

To the editor:

I would like to make a statement concerning the destruction of our national and local Heritage archaeological sites.

First I will describe a few examples that I have observed in the past five years or so, while doing volunteer recording of Native American sites in Clatsop County. I previously had experience in archaeological field work with the National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, California and Oregon State Parks, Umatilla Indian Reservation, and private contractors with over a decade compiled since 1971.

One site recorded on the Necanicum River has been heavily disturbed due to a large house constructed on the site. I suggested [the] High School or Community College might excavate before construction began. The State Historic Preservation Office (Dr. Leland Gilson) wrote to me concerning this site. "The landowner who constructed a house on (number for site) is in violation of State Law (ORS 359.920). It is a class B misdemeanor to disturb or destroy any archaeological site on private land unless it is done under an archaeological permit." (Letter Oct. 28, 1998)

I felt bad it was heavily damaged but S.H.P.O. took no action. I casually had mentioned the site before construction to a Clatsop Co. Deputy Sheriff, no action was taken.

Another site recorded in Seaside this spring near the Golf Course now has a couple of duplex houses constructed on it. I had hoped to get the High School and/or College involved before construction. I talked to a neighbor who knew the owner of this property and told him I planned to record the midden site for the S.H.P.O. Three months later the foundation was poured in the midden deposit.

I had called Neal Maine (Pacific Educational Resources) in Seaside for help getting an educational field school to excavate this site in areas to be impacted by construction. The S.H.O.P. wrote about this site when it was submitted. "The sites in this area are all very important and everyone should be working with the local planners to preserve them." (Letter March 3, 2000)

Yet another example in Seaside, the famous **Palmrose** site east of Hwy 101, excavated by the Smithsonian Institute in the early 1970's, was recently exposed on the West Side of Hwy 101 on the curve south of town. This massive terrain altering development began this spring. The high ground just west of the highway contained midden deposits, which appear to be from prehistoric times into contact period with Europeans and eventually European occupation. This was possibly an excellent previously unparalleled data bank of this time period. I called Seaside Planning Commission and talked to a person who indicated no provisions or policies for archaeological sites were included in building or construction permits, also little or no communication with the S.H.P.O. I also called the S.H.P.O., but only left a message describing the destruction of the Palmrose sites' western edge. One or two days after calling the Seaside Planning Commission I watched the cultural deposits scraped off the cobbles that lay throughout this construction development. This development project also filled in the natural flood channel of the Necanicum River, possibly an old main channel of the river during prehistoric occupation. Another letter might address this alteration, which may cause flooding waters to seek other possibly destructive routes. Site material was intact across west of this channel also and continues towards the golf course. This site area is now totally lost forever!

I also have recorded sites on Oregon State Forestry land here in Clatsop County. I would like to ask why the Oregon State Forestry Department does not follow in the footsteps of the U.S. Forest Service, and Bureau of Land Management and perform adequate surveys for sites before road building and logging activities begin. S.H.P.O. wrote in reference to these interior forest sites and why so few are recorded. "The primary reason is the lack of Federal driven Section 106 compliance actions." (Letter March 1, 1995)

In my experience the highest probability of site locations is topographically on riparian terraces, saddles, knolls and mountaintops. These are likely candidates for roads and logging landings [which] destroy culture deposits.

I have talked to the local Oregon State Forestry Dept. people concerning sites on Clatsop State Forestry lands. They have been expanding efforts in cultural resource management. They have complained that the S.H.P.O. withholds information needed to manage known sites, but have yet to instigate surveys to locate new sites.

Observation of sites in the forestlands of Clatsop County is extremely difficult due to vegetation, duff and ground cover debris. Sub-surface testing would be required, especially in areas to be disturbed. Many of the riparian sites are located near salmon and steelhead spawning grounds. Locating and recording such sites and perhaps excavation could produce data on harvest methods, estimates on human population and numbers of fish harvested. I believe human activity and population in these remote forest areas were greater than previously estimated or known. Perhaps we could learn from a culture that harvested these fish for thousands of years without depleting the runs!

I would also like to mention the incredible opportunities lost on the Necanicum River system when utility lines, such as the water line along Hwy 26 a couple of years ago and now the phone and power lines, [were moved] underground. The miles of trench exposed strata in the soil, in which, if a trained observer had been there, most likely cultural deposits from unknown sites could have located. This would have expanded our knowledge of previous human occupation in the Necanicum Valley. This holds true in many other areas as well, such as the excavation on Hwy 101 this summer through Seaside.

