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Subject

8170 - INTERPRETING CULTURAL RESOURCES FOR THE PUBLIC (PUBLIC)

1. Explanation of Material Transmitted. This is a new Manual Section.
2. Reports Required: None
3. Materials Superseded: No Manual pages are superseded by the addition of this section. No other directives are superseded.
4. Filing Instructions: File as directed below:

REMOVE

(None)

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.01 Purpose. This Manual Section provides general direction for public outreach and interpretation related to cultural resources including use of volunteers, museum collections, heritage tourism, and heritage education.

.02 Objective. The objectives of the public outreach component of the cultural resource management program are to ensure that BLM Field Office managers--

A. Respond in a legally sufficient and professional manner to the statutory authorities concerning public outreach involving interpretation and education related to cultural resource values.

B. Recognize the potential public uses of cultural resources on the public lands, and manage the lands and cultural resources so that these uses and values are not diminished, but rather are maintained and enhanced.

C. Understand the essential roles that public communication and heritage education play in historic preservation.

D. Acknowledge the responsibility to communicate to the public, both local and universal, about the significance and importance of cultural resources.

E. Protect and preserve in place, and improve access where appropriate, to cultural resources on public lands for the benefit of public use by present and future generations.

F. Enhance and expand interpretation, information, and education about cultural resources through establishment of partnerships, including local communities, and use of volunteers.

G. Establish a variety of heritage education programs that promote the public stewardship of cultural resources.

H. Recognize cultural resources as assets with economic as well as intrinsic value.

I. Make appropriate use of BLM museum collections housed in public and private curatorial facilities to inspire public perceptions of diverse cultural values and foster an appreciation and understanding of our Nation's rich heritage.

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.03 Authority

A. National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (P.L. 89-665; 80 Stat. 915; 16 U.S.C. 470), as amended, states that it is “the policy of the Federal Government, in cooperation with other nations and in partnership with the States, local governments, Indian tribes, and private organizations and individuals to ... administer federally owned ... prehistoric and historic resources in a spirit of stewardship for the inspiration and benefit of present and future generations.” It further provides that “The Secretary shall ... develop and implement a comprehensive preservation education and training program,” including increased training opportunities for students.

B. Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979 (P.L. 96-95; 93 Stat. 721; 16 U.S.C. 470aa et seq.) as amended (P.L. 100-555; P.L. 100-588) provides that, “Each Federal land manager shall establish a program to increase public awareness of the significance of the archaeological resources located on public lands and ... the need to protect such resources.”

C. Executive Order 13287: Preserve America (March 3, 2003) provides that, “When carrying out its mission, each agency . . . shall seek partnerships with State and local governments, Indian tribes, and the private sector to promote local economic development and vitality through the use of historic properties in a manner that contributes to the long-term preservation and productive use of those properties.”

.04 Responsibility (See BLM Manual Section 8100.04)

.05 References (See BLM Manual Section 8100.05)

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.06 Policy. The BLM's Field Office managers, with the assistance and advice of professionally qualified cultural resource staff, shall--

A. Treat cultural resources as fragile, irreplaceable resources with potential public and scientific uses, representing an important and integral part of our Nation's heritage.

B. Ensure a high quality public visitor experience and enjoyment of cultural resources on the public lands through interpretation programs that are factually accurate, interesting, and appealing.

C. Foster private-public initiatives and investment in the use, reuse, and rehabilitation of cultural resources.

D. Promote community economic development through State and local governments, Indian tribes and private sector partnerships in heritage tourism.

E. Foster an awareness among students and adults of the fragility and importance of cultural resources through heritage education programs.

F. Involve representatives of the local communities and Indian tribes in the formulation of the basic interpretive approach at a site, particularly when the interpretive presentation involves a description of a living local community or Indian tribe and/or its archaeological, historical, cultural, artistic, and ethnic heritage.

G. Develop sustainable and durable heritage tourism opportunities that minimize the negative effects of tourism and, at the same time, maximize the benefits for local communities, States, Indian tribes, and “gateway” communities.

H. Incorporate site-appropriate design principles, for such things as preservation projects, kiosks, walking paths, and information signs, that are sensitive to the character of the site and its surrounding, and that do not endanger the site's long-term preservation.

