

April 13, 2006

Re: Revised Standards for Conducting Archaeological Investigations on Private Land, February 2006

Dear Friends of Archaeology:

On behalf of the Governor's Archaeology Advisory Commission (GAAC), the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) would like to announce the revision of the 1993 Standards for Conducting Archaeological Investigations on Private Land. This document has been updated to reflect changes in philosophy, technology, and preservation that have occurred over the past 13 years of archaeology in this state and throughout the United States. In generating this revised document, the GAAC solicited comments from the general public, as well as from professional and avocational communities, and this revision includes consideration of the comments received during that process.

Please feel free to pass these standards onto private landowners, developers, and others, so that the messages and guidance contained within are available to those who need them. If you have any questions, please contact Ann Valdo Howard, Public Archaeology Programs Manager, at the SHPO, or the current Chair of the GAAC (please see the Arizona State Parks website [www.azstateparks.com/partnerships/shpo/shpo_gaac.html]) for current Chair. These Standards will also soon be downloadable from the Arizona State Parks website at www.azstateparks.com. Thank you.

Sincerely,

James W. Garrison
State Historic Preservation Officer
Preservation Officer

Carol Griffith
Deputy State Historic/
Archaeology

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STANDARDS FOR CONDUCTING ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS ON PRIVATE LAND

February 2006

The value of heritage resources lies in the knowledge they contain for present and future generations, not in any monetary value as art or antiquities. Many of these sites are of significant cultural and emotional value to various Arizona populations. Archaeological excavations and surface collections are not only inherently damaging to these values but also raise moral and legal issues for Native Americans. When sites are threatened by natural causes or human activities, archaeological excavation or surface collection may be the only way to preserve the information the sites contain. There may also be compelling archaeological research issues that require excavation or collection of non-threatened sites when there is no other way to acquire this information. In these cases the damage caused by archaeological investigations is balanced by scientifically based systematic collection of information that improves our knowledge of Arizona's heritage

Standards for archaeological practice that encourage best practices and preserve both archaeological resources and the knowledge of our past that they represent, already exist for much of the state of Arizona. On federal lands archaeological practice must follow standards issued by the Secretary of the Interior; archaeological practice on state lands is guided by standards developed by the Arizona State Museum.

Archaeological resources on private lands are no less important than those on federal and state lands. An important goal of these standards, distributed by the Arizona State Historic Preservation Office, is to promote archaeological research on private lands of an equivalent quality to that which takes place on federal and state lands. Likewise, municipal and county governments are encouraged to adopt similar standards with ultimate aim that all of Arizona's archaeological resources are afforded the same degree of protection and respect, and serve as a valuable source of knowledge about the state's past, regardless of where they are found.

Guidelines for Conducting Excavations and Surface Collections

1. Excavation and/or surface collection of an archaeological site is appropriate only when done for *scientific* purposes or to *preserve* the site from further deterioration (e.g. stabilization procedures). Excavation or collection is not appropriate for the purpose of recreation, producing monetary profit or material gain for the owner of the site or for those carrying out the work or solely for teaching archaeological techniques.

2. Excavations and surface collections undertaken for *scientific* purposes are justified only when it is reasonable to assume they would produce:
 - a. Information relevant to current regional research questions concerning the history or prehistory of the Southwest.
 - b. Information relevant to current scientific questions concerning human behavior and cultural systems in general.
3. Excavations and surface collections conducted for *preservation* purposes are justified only when undertaken:
 - a. To protect important scientific information that is threatened by natural and human-caused deterioration, e.g., excavation undertaken as part of a stabilization effort, or excavation undertaken to recover information from a site before it is destroyed.
 - b. To assess the need for physical protection at a site through controlled archaeological testing.
4. Excavations and surface collections undertaken for scientific research or preservation may also serve *educational* purposes. Examples of such additional educational purposes are:
 - a. Teaching formal excavation and collection procedures to avocational archaeologists under the direct supervision of professional archaeologists (For example, as part of a certified avocational program such as the Arizona Archaeological Society's Certification Program).
 - b. Teaching formal excavation and collection procedures to students enrolled in an established archaeological program in an accredited academic institution.
 - c. For public education, or interpretive use, such as developing an archaeological park, under the direct supervision of a professional archaeologist.

