

Project Summary

Rocky Mountains Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit

Project Title: Conduct Archeological Testing to Support Determination of Eligibility for Stuart-Menard Cabin Site, Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site

Discipline: Cultural Resources
Type of Project: Education and Technical Assistance
Funding Agency: National Park Service
Other Partners/Cooperators: Salish Kootenai College
Effective Dates: 5/15/2013 - 4/30/2018
Funding Amount: \$46,349

Investigators and Agency Representative:

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Project Abstract: Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site (GRKO) is scoping the best location for a planned visitor contact station. A preferred construction location would impact archeology site 24PW798, the Stuart-Menard homesite demolished by ranch owners in the 1930s. Past work concerning this site includes the 1975 Winifred Brown project that determined some of the limits of the site through test pits in preparation for the planned visitor parking lot. The 2003 Cultural Site Inventory determined the site had potential significance per Nation Register Criterion D and any management actions that impacted sites should trigger further determination of eligibility.

Working towards information needed to complete a Determination of Eligibility, a 2012 Historic Context Study was completed. It confirmed the site had potential significance under National Register Criterion D. Montana State Office of Historic Preservation concurred with the park. Both NPS and SHPO archeologists felt that sub-surface integrity had to be further investigated before a DOE could be completed. A remote sensing survey was conducted in 2012 to identify anomalies in subsurface sediments that are more likely to yield archeological materials. Anomalies were found and can now be used to maximize the efficiency of test unit excavation completed through this project.

It is the objective of this task agreement for project partner Salish Kootenai College to conduct limited test excavations and documentation in the Stuart-Menard homesite area, the Stuart Barn foundation near the existing Visitor Center, and potentially a small area near the highway just north of the entrance gate. A Site Testing Plan will be designed to answer the question of sub-surface horizontal and vertical integrity of the site. The information will contribute to a Determination of Eligibility to the National Register of Historic Places. Dr. Bendremer will coordinate a protocol for discovery of pre-contact material that is agreed to by the NPS and tribal cultural committees. The work will be conducted through an archeological field school, providing SKC students an opportunity to gain professional experience in excavation, mapping, field processing, and other activities crucial to proficiency in cultural heritage management. A second objective of the task agreement is to support Principal Investigator Dr. Jeff Bendremer's participation in teacher workshops and other educational activities with the Youth Conservation Corps and other groups, to raise awareness of the science, ethics, and partnership opportunities of archeological fieldwork for tribal communities and National Parks.

Outcomes with Completion Dates:

Final Report from PI: May 30, 2015

Keywords: field school, archaeology, Stuart-Menard Cabin Site, Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site, Salish Kootenai College