

CASSP newsletter

Volume 3, Number 2, June 2004

Message from the Society for California Archaeology

by Amy Gilreath, SCA President

I know it is bad form to have a favorite child, but I must confess that CASSP is right at the top of the list for my favorite SCA Program. I love that it is inclusive, and that it brings together people of extraordinarily diverse backgrounds who have, in common, an abiding interest in California's history and prehistory. And I love that it lets so many Californians actively preserve and protect sites.

One way that you can have an effect is to let the State know what your priorities are concerning preservation. The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) maintains a Comprehensive Statewide Plan that establishes the historic preservation goals for the state and they use it to prioritize grant applications and SHPO projects. Every five years, the plan is updated, and they are now asking for our input on the 2006-2010 Plan. Up until June 30, you can log-on to <http://ohp.parks.ca.gov?page_id=23420>, and complete their questionnaire. I encourage you to do so.

I know that not all CASSP participants receive the SCA Newsletter, and I would like to use this opportunity to plug you into information about CASSP's parent, the SCA. Next time you're

surfing the net, consider visiting our web site, <www.scahome.org>, for information, current research articles, and news about SCA programs other than CASSP. You might find past issues of our quarterly SCA Newsletter particularly interesting, and these are available to all at <www.scahome.org/educationalresources/archivedNewsletters.html>.

I'd also like to personally invite you to the SCA's Data Sharing Meetings (DSM). Much smaller than the SCA Annual Meeting held in the spring, and so much more intimate, every fall we hold a Northern and a Southern California Data Sharing Meeting. Typically 100-200 folks attend, and a single, continuous session runs for the course of the day. This is a great place to hear preliminary thoughts about projects that have just "come out of the field," to hear archaeologists discuss what they have found and what they are starting to think about the new findings. The Southern DSM are set for September 11 at Fort Hunter Liggett; Terry Jones, SCA Southern Vice President, is the organizer, and can be reached at <tljones@calpoly.edu>. The Northern DSM are set for November 6 at Shasta College in Redding; Karin Anderson, SCA Northern Vice President, is the organizer, and can be reached at <karin_anderson@nps.gov>. I hope to see you there. ◇

SCA Site Stewardship Committee meeting

The Site Stewardship Committee of the SCA provides review and oversight of CASSP activities. The committee consists of SCA officers, CASSP volunteers, agency archaeologists who lead teams of CASSP volunteers, and other SCA members.

The committee met in Riverside during the SCA Annual Meetings. Agenda items included a review of last year's CASSP activities and plans for next year. About 450 people have attended CASSP training workshops since 1999. Currently, 135 people are actively visiting about 230 assigned archaeological and historical sites and districts on public lands. During 2003, CASSP volunteers contributed around 3,600 hours towards site protection.

Next year, CASSP will provide site stewardship brochures to volunteers and agencies, and bumper-sticker signs to inform visitors that they are in areas that are monitored by site stewards. Also we plan to develop new volunteer opportunities and pursue new partnerships with other federal and State agencies, so that more people can participate in CASSP. We will explore opportunities for training workshops for private property owners and for school children.

Perhaps it was only natural, since all of us were attending the SCA annual meetings, that committee members promised to encourage CASSP volunteers to attend future SCA data sharing meetings and annual meetings. ◇

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FIELD REPORT

Archaeological stewardship: Beyond site monitoring

by Judyth Reed

Since the California Archaeological Site Stewardship Program was inaugurated in Ridgecrest in the Spring of 1999, site stewards have contributed thousands of hours to monitoring their assigned areas. Beyond that, they have contributed much time and effort to archaeological inventory and research. They have become a skilled team that is always ready to participate when a crew is needed.

During 2000 and 2001 10 site stewards helped to inventory over 2000 acres in Panamint Valley and to record more than 40 prehistoric archaeological sites, including a number of geoglyphs (ground figures made by lining rocks up in patterns). They were assisting Julie Burcell, BLM Ukiah Field Office Archaeologist, with research for her Masters Thesis. They helped to identify a very important complex of geoglyphs and other unusual site types. They spent one full week in the field with BLM archaeologists and a number of weekends, during which they encountered weather conditions that ranged from over 100 degrees to bitter cold and windy. Julie's thesis will be an important contribution to desert archaeology and to management of rare and beautiful archaeological resources. The contribution of the site stewards was invaluable in completing the field data collection.

