

THE CRISIS IN AMERICAN ARCHEOLOGY AND THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

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It is no secret that American archeology is at a crisis stage due to losses taking place at an expanding rate by the development of lands previously undeveloped or only lightly used. Reference is made here to urban expansion and renewal, suburban sprawl, agricultural development, water and power development, expanded park and recreation facilities, increased timber cutting and reforestation, and many other such land-modifying activities. These changes in our landscape are directly due to a very heavy increase in population as well as to technological advances in all aspects of our society. There are more people wanting and needing more things than ever before.

One of the major contributors to changes in California are the various public agencies -- federal, state and local. The projects fostered by public agencies, water development for example, set the stage for a multiplicity of subsidiary developments. When water is made available to a region, development (agricultural and/or urban) soon follows. This is not to categorically state that such development is necessarily bad. It is to point out, however, that such development often damages or destroys cultural resources; that is, archeologic and historic values. The rate and proportion of this loss has passed the alarming stage and has entered into the area of a catastrophe. The fact that it is not commonly

recognized as a problem by the public does not lessen the fact that we have reached a catastrophic level as regards our historic and prehistoric patrimony.

What is being done at the state level to ameliorate this condition? In terms of what was done by the state ten or fifteen years ago the present state program is outstanding. Expenditure on archeology for the past ten years by state agencies has averaged better than \$100,000.00 a year, an amount far beyond any previous expenditure for archeology in California for a similar period of time. It would seem then that the State of California had an effective, comprehensive statewide archeological program. Involved were the big land manipulating agencies -- Highways, Water Resources and Parks. What more could one want? All was well in the archeological world, at least as regards the state government and its concern for archeologic and historic resources. Those sites within project rights-of-way were found in advance of construction and were eligible for salvage excavation. Yet, as rosy as the picture seemed, there were inherent flaws in the state program that prevented the kind of work which would meet the commonly-held standards for archeology. This is not to imply that all of the projects fell short of professional standards. Rather it is to say that certain statutory and bureaucratic restrictions prevailed which would not allow, or at least not financially support, certain phases of a project. For example, Highways might fully subsidize field excavation but could not

provide funds for the initial surveys, for the laboratory work or for the write-up and publication. Without survey funds the endangered sites often were not discovered, thus lost to the heavy equipment used in road construction. Volunteer surveys were solicited but in some regions of the state the appeal was ignored.

If surveys were made and sites found salvage costs were determined and excavations were carried out. In the case of Highway projects, however, this was the end of the line. No state funds, that is, Highways' money, could be used to transport the collections to the laboratory for cleaning, repairing, preserving, cataloguing and storing. Further, as just noted, if a report were to be prepared it had to be done gratis by those who did the field work.

The result of such an imbalanced program of Highway salvage was the loss of an untold number of sites which remained undetected because of no provision for funding surveys. Another result was the amassing of great collections of artifacts and data which grew cold when the investigators could not spare the free time to prepare a manuscript for publication. Then, too, funds for laboratory tests such as C14, soils, palynology, osteology, obsidian hydration, shell identification and microanalysis, and the like, were not funded by the Highways' program. The administration of this particular program was additionally complicated by the morass of bureaucratic red tape, some of which was necessary but a lot of which only seemed necessary.

The Highway program in archeology, therefore, has done little to foster a fully integrated and coordinated program in archeology for California as a whole. In fact, it has served as a divisive wedge within the archeological community. Until statutory changes are made it would appear that it will continue to be controversial and difficult to manage.

The program of salvage archeology fostered by the State Department of Water Resources had none of the statutory restrictions that Highways had, thus came close to being a perfect program. Funds were available for all phases of archeology, from surveys through publication. This is in marked contrast to the Highway program. However, in actual funding Water Resources was much less generous. It was ironic that the archeologist had a greater latitude and freedom to do a complete job, but with less money with which to do it. This is accentuated when one takes into account the fact that in a reservoir there may be several hundred sites, and the particular highway segment only one or two, seldom more. The result of this kind of ratio was that in most water project areas an inadequate archeological sample was gotten. As regards funding, it early became quite clear that the reason any archeology was allowed was due to the fact that it was a requirement in order for the State to receive a federal power permit to generate and sell power.

The third state agency which has been concerned with archeology is the Department of Parks and Recreation.

By statute it has been permitted to administer programs for other state agencies, as well as for itself. At one time three archeological positions were filled, but one has now been dropped. Up until a few years ago these positions were paid by reimbursable funds from water projects. Parks had little more than a token concern for archeology, although on the books the archeologists were State Park Archeologists. At present, however, the positions are paid out of the general fund and the personnel are primarily concerned with Parks archeology. At present, Water Resources has nearly completed their construction program so there is no longer a need for archeology. The Highway salvage program is now managed by the Society for California Archeology rather than by Parks as in the past.

With the reduction of Water Resource archeology and the elimination of the Highway program, Parks' archeologists have begun to bring some kind of order out of a chaotic condition stemming from years of limited attention to the archeological resources of the Park System. However, the problem with the Park program is, as you might guess, inadequate funds. At the present time archeology has very low budget priority. For this reason the state agency holding the greatest amount of land in California is inadequately staffed and funded to manage and protect the hundreds of archeological sites throughout the state within its system. There is no physical way by which the archeological team of two men can keep up with the workload

generated by the planning and development teams. In fact, it is not possible to keep abreast of activities of the operations staff which include the rangers in the field.

A training program for the rangers at their academy includes material on cultural resources, but the positive results of this program have yet to be seen, at least in any effective way. Collecting and other misuse of the archeological resources by field personnel are documented.

Whereas the outlook given here for Highways, Water Resources and Parks has been bleak it is worse in those agencies which have no staff archeologists at all. Forestry has constructed facilities on sites, and their field personnel have about the same concern for archeological resources as do the Park personnel. The system of fire trails and emergency fire breaks has done incalculable damage to archeological sites throughout California.

Fish and game personnel in the field share the same general attitude toward California's archeological resources as do Park Rangers and Forest Rangers. Fish and Game installations, too, are documented as being built on irreplaceable archeological sites. Campuses of the University, including Davis, Santa Barbara and Berkeley, have built upon and destroyed archeological sites. The one destroyed at Davis now accomodates a building which houses the department of anthropology. Camarillo State Hospital was built at the expense of one large site. And so it goes! It is quite clear that the State of California is not staffed

to manage and protect those sites it owns. Further, it also seems quite clear that it really doesn't much give a damn, either.

Now before one gets overly exercised about the rotten state of affairs in state government it might be well to analyze the situation. The lack of any great concern for archeological resources in state government is nothing more than a mirror image of the lack of concern for it by the taxpayer. Everyone, or nearly everyone, is captivated by archeology -- until it comes time to pay for it. Our agency heads merely reflect a widespread attitude toward archeology. To castigate the head of Highways or Water Resources, or other agency heads, is generally meaningless. The basic fact is that only when the people of California want to support archeology through strong legislation will we see an effective state program.