

PROGRESS REPORT ON THE CALIFORNIA ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

BETH PADON

It has been a very busy time for the California Archaeological Site Stewardship Program (CASSP). This paper reviews CASSP activities and accomplishments of the past year, and describes the goals for next year.

The California Archaeological Site Stewardship Program (CASSP) is a partnership between archaeologists, land management agencies, Native Americans, and public volunteers, who work together to better protect archaeological and historical resources on public lands. Trained volunteers regularly visit assigned sites on public lands (about once a month) to inspect for damage. The purpose is to catch a problem at an early stage so that the land management agency can take action to repair it and prevent additional loss before it becomes more serious and expensive. The volunteer site stewards act as additional eyes and ears in the field; they do not have any law enforcement duties.

CASSP is a statewide program, and it maintains consistent structure of goals, methods, requirements across the State for all local teams. If a potential volunteer cannot attend a local workshop when it's offered, the volunteer may be able to train at another workshop, and then return to work with the local coordinating archaeologist. By working with many teams of volunteers, CASSP achieves economy of scale savings in program administration and equipment purchases. Also, CASSP provides statewide products such as a web site, newsletter, symposiums, and advanced workshops, which would be too expensive to create and maintain for just one local team.

Before they go into the field, CASSP volunteers participate in a two-day training workshop. The first day (Saturday) consists of a classroom session with lectures, slide and video presentations, and discussions. Volunteers learn about the local archaeology, natural resources, Native American views (Figure 1). There are discussions about legal and

safety issues, appropriate behavior in the field, and volunteer requirements. Volunteers review the forms that they should complete when they visit their site. The local coordinating archaeologist presents one of the lectures and takes an active role in the discussions. At the end of the first day, workshop participants who want to become CASSP volunteers sign a confidentiality agreement and commit to making regular site visits.

The second day (Sunday) consists of a field trip to view two or three actual archaeological sites. Often the sites visited need a monitor from the class. During the field trip, the coordinating archaeologist talks about specific features of the site and answers questions. The field trips also gives volunteers the opportunity to compare what they observe in the field with their the site monitoring forms (Figure 2).

CASSP is sponsored by the Society for California Archaeology (SCA), in partnership with other organizations and agencies, including the California Office of Historic Preservation, the California Native American Heritage Commission, the Northern Buttes and Mojave Districts and the Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division of the California State Parks, and the California State Office and the Field Offices of the Bureau of Land Management.

CASSP is guided by a Memorandum of Understanding which states the interests, concerns, and mutual responsibilities of the agencies and organizations that participate in CASSP.

CASSP volunteers participated in the SCA annual meetings held in April, 2002, in San Diego with a



Figure 1: CASSP volunteer training workshop for Estero Bluffs. Terry Jones is demonstrating an atlatl.

Figure 2: Field portion of CASSP volunteer training workshop at the Mojave National Preserve.



poster display, photos, and handouts about the program. And we are pleased to have a half-day symposium about CASSP at these annual meetings which feature CASSP volunteers and their contributions to archaeology.

CASSP welcomes the participation of OHV users. Their interest and knowledge of the outdoors are important skills for successful volunteer site stewards—getting to some sites are serious challenges. In addition to the pleasure of being outdoors, CASSP volunteers know that they are making an important contribution to preserve America's history and prehistory.

MEASURABLE OUTCOMES

We measure the success of the CASSP program from our program goals of education, public outreach, and resource protection.

1. Under the goal of education and public outreach: We have trained approximately 250 volunteers at 15 workshops throughout the State. From this pool, more than 65 active volunteers have donated over 2800 hours this year alone by monitoring over 70 sites.

Several of our workshop participants are coming wanting to know more about archaeology and about the prehistory in their area. We have found that our classroom training and field training provide some people with their first exposure to local archaeology.

In asking site stewards to evaluate CASSP, they have told us:

- “These programs not only educate and involve the public in heritage preservation, but allow people to feel good about donating their time and energy towards protecting and preserving their own cultural heritage.”
- “I wanted to learn more about the people who lived here before and why and this program is providing that opportunity.”
- “Through CASSP and the programs it offers, we have learned much about the many features of rock art, and the cultures that used it, and been able to share our knowledge with others.”
- “I am an interested amateur archeologist, and an enthusiastic participant in the CASSP program. The individually small but collectively large contributions of those in the CASSP program provide significant protection to the state's archeological sites.”

- “I have been a volunteer for the California Archaeological Site Stewardship Program for more than one year now... This has been a great opportunity for me, allowing me to visit an interesting place while learning more about archaeology in general in the process; and to give something back to the community while doing so.”

