for cultural or paleontological resources as part of proactive resource management activities.

Program element BD, Museum Collections Managed, is measured by the number of units (artifacts/specimens or “lots” of such) that are accessioned, cataloged, inventoried, or rehoused/upgraded. It includes collections documented for compliance with NAGPRA.

Program element FB, Permits Issued Authorizing Heritage Resource Investigations, is reported by the numbers of cultural and paleontological resource use permits processed.

Program element FD, Heritage Resources Intensively Recorded, Evaluated and Studied, is measured by the number of cultural properties and paleontological localities at which data recovery, intensive recordation, or other field studies are conducted. This measure encompasses diverse types of studies, including documentation for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places, oral history studies, Class I regional overviews, and cultural landscape studies.

Program element HF, Heritage Resources Stabilized, Managed and Protected, covers a broad range of tasks devoted to resource protection. Its workload measure is the number of cultural sites and paleontological localities receiving on-the-ground protection and stabilization measures.

Program element KO, Historic Structures Managed, is reported as the number of historic structures actively managed to preserve their integrity, character, and materials. This can involve a range of tasks including protective measures, stabilization, monitoring, and related studies such as condition assessments.

Program element MY, Heritage Resources Monitored, covers monitoring activities to assess condition. It is measured by the number of individual cultural properties and paleontological localities monitored by BLM or its partners.

Additional program elements apply to the inventory and monitoring of National Scenic and Historic Trails.

Within any one program element, different units of accomplishment may require vastly different amounts of effort and funding. It may take an easy five-mile drive or a ten-mile trek into the wilderness to monitor the condition of an archaeological or paleontological site. A unit of site protection could involve placing a protective sign at a site, or it could describe a season-long effort of a skilled crew to stabilize a historic building. A unit under program element FD could be accomplished in a day by two people recording a small petroglyph site, or by a crew at a university field school working at a site for several weeks.

Because of such differences in required effort, it can be difficult to plan and report equal numbers of accomplishment units in each monthly or quarterly report. In the cultural heritage program, it's reasonable to expect that complex projects will take a lot of time. Nor do accomplishment units reflect the time and effort required to cultivate partnerships and to train and manage volunteers. In the long run, such efforts pay off by increasing productivity and enhancing public support for the program.

Finally, it's a good idea to keep a few projects "on the shelf," that is, entered into the budget system, even if they are unfunded. A quick response may be needed on those occasions when funding becomes available on short notice. End-of-year funds from other subactivities than 1050 could be tapped for projects that would benefit multiple programs. For example, areas that are favored for wildlife or recreation projects often coincide with areas that are sensitive for cultural resources. Several programs could benefit by conducting inventory work in an area that may be the future locus of a wildlife or recreation project.

### Reporting of Accomplishments

The cultural heritage program isn't immune from the Washington Office data calls that are due almost immediately. In addition, the program has its own reporting requirements under the national PA and state protocols. Each BLM District submits a Cultural Resources Annual Report to its State Office, which compiles the reports in a state report sent to the Washington Office. States also provide annual reports to SHPOs, as required by their state protocol. At the national level, the information is included in the National Park Service's annual report to Congress on implementation of the National Historic Preservation Act, and in other special reports, such as the Preserve America report. The annual report also supports accountability for federal property asset reports and audits.

Each summer, the Washington Office issues an Instruction Memorandum with the required forms for preparing the annual report, which is typically due before the end of the fiscal year. The report covers the entire range of work related to the program, including Section 106

compliance work, tribal consultations, vandalism investigations, collections management, and proactive work. The annual report requires some effort. On the positive side, it offers an excellent way to celebrate and highlight accomplishments of your office. A proven track record could be helpful in justifying future requests for funding. Managers are responsible for reviewing, signing, and submitting the annual report to the State Office.

### Resource Management Planning

In the process of developing Resource Management Plans, staff specialists consider the nature of threats to resources, as well as opportunities to better identify, protect, and interpret them. Tribal consultation and public input are important aspects of the planning process. Interdisciplinary teamwork is also needed to avoid resource conflicts arising from different land uses. Indian tribes and the public may raise concerns about the effects of transportation plans, livestock grazing, or energy development on cultural and paleontological resources, associated landscapes, and places of traditional cultural importance. It's best to identify and address such concerns early in the planning process.

RMPs typically identify priorities for inventory work and resource protection, as well as associated management actions. They may identify sites or areas that the BLM will nominate for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. Management plans should avoid the inclusion of important resources in areas to be designated for potential sales or land exchanges.

RMPs allow the BLM to identify appropriate uses for specific cultural resources or types of resources. We accomplish this by allocating resources to one or more of several use categories. The use categories for cultural resources are defined in BLM Manual 8110.4.

- Scientific use allows resources to be the focus of scientific study. It's likely that the majority of resources, whether known or yet to be discovered, will be allocated to this category, provided that their condition is sufficiently intact to sustain their informational value.
- Conservation for future use allows resources to be preserved until a specific set of conditions is met. Such conditions could include advances in research methods.
- Traditional use would apply to sacred sites or other places of cultural importance to Indian tribes or other groups. In most cases, traditional use would involve long-term preservation of heritage values, which may be incompatible with other uses.
- Public use allows resources to be the focus of interpretive development and public visitation. As the focus is on educational values, this allocation may be compatible with scientific use, as well as heritage tourism.
- Experimental use allows studies that could yield information useful in improving resource management. For example, after completing full documentation of a site, it could be subjected to a controlled study involving different practices of grazing or erosion control. However, most resources would not be suitable for this allocation.
- Sites may be discharged from management if they've been heavily damaged or destroyed to the extent that their remaining values are limited or non-existent. For example, erosion may have altered or destroyed a site in a floodplain. A site in the path of a pipeline may have been fully excavated during data recovery investigations, in accordance with an approved research design. A discharged site would receive limited management attention. However, it may still be possible to use such a site creatively, for example, as

an exhibit along an interpretive trail to make the point that such sites are fragile and irreplaceable. Note that the intentional destruction of a site by a land use applicant or permit holder wouldn't simply be a change in its allocation; it would be a violation of the Archaeological Resources Protection Act.

Resource Management Plans also address the management of paleontological resources for their scientific and educational values. RMPs can identify priorities for inventory and resource protection, with associated management actions. Land use allocations are based on an area's potential to contain vertebrate fossils or noteworthy occurrences of invertebrate or plant fossils. The RMP allocates areas to Paleontological Sensitivity Classes, ranging from low to high sensitivity, considering the potential to contain significant resources. Definitions of sensitivity classes are based on the likelihood that the existing geological deposits contain fossils; the potential for particularly abundant or uncommon fossils; and the risk of natural degradation or human-caused adverse impacts.

Management plans can highlight the opportunities and benefits of the cultural heritage program. We'll next consider these opportunities in the conclusion to this training course.