



Archeology Program

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



November 2005 Archeology E-Gram

New “For Kids” web page on Archeology Program website

The Archeology Program web site has a new “For Kids” page, designed to help young people learn about what archeologists do and how they work. The web page has many images of children learning and working with archeologists, as well as links to other interactive web pages. Suitable for children of all ages, the page is also useful for teachers and adults looking to encourage a child’s interest in archeology. Visit “For Kids” at

<http://www.cr.nps.gov/archeology/PUBLIC/kids/index.htm>.

Archeology Program updates information

The Archeology Program has added three National Monument and Park profiles to the “Accomplishments” section of the Antiquities Act Centennial Commemoration web pages at <http://www.cr.nps.gov/archeology/sites/Antiquities/accomplishments.htm>. Devils Tower National Monument, Petrified Forest National Park (both established in 1906), and Tonto National Monument (established in 1907) were added to a growing list of profiles of early national monuments. The profiles include cultural histories of the national monuments and comments from visitors about the importance of these monuments. “It preserves our heritage which is so important. We have lost too much. Without this park and other national parks, we would lose it all” (comment of visitor to Tonto National Monument).

Archeology Program staff attend ACRA meeting, Washington DC

Archeology Program staff Terry Childs and program manager Frank McManamon attended the Friday session of the 10th annual American Cultural Resources Association (ACRA) meeting in Washington DC on November 9-11, 2005. The Archeology Program provided handouts on the National Anthropological Database (NADB), Antiquities Act centennial activities, and other Archeology Program services. NPS Associate Director, Cultural Resources, Janet Snyder Matthews gave a presentation in the plenary session “The Role of the Federal Government in Cultural Resource Management in the New Millennium.” NPS Assistant Associate Director for Historical Documentation Programs, Antoinette Lee gave a report on NPS cultural resources activities in the session on Government Agency Updates.

ACRA (a 501(c)(6) non-profit organization) was incorporated in March, 1995, to serve the needs of the cultural resources industry in the United States, estimated to be made up of over 500 firms employing over 10,000 people working in a wide variety of fields, including historic preservation, history, archaeology, architectural history, historical architecture, and landscape architecture. ACRA’s mission is to promote the professional, ethical and business practices of the cultural resources industry, including all of its affiliated disciplines, for the benefit of the resources, the public, and the members of the association.

ACRA website: www.acra-crm.org/index.html

The Archaeology Channel Features Videos on NPS Parks and Monuments

Videos about NPS parks and sites are available on **The Archaeology Channel (TAC)** (www.archaeologychannel.org), the streaming-media Web site produced by the nonprofit Archaeological Legacy Institute. National parks and monuments featured in TAC videos include:

Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument,

Hopewell Culture National Historical Park,
Mesa Verde National Park,
Ocmulgee National Monument,
Shiloh National Military Park, and
Tonto National Monument.

Currently, the TAC Web site has 67 archeology videos available on-demand without charge. The web site also includes a wide variety of audio commentaries, interviews, stories, and other features, as well as teacher resources, news, a bulletin board, archeological film festival information, and Web links, all devoted to archeology. Membership information is available at www.archaeologychannel.org/member.html.

Chief Archeologists' Meeting, November 17, 2005

The Archeology Program, NPS, organized a meeting of federal agency chief and lead archeologists on November 17, 2005, to discuss issues, projects, and other topics of mutual concern and interest. Archeologists or others from the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), Farm Security Administration, Fish and Wildlife Service, Minerals Management Service, National Park Service, Natural Resources Conservation Services, Army Corps of Engineers, Bureau of Land Management, United States Army, and the United States Navy attended.

Topics discussed during the meeting included status report and discussion of reserved section of 36 CFR 79, on collection deaccessioning, led by Terry Childs, NPS; developing technical assistance for permitting archeological investigations on federal lands, led by Eugene Marino, FWS; status report on the Secretary's Report to Congress on the Federal Archeology Program, led by Karen Mudar, NPS; Agency updates and discussion on archeological resources as heritage assets, led by Frank McManamon; providing for the preservation of and access to archeological data, led by Frank McManamon; plans for commemoration of the Antiquities Act in 2006, led by Robin Burgess, BLM; and an ACHP Archeology Task Force status report, led by Laura Dean. The next Chief Archeologists' Meeting is scheduled for February, 2006.

SEAC Produces Calendar

The NPS Southeast Archeological Center has produced a handsome calendar FY2006 featuring some of the many activities that take place in association with the protection and preservation of archeological resources in the United States. The color photographs in the calendar show park and volunteer staff carrying out archeological survey, excavation, analysis, curation, and protection of prehistoric and historic archeological resources. The publication of the calendar is one of the activities that have taken place to commemorate the centennial of the Antiquities Act. More information about Antiquities Act centennial celebrations is available on the NPS Archeology Program web site at www.cr.nps.gov/archeology/sites/Antiquities/centennial.htm. More information about the Southeast Archeological Center is available at www.cr.nps.gov/seac/acim.