I also suggest, once again, to the Necanicum Water Shed Council that it consider archaeological site preservation in the salmon habitat improvement projects. Planting trees, etc. involves digging holes, which could be simultaneously archaeological test holes for cultural deposits on the Necanicum.

Cannon Beach also has cultural deposits from prehistoric times. In Dec. 1994 utility excavation exposed a portion of cultural deposit near Cannon Beach Elementary School. I wrote the City of Cannon Beach and explained that cultural material was endangered by excavation in this area and proposed a survey with subsurface testing. The city wrote back expressing its concern for preservation. (Letter 1-4-95). I offered to volunteer to observe future excavations and monitor for cultural remains. I have yet to be taken up on my offer.

In Nov. 1999 we recorded the site near the CBES thanks to an observant resident and exposed cultural strata in a water line repair ditch. There is little doubt this is the site William Clark visited in 1806.

Arch Cape is included with areas containing prehistoric cultural deposits. Astoria has premier historic sites as well as prehistory sites.

I would like to ask Seaside, Cannon Beach, Astoria, Arch Cape and the Oregon State Forestry Dept. to draft policies to record and preserve their cultural sites. Ideally the initial step would be surveys to record locations of all observable cultural deposits through systematic subsurface testing. Hand augurs work well in sandy soils, shovel test in other soils. A map of sensitive areas could be created which planners and developers could consult. All future excavations in these areas by machine could be monitored by observers trained to recognize cultural materials and deposits, with possible archaeological excavations when important significant deposits were encountered.

These archaeological excavations could attract tourist dollars and provide excellent educational opportunities for our children and higher learning institutions. Field school is the best way to learn archaeological field methodology. Local children and adults could learn more about their surrounding environment, becoming more in touch with their heritage and place in these beautiful locations where people have lived for thousands of years. The expanding big picture of the past, created by gathering data from these sites, could alter our perspective of our present culture, perhaps altering our social economic behavior for the better.

Let Clatsop County and its cities lead the state in creating these policies for municipalities to preserve their cultural resources. I would also like to see State officials allocate more dollars to the grossly underfunded S.H.P.O. Also, make laws and policies more land owner friendly, with low cost data recovery plans, involving field schools and volunteers such as the Oregon Archaeology Society, etc.

A comment on the secrecy of archaeological sites. We found in the winter of 1993, while encountering the major condo development on the Necanicum, Neacoxie, and Neawanna estuary, that secrecy of archaeological sites was important. It appeared to be kept secret from the public so the development could continue without impediments from public input, although the reason normally is to protect sites from collectors digging into them and destroying them. Collectors are working in Clatsop County and have recently dug into both sites mentioned in Seaside. I have not heard of any local police activities to prevent these illegal activities. Perhaps police protection and enforcing laws through the planning and development departments, so construction activity does not destroy these sites, would lessen the need for secrecy. I believe the Planning development department should have locations of known sites. Also realtors and county land and title records could use site data so buyers and developers would know beforehand, instead of unknowingly or often knowingly destroying our cultural resources.

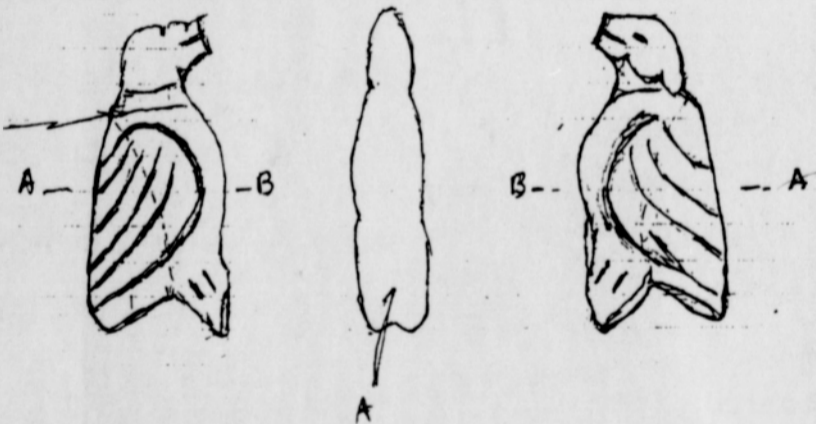
I realize the inconvenience and delays that landowners and developers may encounter dealing with these sites. I myself am a landowner with an archaeological site on my property. I am also a licensed construction contractor and know that unexpected delays can be devastating. If the proper policies were in place for a few years the unexpected could be expected to some degree.

