



Update on ACHP Archaeology Task Force activities July 19, 2005

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As many of our friends and colleagues know, the ACHP Archaeology Task Force has been at work for a little over a year, and so I would like to take this opportunity to update the wider preservation community on its activities. Soon after my appointment to the ACHP, Chairman John L. Nau, III appointed a task force on archaeology to identify issues that should receive priority consideration and action by the ACHP. At this time the Task Force consists of:

- Julia King, chair;
- Gerald Peter Jemison, Native American member of the ACHP;
- Mark Rey, representing the Secretary of Agriculture;
- Phil Grone, representing the Secretary of Defense;
- Fran Mainella, representing the Secretary of the Interior;
- George Schoener, representing the Secretary of Transportation;
- Jay Vogt, president of the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers;
- ACHP Native American Advisory Group (represented by Ken Carleton), and
- Alan Downer, chairman of the National Association of Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (observer).

The first activity of the Task Force was to consult broadly with stakeholders to help shape the agenda of the Task Force, and set its priorities. In addition, proposed Task Force activities were discussed at the annual meetings of the National Association of Tribal Historic Preservation Officers, the United South and Eastern Tribes, and the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers, and with the Executive Board of the Society for American Archaeology. This input confirmed initial assumptions that the Task Force needed to focus its efforts in three key areas:

1. the need for new Section 106 archaeology guidance,
2. the need to update the ACHP's 1988 "Policy Statement Regarding Treatment of Human Remains and Grave Goods," and
3. the development of strategies to better capitalize on the rich potential of archaeological resources for heritage tourism and public educational opportunities.

In addition to the specific work of the Task Force, the ACHP devoted its Spring 2005 meeting to the subject of archaeology. On May 17 Council members enjoyed a tour of the ongoing archaeological excavations, buildings, and exhibits at historic Lodontown just south of Annapolis. After that tour, the members headed deep into southern Maryland to tour the state-of-the-art Maryland Archaeological Conservation (MAC) Laboratory at Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum and to participate in discussions on various archaeological issues. After a brief presentation about the work and recommendations to date of the Task Force, the membership heard from the ACHP's newly appointed Native American Council member Pete Jemison of the Seneca Nation; from the newly-chartered Native American Advisory Group; and from the chairman of the National Association of Tribal Historic Preservation Officers. The members then heard from the presidents and presidents-elect of the Society for American Archaeology, the Society for Historical Archaeology, the American Cultural Resources Association, and the Register of Professional Archaeologists. All speakers were supportive of the need for the ACHP to address the various archaeological issues that have been proposed, and generously offered their assistance in reaching these goals.

Much of the afternoon's discussion centered around how best to ensure professional competency in the archaeology carried out pursuant to Section 106, and how to ensure that all of the work required in agreement documents is actually completed—recovered materials are appropriately curated and final reports are completed in a timely and professional fashion. Mr. Jemison initially raised this issue, and with Chairman Nau noting that this had also been a problem in Texas, Chairman Nau then asked the professional organizations to comment on this issue. Dr. Altschul, president-elect of the Register of Professional Archaeologists led the discussion about current codes of ethics and professional standards and their enforceability. Given the many comments made on this issue by the audience, including members of the Native American Advisory Group and Council members, this was added to the list of guidance topics the Task Force will address.

At the ACHP's business meeting the following day the membership took the following actions. First, the members unanimously concurred in the Task Force's recommendations that it:

1. Move forward to address the guidance topics identified. These topics include:
 - Making Section 106 consultation more effective;
 - What constitutes a "Reasonable and Good-Faith Effort" to identify historic properties;
 - Applying the National Register criteria to archaeological properties in the Section 106 process.
 - Responsibilities of Federal agencies for undertakings on private lands;
 - Opportunities for creative approaches to resolving adverse effects to archaeological sites;
 - Curation of archaeological collections and permanent recordation of archaeological properties;
 - Ensuring quality work and completion of reporting requirements in Section 106 archaeology.
2. Work to expand the *Preserve America* initiative by ensuring public enjoyment of our nation's heritage through greater knowledge and appreciation of archaeological properties.
 - Coordinate with the Preservation Initiatives Committee to examine pertinent issues and recommend possible action by the members at a future ACHP business meeting;
 - Compile a set of Federal, State, and private "best practices" on archaeological heritage tourism and education; and
 - Direct the staff to consider ways to encourage outcomes reached under Section 106 that, where practical and feasible, will use archaeological resources to promote heritage tourism.

3. Revisit the ACHP's current "*Policy Statement Regarding Treatment of Human Remains and Grave Goods.*" The members agreed with the recommendations of the Task Force on two items:
 - that the ACHP's current policy statement on the treatment of human remains and grave goods , does not take into account current Federal law and regulation and should be brought up to date under the direction of the Task Force; and
 - that the Task Force move forward on developing a set of working principles to guide development of a new policy statement and develop a proposed tribal and stakeholder consultation plan for review by the membership.

The Task Force now has met four times. The most recent meeting was on July 18 to review the proposed set of working principles and plan for consulting with Section 106 users. We intend to provide these documents to the ACHP membership for review at its Summer 2005 meeting in early August. Outreach and consultation on a revised human remains policy would begin after this meeting. The consultation plan calls for a mix of mailings, face-to-face meetings, and discussions with professional archaeological, inter-tribal, and Native Hawai'ian organizations, and government-to-government consultation meetings with Federally recognized Indian tribes, held through early Summer, 2006. By that time we hope to have the input and perspective necessary to prepare a revised policy for adoption by the full ACHP membership later that year.

Once these actions are underway, we plan to focus the next meeting of the Task Force on the issues of heritage tourism and archaeological guidance.

We also plan to provide updates like this on a regular basis to keep Section 106 practitioners informed of the activities of the ACHP's Archaeology Task Force. Feel free to reprint this or otherwise share it with your members and others who share an interest in archaeology and historic preservation. As we progress we will be inviting your comments and input on many of the issues described above.

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me by email at King@dhcd.state.md.us or the ACHP's staff contact, Dr. Tom McCulloch at tmcculloch@achp.gov. Thank you.