

## CARING, SHARING, PROTECTING

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*This paper discusses two responsibilities that are becoming more important in archaeology. The first is our responsibility for public involvement, and the second is our responsibility for resource stewardship. It then illustrates how public participation can help us meet these responsibilities.*

Over the last 20 years or so, we have seen the practice of archaeology shift its primary focus from teaching at colleges and universities to working at cultural resource management in government and business environments. There are more archaeologists working in firms doing cultural resource consulting or environmental planning and in agencies that manage public lands than there are archaeologists teaching in colleges and universities.

One effect of this shift is that consulting archaeologists are often in the position of convincing people that archaeology needs doing and is worth doing. They play to a different audience than academic archaeologists. Instead of students, they talk to developers and other business people, and to city councils, county supervisors, and legislators. The best way to convince people that archaeology is worth doing is to educate them about archaeology and its importance.

### PUBLIC AWARENESS FOR ARCHAEOLOGY

In the last two decades, we also have seen public awareness of archaeology grow. This is happening for several reasons. One is that more archaeologists are getting involved with programs like Archaeology Awareness Weeks throughout the country. Like our California Archaeology Week, more events have multiplied as more people get involved, and starting in 2000 California Archaeology Week is a whole month long.

In addition to these activities, directed by archaeologists, there are other influences. The entertainment industry has encouraged greater

interest in our field: in the 1970s, we had the nationwide tour of the King Tutankhamen exhibit; in the 1980s, we had the Indiana Jones movies; in the 1990s, we had Jurassic Park movies, and computer games like Tomb Raider (where the main character is a "Barbie" Doll © parody with a gun). We can all agree that these movies and popular exhibits increased the visibility of archaeology to the public.

The tourist industry also has encouraged greater interest in archaeology by advertising heritage sites as vacation destinations. We all know that there are historical sites in Gettysburg and Williamsburg and Fort Ross, but on a recent flight, I looked at the airline magazine in the seat pocket and discovered that Tampa, Florida, is a wonderful place to visit. Not because of its weather, or the beaches, or the fishing, or the restaurants or resorts or golfing. Surprisingly, this article was selling Tampa as a tourist destination because of its historical attractions (Fowler 2000:19-22).

In addition, Native American activism has generated many news stories about difficult issues, which has increased public awareness of the past. Public interest has grown enough to justify special coverage by several magazines, such as *Time* and *Discovering Archaeology*, and to justify new books, such as *Skulls Wars* by David Hurst Thomas and a new book soon to be in print by Jim Chatters.

### SO, WHERE DOES THIS TAKE US?

We have archaeologists who want to convince the public that archaeology is important. And we have greater public interest in it. This means that

archaeologists are facing greater responsibilities and opportunities for public involvement. As proof that archaeologists are becoming more aware of their responsibilities for public involvement, I offer the candidate statements from the people who are running for SCA offices this year. Perhaps you noticed that most of them include a commitment to increase public awareness of archaeology.

Along with the SCA, The Society for American Archaeology also recognizes the need for public involvement. The SAA is devoting time and resources through its Public Education Committee, which has published class study guides for grades 3 to 12 (Few *et al.* 1992), put out the Resource Forum Guide, and established a national network of representatives for public education. The code of ethics of the SAA also supports public involvement and states that every member should promote public education and outreach in archaeology.

But how and where do we do more for public awareness and education when we already have more than enough archaeological responsibilities? It's hard enough to do the research, conduct the field investigations, manage the lab analysis, and then write it all up, without adding new responsibilities. Where are we going to find the additional dollars and hours to support public involvement activities?

#### STEWARDSHIP OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

One of the responsibilities whose rapid growth makes it difficult to cope with is resource stewardship. In the past we were rather causal in our stewardship efforts. We relied on site confidentiality to protect resources and we didn't broadcast the local richness in archaeology sites. However, casual efforts aren't enough any more. There are many pressures on archaeological sites. More people are visiting remote areas, in the desert and elsewhere, often in 4-wheel drive "SUVs," where they impact archaeological sites in damaging ways. More houses are built in canyon areas and by waterways, near archaeologically sensitive areas. And there are more markets in heritage resources on web sites and auction sites, legal or not.

Archaeologists have always been concerned about conserving and protecting archaeological resources, because they are valuable, unique, and irreplaceable. But the job of protection is getting much bigger and much harder to do. We are reaching a crisis stage where too many sites are disappearing too quickly, without any chance for recordation, investigation, or protection.

