

# Archeological Collections Care Management

## Objective

**T**HE OVERALL GOAL of the federal curation program, as set forth in 36 CFR Part 79, is to ensure the preservation and accessibility of archeological collections for use by members of the public interested in the archaeology of the region. Archeological collections are a significant element of our national patrimony and are valuable for the scientific information they contain, as well as for educational purposes. An archeological collection is defined in 36 CFR Part 79 as material remains that are excavated or removed during an archeological survey, excavation, or other study of prehistoric or historic resources and associated records that are prepared or assembled in connection with the survey, excavation or other study. Archeological collections and associated records always remain the property of the Army and must be maintained in perpetuity. Without the proper conservation and storage, archeological collections deteriorate, become displaced, or are otherwise subject to the many vicissitudes of time. To comply with federal law and Army regulation (36 CFR Part 79, AR 200-4 and PAM 200-4), Fort Bragg has established an artifact curation facility (ACF) and an administrative structure to manage its archeological collections. It is helpful for artifacts, site records, and cultural resource reports to be curated and readily available to the installation Cultural Resources Program staff, other installation professionals, other land management activities and interested researchers. Construction projects, military training activities and other land management activities require cultural resource clearances. Access to this information enables the CRP staff to readily review project proposals, suggest locations that will have a low impact on cultural resources, and project where additional cultural resources are likely to be located. This SOP outlines the policies and procedures to be followed to curate, conserve, store and use Fort Bragg's archeological collections. For detailed information, consult the Curation Guidelines in Appendix VII.

## Policy

The policies outlined here establish consistent curation efforts for the Fort Bragg ACF. It is important to present the governing policies so that curation facility staff and other professionals understand the principles and reasons governing the procedures for collections management tasks. Consistent application of these policies and procedures will be ensured through staff training and the use of this SOP and the Curation Guidelines in the operation of the facility.

The Fort Bragg ACF shall operate in compliance with all applicable federal regulations, most notably 36 CFR Part 79 (*Curation of Federally-Owned and Administered Archeological Collections*) as well as all corresponding Army regulations (AR 200-4 para 27) and guidelines. AR 200-4 (Cultural Resource Management) requires the Installation Commander to ensure that all archeological collections (as defined in 36 CFR Part 79) are processed, maintained and preserved IAW the requirements of 36 CFR Part 79.

The policy for evaluating the acceptability of objects for curation is outlined below. These standards apply both to objects donated to the ACF and to objects collected during cultural resource activities.

- 1) Objects must have a documented ownership history. Documentation of clear title transfer must accompany the object(s).
- 2) The nature and quality of the object(s) are consistent with, and in furtherance of, the mission of the Fort Bragg CRP.
- 3) The physical qualities of the material, as well as any legal encumbrances, will not restrict the ACF to conserve and care for the object(s) in accordance with 36 CFR Part 79.
- 4) Possession or transfer of object(s) will not violate any federal or state law or regulation pertaining to the acquisition or possession of such object(s).

## Procedure

### Accession Approval

Object(s) proposed for accession into the ACF will be reviewed by the archeological collections manager for compliance with the collection criteria outlined above. If in compliance with the collections criteria, the object(s) will then be accessioned into the ACF collections. Whenever a proposed acquisition does not obviously comply with the collections

criteria, the archeological collections manager must consult with the post archeologist. After consultation, accession may be granted or denied based on the degree of compliance with the collections criteria, historical and/or geographical significance of the object(s), physical condition, provenience documentation, representativeness to other object(s) of its kind, and the object(s) contribution to the mission of the CRP.

