

Chapter 15

Summary and Conclusions

15.1 Introduction

Management guidelines for cultural resources, specifically ethnographic resources, are outlined in the National Park Service's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Treatment of Cultural Landscapes. In the publication, ethnographic resources are defined as:

...are variations of natural resources and standard culture resource types. They are subsistence and ceremonial locales and sites, structures, objects, and rural and urban landscapes assigned cultural significance by traditional users. *The decision to call resources "ethnographic" depends on whether associated peoples perceive them as meaningful to their identity as a group and the survival of their lifeways* (Emphasis mine).¹

Culture, according to the definition in the National Register is understood "to mean the traditions, beliefs, practices, life ways, arts, crafts, and social institutions of any community, be it an Indian tribe, a local ethnic group, or people of the nation as a whole."² Several essential points are derived from the definition. First, culture is more than values, beliefs, expressions, but a whole way of life of a specific people. Last, culture embeds individuals in varying degrees, into a manner of shared living that shapes and bounds identity. As Michael Silverstein wrote "...cultures are essentially social facts, not individual ones; they are properties of populations of people who have come to be, by degrees, tightly or loosely bounded in respect of their groupness, their modes of cohering as a group."³

The social facts of culture, even as experienced in the present, are historically contingent. Cultures are historically contingent through relative values and meanings implicit in the ways people do things and interact one with another. Such experiences, as events, have value and meaning only insofar as they are patterned and textually oriented so that even as they are participating in them, people in effect negotiate the way that events are placed in one or more such patterns. Thus, culture being manifest only in such socio-historical facts, anything "cultural" depends on the contingencies of events that, in complex ways, cumulate as patterned norms of "praxis" or "practice" that are potentially transformed by people's actions and interpretations.⁴ Throughout this study, the cultural significance ethnobotanical resources and locations were assessed using the definitional criteria.

15.2 Ethnobotanical Inventory and Summary

The identification of plant species that are culturally significant was done by library and archival searches of the relevant literature. The literature review uncovered approximately 829 plants for the five Native American tribal-nations. Information in the literature identified cultural usage to the species, genus, and familial levels, depending on the publication. In this study all levels of detail were used, depending on the source of available information. A number of plant species found in the literature could not be conclusively identified, but only by the recorded tribal term for the plant. These plants also were recorded for future reference and ethnographic investigation.

Of the species occurring at the Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site, 62 flora species has known ethnobotanical and cultural significance to the five tribes. Thirteen plants are identified as significant to the Arapaho and 26 flora resources for the Cheyenne. Twelve species are recorded for the Comanche, 22 for the Kiowa, and eight species are culturally significant to the Southern Ute (Appendix A).

Of the 150 species occurring at the Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site, 33 plants have known ethnobotanical and cultural significance to the Comanche, Kiowa, and Southern Ute. Seven plant resources are recorded as important to the Comanche, 16 flora

resources were used by the Kiowa, and ten plants resources were used by the Southern Ute (Appendix A).⁵

Culturally significant plants identified by searches of the relevant literature or by oral interviews with representatives of associated Native American communities, provide a valuable baseline database. Evaluations of the cultural significance of specific plants or areas based on the literature and site field data should only be considered a foundation for further study, involving in depth consultations.

When utilizing the information from the ethnobotanical survey, it is necessary to be aware of the data limitations. The ethnobotanical data, largely derived from the literature, is only as complete as the documented research. The completeness of this information remains suspect for several reasons. First, ethnographic research with Native Americans reveal that some aspects of the natural world are classified differently than the classification systems developed in the scientific literature.

Second, the classification of plants in the scientific literature changes through time. Differences in taxonomy systems can possibly lead to either misidentification or an improper identification of cultural significance. Similarly, indigenous plant usages also change through time. Some cultural uses are lost whereas other plants, even non-native species, and their uses are added to the ethnobotanical inventory.

Third, ethnological research, particularly concerning worldview and ecology about Native North America, indicate that there is no single, cultural paradigm of the natural environment for every tribe. Every tribal community assigns significance to aspects of the natural world according to their specific cultural traditions, values, and perceived relationships with resources and landscape features.

Finally, within the larger spectrum of tribal the community paradigm, knowledge about culturally significant aspects of the natural environment differs widely between individuals. Plants and knowledge about plant uses vary among individuals, influenced

by a myriad of factors. Social position, active participation in religious and cultural events, depth of indigenous language knowledge, family traditions, as well as gender often play critical roles in ethnographic knowledge about specific resources.