#### BENEFITS OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN ARCHAEOLOGY

These two issues for archaeologists—greater responsibilities for public involvement and for resource stewardship—can work together to provide solutions. Sometimes we need to change our point of view, and try to look at the problems as opportunities. I suggest that we can meet our responsibilities for public awareness and resource protection by involving the public as trained volunteers in programs that promote stewardship.

By public participation in archaeology, I am referring to active involvement of public volunteers to do archaeological tasks. I am talking about public volunteers helping to update site records, assisting with cataloging and laboratory work, and gathering background research. This is not a new idea. Many archaeologists have been organizing nonarchaeologists to carry out many different stewardship programs. These programs include the following.

- The Bureau of Land Management initiated Project Archaeology ten years ago. Archaeologists and teachers team to train other teachers, usually for grades 3 to 5, in ways to use archaeology in their curriculum. The goal is to teach kids to respect and protect their cultural heritage in the archaeological record.
- Other organizations have customized the Project Archaeology concept to work in their local circumstances. Under a grant received last year, the Institute of Archaeology at UCLA started an outreach program to local schools, offering archaeology workshops for secondary- and primary-education teachers. The Archaeological Survey Association of Southern California has been offering student programs and teacher education in archaeology for several years, using a combination of workshop and web site methods.
- The Passport in Time (PIT) program of the US Forest Service offers volunteers organized opportunities for preserving heritage resources on national forests. Some of these activities are so popular that people return year after year.
- Archaeologists at the Los Padres National Forest have created the Partners in

Preservation program, where public volunteers provide stewardship services as site monitors and work on other project tasks throughout the forest.

- The Arizona Office of Historic Preservation manages a statewide program of volunteer site stewards for archaeological sites on public lands. This program has received several awards in recognition of its achievements in training volunteers, in resource protection, and in building greater public awareness for archaeology.
- Last year, the SCA began a new program of volunteer archaeological site stewards, called the California Archaeological Site Stewardship Program (CASSP). Initial funding was provided by a grant from the state office of the Bureau of Land Management, and by donations that volunteers gave for the training workshops.

#### IMPLICATIONS FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN ARCHAEOLOGY

There are lots of benefits to public participation in archaeology, including benefits to the archaeological resources. Properly trained and supervised volunteers can contribute to better and more comprehensive field investigations, site studies, and curation efforts. There are benefits for managers of public lands. Many times, there is not enough paid staff to protect all of the archaeological resources under their jurisdiction. By using archaeologists in public agencies to train volunteers and supervise them as they visit and observe sites, the sites receive more attention. Instead of one agency archaeologist monitoring sites, there are ten or fifteen or more trained observers watching sites in a coordinated and systematic manner. There are benefits for the volunteers. They participate in meaningful and worthwhile activities. They get out and see the beautiful country and visit exciting archaeology sites. And they get to go behind the scenes and work with real archaeologists. There are benefits for the profession of archaeology. These volunteers become advocates for the discipline and help motivate public leaders for greater protection and study of archaeological resources. They get involved at local schools, libraries, and parks for increased awareness of archaeology.

However, there are potential difficulties when public volunteers participate in doing archaeology.

Volunteers are not free. Running a volunteer program requires staff time and other resources. Public agencies and private developers have to be convinced to devote money for volunteer programs. It is also more difficult to maintain site confidentiality when members of the public have access to site records and maps. It's important to stress confidentiality in volunteer training, and having volunteers sign confidentiality and ethics statements helps reinforce its importance. But there still is greater potential for exposing site locations.

Also, the quality of work from volunteers may be uneven, or below standards. Because volunteers do not have the training and experience of professional archaeologists, there must be careful supervision. Sometimes using public volunteers implies that archaeology can be done for free, or that it can be done by anyone with a little bit of training. This makes it more difficult to maintain adequate budgets for archaeology in public agencies and in CRM contracts.

#### SOLUTIONS

The first step in developing or expanding projects with the public is to recognize these potential problems. The second step is to share successful strategies and techniques for carrying out the projects. And that is why this symposium was held; I refer you to the papers in this volume by Susan Hector, Judyth Reed, and Mary Estes.

Learning about the past can offer many opportunities to discover who we are, where we came from, and where we are going (Lerner 1998:5). And, if we want to have the public truly accept our values for learning about and preserving the past, we need to share with them the doing of archaeology. Sharing with the public in the discovery and in the caring for our resources increases their appreciation for archaeology and its role in understanding our past for the future.

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