

# Curation Guidelines

## Purpose and Authority

**T**HE FORT BRAGG ARTIFACT CURATION FACILITY is responsible for preservation of all archeological collections and associated documents and photographs recovered on Fort Bragg and Camp Mackall. To comply with Federal and Army regulation (36CFR Part 79 and AR 200-4 and PAM 200-4), and to ensure availability for researchers and the public, archeological collections and records should be retrieved, processed, stored and handled in ways that will contribute to their long-term preservation.

The Fort Bragg Cultural Resource Management Program, Environmental and Natural Resources Division in the Public Works Business Center (910-396-6680), has stewardship responsibility for archeological materials owned and maintained by Fort Bragg. Collections in the Curation Facility are the result of contracted and in-house compliance activity, accidental discovery on post, and donated private (pre-1995) collections also from the installation lands.

This document outlines guidelines and instructions to be followed by private consulting firms for the preservation of archeological materials and associated documents, maps and photographs. These guidelines and instructions are consistent with the Standards and Guidelines for Curation of Federally-owned and Administered Archeological Collections (36 CFR 79) promulgated by the National Park Service and the North Carolina Office of State Archeology (OSA) Curation Guidelines (1995). If there are any questions, contact Fort Bragg's Artifact Curation Facility at (910)396-6680, XVIII ABN CORPS AND FORT BRAGG/ATTN: AFZA-PW-E (BOYKO), FORT BRAGG NC 28310 or the Office of State Archeology at (919)733-7342, 4619 Mail Service Center Raleigh, NC 27699-4619.

## Guidelines for Curation of Artifacts

The Fort Bragg Artifact Curation Facility requires that materials submitted for curation meet certain general conditions prior to acceptance.

### Cleaning

For material collected on Fort Bragg, a plain water rinse with a little soft brushing as necessary, has been found to be most appropriate. The installation's sandy soils often fall free from the artifacts as they dry in the collection bag so that little, if any, cleaning is required. Pottery sherds should be treated with particular care during brushing to prevent any abrasion of the surface by the brush. In addition, sherds should not be cleaned at all if any soot-like material remains on the exterior or interior surfaces. Metal artifacts should not be washed but merely dry-brushed as needed.

All artifacts should be cleaned and stabilized prior to shipment to Fort Bragg, except in instances where an uncleaned condition may facilitate a particular form of analysis (eg. Charcoal for C14). In such cases appropriate documentation of the artifact's condition and the proposed analysis should be included in the artifact inventory and lab methods section of the final report. Items requiring specialized conservation measures should be stabilized on a case-by-case basis and further documented in the artifact inventory and lab methods section. Artifacts requiring special treatment must be packaged separately and clearly labeled.

### Sorting and Cataloging

The collections are to be sorted by site number, provenience and artifact category (e.g., lithic, prehistoric ceramic, historic ceramic, metal, glass, other historic, ethnobotanical, faunal). Analytical categories will be further subdivided within each general category (e.g., flake/tool type, raw material, decoration, color etc...). Any material discarded in the lab must be described and noted in the lab methods section, site description or artifact inventory section. The attributes used to identify each artifact analytical category (e.g., artifact type and raw material type) must be clearly and concisely defined in the lab methods section of the cultural resource management report. Each artifact analytical category will be assigned an accession number with a specimen alpha-numeric suffix (see *accession numbers* below) and all data must be entered into a spreadsheet or database format (Excel preferred; QuattroPro, Access acceptable). Analytical categories used are to be defined by the investigator as deemed appropriate, but must be up to acceptable professional standards and, again, clearly defined.

### Accession Numbers

All artifacts must be marked with accession numbers (e.g., 99230) obtained from the North Carolina Office of State Archeology (OSA), and a specimen number (e.g., m100) assigned by the cataloger. A new accession number is obtained for each "collection" (project) or site visit to that site. The specimen number consists of an alphabetic symbol – **a** (artifact), **p** (pot sherd), **b** (bone), **eb** (ethnobotanical), **Hb** (human bone), **m** (miscellaneous)- and an arbitrary sequential number for each analytical category or artifact grouping. The sequential numbers begin with "1" for any given site collection and continue through the entire collection. A new intersite provenience or artifact grouping does not mean you start again with the number "1." **Artifact (a)** includes all prehistoric tools and most historic material; **pot sherd (p)** includes both prehistoric and historic sherds; **bone (b)** includes all faunal material; **ethnobotanical (eb)** includes all carbon samples, nuts and seeds; **miscellaneous (m)** includes lithic debitage, raw material, fire-cracked rock, brick and mortar.