In May of 2000 a dozen regular site stewards and other volunteers camped in Panamint Valley for a week to assist with excavation and mapping at the historic town site of Reilly, this time in support of masters thesis research for James Barnes, BLM Redding and Folsom Field Office. We camped at Ballarat, where volunteers from the Ukiah Field Office set up a field kitchen for the group. The weather cooperated again in improving the crew's ability to work under any conditions. Although we planned the work for May, theoretically before the heat of summer set in, the temperature shot up to 120 degrees. (It dropped back to normal right after the project ended.) We were treated to what we came to call the "Beau Geste" sand storm, during which we watched a wall of sand blow down the valley toward our camp, and had to hold down the kitchen tent to keep it from blowing away. While we were doing that a number of personal tents were blown down. Nevertheless, an impressive number of units were excavated by the group, a field laboratory was staffed to record cans and other historic items on site, and we had an opportunity to observe ground-penetrating radar in action. James has finished his thesis and it has contributed not only to our knowledge about Reilly but to our understanding of historic mining in the area in general.

In September of 2001 and again in November of 2002 many of our site stewards participated in excavation and data recovery at a prehistoric site within the Bedrock Spring Area of Critical Environmental Concern. The site had been damaged years ago by site vandals and the scar left by their actions had never healed. We intended to salvage whatever was left and to rehabilitate the surface of the site so that it would heal to its natural conditions.

We had the unusual experience, in this desert area, of working in rain and fog during the second excavation. We found that the site was in fact quite deep and there were undisturbed levels below the damage caused by the vandals. An enormous amount of information was collected. This is still being analyzed and site stewards are volunteering to assist with the cleaning, cataloguing and analysis.

In April of 2002 several site stewards joined BLM archaeologists and the Gear Grinders, a local off-highway vehicle group, to update information on a historic period wikiup structure in the Panamint Mountains. The Gear Grinders were crucial to the success of the project because the road into the area is so bad that only their custom vehicles could get the crew and equipment into the area. The Gear Grinders have since become site stewards and have adopted the wikiup as their official monitoring assignment. We did some fire protection around the wikiup while we were there, cutting brush and tree limbs that were overhanging the tinder dry wooden structure, mapped and sketched it, and located some rock art sites in the vicinity.



Participants in the project at Reilly; the stone wall is one of the most notable features at this historic site.



Archaeologists and CASSP volunteers worked together at the prehistoric site at Bedrock Spring.

More recently, site stewards have done inventory and excavation around the ancient shoreline of Searles Lake, where an extensive complex of sites as old as 8000 years is being documented, and in the Slate Range where geoglyphs, stacked stone, and historic and prehistoric trails were found. A number of them have volunteered regularly every other Friday to help Russ Kaldenberg, Base Archaeologist at China Lake Naval Air Weapons Station (and developer of CASSP when he worked for BLM) establish a curation facility on the base.

These efforts and others with which site stewards have assisted are important contributions to our understanding of the history and prehistory of the desert and are priceless in terms of their impact on BLM's cultural resources program. As an agency archaeologist, the experience of working with people who truly care about archaeology and are willing to devote a lot of their own time and effort to understanding and protecting it has become the most rewarding and enjoyable part of my job. ◇



Overview of the work at Bedrock Spring in Fall, 2001.



Some of the people who participated in the project to update information on the Panamint Mountains wikiup.

WORKSHOP

Advanced training workshop on flintknapping

On March 17, just before the annual meetings of the Society for California Archaeology (SCA) began at the same location, twelve CASSP volunteers and two skilled archaeologists met for a very enjoyable and informative workshop on flintknapping.

The archaeologists/flintknappers who taught this workshop are Robert Yohe and Tim Gross. Robert is a professor in the Department of Anthropology and Sociology at California State University, Bakersfield. He also directs the Museum of Anthropology and the Laboratory of Archaeological Sciences at the University. Tim is a consultant at Affinis Inc. in San Diego County. Also, he is president of the board of the San Diego Archaeological Center and he teaches at the University of San Diego.

Tim and Bob discussed types of lithic materials, basic principles and methods of flintknapping, different types of chipped stone tools, flintknapping as art, and the ethics and safety of modern flintknapping.

The idea for this workshop came from several site stewards who wanted to know more about the kinds of artifacts that they were seeing at their sites. Sandy Rogers, a site steward in Ridgecrest, was instrumental in setting up this workshop.

When Tim and Bob moved the class outside for demonstrations in flintknapping, they attracted other SCA members who had come to the convention center to register early. Several of these visitors wanted to know how they could come to this type of training next time, and we were more than happy to tell them about CASSP.

The success of this workshop means that another CASSP advanced workshop will be planned for the day before the SCA Annual Meeting in Sacramento in 2005. ◇



Tim Gross (l) and Robert Yohe (r) demonstrate chipped stone tool manufacturing techniques.



