



## Archeology Program

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



### December 2019 Archeology E-Gram Print edition

#### Anthropologist Richard K. Nelson Passes



Richard K. Nelson died on November 4, 2019, listening to the recorded sound of ravens. His last request was fully in keeping with his tremendous passion for the natural world, and most especially for the ravens he knew well from many decades of living in Sitka, Alaska. Born in Madison, Wisconsin, in 1941, Nelson earned his B.S. and M.S. in anthropology at the University of Wisconsin and his Ph.D. in anthropology at the University of California, Santa Barbara. He first began to live among the Eskimo hunting communities in Alaska in 1964, eventually producing the book *Hunters of the Northern Ice* (1969). He later published such works as *Shadow of the Hunter: Stories of Eskimo Life* (1980) and *Make Prayers to the Raven: A Koyukon View of the Northern Forest* (1983).

With *Make Prayers to the Raven* Nelson moved from anthropological studies to a more literary style. It was the basis for a five-part public television series. Nelson's next book, *The Island Within*, won the John Burroughs Medal for distinguished natural history writing. He also received the Lannan Literary Award for creative nonfiction writing and, from 1999–2001, served as the Alaska State Writer Laureate.

Nelson's more recent works include *Heart and Blood: Living with Deer in America* and *Patriotism and the American Land* (book two in *The New Patriotism Series*). During the decades since publication, Nelson's books have become elegies to more traditional lifeways and skills. His lyrical prose and affinity for his subjects, human and animal influenced a generation. We were fortunate to live during his time.

Nelson was also a dedicated environmentalist. He worked to protect old-growth rainforest in Alaska's Tongass National Forest and was a member of the Harriman Alaska Expedition retraced. Later in his life Nelson turned to soundscape work, and recorded 100+ 30-minute radio programs, called *Encounters*, covering subjects from hummingbirds to humpback whales to the life-giving magic of rain.

To listen to Nelson's *Encounters North* podcasts, go to <https://www.encountersnorth.org/>

#### Anthropologist Alan Boraas Passes

Anthropologist Alan Boraas died on November 4, 2019, in Anchorage, Alaska. He was 72. Boraas received his undergraduate degree from the University of Minnesota (B.A. 1969) and graduate degrees from the University of Toronto (M.A. 1971) and Oregon State University (Ph.D. 1983). Boraas worked in Minnesota and Ontario, but his anthropological interests focused on the Cook Inlet region of Alaska.

He conducted archeological excavations at historic Russian sites, Late Prehistoric Dena'ina sites, and both Riverine and Marine and Riverine Kachemak sites on the Kenai and Kasilof Rivers. He collaborated with Dena'ina scholars in several projects relating to traditional Dena'ina religion, including *The True Believe Among the Kenai Peninsula Dena'ina* with Donita Peter, and *Dena'ina Fire and Water Transformations* with Peter Kalifornsky. He learned the Dena'ina language well enough to teach Dena'ina language classes with Peter Kalifornsky and Donita Peter.

Boraas wrote over 150 newspaper articles and commentaries on topics related to Alaskan anthropology and natural history. He co-edited with James Kari, *A Dena'ina Legacy: The Collected Writings of Peter Kalifornsky*, which was recognized by the Before Columbus Foundation as the 1993 Book of the Year.

Boraas served as Chair of the Alaska Humanities Forum, Board of Directors of the Pratt Museum, NAGPRA advisor to the Kenaitze Indian Tribe, and on board of the Alaska Anthropological Association in addition to numerous other professional service positions. He maintained close ties to the Kenaitze Indian Tribe and in 2000 the tribal council voted to grant him honorary tribal membership.



### **National Park Service Awards Grant for Ruff's Mill Battlefield Project**

In 2019, the NPS American Battlefield Protection Program awarded the LAMAR Institute \$95,000 for the Ruff's Mill Battlefield Project. The battle, which took place near Smyrna, Georgia, in the Concord Covered Bridge Historic District, was an important linchpin resulting in the fall of Atlanta. The institute will be conducting investigations to locate and delineate the boundaries of the battlefield.

