

## San Pedro Riparian NCA – Resource Management Plan

### Field Trip: Cultural Resources

May 20, 2014 (9AM– 4PM)

#### Participants:

Jeff Lark, The Nature Conservancy

Jesse Ballenger, Statistical Research, Inc.

Dr. Vance Haynes, University of Arizona

Ron Stewart, Friends of the San Pedro River

Erik Anderson, Citizen

Ron Serviss, Friends of the San Pedro River

Naomi Katz, Citizen

Mary Darling, City of Sierra Vista

Andy Laurenzi, Archaeology Southwest

Vi Hillman, Field Manager, Bureau of Land Management

Karen Simms, Assistant Field Manager, Bureau of Land Management

David McIntyre, SPRNCA RMP Team Lead, Bureau of Land Management

Amy Sobiech, Archaeologist, Bureau of Land Management

Chris Schrager, Historic Preservation Officer, Bureau of Land Management

Rachel More-Hla, Intern, Bureau of Land Management

Gavin Shippen, Bureau of Land Management

Colleen Whitaker, Southwest Decision Resources (facilitator)

Julia Sittig, Southwest Decision Resources (facilitator)

Note: Questions/comments from participants are in *italics*. Responses from BLM staff are in regular font.

#### Meeting Spot - San Pedro House

- The focus of this field trip is to view a sampling of the many types of archaeological sites on the SPRNCA, and to discuss potential management strategies for those types.
- Issues will be introduced that everyone can consider (on agenda), and discussion can help to develop solutions to suggest in the RMP.
  - Strategy examples include nominating historic mining areas as districts; designating special management areas to protect resources from ground-disturbing activities; inventorying and monitoring site conditions.
- A key theme is balancing the preservation of resources with public use of sites.



### Questions/Discussion:

- *I'm trying to understand how input from today's field trip will be used. Comments have already been made during RMP scoping; is this just a second chance to comment?*
  - Today's input will be used to inform the alternatives, or potential management strategies, that could be used on the SPRNCA. It's not the same as comments made during the Scoping period, which were meant to assess the issues. Now, the BLM has identified the issues, and is looking for strategies to manage them.
  - Many of the issues discussed today are direct results of public input during Scoping.
  - Notes from other field trips are posted on the [SPRNCA RMP website](#); to comment on other resource areas, refer to those notes.
- *The Friends of the San Pedro (FSPR) would like more archaeological research, docent-led tours, and interpretive signs and materials on the SPRNCA.*

## Stop 1: Murray Springs



### Overview

- Archaeological resources at Murray Springs were found in 1966. In 2012, the site was designated a National Historic Landmark, which means that it has national significance; the National Park Service is consequently a partner in managing the site.
- Remains are 13,000 years old, and provide evidence of three different areas of activity by the Clovis people. There are 15 known Clovis sites in the nation.

### Issues Relevant to the RMP

- Erosion of arroyo banks may destroy or bury artifacts.
- Unnatural rise in water table threatens to drown the site. The water rise is a result of effluent discharge at the upstream Sierra Vista water treatment plant.

- Discussions took place prior to the siting of the effluent about working together to mitigate impacts.
- Exposure of artifacts can lead to looting; it is unlikely that people who find artifacts will turn them in.
- A formalized plan with components for data recording and public education could help to preserve this site.

Questions/Discussion:

- *BLM staff seem to have mixed minds about the effluent discharge, and whether it provides services such as water for vegetation that prevents streambed erosion. Dr. Haynes was very clear that he believes the greatest danger to this site is the EOP.*
- *Murray Springs is the crown jewel of the SPRNCA. If the USA were a member of UNESCO, this would be a World Heritage Site. You should maintain the trails, repair the bridge, and build new signs.*
- *Murray Springs is better than it used to be. The bathrooms and signs are nice. However, it is more heavily vegetated.*
- *Sloughing has occurred in the arroyo. If the artifacts become buried or lost due to sloughing, is there a system for data collection in place that has already recorded them?*
  - Sloughing is a natural process of bank softening from water discharge. There isn't a data recording plan in place; usually, professionals are happy to come out to record data when asked.
- *Interpretation of Murray Springs could include both cultural and natural resource components; explaining the formation of arroyos and the prehistoric black mat could interest a lot of people.*
- *Has anyone considered leaving the natural sites less visited, and having an exhibit somewhere else in a central location where more people can visit?*
  - No off-site exhibits have been considered, but making an exhibit is an option.
- *When he first discovered the site, Dr. Haynes recommended hardening the banks using soil cement. If Dr. Hanes could spend an unlimited amount of money on this site, he would harden the banks, install better signage, divert the Sierra Vista effluent, and build viewpoints around the arroyo so that people could look into it without damaging it.*

- *Murray Springs could bring a lot of people to Sierra Vista- as many as Tombstone gets for its attractions.*
- *Money could be brought into Murray Springs by partnering with NPS and using their technical expertise for handling “emergency” sites. The University of Arizona may also be interested in responding to “emergency” sites.*
- *How many people visit Murray Springs per year?*
  - 3,000 people, according to the BLM recreation specialist.

## Stop 2: Fairbank Cemetery



### Overview and issues relevant to RMP

- This is a unique site with low recordation. There are some archival materials, including an engineering map from 1998 that mentions 120 graves here.
- It is a dual component site: Historic and prehistoric (In 1968 the Charleston Dam survey recorded it as a prehistoric site.
- Under current management it is in the public use category
- Would be useful to have it official mapped, with photographs to compare old conditions to current conditions.