I. Ensure that BLM cultural specialists, as well as outside scholars and permittees, working on public lands fulfill their responsibility to communicate the significance and meaning of cultural resources to the general public.

J. Maximize efforts to integrate the National Historic Preservation Act and Executive Order 13287 into their program activities.

.07 File and Records Maintenance. Filing requirements are found in the GRS/BLM Combined Records Schedule (Schedule 4).

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.1 Public Interpretation and Education.

.11 Program Relationships.

A. Adventures in the Past. Adventures in the Past is the BLM's "umbrella" program for promoting public education and awareness, and for encouraging public participation in the protection of its cultural resources. Adventures in the Past has as its goals increasing public appreciation and knowledge of cultural resources, promoting public stewardship of cultural resources, and reducing the threat to these resources. These goals have their basis in law and Executive Order. (See BLM Manual Section 8100.03.)

B. National Programmatic Agreement. A major purpose of the BLM's national Programmatic Agreement (see BLM Manual Section 8100, Appendix 13) is to create efficiencies in the Section 106 process and to enable the BLM's cultural resource staff and the SHPO's staff to devote a larger percentage of their time and energy to proactive work, including creative public education and interpretation.

C. Heritage Education. BLM's Heritage Education Program includes two primary elements, Project Archaeology and History Mysteries, as well as occasional outreach pieces targeted toward other audiences. Project Archaeology is a collaborative effort between BLM and The Watercourse, an educational non-profit group located at Montana State University. Aimed at teachers and youth leaders, Project Archaeology emphasizes stewardship of cultural resources. Tied to educational standards, it supports the existing elementary and secondary school curriculum by using examples from archaeology and history to facilitate the teaching of history, social studies, science, math, art, and higher order thinking skills, such as problem solving, synthesis, and evaluation. Project Archaeology is delivered through local teacher workshops; local information is provided by the state student handbook series, *Discovering Archaeology*. State and regional partners organize Project Archaeology locally and provide newsletters, and additional learning and teaching opportunities.

History Mysteries seek to stimulate in young people an interest in and appreciation of stories associated with public lands and to foster their commitment to good stewardship of public lands in the United States by exploring unsolved mysteries and lingering questions of broader historical significance regarding the development of the American West. Components include a newspaper, educational trading cards, and a related web page for children and teachers. Other elements of the Heritage Education Program include a series of articles published in the magazine of the National Science Teachers Association, which often draw on Adventures themes; and the BLM cultural web page. Additionally, occasional brochures focusing on a topic, like the effect of fire on cultural resources, are targeted toward adult audiences.

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D. Recreation Management. The cultural resource management program and the recreation management program often share in designing and operating interpretive sites. See BLM Manual Section 8100.08A2.

E. Relationship to Use Allocation. Field Office managers are expected to allocate all cultural properties in a plan area to one or more use categories, including scientific use, conservation for future use, traditional use, public use, and experimental use (see BLM Manual Section 8110.4). In an important sense these use categories are public-benefit categories. Cultural resources are expected to be utilized in ways that reflect the use(s) to which they were assigned during the planning process. Thus, if a cultural property has been allocated to scientific use, it is reasonable to assume that public benefit is realized when this property is scientifically investigated. Similarly, if a property is identified as having interpretive (public use) potential, it can be assumed that an important public benefit is being realized when the property is made accessible and its place in time, culture, and the ecosystem is explained.

.12 Kinds of Benefits.

A. Direct, Indirect, and Multiple Benefits. Benefits from the use of cultural resources may derive directly from the actual places on the public lands, and also indirectly from the information--documents, records, and museum collections--that results when these places are recorded or scientifically investigated. In developing public awareness and outreach efforts, Field Offices should consider giving priority to those that achieve the broadest array of public benefits. In some instances, however, attaining a single public benefit, such as traditional use by a specific sociocultural group, may outweigh projects with multiple benefits.

B. Public Benefit Categories.

1. Information Benefits. Information benefits include the increase in knowledge about past and contemporary cultures as a result of formal archaeological, anthropological, or historical study. Such knowledge may relate to the adaptation and adjustment of cultures to their environments, cultural evolution, the development of political or religious belief systems, the evolution and functioning of complex systems, or other research topics validated by current research paradigms within the fields of archaeology, anthropology, and history. This is the broadest category of public benefits derived from the systematic study of cultural resources. With interpretation, the knowledge gained is often of equal academic and lay interest.