Projects in Parks: NPS Archeologists Conduct Archeological Site Assessments after Hurricane Katrina NPS Archeologists respond to Hurricane Katrina

Hurricane Katrina, one of the worst natural disasters in the history of the United States, first struck Florida as a Category 1 hurricane (winds 74-95 mph) on August 25, 2005, then went on to make landfall in Louisiana and Mississippi as a Category 4 hurricane (winds 131-155 mph) on August 29. Eight national parks in the region were affected. Parks that were located well inland of the Gulf received wind and rain, but sustained little substantial damage. These parks include Vicksburg NMP, Big Thicket NP, Cane River Creole NHP, and Natchez NHP.

Parks along the Gulf coast sustained serious damage to historic structures and, potentially, to archeological sites. The hurricane caused substantial damage to Dry Tortugas NP and the Flamingo District of Everglades NP, major damage to the Mississippi District of Gulf Islands NS, and extensive damage to units of Jean Lafitte NHP&P and New Orleans Jazz NHP in Louisiana. Shortly after the Hurricane Katrina dissipated, the Incident Command Team requested the services of NPS archeologists to provide assessments of damages to archeological properties at Chalmette Battlefield and Cemetery, Jean Lafitte NHP, and at Gulf Island NS.

Types of Hurricane Damage

In general, there are three types of damage to archeological properties that are associated with storms: tree throws; storm surge and scouring and erosion; and seabed shifting. Park archeologists that assessed archeological properties for damage following hurricane Katrina encountered all three kinds of damage.

Tree-throws: In the American Southeast, large trees often grow preferentially into archeological sites because of the higher organic content of their soils as compared to surrounding soils. Tree roots can be especially damaging, since they spread through portions of sites. If a tree is uprooted by hurricane winds, the archeological stratigraphy is disturbed and the artifacts embedded in the affected portion of the site are scattered.

Seabed shifting and new current patterns: Submerged sites, in particular shipwrecks, might be disturbed by extreme subsurface ocean currents or water displacement events associated with hurricanes. Shifts in sandbanks and movement of other materials on the ocean floor can affect local currents and uncover previously protected shipwreck sites or portions of sites.

Storm surge scouring and erosion: Storm surge, that forces large amounts of water onto land and through narrow openings in levees and other natural barriers, can cause extensive erosion. Scouring may occur when strong currents erode channel beds.

Chalmette National Battlefield and Cemetery, Jean Lafitte NHP

Chalmette National Cemetery is a 17.5 acre strip of land that sits adjacent to the site of the Battle of New Orleans along the Mississippi River in Chalmette, Louisiana. The cemetery has more than 15,300 interments from every major U.S. conflict between the American Revolution and Vietnam. The cemetery was established in May 1864 as a final resting place for Civil War dead but only Union soldiers were, ultimately, buried at Chalmette. Civil War burials at Chalmette number well over 12,000; almost 7,000 are of unknown individuals.

Emergency Response Team members Bob Sonderman, MRCE, and Mary Troy, GWMP, assessed hurricane damage at Chalmette National Cemetery on September 18, 2005. They observed four downed trees with root balls exposed. The disturbance at each root ball was approximately 8-10 feet in diameter and the depth of disturbance ranged from 12 to 18 inches.

Sonderman and Troy systematically examined the exposed soils. This process consisted of visual observation as well as very shallow troweling of the root ball and surface. No excavations were conducted. They identified and removed several fragments of human bone, as well as coffin fragments. The cultural materials were removed to be described and analyzed and will be re-interred at a later time.

A number of grave stones were displaced as a result of the fallen trees, but the archeologists did not observe any additional damage.

East and West Ship Islands, Gulf Islands National Historic Seashore

Ship Island is a barrier island located in the Gulf of Mexico between the Mississippi Sound to its north and Chandeleur Sound in the south. The island was cut in two by a hurricane in 1969 creating the East and West Ship Islands. It has played an important role in the history and settlement of the Gulf Coast. Ship Island was named in 1699 by French explorers who were impressed with the protected, deep-water anchorage it offered their ships. Sites on East and West Ship islands that were impacted by Hurricane Katrina are the historic cemetery, the French warehouse site, the quarantine site, the lighthouse, and Fort Massachusetts.

Emergency Response Team members Guy Prentice, SEAC, and Robert Wilson, SEAC, assessed hurricane damage on East and West Ship Islands September 28-29, 2005. The two archeologists located the French Warehouse Site (GUIS-098), dating to the early 18th century on East Ship Island. The site is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and was tested by Wilson in 1988. Prentice and Wilson were able to locate the site, but less than 25% remains, and most of the vegetation on the site appears to have been removed or killed by Hurricane Katrina.

