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Author

Johnson, Ronald W.

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In The New Areas Study Process

Ronald W. Johnson

The General Authorities Act of 1970, as amended by Public Law 94-458 in 1976, established a rational approach to evaluate natural and cultural areas for possible addition to the National Park System. The 1976 amendment required that the Secretary of the Interior "transmit a listing, in generally descending order of importance or merit, of not less than 12 such areas which appear to be of national significance and which may have potential for inclusion in the National Park System." Consequently a number of high quality studies have been transmitted to Congress.

The thrust of this article is to illustrate the exciting and challenging role that cultural resources management (CRM) has had in the new area study process. Augmented by policies, methodological approaches and standards contained in *NPS-2: The Planning Process*; *NPS-28: Cultural Resources Management Guidelines* and the *NPS Management Policies*, CRM has developed as a vital, often Principal component of reconnaissance surveys or a study of alternatives prepared to comply with the 1976 law cited above. The plethora of recent studies has been encouraging for those CRM specialists who have sought entry into the planning realm.

By examining three studies completed by an interdisciplinary group in the Denver Service Center's Special Programs unit, it is apparent that CRM provides fundamental underpinnings and is integral to the new areas evaluation process. No matter where the new areas function may be placed in the future, the need for trained CRM professionals, knowledgeable and in tune with the planning process, will continue.

The three projects prepared between 1978-1980 include the Great Basin Reconnaissance Survey (Nevada-California), the Illinois & Michigan Canal Reconnaissance Survey (Illinois) and the Historic Camden Study of Alternatives (South Carolina). Each was finalized with intensive participation of a CRM specialist either as project member or team leader. Geographically disposed, the studies were situated in three NPS regions and varied widely in resource base, significance, and integrity.

A four member team started the Great Basin project in December 1978 using a 1975 national natural landmarks study prepared through contract as a departure point. The consultants pared down the multi-state Great Basin physiographic region to four study area recommendations (800,000-1,000,000 acres each) in Nevada and California comprised of U. S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management and private holdings.

While emphasizing Great Basin natural attributes, the data generated prior to the 1978 NPS reconnaissance survey contained no reference to cultural resources. To compensate for this lack, the CRM planner perused materials at the University of Nevada,

Reno, and the State Historical Society to acquire a fundamental cultural and historical understanding of the four study areas. Subsequent contact with the State Historic Preservation Officer's staff brought to light much pertinent data. At a point early in the project, the CRM specialist synthesized a local history for each area, prepared an analysis of previous cultural resource surveys or those in progress by federal or state agencies, and compiled a list of properties entered or eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. In all new area studies a preliminary data package is essential for generating subsequent resource and management strategies.

Another vital aspect involved an archeologist from the Western Archeological Center (WAC) in Tucson. The CRM planner negotiated with WAC for provision of archeological services to help defray salary and travel costs. Through the working relationship between the two offices, an individual well acquainted with the Great Basin's pre-historic resource base was recruited, and professional linkages between DSC and WAC were strengthened.

As the Great Basin project advanced, the CRM specialist became aware that cultural resources were secondary to natural values in this remote area. Within the four areas, only a very few known cultural resources reflected national significance. Other than two pre-historic sites that presented nationally significant research potential (Gatecliff Shelter and the Spring Valley Slough), remnants of early mining ventures, frontier communities and the still extant ranching sector typified local significance. Of course, future survey work may uncover additional nationally significant resources.

Once the CRM specialist completed these tasks, he worked on other aspects of the reconnaissance survey including socio-economic profiles, the impact of the Air Force's MX missile system, and analysis of current land use patterns that focus on mining and grazing. Besides periodically managing the team, the CRM specialist briefed a public somewhat skeptical of NPS motives in Nevada and met with NPS and other agency professionals and management to coordinate the study. This project clearly demonstrated that a CRM specialist must be an eclectic professional, able to make diverse and timely contributions to insure a successful product.

The Illinois & Michigan Canal Reconnaissance Survey required quite a different approach. It involved evaluation of a nationally significant 19th century transportation system currently managed by the Illinois Department of Conservation in the state park system. With the Canal's historical significance previously established, the issue of integrity assumed more importance in the three member team's resource evaluation. Despite the dedicated efforts of state park employees to preserve an important section of the frontier waterway, portions beyond their jurisdiction were being increasingly threatened by urbanization and industrialization which was obliterating canal, channel, towpath, and locks. Years of neglect

had turned some sections of the 96-mile waterway into little more than a dumping ground. Clearly, investigation and analysis of resource threats is integral to the new area study process and must be well-presented.