Tim Gross (l) and Robert Yohe (r) during the lecture and discussion session.



CASSP volunteers at the flintknapping workshop, in front of the Riverside Convention Center.

PHOTO ESSAY

Advanced workshops in analysis of historical artifacts at The Presidio of San Francisco

photos and text by Sue Myers, Beth and Chris Padon



The "wet area" is located outside, behind the Lab building. This is the area where Lab personnel and volunteers wet screen excavated soils to recover all artifacts. This photo shows Historical Archaeologist Sannie Osborn (center), with two CASSP volunteers.



The Presidio Archaeology Lab serves many research and education goals. Lab personnel build and maintain archives, care for artifacts, preserve and protect sites at The Presidio, and conduct public outreach to visitors and school children. The following photos show some of the many tasks performed at the Lab.



Objects are photographed to provide a preliminary record. Eventually, these will be compiled into a database and made available to other researchers. CASSP volunteers photographed 90 objects in the 2003 workshop, and another 32 collections of objects in the 2004 workshop.



This part of The Presidio of San Francisco is known today as Pershing Square. The Presidio also was a special place to Spanish colonists and Native Americans. Remains from the history and prehistory of this place can still be found on the grounds.



Artifacts that have been recovered from soils by wet screening are dried. Items from the same location are kept together. Then the artifacts are sorted by material, function, type, time period. Over 1.2 million artifacts from Crissy Field are stored at the Lab.



After the artifacts from each location have been cleaned and sorted, they must be identified and cataloged. Megan Wilkinson (standing), Museum Specialist, is supervising CASSP volunteers as they prepare artifact identification sheets.



Articles of wood, leather, and metal are carefully cleaned, stabilized, and preserved. Leather, for example, is preserved with polyethelene glycol. Leo Barker, NPS Archaeologist, is showing the final stage of conservation/storage.



FIELD REPORT

Trip to Little Lake

by Sandy Rogers

On March 11, ten Site Stewards* in the Ridgecrest area were treated to a tour of the Little Lake area. Little Lake, a perennial body of fresh water, is located east of Highway US-395, about 40 miles north of Ridgecrest; it is the home of two fascinating archaeological sites and three rock art loci. The lake and surrounding area are privately owned, by the Little Lake Duck Hunting Club, which takes its stewardship very seriously. The tour was hosted and conducted by Dr. Jim Pearson, a consulting archaeologist and member of the duck hunting club.

The Stahl Site, located toward the north end of the property, was first excavated in the 1950s by Mark Harrington of the Southwest Museum, and has been re-examined since by other investigators. It is believed to contain a Pinto or Lake Mojave component, in excess of 6000 years old, and continues until

protohistoric times. In addition to the open areas of the site, a rock shelter contains rock art. In addition, the remains of Harrington's station wagon, which caught fire during the dig, are still to be seen!

At the south end of the lake is the site of the ancient Koso Panamint village of Pagunda. This site was occupied as a wintering village until historic times, and exhibits rock rings, bedrock mortars, grinding slicks, and vast amounts of obsidian flakes. Nearby is a wonderful locus of rock art, including both petroglyphs and pictographs. Other rock art loci are Atlatl Cliff, on the east side of the property, and a rock outcropping at the extreme southern end of the lake.

All in all, it was a great outing, and Dr. Pearson's enthusiastic explanations enhanced the experience. The Site Stewards came away with a heightened sense of the cultural resources in the area. The Duck Hunting Club is to be commended for their outstanding efforts to conserve the sites. ◇

**Sandy Rogers, Bill Wight, Freida Branson, Kathy and Bill Martin, Ken Pringle, Jim Murray, Al and Joan Woodman. Also Alan Gold and family, Dr Jeanne Binning of Caltrans, and Linda Saholt of the Daily Independent.*



These petroglyphs are recognized as representing atlatls.



Many of these small obsidian chips at Little Lake are just a centimeter or two in size.



Petroglyphs at Little Lake display a wide variety of elements.



An example of a dense panel of petroglyphs at Little Lake.

CALENDAR

Training workshops scheduled

A training workshop for new site stewards has been scheduled for June 26-27 at the Hollister BLM Field Office. Erik Zaborsky is the archaeologist at this Field Office; he will host the workshop and supervise the new volunteers who want to work on BLM lands in this area.

The workshop will start with a Saturday classroom session, which begins at 9:00 am and ends about 4:00 pm. On Sunday, we will train in the field at nearby archaeological or historical sites. The Sunday session will start at 9:00 am and finish by early afternoon. In order to participate in the field trip portion of the workshop, you must attend the Saturday session and sign the confidentiality forms. For more information about the contents of the workshop and the work of site stewards, please visit the CASSP web site at <www.cassp.org>.