GIS specialists will examine historical maps to identify areas for field work. Archeologists will conduct controlled metal detector survey. GPR survey will assist in location of subsurface remains such as trenches, rifle pits, and artillery impact craters. Archeologists also will interview collectors and metal detectorists to gather information on where various battle artifacts have been discovered.

The research empowers the community in education and preservation efforts. Supporters include land-owners within the project area, County Commissioner, Cobb Parks Department, Friends of the Concord Covered Bridge Historic District, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Georgia Battlefields Association, and Smyrna Museum. Efforts are planned to involve the Cobb County Historic Preservation Commission, Cobb Landmarks, Cobb County Land Trust, River Line Historic Area, and area school districts, private schools, and homeschoolers, Silver Comet walking trail and the Atlanta Beltline.

The LAMAR Institute is as a non-profit organization dedicated to conducting archeological research in the southeastern U.S. and educating the public about archeology.

*From Cobb County Government press release*

### **Forest Service Archeologist Locates Forgotten Cemetery**

More than 110 years ago, the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul railroad built a rail line to the Pacific Coast, including a tunnel through Montana's Bitterroot Mountains. Thousands of laborers, many of them immigrants, spent two years boring through rock to create a 1.7-mile tunnel connecting Idaho and Montana. The massive undertaking gave birth to a boomtown, later named Taft, that was called the "wickedest city in America."

By the time the tunnel was completed, an estimated 72 people had died from construction accidents, diseases, gunfights, and other violence. They were buried in a cemetery outside town. Any sign of the cemetery was erased by the historic Big Burn of 1910, that incinerated 3 million acres of forest in western Montana and northern Idaho. The fire also destroyed the town of Taft. Now, a team of researchers has found Taft's forgotten graveyard. The recent rediscovery involves a USFS archeologist, railroad historians, and archeology graduate students.

Taft, which only really existed from late 1906 to 1910, was named for William Howard Taft, the nation's 27th president. As Secretary of War, he visited the then-unnamed railroad town in 1907.

John Shontz, a retired lawyer and a railroad history buff, decided to research the old Milwaukee Road tunnel and the location of the cemetery. Volunteers initially spent days looking in the wrong location. C.A. Jacobson, a retired miner and local historian, came forward with old photos and his own recollections of the area. As a teenager in the 1950s, Jacobson and his father had stopped at the Taft Hotel and Saloon. The saloon manager had pointed out the location of the graveyard on a nearby hillside. The Taft Hotel and Saloon, which was rebuilt after the 1910 fire, was razed to make way for Interstate 90 in the early 1960s.

With Jacobson's help, the search team in 2018 was able to zero in on the site, matching historical photos with geological landmarks. Almost immediately, FS archeologist Erika Karuzas began getting hits on her metal detector. The metal-detecting field work has now identified about 40 possible grave sites.



Jacobson and Karuzas hiking to the Taft cemetery  
(Photo Rajah Bose for The New York Times)

Carole Johnson, now a USFS supervisor, remembers a woman who spoke to her high school history class in 1969. The speaker recalled that, as a child, the passenger train she was riding was stopped by a snow slide in Taft in 1908 or 1909. She remembered seeing "arms and legs of corpses sticking out of snowbanks" piled high outside a saloon.

"She told us they were killed in a bar fight or whatever, and because of the deep snow in Taft, they were just pitched out the door into the snow drifts to be buried in the spring," Ms. Johnson said. "Now we know where they buried them."

*From report by Bill Morlin, New York Times*

### **World Heritage and Historic Preservation Grants Training in Insular Areas**

The DOI Office of Insular Affairs, the NPS, and the Guam Preservation Trust hosted a World Heritage Opportunities Workshop and Insular Areas State Historic Preservation Officers training December 3-6, 2019, on Guam. Over 75 participants represented the U.S. territories of American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands; Republic of the Marshall Islands; Republic of Palau; and the Federated States of Micronesia.