Methods and Techniques

1. When surface collection or excavation is necessary fieldwork, laboratory analysis and report writing should be consistent with current scientific standards. The bibliography included at the end of this document contains several sources that discuss accepted scientific standards and ethics.

2. The extent of archaeological investigations (excavation, limited testing, surface collection) at any one site should be commensurate with the degree to which the site and its potential for yielding important information is threatened. Therefore, only an appropriate sample of any site should be excavated; and the remaining portion should be preserved for future study to the extent possible.
3. Because surface collection and excavation inherently damage archaeological resources, we strongly encourage the use of nondestructive or minimally destructive techniques for data recovery such as remote sensing, in-field analysis of artifacts, geophysical survey, coring, etc. These new techniques are rapidly becoming less expensive and can be more efficient than other more destructive methods.
4. Use of heavy equipment such as backhoes on sites should be restricted to (a) the removal of sterile overburden, i.e., soil that does not contain cultural material, (b) testing the subsurface components of large sites when other less destructive methods are less appropriate or efficient, (c) excavating sites that are in imminent danger of being destroyed through natural forces or human activities when there is no time to excavate them by hand, or (d) for backfilling or stabilizing the site.
5. A treatment (or historic preservation) plan should be developed prior to any excavation or collection, and the results of any excavation or collection should be documented in a professional quality report. The contents and format of acceptable treatment plans and reports are described in more detail in following sections.

Treatment Plans

The treatment plan serves as a guide for the fieldwork, laboratory work, disposition of materials, and report writing that are essential components of archaeological investigations. It is a plan that not only helps focus the efforts of the Project Director and his/her staff, but also provides a means by which the owner of the site can evaluate the quality and appropriateness of the archaeological investigation proposed. The treatment plan should ensure that the investigation addresses important research questions, produces useful results, and is conducted efficiently.

The treatment plan should also include a clear statement of the wishes of the landowner with respect to the work to be done. In this way, misunderstandings between the landowner and the archaeologist can be avoided. In some cases, the landowner and the archaeologist may wish to enter into a formal contract that incorporates the treatment plan.

A treatment plan should be prepared for each excavation or collection project and should include the following elements:

1. A precise statement of purpose and goals.

2. Designation of Project Director. A Project Director must meet the professional qualifications discussed below. The roles and responsibilities of other individuals involved in the research should be specified.
3. Relevant research questions that will be addressed. The research questions should relate to previous studies in the area and existing knowledge. A treatment plan that proposes work only because “little is known about the prehistory of the area,” without identifying more explicit research questions, should be treated with caution. Such vague plans provide little basis for conducting research and may result in the generation of only useless, trivial or redundant information
4. Priorities for study. Devoting the same level of effort to all research questions is not necessary. All research questions should be considered, but priorities for their investigation should be established and justified.
5. Definition of data needs. The information needed to address each research question should be identified, and how (from which contexts) it will be obtained.
6. Methods to be used in fieldwork and analysis. Methods should be justified in terms of their effectiveness in collecting the information that is sought. The plan should also recognize that important information may emerge unexpectedly during fieldwork or analysis and need to be addressed.
 - a. The methods used should ensure full, clear, and accurate descriptions of all fieldwork and observations. Stratigraphic and associational relationships, environmental relationships, excavation techniques, recording methods, and analytical procedures should be described in a such a way as to allow future researchers to reconstruct what was done, what was observed, and why.
 - b. The methods used should take into account the possibility that future researchers will need to use the information collected from the site to address questions not recognized at the time the site was excavated.
 - c. The treatment plan should consider whether portions of a site can be preserved in place. Where practical, less destructive methods should be used over more destructive ones.
 - d. If it is likely that human remains or funerary objects will be encountered, the treatment plan should specify their proper treatment and disposition under relevant state laws.
7. Reporting and documentation of results. The treatment plan should describe how results of the investigation will be reported. For collected information to be useful the original (or a copy) of the report, the data, and relevant documentation must be

made available in a useable format at a publicly accessible institution. As appropriate, these include:

- a. A report that describes the investigation and its results, with reference to the research questions addressed;
 - b. Raw data in the form of field notes, journals, photographs, and data recording forms; and
 - c. Scholarly and other articles, monographs, or exhibitions using the results of the work for analytic purposes or to interpret the site to the public.
8. Description of how the excavated materials will be cared for or otherwise curated. The treatment plan for any archaeological excavation should provide for the proper treatment and disposition of collected materials. Sacred objects and objects of tribal patrimony may be returned to affiliated tribes at the owner's discretion. Land owners are encouraged to consult with affiliated tribes with regard to such objects.