I believe the value gained by retrieved data of the past and educational value to our children is well worth the trouble!

I would welcome any comments or suggestions or advice concerning this matter. Also offering any assistance drafting and/or implementing new policies.

Sincerely,

William Kirk



This carving of a mammal bone was found at the Palmrose site by a local after a bulldozer ran over it and broke it. Nov. 2000



The Writers' Block

Readings & Interviews
on KMUN 91.9 FM Astoria
Wednesdays at 1pm

The future ain't what it used to be. Casey Stengel

Dear rev billy:

I know - I know the geese are getting fat and deadline passed a week ago and time and tide wait for no man, and all that kind of thing but you know there's a revolution cooking in the valley - I'm asking if there's a possibility you might spread that word in your esteemed publication.

We're organizing a PEOPLE'S INAUGURAL BALL for the evening of January 20, 2001, at the BENTON COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS in CORVALLIS, OREGON. It's not your usual celebration of a done deal; yes there will be dancing and costume. JIM PAGE is coming from Seattle to do his political folksongs, GENERAL STRIKE will remind us that union songs are a popular art form, CHAD and the CHADETTES are showing up from Florida, (in complete, dimpled as well as pregnant versions) and some other interesting folk expect to show up. ADULTS must pay \$10 to get in; and the proceeds are intended to benefit KBOO (Portland's unique alternative community radio station), the CORVALLIS ACTION ON GLOBALIZATION group (our local WTO/Seattle veterans' creation), as well as the struggling artists

Info from Michael at 541-753-3138.

Michael Papadopoulos

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JANUARY BIRTHDAY PARTIES HONOR POET WILLIAM STAFFORD

Friends of William Stafford, P.O. Box 592, Lake Oswego, OR 97304
Contact: Paulann Petersen, <ppetersen@jps.net>

PORTLAND--The birthday of poet William Stafford will be celebrated by a cornucopia of thirty-seven Oregon poets and readers at six different reading parties throughout the Portland area during the month of January. An additional five reading parties will be held in Bend, Salem, Eugene, Ashland, and Vancouver, Washington.

The public is invited to these free events sponsored by The Friends of William Stafford. But these are not the usual poetry readings. Each "party" features five to seven readers, each of whom will read a Stafford poem and one of their own written in the spirit of Stafford's work. Members of the audience, the guests, are then invited to read their favorite poem by the late Oregon poet laureate.

Among the participating poets at the Portland readings are Primus St. John, David Hedges, Willa Schneberg, Judith Barrington, Barbara Drake, Greg Simon, Martha Gatchell, Vince Wixon, Lisa Steinman, Sherron Norlen, Jane Glazer, and Vern Rutsula. Dorothy Stafford will be an honored guest at each of the parties, all of which are hosted by Paulann Petersen, FWS Events Director.

The readings will be held at the West Linn Public Library, Thursday, January 11, 7 P.M.; Mountain Writers Center, Friday, January 12, 8 P.M.; Multnomah Central Library, Wednesday, January 17, 7 P.M.; Oswego Heritage House, Sunday, January 21, 2 P.M.; Belmont Branch Library, Tuesday, January 23, 7 P.M.; and Broadway Books, Tuesday, January 30, 7 P.M.

One of America's most celebrated poets and a favorite professor at Lewis and Clark College, Stafford, who died in 1993, was born on January 17, 1914. Known for his encouragement of other writers, Stafford is the author of more than fifty books and a recipient of the National Book Award.

The Friends of William Stafford is a nonprofit organization that, by keeping alive Stafford's gift as a teacher devoted to all types of free expression, provides ongoing education in literature, particularly in poetry, in ways that will encourage and broaden the community of readers and writers.

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Nature is an infinite sphere whose center is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere.
Blaise Pascal

UPPER LEFT EDGE JANUARY 2001

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