
WAAC Publications

Handling Guide for Anthropology Collections

Straightforward text is paired with humorous illustrations in 41 pages of "do's and don'ts" of collection handling. A Guide to Handling Anthropological Museum Collections was written by Arizona State Museum conservator Nancy Odegaard and illustrated by conservation technician Grace Katterman. This manual was designed to be used by researchers, docents, volunteers, visitors, students, staff or others who have not received formal training in the handling of museum artifacts. Paper-bound and printed on acid-free stock.

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Nancy Odegaard
Conservation Section
Arizona State Museum
University of Arizona
Tucson, Arizona 85721

Loss Compensation Symposium Postprints

A compilation of the talks comprising the Loss Compensation panel from the 1993 meeting at the Marconi Conference Center, enhanced by a detailed introduction into the history of loss compensation theory written by Patricia Leavengood.

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Site Stewards Help Preserve Arizona's Past

by Melissa J. Huber

The Arizona Site Steward Program developed as a statewide cooperative response to the destruction of fragile and irreplaceable archaeological resources. Formalized in 1988 with an intergovernmental agreement between the public land managers of Arizona and Tribal governments, the program relies almost entirely on the thousands of hours donated by trained volunteers. In 2003 alone, over 800 certified Site Stewards contributed 22,576.5 hours to monitoring approximately 2,000 prehistoric, historic, and paleontological sites.

The majority of Site Stewards are not professional archaeologists. They are concerned citizens who share a respect for the fragility of Arizona's prehistoric and historic resources and an interest in the preservation of cultural heritage. Volunteers are trained and certified by the State Historic Preservation Office and Archaeology Advisory Commission. Instruction takes place in the classroom and field and covers antiquity laws, site and feature recognition, map reading, and identification of looting and vandalism.

The program is designed to function on a local level with regional coordinators organizing Site Steward activities throughout the state. The primary activities of a Site Steward are site monitoring and recording site condition. Stewards agree to visit their assigned site at least quarterly, but many Stewards visit their sites as often as possible throughout the year. As archaeological resources are ever-changing and impermanent by nature, this continual, cyclical monitoring of sites is key to their successful preservation for future study, conservation, and interpretation. If looting, vandalism, or other damage is suspected, Site Stewards are responsible for recording evidence and reporting to the land managers for further investigation. Stewards report about one case a week, on average.

Site Stewards are also encouraged to participate in public education and outreach programs. The goal is to increase awareness of the significance and value of the state's cultural resources and of the damage caused by vandalism, looting, and the sale and trade of antiquities. Heightening public sensitivity to the potential loss of valuable heritage has, in turn, increased advocacy and participation within the community.

Preservation is not merely an end goal for the Arizona State Steward Program, but a means to facilitate cultural understanding at large. By taking a broader understanding of preservation as a systems-oriented process, the program provides an opportunity to involve the community intimately with its cultural heritage. In turn, the process fosters cohesiveness, cultural awareness, and a connection with Arizona's natural and cultural resources.

Since its inception, a number of institutions throughout the Southwest have subsequently modeled stewardship programs after the Arizona Site Steward Program including Los Padres National Forest in California, the Utah Bureau of Land Management, and developing programs in Nevada, New Mexico, and Colorado.

For more information on the Arizona Site Steward Program see www.azstateparks.com.

References:

Arizona Site Steward Program Handbook for State Historic Preservation Office, Arizona State Parks, Phoenix.

Estes, Mary. 2004. Service Hours and Activity Log. Arizona WATCH. 14:1.

Hoffman, Teresa L. 1991. Stewards of the Past: Preserving Arizona's Archaeological Resources Through Positive Public Involvement. Protecting the Past. Southeast Archeological Center. <http://www.cr.nps.gov/seac/>.