### Labeling

All artifacts must be labeled in a permanent yet reversible manner. The accession number should be placed on the artifact in a discrete place without losing legibility. The central-ventral surface of flakes; interior surface of sherds, away from the rim; non-photogenic side of projectile points, away from the edge; ventral side of scrapers/tools; are all examples of preferred label locations. A basecoat of archivally friendly sealer (polyvinyl acetate [PVA] in acetone or pure grain alcohol or B72 in acetone) is followed by a waterproof black India ink. The numbers are then sealed with an additional coating of sealer. Artifacts which are too small to directly mark must be placed in ziplocs with a tag marked with the accession number. Tyvek, Mylar or acid-free paper with permanent ink labeling is appropriate. In large artifact groupings with the same accession/specimen number (eg. 259 biface thinning flakes) a 20% sample of the material is directly labeled then bagged with the rest of the grouping and an accession number tag. The labels for all projectile points, prehistoric tools and any other unique or diagnostics artifacts are to have the site number as well as the accession number. If the artifact is too small or otherwise unacceptable for this additional labeling the site number may be excluded at the discretion of the lab supervisor. A discussion of all labeling materials and techniques should be included in the lab methods section of the report.

### Treatment Measures

A statement indicating chemical materials and methods used in artifact labeling, and whether or not specialized conservation treatment was

performed, should accompany collections. If specialized treatment has occurred, a list of the objects and the treatment received is required. If conservation has not been completed, provide an itemized list of objects that need additional treatment.

#### Prehistoric Pottery

Pottery should not be washed if any soot material is observed on a surface. An attempt to remove and catalog a sample (treat as radiocarbon sample [see below]) of the soot should be made. If this is not possible, then the sherd should be wrapped in aluminum foil and the presence of soot should be noted on the bag and in the inventory. If casts of sherds are part of the laboratory procedure, be aware that both Plasticine and Sculpy are petrochemicals and will, therefore, add carbon to the surface of the sherd. This will adversely affect any potential accelerated mass spectrometry (AMS) dates on surface soot material.

#### Soil, Phytolith and Pollen Samples

Soil samples should be assigned an accession number and inventoried in the same manner as artifacts. The maximum amount of soil per sample should not exceed a 1 gallon size ziploc. The sample should be completely air-dried, and packaged in a 4 mil plastic bag, or double bagged in 2 mil plastic bags with a zipper closure. Use a permanent marker to label bags with the provenience information and accession number. Soil samples should be boxed separately from the rest of the site material. Storage boxes containing soil samples must not exceed 40 lbs. total weight, regardless of box size. Be sure the exterior box label includes the site number(s) and is also further marked as containing soil samples.

#### Radiocarbon, Faunal and Floral Samples

Accession numbers are to be assigned to all C-14 samples and these numbers are to be included in the site inventory. All samples should be packaged in aluminum foil and bagged in plastic ziploc bags. Label each package with the provenience information and accession number. Clearly mark each package as containing C-14 samples.

#### Microscope Slides

Slides made as a result of pollen or phytolith analysis, or thin-sectioning of stone, bone, etc. are to be stored in plastic or metal microscope slide storage boxes (available from Fisher Scientific or other laboratory supply catalogues). Slide numbers must be legible and correlated with an inventory list including provenience information, description, purpose, name of person performing the work and/or other pertinent information.

### Human Remains

If suspected human remains are encountered during the course of excavation or survey all work should stop until the Fort Bragg Cultural Resource Manager is contacted. All contractors working on Fort Bragg are required to comply with SOP #4 which provides procedures for dealing with human remains.

### Provenience and Site Bags

Artifacts must be bagged by provenience within a 4 mil thick "site" bag. The site number should be placed on the upper-left and the accession number (excluding the individual specimen suffix) in the upper-right corner of the site bag but far enough below the closure so the information will not be rubbed off by opening and closing the bag. Interior provenience bags may be of a thinner plastic as appropriate for the material collected. Other appropriate provenience designations, such as test unit, shovel test, and level, should be marked on the lower-center portion of the interior bags, or included as tag labels within the bags. Paper bags although appropriate for fieldwork, are not acceptable long-term packaging material. A portion of the field paper bag, containing the original provenience information is acceptable as an enclosed tag. If the material from any one site is too large for a single "site bag," then several bags may be used. Multiple bags should be marked with sequential bag numbers (e.g., Bag 1/2, Bag 2/2, etc.).

### Special Packaging

Particularly delicate items, such as ethnobotanical and faunal samples, should be wrapped in aluminum foil and placed in a solid-side container such as a small acid-free box or plastic film canister before packaging with the rest of the site collection. Oversized artifacts must be securely tagged with appropriate information on acid-free poster board, Mylar or Tyvek tags. Soil samples should be completely dry before sealing in a 4 mil thick bag and packed separately from the site collection.