Speakers included Guam Governor Lourdes Guerrero; Assistant Secretary Domenech and Navy Deputy Assistant Secretary for Environment Karnig Ohannessian; and Robert A. Underwood, former delegate to Congress. Stephen Morris, NPS International Affairs, led the DOI team in conducting the World Heritage Opportunities Workshop. World Heritage experts David Sheppard, former head of the International Union for Conservation of Nature Program on Protected Areas, and Anita Smith, lecturer at Australia's LaTrobe University helped lead workshop discussions. Megan Brown, NPS Office of State, Tribal, Local, Plans, and Grants led a team with Elaine Jackson-Retondo, NPS Preservation Program, for grant management training under the Historic Preservation Fund.

Additional partners included Athline Clark, superintendent, Papahānaumokuākea Marine NM; Barbara Alberti, superintendent, War in the Pacific NHP and American Memorial Park; Marybelle Quinata, acting refuge manager, Guam NWR at Ritidian Point; David Helweg, senior liaison for insular relations, USGS; Susan Ross, U.S. Embassy, Kolonia; and Rear Adm. John Menoni, commander, Joint Region Marianas.



World Heritage Opportunities Workshop participants U.S. Department of the Interior photo

The workshop was funded by the DOI. The Guam Preservation Trust provided on-the-ground logistical support and funding with additional support from the Guam Department of Parks and Recreation and Guam Historic Resources Division. All official workshop and training events were held at the Senator Antonio M. Palomo Guam Museum & Educational Facility on Guam.

The agenda, remarks, documents, recommended resources, and a resolution produced by the workshop participants will be made available on the Office of Insular Affairs website at <https://www.doi.gov/oia/world-heritage>.



**The Federal Archeologist's Bookshelf: 3-D radar imaging unlocks the untapped behavioral and biomechanical archive of Pleistocene ghost tracks.** Thomas M. Urban, Matthew R Bennett, David Bustos, Sturt W. Manning, Sally C. Reynolds, Matteo Belvedere, Daniel Odess & Vincent L. Santucci *Scientific Reports* (2019) 9:16470.

In this straightforward scientific report are at least seven astonishing facts:

- 1.) *There is a field of study of trace fossils called ichnology and people who study them are ichnologists.* Who knew? Examples of trace fossils include burrows, root casts, feeding marks and footprints. Footprints are often called ghost tracks.
- 2.) Twelve thousand years ago, the White Sands dune area was a large, muddy flat, which was covered with footprints from various taxa, including humans. The study demonstrated that mammoth tracks crossed and obscured human footprints. *Humans were just another species on the landscape.*
- 3.) *The researchers were able to follow the human footprints for 800 meters!* That is more than half a mile!
- 4.) *The person was not wearing shoes!* It gives one pause, doesn't it, to think about someone walking on this landscape barefoot. Was it summer? Was it hot? Was it winter? Was it cold? Did these people never wear shoes or sandals?

- 5.) *Researchers trained African elephants to walk across pressure plates.* (How do you do that?) In order to determine which direction the mammoths were walking, the technology team compared the compression patterns of the elephants' footprints to GPR data from mammoth footprints.
- 6.) *The GPR resolutions were so clear that the technology team could discern which direction the mammoths were walking.* To think that GPR technology has progressed to the point where researchers can interpret the pattern of compressed soil from a footprint 12,000 years ago is mind-boggling.
- 7.) *The research demonstrated a time sequence of the events: a person walked north, the mammoth walked east, and the person walked back south, creating two sets of tracks.* This rare glimpse into the events of a single day is just breathtaking. A lone individual heads out along the edge of a lake, leaving tracks in the muddy surface. After they pass, a mammoth, moving to or from the lake (the exact location of the site in relation to then-extant Lake Otero is not revealed), crosses the individual's tracks. At some point, presumably during the same day, as the preservation conditions are similar for both sets of tracks, the lone individual returns the way that they came.

