

with archeological resources by finding personal resonance and relevance in them. Site evaluation offers a useful perspective for archeologists who undertake reconstructions; evaluations can document whether or not the archeologists' interpretation has meaning for visitors.

As Barry Mackintosh notes in his discussion of the National Park Service's policies on reconstructions, this issue cuts to the heart of the question, "What are we here to do?" Reconstruction has had opponents and allies, another theme of the book. Bureaucracy, personalities, and, frankly, the wrong people doing the job, are repeatedly shown to tax an otherwise promising project. In Donald Linebaugh's superb discussion of Roland Wells Robbins's work, we learn that politics and personalities ultimately damaged projects despite Robbins's best intentions. For others, as Peter Fowler and Susan Mills discuss, the process offers professionals an "open air laboratory" for understanding ancient construction methods and materials. Some reconstructions enable archeologists and the public to understand sites at human scale. Overall, reconstructions are a tool for attracting and educating visitors, and linking visitors with the past.

Because this book is written without jargon and tells behind-the-scenes stories about people and places, *The Reconstructed Past* will benefit both students and professionals. The case studies and the history of applied archeology are appropriate for university or college classrooms, particularly method and theory classes. The book's themes would also interest professionals making decisions about site interpretation. The provocative case studies illuminate the dilemma of reconstruction. The chapters play off each other in a debate that encourages reader participation as the authors jostle over simplifying sites, choosing a "most significant" story at the expense of others, the contested nature of heritage, and the flexibility of presentation as an interpretive tool. While authors disagree on the finer points and, perhaps, the ethics of

reconstruction, they seem to agree that reconstructions will not leave the interpretive toolbox in the foreseeable future.

Teresa S. Moyer
Society for American Archaeology

Thinking about Significance

Edited by Robert J. Austin, Kathleen S. Hoffman, and George R. Ballo. Special Publication Series No. 1, Riverview: Florida Archaeological Council, Inc., 2002; 242 pp.; paper \$15.00.

The issues discussed in *Thinking about Significance* are core to the policy and practice of historic preservation. The evaluation of a property in order to make decisions about preservation (or destruction) should never be routine, as the stakes are high. The contributors to this collection of papers and proceedings from a professional development workshop sponsored by the Florida Archaeological Council in 2001 include representatives of federal and state agencies, tribes, consulting firms, and academia.

In focusing on the big question of what we consider significant and why, the editors state that the most important result of the workshop—and the clear message of this book—is that current challenges "require us to change our thinking about almost everything—the goals of archaeology, how archaeology will be practiced, what is significant, and how to incorporate the views and opinions of other ethnic groups into the decision making process."

The National Register of Historic Places, the Florida Division of Historical Resources, the Florida Department of Transportation, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation provide agency perspectives on the topic. The issues that are emphasized in the papers and discussion

include the important but imperfectly realized role of historic contexts, the critical importance of listening to Native perspectives, the challenges of evaluating redundant resources and resources from the recent past, and the need for creative strategies to protect sites.

The Miccosukee Tribe and the Florida and Oklahoma Seminole tribes provide Native American perspectives. Woven through these viewpoints are major differences and commonalities between Western and Native worldviews, including the latter's understanding of the sacredness and interconnectedness of all things, the importance of consultation, the usefulness of archeology from a Native perspective, and the advantages of working together towards the common goal of protecting resources.

Archeologists working in the private sector and in the academy provide their perspective, including professional responsibilities and innovative methods for making significance evaluations more consistent. In addition, and core to the ongoing challenges of the profession, participants argue for a more rigorous archeology that can fully and fairly evaluate the contentious site categories of archeological resources of the 20th century and surface sites comprised of undiagnostic stone artifacts—the lithic scatters familiar to archeologists everywhere.

The concluding chapter is worth the price of the book. In it, the authors challenge their profession to change the way that it thinks about the past and how it practices archeology. This collection defines three challenges: what should be considered significant, how do we determine significance, and who should make that determination.

It is clear that one of the most effective tools for deciding the first question lies in the use and continual updating of state historic contexts because they provide the framework within which significance can be evaluated. Related to this is the need to acknowledge and address individual biases of

the evaluator and researcher, culturally relative values, and values other than scientific ones. The second question encompasses further questions: Where we should spend our limited resources and, more broadly, ask what is the goal of preservation? What is the role of the National Register of Historic Places, and what should we do about places that are worthy of preserving but whose values do not fit under the National Register criteria? As for the third question of who should make significance determinations, there are widely differing opinions, although there is agreement that all points of view need to be considered.

The editors have 14 recommendations for moving the profession to think differently, from expanding the significance concept to addressing inclusiveness and alternative viewpoints, and adopting a nonlinear view of the world. The editors recognize that the inclusion of Native American concerns has been the source of major changes in archeology since the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990. In addition, the editors advocate that their colleagues learn from Native Americans to “truly embrace the idea that the past is very much alive today and actively informs the present, and that the present is nothing more than the future unfolding.”