### Discussion/Comments/Questions:

- *The soil should be permanently stabilized where some graves are sliding off.*
- *This should be formally recognized as a cemetery. The sacredness of this spot has*



*been lost. There should be some management tools that could be used to get people to pay more respect to it (i.e. delineate the trail more clearly with railings). Much of the rock that's visible on the surface is from when graves were vandalized back in the 1960s.*

- *Do people actually come to pay respects here?*
  - Yes – Amy sees people here each time she visits.
  
- *How old is this site?*
  - Unsure exactly. A participant shared that during the Fairbank reunion there are people who grew up here and they say as late as the 1950's it was groomed and maintained. They were shocked at the current condition.
  
- Vi: The plan is to continue the practice of site hosts here to help with protection. There are not plans to have a “guard.” There may be a possibility to get some Budget Planning System (one time funding for projects) money to do some work at this site.
  
- *Are there other cemeteries (like Contention) that you'd like to work on?*
  - No plans for Contention. But it could be included in a historic designation nomination for milling sites.
  
- *Are there plans to get rid of the Acacia here?*
  - That could be an idea that's included.
  
- *Friends of San Pedro (FSPR) may be able to get a workday out here as part of National Public Lands Day. FSPR also plans to renew the Halloween walk here this year.*

### **Stop 3: NOAA Weather Station**

#### Overview

- On one side of the wash, a NOAA weather station was installed by obtaining a right-of-way.
- On the other side, remains of settlements at historic Fairbank occur; this area has not been inventoried but would need to be surveyed if a project were proposed.
- This area is an example of a dual-component site, in which historical and pre-historical artifacts occur together.
- Site inventories and assessments have not been completed for many of these types of sites on the SPRNCA, especially non-project-driven sites.
- For ground-disturbing projects, a Class III survey (the most detailed type) is needed.

### Issues Relevant to the RMP

- Monitoring program: BLM is unable to inventory all sites on the SPRNCA.
  - Options: leave non-inventoried sites as they are; attempt to “get ahead” of project-based inventories by prioritizing sites and inventorying high priorities before projects are proposed; arrange surveys to be done using non-BLM staff.
- Making formal inventorying plans could make monitoring more efficient, and could facilitate using partners for surveys.

### Questions/Discussion:

- *How much of the arch sites on the SPRNCA are inventoried?*
  - About 37% have Class III surveys, but more (around 50%) have Class I surveys.
  - Many sites that were inventoried in the past cannot be found because of poor location descriptions. The Kaiser Dam survey was good quality, because it contains a good location description.
- Do you have to be a professional archaeologist to do the surveys?
  - The leader of the survey must be a certified professional. They can, however, be supported by non-professionals such as students and interns.

## Stop 4: Boquillas Ranch





Commissary

Overview and management issues (Chris Schaefer, BLM Historic Preservationist):

- The site needs some type of management plan. That is important for coordination of different groups, parties and agencies who may do work or projects here.
- The RMP is overarching, but not site specific.
- Have the site used in some way is important. The house was in good shape

Smoke house

when it was lived in. “Use = maintenance”. There is also a big focus in BLM now on “adaptive reuse”.

- Commissary needs a new roof.
- This site is probably eligible for listing on the National Register, but it is a lengthy and resource intensive process.



Carriage Barn

Comments/Questions/Discussion

- *If money were no option, how would Chris want to do at this site?*
  - See the site preserved and made available to the public. High priority would be fixing the carriage barn.



- *Is this site uniquely different than the Empire Ranch Site?*
  - Yes. It has a different historical context. The history is different. This place is integral and directly linked to the foundational history of Cochise County. Inside the Carriage Barn
- *FSPR would like to bring hiking groups out here one or two times a year*
  - That is possible – need to speak to the Recreation Planner.
- *BLM has owned this site for 25 years and it is a bit disconcerting that there is still no site plan. There are groups and individuals that are prepared to help make it a reality.*
  - We are moving forward now and the site management plan is the first step.
- *Why is the ranger not staying here anymore?*
  - BLM didn't have resources to maintain the house in a safe condition to allow habitation.
- *The Empire Ranch gets more local support than the SPRNCA, maybe because Sonoita has more of a ranching and western heritage history. But with some effort, education and awareness building this area could have it's profile raised significantly. Getting people to see and learn about it is critical. Can't get leverage and support if people don't know it's here.*
- *The administrative road at all times is an obstacle*
  - It is possible to get permission for access

### Field Trip Debrief

- *There is lots of work to be done. People need to see/experience this stuff if they're going to support it. Need to find ways to get people out here.*
- *Plans are good, but we need resources.*
- *Thanks to the BLM for taking the time to host this.*
- *I don't know anyone who is involved with this river that think the river will still be here in 50 years. These sites will be. These historic sites are our legacy.*
- *Keep flexibility to do interim things that can encourage interest. Lots of people are interested in this place. While working on the planning, keep moving forward.*
- *San Pedro is a hotbed for archaeology. There are cultural sites from all periods of time here. The Clovis sites are so rare, yet they go under the radar. Archaeology is not highlighted in the existing plan as much as it should be – highlight it in this one.*
- *Great to see a group of passionate people.*



- Hope you take away knowledge that there are staff in land management agencies that care about these resources.
- *SPRNCA is a gem. The things BLM and others are working to preserve are special*
- Need to take more advantage of Friends groups.
- Good to get out of the office. This is a special and incredible place.