There is no indication that this individual was dragging any burden, such as a carcass or firewood. Was the hunter unsuccessful? Were they checking traps? Did the plant gatherer achieve their mission? Were they following their footprints in order to get back to a base? These footprints, providing a rare glimpse into the life of a person living in the Pleistocene, is as haunting as the Laetoli footprints, that record an australopithecine group pausing in a walk across wet ashfall.

It is unclear from the publication whether unique properties of gypsum have facilitated the preservation of tracks, but the unstable sands have covered tens of thousands of tracks on the margins of former Lake Otero. The tracks almost certainly include human footprints. It will be exciting to see what the shifting dunes uncover next.

*By Karen Mudar*

To read the article, go to <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-019-52996-8>

To hear a short podcast by the lead author, go to

<https://www.scientificamerican.com/podcast/episode/subtle-ancient-footprints-come-to-light/#transcripts-body>

### **Bureau of Land Management Awards Grant for Museum Study**

A \$200,000 grant from the BLM is encouraging research opportunities in the Guadalupe Mountains, that straddle the New Mexico-Texas line. The University of New Mexico is partnering with the Lincoln NF, University of Pennsylvania, NPS Western Archeological and Conservation Center, New Mexico Museum of Indian Arts and Culture, Guadalupe Mountains NP and Carlsbad Museum and Art Center to examine museum collections to build a time line of basket and sandal styles used by those who once inhabited the area.

They also will take another look at two rock shelter sites, using new technologies, including a drone and photogrammetric mapping. Excavations of Burnet's Cave and Hermit's Cave during the 1930s uncovered organic sandals, baskets, ropes, fiber bundles and grass rings that are now part of museum collections. Most of the artifacts have not been examined since their excavation. The current analysis will allow the artifacts to be placed into more precise time periods.

The researchers hope to answer questions about what native plants were used and whether certain weaving or construction techniques were favored at certain times. The Mescalero Apache harvested plants in the mountains,

such as agave, sotol and bear grass. The agave's fibers were used for ropes, blankets and sandals. The Guadalupe Mountains still represent an important spiritual sanctuary for the Mescalero Apache.

The project is spearheaded by Robert Dello-Russo and Alexander Kurota of the University of New Mexico's Office of Contract Archaeology.

*From a report by Susan Montoya Bryan, Associated Press*

## **GRANTS AND TRAINING**

### **ACHP Advisory Council on Historic Preservation issues Technical Guidance for Consultations**

Applicant-driven projects can create challenges for federal agencies in carrying out effective Section 106 consultation with Indian tribes, because extensive planning occurs prior to the submission of an application. When project siting and planning takes place in advance of the Section 106 process, neither federal agencies nor Indian tribes have many options to seek modifications to the project to avoid impacts to historic properties.

The ACHP has developed *Early Coordination with Indian Tribes During Pre-application Processes: A Handbook* to address these issues. It provides information about the Section 106 process for applicant-driven projects and offers suggestions for federal agencies, industry, and Indian tribes to work collaboratively and effectively in pre-application planning, before formal government-to-government consultation would begin. The handbook was developed with assistance from a tribal working group, federal and state agencies, and energy producers and trade organizations.

The ACHP has also launched a 90 minute online, on-demand eLearning course *Early Coordination with Indian Tribes for Infrastructure Projects*. The course will prepare federal agencies, applicants and consultants to work with Indian tribes early in project planning or in pre-application planning.

The handbook and online course provide recommendations for federal agencies, applicants, and Indian tribes regarding how to begin, facilitate, and participate in early coordination in a manner that should result in a more efficient and effective Section 106 process.

To read the handbook, go to [https://www.achp.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2019-10/EarlyCoordinationHandbook\\_102819\\_highRes.pdf](https://www.achp.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2019-10/EarlyCoordinationHandbook_102819_highRes.pdf)

To take the online course, go to <https://www.achp.gov/training/elearning> (scroll down to the bottom of the page)

**Contact:** Valerie Hauser, ACHP Director, Office of Native American Affairs at [vhauser@achp.gov](mailto:vhauser@achp.gov).

