National Preservation Institute

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Archaeological Curation and Collections Management

Seminar Overview

Become familiar with principles and methods for curation and management of archaeological collections. Explore topics including responsibilities under federal laws and regulations (36 CFR Part 79), archaeological standards, collections policies, costs of curation, evaluating repositories, proper housing of collections, archaeological laboratory procedures, computerization of collections recordkeeping, and educating the public with archaeological collections.

Agenda

Introduction and participants' problems and concerns

Legal background to collections management
- Understanding the history of federal laws and regulations
- Understanding 36 CFR part 79, Curation of Federally-Owned and Administered Archaeological Collections
- The cost of curation
- Roles and responsibilities

Collections Policies
- Ownership issues
- Collections policies
- Archaeological standards, respository standards, procedural manuals
- Scopes of work and proposals

Evaluating Repositories
- Inspection checklist
- Planning for storage
- Physical space, environment, security and fire protection, storage equipment and materials, artifact care and conservation, recordkeeping, access to collections
- Field trip to curation facility

Curation Practices
- Laboratory procedures: cleaning, marking, conservation, storing
- Caring for associated records

Digital Data
- Computerization of collections recordkeeping
- Documentation management: digital imaging, distribution of grey literature, email management, management of digital collections
- Databases: catalogues, inventory, accession records, collections management, conservation, field records, analysis

The Benefits of Collections Management: Educating the Public

Discussion and Wrap-Up