

Project Summary

Rocky Mountains Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit

Project Title: NAGPRA: Contaminated Collections Consultation, Human Remains Consultation, Training, and Protocol Development

Discipline: Cultural

Type of Project: Technical Assistance and Education

Funding Agency: National Park Service

Other Partners/Cooperators: University of Colorado at Boulder

Effective Dates: 8/10/2006- February 15, 2009

Funding Amount: \$22,626

Investigators and Agency Representative:

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Investigator: Steve Lekson, Museum-Administration, University of Colorado at Boulder, 218 UCB Boulder, CO 80309-0218, (303) 492-6671, lekson@colorado.edu

Project Abstract: Cultural items and human remains subject to Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) comprise approximately 25% of the holdings of museum collections in the Intermountain Region. Through consultation required by NAGPRA, many Native American tribes have expressed serious concerns about the health threats posed by cultural items subject to NAGPRA that have been repatriated and that may be repatriated in the future. It is widely known that heavy metal pesticides were commonly applied to museum artifacts in the past to prevent damage from insects, but the use is poorly documented. Full disclosure about the presence of contaminants along with information about possible mitigation and safe handling techniques is essential to full compliance and the intent of NAGPRA.

The NPS Intermountain Regional Office will work with the University of Colorado-Boulder to secure a student in museum studies, anthropology, or a related field to complete the project tasks. The Principal Investigator will supervise the Student Investigator with direction from the Office of Indian Affairs and American Culture.

The University investigators will work with the NPS to: (1) coordinate a tribal consultation meeting and training on the issue of contaminated collections. The meeting and training will be held in Santa Fe, NM in October or November of 2006. The PI and SI are responsible for preparing correspondence for NPS signature, documenting the training and meetings, maintaining project files, meeting logistics, and facilitating tribal participation including travel arrangements and fees for professional services, (2) coordinate tribal consultation regarding remains presently held in NPS facilities in Santa Fe, New Mexico: December 2006, (3) coordinate all aspects of at least one tribal consultation meeting on the subject of NPS contaminated collections testing protocol development. The meeting will be held at a location to be determined during February or March 2007; and (4) draft contaminated collections protocols submitted for NPS review: May 2007, with final documents to be distributed by August 2007.

A task was added, to have the cooperator facilitate a tribal consultation meeting with Midwestern tribes regarding a demonstration of the XRF equipment to test for collections contamination.

Outcomes with Completion Dates:

- Tribal consultation and training: October-November, 2006
- Tribal consultation on NAGPRA remains in IMR: December 2006
- Tribal consultation for Contaminated Objects protocol development: March 2007
- Draft contaminated collections protocols submitted for NPS review: May 2007
- Final contaminated collections protocols submitted: July 2007
- Tribal Consultation Meeting on Testing Procedures - July 2008

Keywords: Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), museum collections, contamination, University of Colorado at Boulder