### **Section 106 Streamline Activities for Facility Managers and Section 106 Coordinators Webinar**

This webinar will unveil the mysteries behind the Section 106 Nationwide Programmatic Agreement (2008) and the types of maintenance activities that can be streamlined in meeting the park's compliance requirements. The webinar will identify key aspects of a successful compliance process for streamline activities and how facilities managers and Section 106 Coordinators contribute to that success.

Steven Kidd, Chief of Science and Resource Management at TIMU, and Simone Monteleone, Cultural Resources Specialist and Section 106 lead for the Southeast Region Storm Recovery Team, will conduct

the webinar. They will offer strategies to build a strong project development effort for PEPC; review the need for subject matter experts for interdisciplinary teams and; explain the purpose of understanding your park's historic properties during project development, and the keys for understanding how each streamline activity is applied.

February 6, 2020 at 2–4 pm ET

You do not need to pre-register for the webinar, simply login using the information below.

1. Go to <https://doilearn2.webex.com/doilearn2/k2/j.php?MTID=t45a8278e1ea96929b7ff4cc33d604b0a>
2. Enter your name and email address.
3. Enter the session password: pXWaYWHK
4. Click "Join Now".
5. Follow the instructions that appear on your screen.

To view in other time zones or languages, please click the link

<https://doilearn2.webex.com/doilearn2/k2/j.php?MTID=t9d0504defe4a0ea1b7b1e9c2413c9cd6>

To join the session by phone only: 888-810-4935; Participant Code: 7026136

**Contact:** Cari Kreshak ([cari\\_kreshak@nps.gov](mailto:cari_kreshak@nps.gov))

### **FY2020 NPS Albright-Wirth Grants Available**

The NPS Albright-Wirth grant application is now open and will close January 10, 2020. Applications must be submitted online and are available through the **Albright-Wirth Grant SharePoint Site**. Please note: you must be on the NPS network to access the application website, and it is better to use Internet Explorer rather than Google Chrome.

The Horace M. Albright-Conrad L. Wirth Grant Program (AWGP) is a prestigious developmental opportunity that annually awards funding for personal and career development projects to NPS employees. The AWGP is funded by the National Park Foundation, and administered by the NPS WASO Leadership Development Group. 2020 funding amounts are not to exceed:

- \$3,500 for individual grants
- \$7,000 for partner grants (two individuals)
- \$10,500 for team grants (three or more individuals)

**Contact:** Lisa Matarazzo 202.354.1998 | [lisa\\_matarazzo@nps.gov](mailto:lisa_matarazzo@nps.gov)

### **SLIGHTLY OFF TOPIC: Home Fires Burning at Mesa Verde National Park**

On the evening of December 12, 2019, Mesa Verde NP staff began lighting the candles for the annual Luminaria. Thousands of paper bags are filled with sand and placed along trails and inside the cliff dwellings. The enclosed soft candlelight creates luminous paths to places to view cliff dwellings such as Square Tower House and Cliff Palace. The glowing lights throughout the site create the illusion that fire-lit dwellings of centuries ago are again inhabited.



This year, sunset and the rise of a full moon were nearly simultaneous. As the light of day faded, streaks of moonlight wove silver threads through the clouds, and the golden light of lanterns reflecting off ancient sandstone transformed the cold stone of the cliff dwellings into warm and inviting homes.

It was a labor of love involving all park operations. Before the last candle was blown out that night, ideas were already being shared as to how to make next year's Luminaria even more magical.

*From report by Laurie Smith*

*Archeology E-Gram*, distributed via e-mail on a regular basis, includes announcements about news, new publications, training opportunities, national and regional meetings, and other important goings-on related to public archeology in the NPS and other public agencies. Recipients are encouraged to forward *Archeology E-Grams* to colleagues and relevant mailing lists. The *Archeology E-Gram* is available on the *News and Links* page at [www.nps.gov/archeology/public/news.htm](http://www.nps.gov/archeology/public/news.htm) on the NPS Archeology Program website.

**Contact:** Karen Mudar at [karen\\_mudar@nps.gov](mailto:karen_mudar@nps.gov) to contribute news items and to subscribe.