In addition to introductory and concluding articles, three major sections address government agency issues, Native American issues, and archeological issues. A historical overview of the development of cultural resources management in Florida provides an orientation to state-specific laws, rules, and practice, and should be useful to those who work outside of Florida as comparative information. The issues raised throughout this book, however, are relevant to practitioners across the country. An appendix summarizes applicable federal laws as well as state statutes and rules. The inclusion of transcriptions of comments and discussion for each of these three major topics is important because the Native American perspectives at the workshop were nearly entirely spoken rather than

written. The transcripts also add the workshop flavor to the publication and remind the reader that the issues are not resolved, but continue to appropriately trouble historic preservation practitioners in Florida and everywhere else.

Barbara J. Little

National Park Service

*Reconstructing Conservation:
Finding Common Ground*

Edited by Ben A. Minter and Robert E. Manning.
Washington, DC: Island Press, 2003; xiii + 417 pp.,
notes, index; cloth \$55.00; paper \$27.50.

Reconstructing Conservation: Finding Common Ground presents a series of 21 essays on future directions in the conservation of cultural landscapes. The authors base their writings on personal insights and collective reflections from a symposium convened by the National Park Service's Conservation Study Institute in 2001 to discuss the history, values, and practice of conservation.

The workshop gathered prominent practitioners and academics to discuss how the theory and practice of conservation is changing, and what the changes portend for the future. In contrast to some contemporary assessments that the future of conservation is in danger, symposium participants felt strongly that cultural landscape preservation is flourishing. They identified key ingredients of change that are occurring in response to and in spite of obstacles presented by changing land uses, values, and ownership.

Reconstructing Conservation argues that conservation is undergoing a major transformation from a centralized, narrowly focused, top-down activity to a locally driven, highly democratic, multidisciplinary strategy for balancing growth with the human need to connect with the land. Local distinctiveness

is another component of the way that communities and their partners approach conservation, as is the trend to link natural and cultural preservation goals in a long-term vision. Essays explore these major transformations through case studies and through the history and policies that have influenced the evolution in conservation thinking and action.

In the opening chapter, "Conservation: From Deconstruction to Reconstruction," editors Ben A. Minter and Robert E. Manning present background for the authors' contributions, reflect on the symposium and its timeliness, and outline the major concepts authors will address. In "Finding Common Ground," the final essay, the editors offer a series of principles upon which they believe the future of conservation hinges. The essays in-between reveal theoretical and practical perspectives about how and why the field is changing.

The book's mix of theory and practice lends credence to the argument that the two approaches must by necessity influence one another in order for the field to mature. The book also argues that the field has taken a more multidisciplinary approach to include advocates of community, history, culture, and heritage to achieve landscape conservation goals. In contrast with more traditionally focused environmental studies, the book invites preservationists, ethnographers, social scientists, and historians to see commonalities among disciplines. The conservation history threaded throughout provides sufficient context for a reader with little prior knowledge of the conservation field to understand the sequences that lead to reevaluating current conservation history and practice. The book also reiterates the local, publicly driven, and democratic approach that conservation is taking as communities adopt conservation tools to preserve their natural and cultural resources.

Reconstructing Conservation builds upon the work of over a century of environmental advocates and practitioners and, more recently, William Cronon's collection of essays entitled *Uncommon Ground*.¹

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

National Center for Cultural Resources



CRM: The Journal of Heritage Stewardship

Volume 2 Number 2 Summer 2005



CRM: The Journal of Heritage Stewardship
Summer 2005
ISSN 1068-4999

CRM = cultural resource management

CRM: The Journal of Heritage Stewardship is published twice each year by the National Park Service to address the history and development of and trends and emerging issues in cultural resource management in the United States and abroad. Its purpose is to broaden the intellectual foundation of the management of cultural resources. *CRM Journal* is edited in the offices of the National Center for Cultural Resources, National Park Service, in Washington, DC.

The online version of *CRM Journal* is available at www.cr.nps.gov/CRMJournal. Back issues of *CRM* magazine (1978–2002) are available online at <http://www.cr.nps.gov/crm>.

Guidance for authors is available online at <http://www.cr.nps.gov/CRMJournal>.

Manuscripts, letters to the editor, and all questions and recommendations of an editorial nature should be addressed to Antoinette J. Lee, Editor, email Toni_Lee@nps.gov, telephone (202) 354-2272, or fax (202) 371-2422. Incoming mail to the Federal Government is irradiated, which damages computer disks, CDs, and paper products. These materials should be sent by a commercial delivery service to Editor, *CRM Journal*, National Park Service, 1201 Eye Street, NW (2251), Washington, DC 20005.

Views and conclusions in *CRM Journal* are those of the authors and should not be interpreted as representing the opinions or policies of the U.S. Government. Acceptance of material for publication does not necessarily reflect an opinion or endorsement on the part of the *CRM Journal* staff or the National Park Service.

CRM Journal is produced under a cooperative agreement between the National Park Service and the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers.

To subscribe to *CRM Journal*—

Online <http://www.cr.nps.gov/CRMJournal>
email NPS_CRMJournal@nps.gov
Facsimile (202) 371-2422

U.S. Mail—
CRM Journal
National Park Service
1849 C Street, NW (2251)
Washington, DC 20240-0001