Registration is required, and the workshop fee is \$25 per person, which can be paid at the door. A training notebook and lunch on Saturday is provided. Please bring your own lunch or snacks for Sunday.

CASSP volunteers from previous workshops are encouraged to attend to refresh their training and to talk with the new volunteers. If you attended a previous workshop, then the \$25 fee is waived, but you still need to register.

Space is limited to 25 participants. Please register by June 21, the Monday before the workshop, by sending your name and contact information to Beth Padon at (562) 432-1801, fax: (562) 432-1811, email: bpadon@discoveryworks.com.

Other workshops will be held later this year. The BLM Field Office in Palm Springs, in partnership with the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, the Bureau of Reclamation, and the US Forest Service, will host a workshop in the Fall. Advanced workshops in field survey techniques and site recordation also will be offered this year.

Please visit the CASSP web site for the latest schedule information about this and other future workshops. ◇

WORKSHOP

Anza-Borrego Desert State Park

On April 16-17, a CASSP training workshop was held for California Volunteers in Parks and Colorado Desert Archaeological Society members at the Vallecito Ranch site in Anza-Borrego Desert State Park.

Before the workshop began, the Colorado Desert Archaeological Society was recognized for receiving the 2004 Helen C. Smith Avocational Award from the SCA. Joan Schneider accepted the plaque on behalf of the Society at the SCA meetings, and she presented it to Society president, Sam Webb.

Twenty new CASSP volunteers attended the workshop, where they learned about CASSP, the prehistory of the area, Native American views, archaeology laws, safety rules, and law enforcement concerns. Special Agent Todd Swain addressed the volunteers on Friday, and prepared field exercises on Saturday with the assistance of State Parks Rangers J. B. Zemon and Nancy Wittig. The site stewards worked on footprint identification and on tracking and observation skills. The field session ended with everyone visiting a mock crime scene, where Todd explained why it was important to carefully approach a site where vandalism may have occurred.

This is a good group of volunteers, and we were very pleased to work with them, and to enjoy the recently acquired Vallecito Ranch—a beautiful addition to a wonderful park. ◇



The Colorado Desert Archaeological Society received the SCA Helen C. Smith Avocational Award in 2004.



State Parks archaeologist Sue Wade reviewed the prehistory of the park.



Ranger Nancy Wittig led one of the field exercises; this one studies different types of boot prints.

Contributors to this issue:

Amy Gilreath is the President of the Society for California Archaeology. She is an owner of Far Western Anthropological Research Group, Inc., a cultural resources management firm in Davis.

Sue Myers is a CASSP volunteer in the Palm Springs area, and she attended the advanced workshops at The Presidio in both 2003 and 2004. She also is a professional photographer.

Beth and Chris Padon administer CASSP, and they are chairpersons of the SCA Site Stewardship committee. They own Discovery Works, Inc., a cultural resources management firm in Long Beach.

Judyth Reed is the BLM Ridgcrest Field Office archaeologist. She hosted the first CASSP workshop in 1999, and several others since then. She has the largest group of CASSP volunteers.

Sandy Rogers is a site steward in the Ridgcrest area. His second career is archaeology, and he was recently appointed to the staff of the Maturango Museum in Ridgcrest.

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BACK PAGE

Triangles and Artifacts

CASSP volunteers have a lot of experience and knowledge.

At last year's advanced workshop in sketch mapping for sites, our instructor, Steve Horne, showed us how to use our compasses to measure vertical angles, and then use trigonometry equations to measure the height of tall objects. While some of us were struggling to remember back to high-school trigonometry, one of the volunteers in the class told us how to compute the height without equations. He said, "Move to a point where the vertical angle measures 45 degrees. Then the height of the wall can be found by adding the vertical height of the compass in your hand to the horizontal distance from your location to the wall."

There was a similar display of knowledge at last January's advanced workshop on artifact analysis, where volunteers helped

clean and classify artifacts excavated at The Presidio. The one shown on the left puzzled archaeologists, but a volunteer wrote: "Through coax connector, with set screw and groundwire. Estimated 1976 mfr. date." ◇



CASSP newsletter

CASSP newsletter is a publication of the Society for California Archaeology, Site Stewardship Committee. Newsletter editors are Beth Padon and Chris Padon. The President of the Society for California Archaeology is Amy Gilreath.

Submissions

We welcome submissions to the Newsletter; however, articles may be edited for length and content, and all submitted materials become property of the Society for California Archaeology.

Subscriptions

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