2. Under the goal to increase protection for archaeological resources: there are over 65 active volunteers who monitor regularly more than 70 different archaeological sites. Some volunteers visit their sites every month and some every other month. Some volunteers monitor two or more sites. They adjust the frequency and intensity of their visits to their site according to its level of exposure.

Perhaps the impact of CASSP protection is best told by examples. Jeff Lafave, a site steward for CASSP in Imperial County, has been monitoring a site in the Yuha Desert that contains a rock circle (Figure 3). In 1994 this stone circle was discovered and later recorded by Jay von Werlhof, archaeologist with the Imperial Valley Museum. It is attributed to the Kumeyaay who lived in this area over the past millennium. Soon after Jay recorded this site, someone came to the site and rearranged many of the stones. They were restored by a Kumeyaay elder, but vandalism to this fragile and important site, occurred again. When Jeff became a CASSP site steward in October 1999, he was assigned to this site and started making regular monitoring visits. Since late 1999, the only disturbance to the site was been the moving of a few stones with no signs of vandalism for the past several months. His repeated presence may be reducing vandalism. Furthermore, Jeff's careful recording of the condition each time that he visits this site provides the land management agency (BLM) valuable information regarding any changes taking place at the site and the surrounding area. Recently, the BLM completed a National Register nomination for this site.

Another example of how effective a monitoring program can be is the Lake Oroville State Recreation Area team. Leslie Steidl with the Northern Buttes District of the State Parks coordinates this team of volunteers from the Enterprise Rancheria. Her site stewards, Maidu tribal members, started visiting 11 archaeological sites within the recreational area in April, 2000, that have had a long history of vandalism, looting, and artifact collecting. Since these sites are in close proximity to each other and located around the lake shore, they are visited each time by the site stewards during their monitoring. With the increased number of eyes and ears, these sites have not seen any signs of vandalism since the monitoring visits

began. A real success story for CASSP. Leslie remarked that this success has lead to renewed hope that these Maidu sites will be protected for future generations.

CASSP site stewards are also adding valuable archaeological information to the known site records. Some CASSP volunteers have been assigned to archaeological sites that initially were recorded and documented many years ago. Site stewards, with assistance from their coordinating archaeologists, have helped to update these site records with new photos and other data. Recently, Wanda Raschkow, the coordinating archaeologist, from Palm Springs/South Coast Resource Area reported that:

While reviewing the archaeological sites in the Red Cloud Canyon area, the site steward found a previously unrecorded prehistoric trail marker. This prehistoric trail marker is a boulder with a petroglyph on it. Because of the efforts of this alert site steward, this new information becomes a part of the permanent record for this site. Information that tells an important part of our prehistory.

With the information that CASSP site stewards are adding to the records, they are helping to protect these resources for future generations.

3. Under the goal to help the agency archaeologist:

It takes agency time and effort to work with volunteers. The coordinating archaeologists provide professional input, review monitoring reports, and respond to observed damage. This investment is multiplied several times over, because the coordinating archaeologist have additional eyes and ears for the field, trained to help them keep track of archaeological and historical resources.

Wanda Raschkow, BLM archaeologist, recently commented:

Two site stewards accompanied her to a Cahuilla village or seasonal camp and assisted her with a general review of the site area. They found the past site documentation and records were not accurate any more; so she with the help of the trained site stewards immediately began to update the records and to map the new artifact clusters and features. Now, the site stewards have accurate baseline information to use while monitoring the site for any changes and Wanda as the land manager has update information on this resource which helps her meet the Section 110 mandate for resource protection.

They also find that the site stewards enthusiasm for archaeology bolsters them which brings added job satisfaction. But the benefits to the coordinating archaeologist doesn't stop there; we have two site stewards who volunteer and work with the coordinating archaeologist in their offices. These site stewards provide valuable aid with the administrative tasks concerning archaeological site records, reports, and artifacts.

With these encouraging results, CASSP is looking forward to providing additional training workshops, advanced workshops and other archaeological research opportunities for our site stewards. We recently held a two-day advanced workshop at the Archaeological Lab at the Presidio in San Francisco (Figure 4). Megan Wilkinson, Museum specialist, wrote that:

the volunteers helped wet screen, sort and catalog over 1500 cubic feet of remains from historic Spanish and American period sites, as well as photographed and entered data into their database. Both the Presidio Trust and the National Park Service archaeological programs benefited greatly from the volunteer's visit. We hope to host another CASSP group soon!

We believe that involving the public in a meaningful way with our cultural heritage will reap untold benefits for the resources and for the public's understanding of prehistory. Hopefully, CASSP provides a meaning bridge for the archaeologist to share their feelings and values about the past.

.....



Figure 3: Restored rock circle, monitored by site steward Jeff Lafave.

Figure 4: CASSP advanced workshop in historical artifacts analysis at the Archaeology Lab of the Presidio of San Francisco.