Reporting Results of Archaeological Investigations

The following products are normally expected in reporting the results of archaeological research:

1. Title Page
2. Table of Contents
3. Abstract – A concise description of the project, outlining the report contents and referring to specific highlights of the findings.
4. Background – A brief summary of the project and surrounding environment should be provided as a context for the archaeological work. Previous archaeological work in the area should be discussed and referenced.
5. Summary – The archaeological site(s) should be described including materials present, physical attributes, environmental setting, cultural/temporal affiliation, and function. The significant values of each site should be identified.
6. Research Orientation – The research orientation underlying the work should be discussed, including the regional research topics and the site-specific-research questions investigated.

7. Description of Work Performed – The fieldwork and analysis methods used should be completely and accurately described. The dates of fieldwork, number of workers, and person-hours/days involved should be specified.
8. Results and Evaluation – The results of fieldwork and analysis should be presented and discussed as they relate to the treatment plan. The success of the work should be evaluated in terms of its contribution to regional research questions and the objectives of the treatment plan.
9. Recommendations – Future work, methods, and research questions should be recommended for the site and, if appropriate, for the area.
10. Bibliography – A bibliography of all references cited in the report should be included.
11. Appendices – These should describe special studies performed and/or list data collected.
12. Maps – The map(s) should show, at a minimum, the site boundaries, features, land ownership, the site grid system (if grid was used), and areas excavated and/or collected.
13. Illustrations – Sufficient drawings, stratigraphic profiles, artifact illustrations, and other figures should be included to illustrate the data in the report.
14. Tables – At a minimum, a tabulation of materials and samples recovered, and items curated, should be included.
15. Photographs – Photographs of artifacts, features, and excavation/collection areas should be included in the text sufficiently to document the work done.
16. Curation – Location of final report, data, and curated materials.

Care and Treatment of Archaeological Collections

Care should be taken during the recovery, conservation, curation, and handling of specimens and records to ensure that materials are not lost, inappropriately altered, or damaged.

It is very important that field notes, artifacts and photographs from an archaeological project be preserved and made available to future researchers. Such materials may be used to address research questions not anticipated during the original investigation. They may be re-analyzed with new techniques that were not available at the time they were collected. Future researchers may also be able to re-interpret such materials from different perspectives or in light of new findings from other sites.

Archaeological materials should be permanently curated at a public or private repository (e.g., college, university, or local museum), that will fully protect them from the elements and from vermin, that will ensure their preservation, and that will guarantee their security and accessibility for future study. Arrangements between the landowner and the repository should be made before fieldwork begins. The treatment plan should specify the repository that will be used and the terms under which the materials will be curated. Funding for excavations, analysis, publication, and curation should be secured prior to initiation of fieldwork.

Treatment of Human Remains and Funerary Objects

Human remains and funerary objects buried with them must be treated in accordance with State law A.R.S. 41-865. If such remains and funerary objects are encountered on private land, the landowner or the landowner's agent must notify the Arizona State Museum (ASM). The Museum then has to consult with Indian tribes or other groups that might be culturally affiliated with the remains, and to determine the final disposition of the remains and funerary objects.

If human remains and funerary objects are anticipated, then a burial agreement needs to be negotiated under state law by ASM, between the landowner or the landowner's agent and the potentially affiliated tribes is advisable. Such an agreement can reduce or eliminate delays that might otherwise occur.

Please note that any projects on private land that involve federal funds, permits, approvals, or other federal connections require the state or federal agency to comply with historic preservation laws for that project. Thus, a private landowner involved in a project that has state or federal involvement should not have archaeological sites on her/his property excavated or collected without the agency's direction and approval.