15.3 Conclusions

In the past, sites were managed strictly for their historical or archaeological value. Recently, specific sites and locales are now recognized as culturally significant and rooted in cultural landscapes that are imbued as being sacred or having traditional cultural importance to living communities. Such significant cultural landscapes are currently listed in the National Register of Historic Places as Traditional Cultural Properties.⁶

In historic preservation, the policy concept, Traditional Cultural Property specifically refers to:

...a place that is eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places because of its association with cultural practices and beliefs that are (1) rooted in the history of a community, and (2) are important to maintaining the continuity of that community's traditional beliefs and practices.⁷

While the resources under consideration recorded primarily for their ethnographic value, also attempts to address the historical continuity of each society to the region by linking tribal members to their past, and the embedding cultural centrality of these resources for their continuance as a people remain. The present study is designed to address these issues. It employs original ethnographic research, in combination with an ethnological literature review and ethnohistorical documentation, to document the potential significance of resources and the surrounding cultural landscape.

The traditional beliefs, customs, and practices identified through the research, reveal that contemporary cultural practices are rooted in study area. All consultants believe their association with this cultural landscape extends back centuries. Ethnohistorical and ethnological evidence confirm that the five indigenous tribes under consideration occupied the region. During the site visit to Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site, a consultant who accompanied the ethnographer and National Park Service personnel, emphatically reiterated that the Kiowa used the Front Range "from the mountains east, the Kiowa came through here all the time. They were not one big tribe, they were bands and they came through here all the time tried to get through before winter to get further south."⁸

Current indigenous beliefs and associated practices about the region transcend European constructs of past and present. Consultants repeatedly emphasized the continuity of their contemporary beliefs and practices with those of the past. As in the past, these practices are grounded in a body of oral traditions. For the Arapaho, Cheyenne, Comanche, Kiowa, and Southern Ute, oral tradition "...is a kind of history, and they accept it as reality in much the same way that we accept historical documents. Perhaps most important is what they do with their image of the past, for it influences their belief about the present..."⁹. How oral history and contemporary cultural knowledge is interpreted in current social and political contexts is graphically illustrated by the controversy surrounding the location of the Sand Creek campsite during the morning of the attack. Contrary to historical documentation, in association with archaeological evidence, contemporary Elders place the camp at another location.¹⁰ Thus contemporary traditions and beliefs are simultaneously and intimately linked with the past, but remain relevant to current life ways.

Also in contrast to western European ideologies, there is not a sharp dichotomy between secular and sacred arenas. For traditionalists, there is no distinction as in a Western conceptual framework between a landscape's "natural" and "supernatural" qualities.¹¹ As an ecosystem, the landscape is alive and

personal. It is filled with potential sacred powers. In interacting with the natural and sacred world, there develops reciprocal relationships in that individuals and communities form intimate relationships with the landscape.

Although incomplete, the emerging data reveals that the landscapes within and surrounding the Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site and Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site form a coherent cultural landscape. Regionally, mountain peaks, springs, buttes, rivers, flora, and other geographical features are significant. Traditional cultural behaviors and beliefs are dependent on their continued interaction with that cultural landscape. Practitioners must continuously use and renew relationships with environmental features.

Harvesting, if conducted, of important ethnobotanical resources for example are often done at specific times and locations. These resources, consultants felt, are best if collected in their purist forms. Therefore the harvesting of such items must be done in locations that are as "pristine" as possible. Water, natural resources, animals, as well as other resources in the study areas also must meet the same cultural criteria. It is one central quality that empowers the land with meanings and qualities of sacredness to traditionalists.

Ethnohistory also reveals that the areas were vital arenas for various subsistence activities. Ethnographic information affirms that picking berries, collecting wood, and hunting remains central. These activities are viewed as another cultural core of being and remaining indigenous. The critical role that ethnobotanical resources have of in the continuation of cultural traditions among the five tribes is rooted in their oral traditions, history, cultural values, and practices. "We've always used that area..." proclaimed one consultant.¹²

Consultants believe firmly that the sites and the surrounding area form a cultural landscape. Cultural landscapes, according to National Park Service ethnologists Michael Evans, Alexa Roberts, and Peggy Nelson, are not;

...collections of material objects placed in geographical space, but as social and cultural constructions of the people who use them. In this sense, landscapes are "symbolic environments" that people create to give meaning and definition to their physical environment. *Cultural groups socially construct landscapes as reflections of themselves. In the process, the social, cultural, and natural environments are meshed and become part of the shared symbols and beliefs of members of the groups* (Emphasis mine).¹³

Cultural landscapes, by the National Park Service criteria, are a category of "cultural resources" that is eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places recognizing four overlapping categories (historic site, historic designed, historic vernacular, and ethnographic).¹⁴

Historically, all the sites are located in the traditional territories or use ranges of the five tribes. During the site visits by consultants, they pointed out important resources in the surrounding area. Each consultant offered their individual interpretation of why these particular resources and locations are important from their cultural perspective. Their association with the sites is based on their strong sense of oral history about being the original inhabitants of this region.