Wilson and Prentice searched for any evidence of the historic cemetery (GUIS-099), located to the northwest of the French Warehouse site. They examined the shoreline and the higher ground, but did not observe any indications of the site. It is believed that the cemetery has been completely destroyed by shoreline erosion.

The historic Quarantine Station (GUIS-100) on East Ship Island, also appears to have been submerged by shifting shorelines associated with Hurricane Katrina. Prentice and Wilson encountered the remains of tree trunks on the western side of the present island, suggesting that the site, if any portion remains, now lies under water at high tide.

Archeological assessment of the Ship Island Lighthouse site (GUIS – 101) was carried out by Sonderman on September 20, and by Prentice and Wilson on September 28, 2005. All reported that the Hurricane Katrina storm surge had significantly impacted the Ship Island Lighthouse Site (GUIS – 101). Since a brick lighthouse and keeper's quarters were first erected in 1853, the Ship Island Lighthouse site (GUIS-101) has been used for a series of signal stations. The brick remains of the 1853 lighthouse were readily visible during the assessments conducted after the hurricane. A broken but still easily discernable roughly square brick foundation that is presumed to have been the base of the 1853 lighthouse is still present. Immediately to the north of the square brick foundation were the remains of a demolished modern tower with wooden superstructure and concrete footers that had been built upon the remains of the 1853 lighthouse. The storm surge of Hurricane Katrina removed most of the wooden superstructure and undermined one of the large concrete footers, and exposed the bricks, iron, and other structural components of the old 1853 lighthouse upon which the modern structure had been built.

Fort Massachusetts (GUIS 102), a pre-Civil War fort located on West Ship Island, was significantly impacted by storm surge from Hurricane Katrina. Assessment was carried out by Sonderman on September 20, and by Prentice and Wilson on September 28, 2005. It appears that the storm surge from Hurricane Katrina came over the walls of the fort, causing water damage. The sod layer was removed from the southeast roof, exposing the underlying brick, and a number of the capstones have fallen and lay around the outside of the fort. There are large timbers, pilings, grass and mud, deposited on the inside of the fort. A layer of mud one to two inches deep

covers the interior grounds of the fort. Mud also covers the floors inside the fort. The brickwork, for which the fort is known, appears to be intact.

Assessment of Damage to Other Sites

NPS archeologists moved quickly to assist in assessment of damage to these prominent historic structures and sites. At least four of the affected national parks, however, contain significant numbers of prehistoric and historic sites without standing structures that should be assessed for hurricane damage. Archeologists have identified 400 sites at Everglades, Dry Tortugas, Gulf Islands, and Jean La Fitte National Parks. While the costs of carrying out assessments of these sites is not insignificant, as estimated \$330,000, assessments are key to management plans for site preservation and protection, and part of good stewardship of our national heritage.

One lesson from these emergency site conditions assessments is the importance of up-to-date and detailed documentation of NPS archeological sites. Current condition assessments and reports of past site inspections and investigations are crucial foundations upon which to base estimates of site damage from natural forces like the recent hurricanes.

Technical information about conducting archeological sites condition assessments is available at the NPS intranet system, InsideNPS, at: InsideNPS>WASO>Cultural Resources>Park Cultural Resources Programs>Archeology>ASMIS.

Sources for this report:

Hitchcock, Ann

2005 **National Park Service Status Report on Impact of Hurricane Katrina on Cultural Resources Gathered by NPS Cultural Resources Staff, 10/31/05**

McManamon, F.P. and S.T. Childs

2005 **Archeological Sites in NPS Units Affected by Hurricane Katrina.** NPS, WASO, Archeology Program Briefing Statement

Sonderman, Bob

2005 **Museum Emergency Response Team Trip Report to East and West Ship Islands, Gulf Islands National Seashore, NPS.**

Sonderman, Bob and Mary Troy

2005 **Museum Emergency Response Team Trip Report to Chalmette National Battlefield and Cemetery, NPS.**

Wilson, Robert C. and Guy Prentice

2005 **Rapid Emergency Assessment of Damages Resulting from Hurricane Katrina to the Archeological Resources on East and West Ship Island, Gulf Islands National Seashore, Mississippi Unit.** NPS, SEAC Acc. 1989.

“Projects in Parks” is a feature of the *Archeology E-Gram* that serves to inform others of interesting archeology-related projects in a national park. To contribute project information, contact DCA@nps.gov

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 National Park Service and other public agencies. Recipients are encouraged to forward *Archeology E-Grams* to colleagues and relevant mailing lists and new subscribers are accepted. Past issues of the *Archeology E-Gram* are

available on the *Archeology E-Gram* webpage, accessed through the Archeology homepage, on Inside NPS. Contact DCA@nps.gov to contribute news items and to subscribe.