#### Storage

Secure storage for archeological collections will consist of locked storage rooms and access to any archeological materials will be under the direct supervision of the Fort Bragg archeological collections manager, or a designated employee of the Fort Bragg Cultural Resources Program staff. Cleaning of the storage facility is conducted on an as needed basis by CRP personnel in addition to the weekly activities of the PWBC housekeeping plan. Each artifact is provided with sufficient space, storage furnishings, temperature, humidity, and light levels to maximize object stability over time. Regularly scheduled monitoring of environmental controls, cleaning and spot inventories enable the CRP to comply with or exceed standards set in 36 CFR 79. Insect detector traps (glue boards) are placed in the storage rooms and monitored on a weekly basis. Identifying pests in the traps and patterns of infestation enable ACF staff to determine sources of invasion and develop strategies for prevention.

#### Access

In accordance with 36 CFR 79, Fort Bragg's collections and associated records are available for scientific, educational, and religious uses, subject to such terms and conditions as are necessary to protect and preserve the condition, research potential, religious or sacred importance, and uniqueness of the collection. To gain access to the collections, all potential users must register their visit in the "collections use log" indicating the nature of their work and the specific collections to be viewed. Any resulting exhibits and/or publications shall acknowledge Fort Bragg as the curatorial facility and the U.S. Army as the owner and administrator of the collections. Copies of any resulting publications including exhibition supplementary materials shall be provided to the archeological collections manager. All outgoing loans of Fort Bragg's materials require execution of written loan agreements.

#### Conservation

The goal of the Fort Bragg ACF is to set standards for handling objects and associated documents that will maximize the preservation of data. Only actions absolutely necessary to stabilize objects or to rid the collection of

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agents of deterioration will be performed. The majority of artifacts stored at Fort Bragg will require no or minimal conservation. Artifact examination, cleaning, stabilization, accessioning, cataloguing and packing for storage are outlined in the Curation Guidelines (Appendix VII).

### Reporting Requirements

The annual Secretary of Interior's report to Congress requires an assessment of archeological records and materials in federal repositories. This is accomplished on Fort Bragg through the ACTS reporting system. 36 CFR Part 79 and AR 200-4 require reports specific to actions pertaining to the installation archeological collections. The Installation Commander (Federal Agency Official; the Director of PWBC for the Fort Bragg CG) has authorized an annual repository inspection and inventory, to be conducted by the archeological collections manager (Repository Official). In addition, 36 CFR Part 79 and AR 400-4 require specific reporting actions pertaining to the installation archeological collections:

- 1) Within five (5) days of the discovery of any loss or theft of, deterioration and damage to, or destruction of the collection (or part thereof) or any other Fort Bragg-owned or controlled archeological artifacts, the Repository Official prepares and provides the Federal Agency Official written notification of the circumstances surrounding the loss, theft, deterioration, damage or destruction.
- 2) Following each inspection and inventory, the Repository Official prepares and provides the Federal Agency Official with a written report of the results of the inspection and inventory, including the status of the objects and associated records, treatments completed and recommendations for additional treatments, inventory of all U.S. Government-owned personal property received by the ACF, physical status of the ACF and the results of periodic inventories conducted to verify the location of objects and/or associated documents.

### Artifact analysis and accessioning

Artifact analysis and accessioning is conducted either by contracted cultural resource specialists or the CRP staff at Fort Bragg. Standard sources will be used for the identification of objects. Descriptions will include as much detail as possible for future research reference. Minimally, material, function, technological and morphological characteristics and dimensions will be recorded. Analysis and accessioning procedural details can be found in Appendix VII. Objects and documents analyzed and accessioned by contracted specialists will be

inspected and incorporated into the Fort Bragg collections and database upon their return to the ACF. All objects are organized by site number and stored in clearly-labeled archival-quality bags and boxes. Associated documents, maps and records are stored in archival folders and photographic sleeves by assigned project numbers. All records and photographic material are filed in metal filing or map drawer cabinets. In addition to the main collection, extra security and climate control is offered to special collections such as Monroe's Crossroads Civil War artifacts, Overhills property objects and the projectile point and prehistoric ceramic type collections. These materials are housed in pull-out drawers inside locked, museum-quality cabinets. As of FY 2001, the Fort Bragg ACF houses approximately 205 cubic feet of archeological objects and 116 linear feet of associated records and documents.