

CASSP WORKSHOPS: ONE PERSPECTIVE ON TEACHING ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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The California Archaeological Site Stewardship Program (CASSP) is sponsored by the SCA, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and the Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division of State Parks, with the goal of protecting archaeological sites on public lands. A small group of archaeologists, led by Russ Kaldenberg, started CASSP in 1999. The organization consists of public volunteers who monitor archaeological sites and report to their local coordinating archaeologist. In order to participate in the program, volunteers attend a workshop introducing local archaeology, Native American perspectives, ethics, safety, and other program topics.

The CASSP has conducted eight volunteer training workshops in the last three years. Our workshop format has evolved into a weekend event; the first day consists of classroom training (Figure 1) and the second day is field training (Figure 2) with visits to archaeological sites. I want to share some of our workshop experiences and observations. And I want to discuss how the program's specific goals determine what we teach. I encourage you to compare our methods and content with the other perspectives on teaching archaeology in the 21st century.

Not surprising, we quickly realized that our main goal for the program training is not to teach archaeology but to engage the volunteers and gain their support for the program. By the end of the classroom training, we want the site stewards to be informed, enthusiastic, and committed to the program. Our main task involves the transfer of our preservation values and our enthusiasm for archaeology to the volunteer. These goals guide our teaching.

We realize that one day in the classroom and one day in the field is not enough time to teach archaeology, but there is time to achieve the goal of recruitment and to motivate volunteers to join and to actively participate in the program. Now, how to successfully engage the volunteers?

We based our approach on several other volunteer programs, including the Partners in Preservation developed by Janine McFarland and Steve Horne with the Los Padres National Forest, the Friends of Southern Sierra stewardship program, and the Arizona Site Stewardship program coordinated by Mary Estes. These programs have long and successful records of recruiting volunteers, providing a worthwhile program, and maintaining volunteer interest.

Our research of these and other volunteer efforts taught us that we needed:

1. a compelling reason to recruit volunteers,
2. sincere support from the professional community, and
3. an understanding that volunteers do not come free.

It seems obvious that the compelling reason to recruit volunteers has been the loss of archaeological sites from increased access and use of our public lands. Unless the number of staff increased tremendously, protection of archaeological resources on public lands could not compete with the demands of law enforcement, recreation programs, and agency mandates. Even though our federal and state agencies are considered stewards of the many resources within their boundaries, management for this stewardship has not been a high priority for the agencies. We sought to address this need with on the ground volunteers to monitor archaeological sites on a regular basis and report back to a professional archaeologist.

The involvement of the professional community also is an essential component of the CASSP program. The professional archaeologist with his or her enthusiasm, knowledge, and expertise in archaeology provides the guidance and direction to the volunteer support. Often the volunteers lend their experience and knowledge from other fields or work experience to the program, which increases the effectiveness of



Figure 1. Classroom training during the first day of the Palm Springs training workshop in January, 2002. Ginger Ridgway, Curator of the Agua Caliente Cultural Museum, is talking about the Cahuilla culture.

Figure 2. Field training during the second day of the Palm Springs training workshop in January, 2002. Wanda Raschkow, Archaeologist at the BLM Palm Springs Field Office, demonstrates map reading.



their effort. The agency archaeologist teaches archaeological methods and techniques as they guide the site stewards. Their teaching is primarily on a one-to-one basis.

Our approach also recognizes that, in order to recruit and retain committed volunteers, our program must provide some "meat." In exchange for their time and labor, our program right away outlines the benefits to the volunteers. Most importantly, the volunteer is given the opportunity to see "behind the scenes" and work with a professional archaeologist.

In designing our workshop, then, we selected topics that focus on the recruitment goal for the program. With this focus, the workshops are structured to involve the volunteers immediately; we start by asking the participants to introduce themselves, reinforcing that CASSP requires active participation from its volunteers. We also emphasize a professional attitude, requiring the participants to sign an Agreement of Confidentiality for access to site data. In addition, we introduce the basics about archaeology, prepare a workbook of information that gives the volunteer reference material and safety procedures; provide a one-on-one environment for the volunteer; encourage conservation; and simulate situations that the site stewards may encounter with the public where they must analyze the situation and decide how they may act.

To cover all the classroom topics in one day requires a carefully organized workshop (Figure 3). This means that we follow an agenda and keep on schedule. Since we will expect volunteers to meet their commitment to the program, prepare monitoring reports, etc., we must set the example and keep on schedule for the workshop. Having an organized and well run workshop also emphasizes to the volunteer that the sponsors and leaders of the program take very seriously the responsibility of involving the public with archaeology.

At the end of the classroom and field days, we want the volunteers to be informed, enthusiastic, and committed to this volunteer program. After

California Archaeological Site Stewardship Program (CASSP) Workshop for Site Stewards

Bureau of Land Management, Palm Springs-South Coast Resource Area

Program Agenda

- 9:00 Check-in and registration. Distribute workshop notebooks.
- 9:30 Welcoming remarks. (Jim Kenna, Office Field Manager; Wanda Raschkow; Beth Padon)
- 9:40 Round robin introductions of participants; what are your expectations?
- 10:00 Overview of CASSP. (Beth Padon)
Report from other site stewardship programs.
Site stewardship: ethics and expectations.
- 10:30 Natural resources. (Robin Kobaly, Big Morongo Preserve Manager)
Luiseno culture (Benjamin Masiel, Coordinator, Pochanga Cultural Resources)
Cahuilla culture (Ginger Ridgway, Curator, Agua Caliente Cultural Museum)
Prehistoric artifact identification and archaeology site types. (Wanda Raschkow)
- 12:30 Lunch, provided at the workshop.
- 1:30 Laws and archaeology. (Beth Padon)
- 1:45 What does it take to be a site steward? (video)
How to be a witness and communication tools. (Beth Padon)
Personal safety.
- 2:30 Discussions and role-playing exercises for dealing with the public. (All participants)
- 3:30 Site stewardship opportunities and logistics. (Wanda Raschkow, Beth Padon)
Discussion, questions and comments.
Fill out volunteer forms.
Sign application and ethics statement.
Complete workshop evaluations.
- 4:00 Thanks to SCA, BLM, OHMVR Division, and the participants. Workshop ends.

A second day of training with field visits is planned for Sunday, January 27.

Figure 3. Example Workshop Agenda.

conducting eight workshops, I know that we still have things to learn in order to have a successful program. Yet, the program has proven that outreach to the public can help the agency archaeologist, does protect archaeological resources, and gives the volunteer a unique experience. Several of our coordinating archaeologists are attending these meetings and I encourage you to ask Judyth Reed, Herb Dallas, Leslie Steidl, Kirk Halford, Eric Ritter, or Wanda Raschkow how the program is working for them. We have trained 128 volunteers and are pleased that six of these attended the 2002 SCA meetings.