

# 25

Simple things  
you can do to  
promote the  
public  
benefits of  
archaeology

Produced by



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
National Register of Historic Places



Society for Historical Archaeology



Society for American Archaeology

under a cooperative agreement with the  
National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers

**A**rchaeologists have a special responsibility to promote the public benefits that can be derived from the practice of archaeology and the appropriate investigation of archaeological resources.

A variety of other groups, some with very different and quite destructive perspectives on archaeological resources, busily pursue different agendas for use of the archaeological record.

If archaeologists do not act to counter these, who will? This brochure provides a wealth of suggestions about what you can do to be an advocate for archaeology.

For information on the National Register of Historic Places and Teaching with Historic Places contact:

**National Register of Historic Places**

National Register, History and Education

National Park Service, DOI

P.O. Box 37127, Mail Stop 2280

Washington, DC 20013-7127

phone: 202-343-9500

fax: 202-343-1836

email: [nr\\_reference@nps.gov](mailto:nr_reference@nps.gov)

[www.cr.nps.gov/nr/nrhome.html](http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/nrhome.html)

For information about general public education and outreach activities in archaeology programs and projects contact:

**Departmental Consulting**

**Archeologist**

**Archeology and Ethnography**

**Program**

National Park Service, DOI

P.O. Box 37127, Mail Stop 2275

Washington, DC 20013-7127

phone: 202-343-4101

fax: 202-523-1547

email: [DCA@nps.gov](mailto:DCA@nps.gov)

[www.cr.nps.gov](http://www.cr.nps.gov)

For information on the Public Education Network and *Archaeology and Public Education* contact:

**Society for American Archaeology**

900 Second St, NE, Suite 12  
Washington, DC 20002-3557  
ph: 202-789-8200  
fax: 202-789-0284  
email: public\_edu@saa.org  
www.saa.org

For information on the Public Education and Information Committee contact:

**Society for Historical Archaeology**

P.O. Box 30446  
Tucson, AZ 85751  
phone: 520-886-8006  
fax: 520-886-0182  
email: sha@azstarnet.com  
www.sha.org

Other organizations of interest:

**National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers**

Suite 342, Hall of the States  
444 North Capitol Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20001-1512

For information on *Public Archaeology Review* contact:

**Center for Archaeology in the Public Interest**

Department of Anthropology  
425 University Blvd., IUPUI  
Indianapolis, IN 46202-5140

For information on *Anthro Notes*, a bulletin for teachers, contact:

**National Museum of Natural History**

Anthropology Department  
Smithsonian Institution  
Washington, DC 20560

Some other useful Internet sites:

**National Association of State Archaeologists**

[www.lib.uconn.edu/NASA/](http://www.lib.uconn.edu/NASA/)

**Archaeological Institute of America**

[csaws.brynmawr.edu:443/aia.html](http://csaws.brynmawr.edu:443/aia.html)

## **Spread the word enthusiastically**

- 1** Include public outreach in all of your projects. Provide tours. Develop or contribute to an Internet page.
- 2** Hone your writing skills and use them. Write letters to the editors of your local newspapers. Learn to write for specific audiences. Above all, avoid jargon!
- 3** Talk about the values of archaeology, historic places and preservation and highlight local archaeological activities. Practice the effective "sound bite."
- 4** Cooperate with the media and build contacts with history and science writers and broadcasters.

## **Get the most out of the National Register of Historic Places**

- 5** Nominate sites and multiple properties to the National Register of Historic Places.
- 6** Use state and local registers as well to honor and document important sites.
- 7** Request an Author's Packet from the National Register of Historic Places and write a Teaching with Historic Places lesson plan.

## **Get on the tourism train**

- 8** Contact state travel offices and local convention and visitor bureaus with accurate, interesting information on archaeological travel destinations.

## **Improve undergraduate and graduate education**

- 9** PROFESSORS:  
Include discussion of public archaeology in all of your courses: business, legal and ethical issues, and the responsibility to communicate with the public about archaeology. Ensure that students learn that archaeological sites are found in their communities, not only in exotic locales.
- 10** Educate the administration of your school about the importance of public outreach.
- 11** STUDENTS:  
Request courses in public archaeology and methods of public education.

## **Join up: There is strength in numbers**

- 12** Join the professional council and the avocational society in your state. Keep your dues current, attend meetings, and participate by giving papers or writing for journals.

## **Provide your insight as a professional, a citizen, and a constituent**

- 13** Know your local, state, and federal legislators and let them know what you think. (The League of Women Voters is one source of information.)
- 14** Learn about issues that impact archaeology, such as federal land management, resource protection, and historic preservation. Check out the Government Affairs section of SAA's Web page.
- 15** Communicate the business and financial contributions of archaeology to the Chamber of Commerce in your community.

## **Get involved with local communities**

- 16** Contact all local community interest groups about your work. Know local cultures, history and customs.
- 17** Be sensitive to the traditional knowledge and values of Native Americans and other ethnic and racial minorities.
- 18** Speak to local organizations, civic associations, and clubs.

## **Build bridges**

- 19** Contact and cooperate with other professionals to promote a multidisciplinary approach to Cultural Resource Management.
- 20** Talk to developers, civil engineers, and planners and write articles for their professional journals.
- 21** Initiate and maintain contact with historical societies and local historic preservation commissions.
- 22** Work with agricultural, environmental, and land trust organizations to promote consideration of cultural resources in open space, or protection through easements or other preservation strategies.

## **Build a constituency of teachers and students**

- 23** Support and participate in the public education activities of your professional societies.
- 24** Volunteer to be a resource person for teachers to help get archaeology in the curriculum.
- 25** Encourage your school system (and particularly your own children's teachers) to subscribe to SAA's *Archaeology and Public Education* and to use the National Park Service's Teaching with Historic Places series of lesson plans.

# Public Benefits of Archaeology

**Teachers and students** find that archaeology can help teach principles of math, science, geography, and logic as well as history and human diversity.

**Community leaders** find that archaeology can build community links in the present as well as the past.

**Cultural groups** find that archaeology can contribute to the preservation of their history and traditions.

**Ecologists** find that archaeology reveals information on environmental stability and change.

**Historians** find that archaeology provides both new information to complement the written record and important new questions about our past.

**Avocational archaeologists** find the opportunity to make a direct contribution to research about the past.

**Senior citizens** find that their broad range of skills and expertise contribute to archaeological research.

**Writers, newspaper reporters, and television producers** find that archaeology is educational entertainment that sells.

**Tourism councils, museums and parks** find that authentic archaeology brings people in and keeps them coming back.

**Planners and citizens** find that archaeology can contribute to a sustainable community where cultural heritage is valued and nurtured.