



Archaeological Inventory Survey Standards and Cost-estimation Guidelines for the Department of Defense

#92-302

Background

Current historic preservation legislation requires that Federal agencies inspect their landholdings to identify historic and prehistoric archaeological sites, evaluate these resources to determine their significance, and protect important sites. To minimize the effects of variable regional conditions and certain methodological biases, Department of Defense (DoD) land managers need standardization and comparability in the inventory survey procedures and data collection techniques so the degree of survey coverage on different installations can be objectively assessed.

Objective

The purpose of the study is to establish standard definitions and procedures for conducting intensive inventory surveys of archaeological sites. Secondly, the goal is to recommend contracting and cost estimation guidelines to be used when proposing, budgeting, and scheduling archaeological inventory surveys. In addition, the project provides quantifiable and statistically defensible methods for conducting inventory surveys on DoD lands by focusing greater attention on the issues of site definition, survey intensity, and the use of appropriate site discovery procedures for given land surface conditions and archaeological resources. Finally, the related issues of contracting and cost estimation are explored as a means of facilitating the planning and execution of archaeological inventory surveys.

Summary of Approach

The discipline of archaeology has made dramatic progress toward refining automated data retrieval and data management techniques. Despite technological breakthroughs, there has been comparatively less attention paid to the questions of quality control and bias assessment in the data acquisition and analysis process. Objective evaluations of the quality and consistency of field and laboratory procedures and their ability to recover systematic and representative data on the archaeology of a regional landscape are not common; therefore, the goal is to define an archaeological site and offer consistent survey methods.

An extensive literature review was carried out on various aspects of regional archaeological distributions and survey



Carved stone found at the Limpey Creek archaeological site, Josephine County, Oregon.

methods throughout the United States. The purpose was to identify regional trends and create baseline data for the development of confidence thresholds on the recovery rate of archaeological sites. Additionally, theoretical and methodological justifications behind site discovery were taken into account. The compilation of data is intended to be used as reference for evaluating the inter-related problems of site definition, survey intensity, and cost estimation in archaeological inventory surveys.

Benefit and Accomplishments

The benefit of this demonstration project is to foster policy changes in the way archaeological inventory surveys are planned, contracted, executed, and reported within the DoD. Ultimately, the establishment of archaeological survey standards will represent a cost-saving effort to gain a more accurate and representative picture of all archaeological resources on installation lands and identify less informative or redundant types of resources. This effort can be used to effectively comply with the National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106 and Section 110. In addition, this strategy will ensure the collection of baseline archaeological information necessary for informed management decisions and long-term stewardship of these resources

For additional information visit:

<https://www.denix.osd.mil/denix/Public/ES-Programs/Conservation/Legacy/AISS/usacer11.html>