Professional Qualifications

The following minimum qualifications are based upon the Secretary of Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards (www.cr.nps.gov/local-law/arch_stands_9.htm) and the Arizona Board of Regents Rules Implementing A.R.S. §15-1631 and 41-841, et. seq., The Arizona Antiquities Act. The qualifications listed below are recommended for persons proposing to conduct archaeological investigations on private lands (NOTE: A year of full-time professional experience need not consist of a continuous year of full-time work, but may be made up of discontinuous periods of full-time or part-time work adding up to the equivalent of a year of full-time experience):

Principal Investigator

The Principal Investigator is responsible for the technical completeness and competency of all fieldwork performed, as well as of all reports and all laboratory work. These responsibilities include:

1. The performance of the field supervisors working under his/her direction.
2. Adherence to professionally accepted codes of conduct and standards of research performance such as those issued by the Society for American Archaeology, the Society for Historical Archaeology, Archaeological Institute of America, Register of Professional Archaeologists, and the Arizona Archaeological Council.
3. The writing of reports, including the review and approval of reports written by supervised staff.
4. The development of work plans and treatment plans.
5. The competence of field crew members and their adherence to professional standards.

Qualifications

1. A graduate degree (Masters or Doctorate) in anthropology, archaeology, or closely related field plus at least one year of full time professional experience at a supervisory level in the study of archaeological resources of the prehistoric period (or the historic period, if the archaeological site being investigated dates from the historic period).
2. A demonstrated ability to plan and conduct research based on contemporary archaeological method and theory.
3. The ability to carry research to completion, demonstrated by the timely completion of theses, research reports or similar documents which would be acceptable to the professional academic community.
4. Twelve months of relevant professional experience including at least four months of supervised field experience in survey, four months in excavation,

and at least four months additional experience in artifact identification and the analysis and synthesis of archaeological data.

Field Supervisor

The Field Supervisor works under the Principal Investigator and is responsible for the following:

1. On-site supervision of field crewmembers on a daily basis.
2. Making on-site evaluations of artifacts and features.
3. Making on-going decisions about the manner in which sites are excavated and recorded, and consulting with the Project Director about those decisions.
4. Writing, or assisting the Principal Investigator in writing, descriptive technical reports.

Qualifications

1. At least a Baccalaureate degree in anthropology, archaeology, or closely related field.
2. At least 12 months of relevant pertinent, professional experience, including supervisory experience, with increasing responsibility leading to duties similar to those proposed.
3. Competence in recording, collecting, analyzing, evaluating, and reporting archaeological data relative to the type of work proposed, as demonstrated by previous experience or relevant training.

Additional Sources of Information

Bibliography

A Complete Manual of Field Archaeology: Tools and Techniques for Field Work for Archaeologists by Martha Joukowsky (1980, Prentice Hall);

Archaeology: Down to Earth by David Hurst Thomas (1991, Harcourt, Brace Jovanovich);

Archeology and Historic Preservation: Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines, as amended and annotated; Professional Qualifications Standards. (www.cr.nps.gov/local-law/arch_stands_9.htm.) Also found in Code of Federal Regulations, 36 CFR Part 61.

Arizona Board of Regents, Chapter VIII, Part B./Rule implementing A.R.S. §15-1631 AND 41-841, ET SEQ, The Arizona Antiquities Act

Field Methods in Archaeology by Thomas R. Hester, Harry J. Shafer, and Kenneth L. Feder (1997, Mayfield Publishing);

Geophysical Surveys as Landscape Archaeology by K.L. Kvamme. In: American Antiquity 68(3):435-457.

In Small Things Forgotten: An Archaeology of Early American Life by James Deetz, (1996, Doubleday)

Websites

Society for American Archaeology: www.saa.org
 Society for Historical Archaeology: www.sha.org
 Arizona Archaeological Society: www.azarchsoc.org
 Arizona Archaeological Council: www.arizonaarchaeologicalcouncil.org
 Southwest Archaeology Team: www.southwestarchaeologyteam.org
 ArchNet: <http://archnet.asu.edu>
 Southwest Archaeology: <http://www.swanet.org>
 Register of Professional Archaeologists: www.rpanet.org
 American Association of Museums: www.aam-us.org
 National Park Service: www.nps.gov
 American Rock Art Research Association: www.arara.org
 Archaeological Conservancy: www.americanarchaeology.com
 American Cultural Resources Association: www.acra-crm.org

Addresses and Telephone Numbers

Arizona State Museum
 The University of Arizona
 Tucson, AZ 85721
 520-621-6302
www.statemuseum.arizona.edu

State Historic Preservation Office
 1300 W. Washington
 Phoenix, AZ 85007
 602-542-4009
www.azstateparks.com