



# National Preservation Institute

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## Conservation Strategies for Archaeologists

### Seminar Overview

Review the role of conservation in the field and in the laboratory for archaeological projects. Discuss planning and preparation for the care of excavated materials. Learn about the condition of materials upon excavation and “first aid” packing and transport methods for artifacts from both dry and waterlogged contexts. Examine artifact preservation and methods to facilitate interpretation. Learn how to perform simple stabilization techniques such as dewatering waterlogged bone, removing chlorides from objects, and consolidating highly degraded glass, as well as exploring tips for mending vessels.

### Agenda

#### Intro to Conservation

- What is conservation
- Budgeting and planning
- Conservation terminology and definitions

#### Deterioration of Artifacts in Burial

- Field manuals—field kits

#### Lifting and Consolidation—Lecture

- Exercise: Lifting fragile ceramics practical

#### Transport and Packing of Artifacts

- How to keep artifacts wet and dry

#### What is Stabilization?

The difference between stabilization and conservation

#### Discussion of Labs

Equipment, set up, tools, differences between a variety of labs

#### Health and Safety

- Personal protection, chemical safety, laboratory safety
- Exercise: Red Cross exercise on how to remove gloves safely

#### Documentation

- Exercise: Documentation
- Materials ID
- X-radiography

#### Desalination

- Techniques—when, why, how
- Material specific points, including iron, lead, wood etc.

#### Cleaning

- Pros and cons
- What should a conservator do compared to laboratory staff
- What can be learned by a conservator working on artifact

#### Mending Ceramics—The Ins and Outs of Good Technique and Materials

- Exercise: Pot mending practical

#### Choosing Archival Materials

- Talk about support
- Long-term storage
- Microclimates
- Exercise: Boxmaking practical

#### Surveying Collections

- Talk about use and lessons
  - Prioritizing
  - For conditions/preservation
  - For budgeting
  - Long-term effects of preservation