### Boxes

Site bags will be placed in numeric order in a standard, acid-free storage box (10" high, 12.5" wide, and 15" long). Box labels must be placed on the "width" end (below handle hole) of each sealed box. Labels include the site numbers and/or other relevant additional information. Labels should be typed, or hand written in large font, bold letters for easy reading. Box labels must be self-adhesive or securely attached to boxes with adhesive tape. The minimum label size for the standard storage box is 3" x 5." Multiple boxes for each site or project collection should be marked on the label with sequential box numbers (e.g., Box 1/ 4, Box 2/4, etc.). Such

numbers must be applied to all boxes, containers, or other packaged artifacts, samples, documents, records, etc., and cross-referenced to packing lists or similar inventory control documents.

#### Packing Lists

All shipments to the Fort Bragg Artifact Curation Facility must be accompanied by a packing list, which provides the project name, artifact inventory (to include site number(s), accession numbers and brief artifact description/count) and number of containers. A packing list for each box addressing the materials included therein is preferred.

#### Shipping

To pack artifacts for shipping, place Styrofoam peanuts at the bottom of the box to act as a buffer and reduce excess volume. Do not use newspaper. Place materials in position, then fill the remaining volume with Styrofoam peanuts to keep the materials in an upright or stable position within the exterior storage box. The weight of boxed collections should be distributed as evenly as possible. Standard acid-free storage boxes are suitable for shipping if the interior contents are appropriately packed.

## Guidelines for Curation of Documents, Maps, Photographs

#### Documents

At least one photocopy, on stable, acid-free paper, of all original field documentation must accompany each collection submitted for curation. This may include field notes, shovel test forms, transect forms, topographic field maps, site sketches etc. Original field notes and other documentation must be submitted for permanent storage with the artifact collections. All documents are to be organized in acid-free, letter-size manila folders and clearly labeled. Over-sized material (e.g: maps, etc.) may be submitted in mailing-tubes or large envelopes. Field notebooks or other bound records should be labeled on the exterior cover with a permanent marker.

#### Site Forms

North Carolina Site Form III or VI must be completed according to OSA guidelines and submitted to that office upon completion of the artifact and site analysis. Site Forms may be hand-written or computer generated and

re-formatted to eliminate unused categories (see the state guidelines). Any previously recorded sites must have a Fort Bragg Unlocated Site Form filled out and submitted if the site was not relocated during the project. Acid-free copies of all site forms must be submitted to Fort Bragg for incorporation into the Curation Facility's site record files.

#### Maps, Large Drawings and Charts

Maps and drawings on paper should be either rolled or folded with an acid-free outer label. Labels should include the provenience, name of the person who prepared the map, and the subject of map. Maps or drawings prepared on plastic drafting film ("Mylar") should be wrapped in acid-free tissue paper. Cotton string may be used to secure map rolls. Folded maps are to be stored in acid-free file folders. Fasten maps or drawings with moderate tension so that there is no stress on the medium itself. Do not use cellophane or plastic tape on maps (such adhesive materials lose qualities over time and discolor maps). Do not staple maps. Cardboard or plastic chart storage tubes may be used for shipping purposes.

#### Photographs, Negatives, Slides

A representative set of photographic slides and black & white photographs documenting each site will accompany each archeological site collection. Color slides should be Kodachrome process. Black and white "T-Max" print film is also recommended. Digital photography is also encouraged. Minimally, at least 3 images per site should include an overall site view, a referencing landmark, and selected excavation units and/or soil profiles. Photos of features from first identification through the excavation process should also be included if applicable.

All photos, negatives and slides are to be curated in polypropylene sheets of the appropriate size. Photographic slides must be individually marked and identified. Sleeves are to be clearly labeled in permanent ink. A catalog (photo log) of all photographic documentation, to include the frame number, date, photographer, subject (provenience information), image descriptions etc., will be submitted with the images and coordinated with the labeling information. Sleeves may be in a standard 3-ring binder (labeled) or in labeled, acid-free file folders.

#### Computer Diskettes, Compact Disks, Videotapes and Audiotapes

Storage media for computerized data can take several forms, but all mediums should be carefully labeled and protected from physical damage. Diskettes or magnetic tapes should be directly labeled (permanent ink marker) and placed in archival quality storage sleeves in acid-free file folders. Labeling should include provenience information,

subject, name of the person who supervised the data in/output, identification of the computer software, and the operating systems used.

**Additional Information**

For additional information regarding these standards and guidelines, or for further instructions on preparation or shipping of archeological collections, contact Beverly Boyko, Fort Bragg's Archeological Collections Manager, at:

***Shipping Address***

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