15.4 Recommendations

In its role as the nation's conservator of natural history and cultural heritage located within the nation's parks and monuments, the National Park Service is responsible for managing resources and instituting programs that reflect "knowledge of and respect for the cultures, including religious and subsistence traditions, of Native American tribes or groups with demonstrated ancestral ties to particular resources in the park."¹⁵ A growing body of law that is designed to incorporate and guard Native American religious and cultural practices directs this mandate.¹⁶

Specific management objectives concerning the preservation, protection, and management of resources must continue to include Native American involvement. As part of National Park Service policy, indigenous access and potential use of ethnographic resources at the Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site and the Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site will continue to include a cooperative dialogue between park staff and respective tribes. Thus the following recommendations are respectfully made for National Park Service consideration:

1. The scope of the current study, while comprehensive, can be used as a foundation for tribally specific research about plant use and plant knowledge at each site. Separate ethnographic research projects should be developed with appropriate tribal representatives at each site. As prairie restoration efforts continue at each National Historical Site, the introduction of new native species will require periodic assessment of ethnobotanical and other cultural resources. In-depth ethnographic documentation will further enhance the relationship between natural and cultural resources.
2. To fully comprehend the significance of identified resources and geographical locations within each national historic landmark, it is necessary to link the sites to critical resources found outside each site's boundaries. A research project linking the two National Park Service sites and resources to other culturally defined regionally significant locations would result in an inclusive cultural landscape that connects indigenous meanings and uses.
3. During the oral interviews, all tribal representatives emphasized the importance of educating the non-Native public about their unique cultural traditions and historical ties to the region. While indigenous consultation is a continuous endeavor at the Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site, tribal consultants expressed a willingness and desire to develop an on-going dialogue with National Park Service staff at Bent's Old Fort National Historic

Site to assist in further documentation, public education, and interpretative purposes.

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- ¹. Charles A. Brinbaum and Christine C. Peters, Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Treatment of Cultural Landscapes. (Washington, D.C.: United States Department of Interior, National Park Service, 1996), 160.
- ². http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletin/nr38_int.htm.
- ³. Michael Silverstein, "Cultural" Concepts and the Language-Culture Nexus," Current Anthropology. 45(5, 2004):621-622.
- ⁴. Refer to, Silverstein, "Cultural" Concepts and the Language-Culture Nexus," 621-652.
- ⁵. Juanita A. R. Ladyman, Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site Vegetation Restoration Plan. (Junta: Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site, 2003).
- ⁶. Patricia L. Parker and Thomas F. King, Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Traditional Cultural Properties. National Register Bulletin 38, National Register of Historic Places. (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1990).
- ⁷. Patricia Parker, "Traditional Cultural Properties," CRM Bulletin. Special Issue on Traditional Cultural Properties. 16(1993), 1.
- ⁸. Gregory R. Campbell, "Ethnographic Interviews with a Kiowa Consultant, May 17, 2006," (Missoula: Department of Anthropology, The University of Montana, 2006).
- ⁹. See, Clayton C. Denman, Cultural Change Among the Blackfeet of Montana. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley. (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, Inc., 1968), 13.
- ¹⁰. See, National Park Service, Sand Creek Massacre Project, Site Location Study. Volume One. (Denver: National Park Service Intermountain Region, 2000).
- ¹¹. See, Howard L. Harrod, Renewing the World: Plains Indian Religion and Morality. (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1987); Becoming and Remaining a People: Native American Religions on the Northern Plains. (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1995); The Animals Came Dancing: Native American Sacred Ecology and Animal Kinship. (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2000).
- ¹². Gregory R. Campbell, "Ethnographic Interview with the Southern Cheyenne Consultant, May 15, 2006," (Missoula: Department of Anthropology, The University of Montana, 2006).
- ¹³. Michael J. Evans, Alexa Roberts, and Peggy Nelson, "Ethnographic Landscapes," CRM. 24(2001):53-56.
- ¹⁴. Evans, Roberts, and Nelson, "Ethnographic Landscapes," 53.
- ¹⁵. See, Chapter Eight in National Park Service, National Park Service Management Policies. (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Interior, 1988), 8-9.
- ¹⁶. There is a body of law that is directly and indirectly central to the indigenous religious and cultural practices considered under this study. These include: The National Environmental Policy Act, The National Historic Preservation Act, The Historic Sites Act, Executive Order 11593, The Antiquities Act of 1906, The Archaeological Resources Protection Act, The Archaeological Data Preservation Act of 1974, The American Indian Religious Freedom Act (AIRFA). Public Law No. 95-341. (1978), codified in part at 42 U.S.C. (1996 (1988)); The Native American Graves and Protection Act. See, Thomas F. King, Cultural Resource Laws and Practice. (Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press, 1998).