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2. Applied Benefits. Knowledge derived from the study of cultural resources can have application to contemporary issues. For example, the study of past settlements may provide information useful for making decisions about vegetative treatments, zoning policies, the siting of developments, or appropriate land uses. Paleoenvironmental data may provide clues on the role of prehistoric and historic peoples in environmental change, informing contemporary discussions on the subject. Analyses of archaeological data may also yield management benefits. For example, pollen studies may reveal the mix of forbs, trees, and shrubs in a past environment that a Field Office wants to restore for a specific region. Similarly, faunal remains from archaeological sites may indicate suitable habitat for endangered species or former distribution of such species, information useful for reintroducing plants or animals into their former habitats.

3. Sociocultural Benefits. Sociocultural benefits may accrue to the general public and to specific cultural groups as a result of studying or interpreting cultural resources representative of the groups' culture and history. Benefits may include improved recognition of the richness and complexity of a minority group's culture and history, an increase in intercultural tolerance, greater appreciation for multicultural perspectives, and increased economic opportunities. For example, interpreting cultural resources related to a group's ancestral or historical roots may foster acknowledgment in the society at large of the group's contributions to the regional culture, and enhance the group's sense of well-being.

4. Economic Benefits. Economic benefits are the tangible fiscal or economic gains enjoyed by communities as a result of cultural resources, primarily as a result of heritage tourism. Heritage tourism represents a very significant segment of State and local economies in the West, and its significance is expected to grow in the years ahead, according to marketing studies conducted by the tourism industry. Revival of Native American artistic traditions inspired by prehistoric archaeological motifs on prehistoric pottery or rock art, translated into an invigorated market for Native American art and craft items, is another example of an economic benefit and an improved standard of living.

5. Recreational and Inspirational Benefits. Outdoor enthusiasts such as horseback riders, mountain bikers, hikers, and photographers use cultural resources as a focus for their personal recreation. For many of these recreationists, the benefits they derive are an increased sense of place and an increased connectedness to, and appreciation for, their historical roots. Others gain inspiration through museum exhibits and heritage presentations. As with any recreation and tourism attraction there are associated economic benefits.

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6. Educational Benefits. Heritage education benefits people of all ages through their increased knowledge about cultures past and present and special heritage places on public lands. Increasingly, cultural resource materials are being used to improve student reading, writing, mathematics, reasoning, and higher order thinking skills through the development of lesson plans, hands-on activities and multi-media products. Project Archaeology and History Mysteries are a major commitment by the BLM to improve the education of America's youth while exposing them to a conservation message regarding cultural resources. These programs demonstrate that the Nation's educational system can benefit by utilizing the material culture, scientific resources, and environmental data associated with archaeological sites. Local offices and visitor centers provide educational programming and loan kits for the benefit of people of all ages. Heritage education programs serve to inspire and stimulate the public across a broad spectrum of subject areas while improving knowledge and respect for other cultures.

7. Intra- and Intergovernmental Benefits. Improvements in relations with other units of the Federal Government, with State and local governments, with Indian tribal governments, and internationally can result from shared programs of cultural resource study, conservation, and interpretation. Local benefits also accrue through good public relations or economic benefits resulting from effective public outreach projects with local user groups, museums, Indian tribes, or other interested parties.

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Glossary of Terms

-C-

cultural tourism or heritage tourism: means the business and practice of attracting and accommodating visitors to a place or area based especially on the unique or special aspects of that locale's history, landscape (including trail systems), and culture.

-H-

heritage education: is the formal and informal method and theory about presenting the cultural heritage, particularly the physical past, to the public in order to enhance people's understanding of the past. Specifically, for BLM, it involves formal programs and presentations about the broad context of cultural heritage associated with public lands.

-P-

public interpretation: is the arrangement of information about a particular archaeological or historic site into a meaningful sequence, narrative, or presentation. Public interpretation should strive to contextualize the significance of the site for the visitor, not merely provide disconnected statistics, dates, or technical terms. Its communication medium can range from a text panel, to live guides, to a virtual reality application, although in every case it provides information about the site that would be unavailable through visual inspection alone.