A much larger issue unfolded in the team's field investigations and evaluation—the question of how much more than a narrow 350-foot wide canal right-of-way should be studied and perhaps preserved. This question assumed important ramifications since two canals—the Chesapeake & Ohio and a section of the Ohio & Erie already were managed by the NPS. Since the frontier canal theme already was represented in the Park System, the team broadened its analysis in to tie rampant resource degradation to other forms of resource significance and needs.

As the fieldwork progressed, the team saw the resource as a valuable entity in terms of providing rural open space for the nearby Chicago metropolitan area. Although it could boast of having developed a magnificent city park and suburban forest preserve system, the urban area requires massive amounts of new open space for the future. The slender corridor represented by the canal right-of-way could be viewed as an extension of the urban park and forest preserve complex, linking it with the rural Illinois River Valley, which contains several large state parks.

While working on this project, the CRM planner generated basic cultural resources data for the study document and wrote sections that analyzed the area's recreational potential and socio-economic attributes. As in the Great Basin study, the CRM specialist moved from the circumscribed arena of data collection, analysis, and synthesis to one that focused on the implications of a cultural resources base that could be utilized productively by contemporary society. Although obviously not valid for all cultural resources, some marginal resources wherever possible must be recycled to a high use such as outdoor recreation. Only in this way will public support be generated and translated into the funds necessary to preserve, develop, and interpret such resources.

On the third project, the CRM specialist acted as a project manager for the Historic Camden Study of Alternatives. Besides providing basic historical data for the study, the team leader managed limited funding and personnel effectively to complete congressionally mandated study. There was much local, state and Congressional support for establishment of the subject area as another NPS site in South Carolina to commemorate the American Revolution. In short, it was a high profile project.

During the past decade, Historic Camden (a partially reconstructed Revolutionary War stockaded village) had been sponsored and developed by sophisticated local interests. Facing the NPS team was the concern that the site did not add new dimensions to the *NPS Plan's* Revolutionary War theme (War in the South). Although the resource base is nationally significant, it is heavily

impacted by nearby development. Nonetheless, greater significance lies in its archeological potential as an upcountry 18th century frontier community. Despite the impact of an athletic complex erected on part of the site, archeological potential has been determined in several qualified survey and excavation projects in the 1970s.

These facets were illustrated in the ensuing document, and, even more importantly, four management alternatives or strategies were presented to set a future course of action. They ranged from a *status quo* operation to outright NPS designation and management. A middle approach suggested that Historic Camden should be recognized as an NPS affiliated area. If implemented, this alternative could foster orderly development, interpretation and preservation with an assured source of planning and financial assistance from the federal sector. The study reported that local commitments and financial support had done as much as possible to preserve and develop the site.

Much work accomplished by the CRM specialist involved meetings and contacting various interests who supported the Historic Camden concept, as well as procuring data and assistance from various offices. As the project developed, it received the close scrutiny of the South Carolina State Historic Preservation Officer, local supporters and the state's congressional delegation. Early and frequent contacts made by the two-member DSC team insured smooth and positive relations with all parties.

As illustrated in this review of three diverse studies, the CRM specialist operates in many areas with different publics to complete projects in a cost effective and timely manner. A quality document gives NPS decision-makers a thorough grounding in a particular resource base. Management then can evaluate candidate areas for significance, integrity and resource threats. Information such as this constitutes the strongest possible base for position recommendations that eventually go to Congress. The new area study process ensures a rational method for evaluating the numerous areas that individuals and groups across the United States wish to add to a System that has doubled in the past two decades. These same reports can suggest alternative means of preserving and protecting resources that may not merit NPS protection and inclusion.

Such projects encourage the CRM professional to develop and hone a variety of services valuable to the planning team. Such specialists must work closely with professionals, management (in and outside the NPS), special interests, and congressional sponsors, and be able to address the myriad of issues and problems that will surface. The state of preservation ranges from no-action-needed to total reconstruction. The professional must be ready to address the significance and integrity of the resource base in the technical report that usually marks the end of the study. Also the CRM specialist must remain objective in the face of the enthusiasm

of local champions for their particular resource. Above all, although the CRM specialist relies upon his or her chosen academic background as a base, s/he must operate as a generalist in the planning process. Thus the CRM professional is beckoned into a wider context of operation in order to fill the role demanded by the new areas study mission.

RONALD W. JOHNSON is a Cultural Resources Specialist, US National Park Service Denver Service Center, Denver, Colorado.

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