

Visioning Future Directions in CRM Archaeology: The Airlie House 2.0 Workshop

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This, the first of several communications regarding the Airlie House 2.0 Workshop, briefly outlines the genesis of the workshop and its topical discussions. Please see the upcoming article in the *SAA Archaeological Record (tSAR)* for a fuller presentation of workshop topics and recommendations, as well as future emails via the *Government Affairs Updates* for news on the implementation of action plans.

In 1974, the Airlie House Seminars, a collaborative effort between the National Park Service (NPS) and the Society for American Archaeology (SAA), addressed critical issues facing the new field of cultural resource management (CRM) archaeology, including the legal framework for archaeological protection, standards for CRM fieldwork and reporting, Native American community engagement, and professional qualifications. The resulting report (McGimsey and Davis 1977) influenced legislation, policy, and CRM archaeological standards.

Half a century has passed since the Airlie House Seminars, and new challenges have emerged in CRM archaeology. In recognition, organizers from the NPS, SAA, and other collaborating organizations convened the workshop “Airlie House 2.0: Visioning Future

Directions in CRM Archaeology” in May 2024, building on the legacy of the original seminars by fostering dialogue and generating proactive recommendations to meet current challenges. The workshop brought together CRM practitioners from federal and state agencies and the private sector, Tribal representatives, academicians, and repository and museum staff.

Planning the workshop began with a preliminary session (“State of the State”) at the 2022 SAA annual meeting and a nationwide survey distributed to SAA members, members of other archaeological societies and organizations, and historic preservation offices and organizations. The survey solicited information about challenges affecting and potential approaches to improving CRM archaeology. The SAA hosted a national webinar in 2023 on the contributions of the 1974 Airlie House Seminars; Airlie House 2.0 organizers consulted with three original Airlie House members—Alice Kehoe, William Lipe, and Michael Moratto—whose reflections were posted on the SAA website. Forums at the 2023 and 2024 SAA annual meetings also solicited member input. Organizers distilled four overarching topics from these efforts: (1) archaeological collections, including records; (2) recentering communities and diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging; (3) CRM archaeology compliance; and (4) workforce training and careers. Workshop organizers served as facilitators, and participants engaged in discussion groups associated with the four topics, which are synopsized below.

Discussion Topics

Topic 1: Archaeological Collections, including Records

A curation crisis has persisted since at least the 1970s, and all CRM practitioners need to recognize their responsibilities to the archaeological collections they recover. Key elements of a strategy to recognize the full potential of archaeological collections, including records and data, are to develop an advocacy plan for all recommended actions; found an association of archaeological repositories to improve communication, develop standards, best practices, and training and engage effectively with professional societies and stakeholders/rightsholders; and advocate that improved practices to preserve digital records and data be integrated into the overall workshop effort. The Archaeological Collections Group identified the following subtopics:

- Locating collections and information about their content
- CRM responsibilities for collections
- Respecting and operationalizing descendant communities' desires regarding associated collections
- Improving the preservation of digital records and data

Topic 2: Recentring Communities and Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging in the Field of Archaeology

Indigenous and other descendant communities have a critical role in decision-making, and archaeologists must accept this if cultural resources are to be managed effectively. Collaborative efforts can lead to advocacy, consensus building, and educational initiatives focused on the diverse roles within the NHPA Section 106 process. Adopting more respectful language will facilitate such efforts. Workshop participants pinpointed four subtopics essential for advancing archaeology as an ethical profession that serves multiple communities:

- Improving language and terminology
- Promoting education and diversity within the field
- Improving the consultation process
- Expanding rightsholders

Topic Group 3: Workforce Training and Education

Despite the need, academic institutions by and large have not created degree and certificate programs tailored to industry demands (Altschul and Klein 2022; Altschul et al. 2023). Several CRM training programs, including those at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, the University of Iowa, and Ball State University (Indiana), have been successful, but more are needed. Universities and CRM firms need to adapt to changing needs and ensure that the profession remains relevant and sustainable. The Workforce Training and Education Group identified the following subtopics for discussion:

- Challenges in CRM recruitment
- Structural and ethical issues in CRM
- Educational and professional development in CRM
- Future directions and sustainability of CRM

Topic Group 4: CRM Archaeology Compliance

This discussion group focused on the current status of CRM compliance and challenges facing CRM practitioners and ways to alleviate those challenges. Changes in CRM archaeological practice will grant stakeholders and rightsholders, specifically Indigenous and other descendant communities, a louder voice in identifying and managing archaeological resources. CRM archaeologists must advocate actively involving the public in CRM archaeology, as the public pays for CRM compliance through tax dollars, and archaeologists must demonstrate that this investment has value. The CRM Archaeology Compliance Group focused on the following subtopics:

- Involving Tribes and Tribal Historic Preservation Officers and descendant communities in planning
- Promoting creative (flexible) mitigation
- Developing programmatic efficiencies (streamlining)
- Revising professional standards and qualifications
- Revising National Register of Historic Places and Traditional Cultural Places criteria

Next Steps

Over the next 12 months, Airlie House 2.0 Workshop organizers and participants will continue to report on the results of the workshop at various venues, including the annual conferences of the American Cultural Resources Association, the Society of Black Archaeologists, the Society for Historical Archaeology, and the Society for American Archaeology, in addition to regional archaeological conferences. The SAA and NPS also plan to produce an edited volume on the outcomes of the workshop, similar to the

report that was generated by the original Airlie House seminars in 1974.

More important, however, will be the advancement of the workshop's action plans, which are discussed at length in the upcoming *tSAR* article. As with the original Airlie House Seminars, organizers and participants of the Airlie House 2.0 Workshop are hopeful that the action plans will provide a road map for a new vision in CRM archaeology in the United States. Airlie House 2.0 participants view the implementation of workshop action plans as an “all-hands-on-deck” effort.

The Airlie House 2.0 Workshop organizers and participants hope to see SAA members at the 2025 annual meeting in Denver. We invite you to attend the forum entitled “Airlie House 2.0, Envisioning New Directions for CRM Archaeology: Results of the 2024 Workshop and Future Developments” and the plenary session entitled “The Future of Careers in Archaeology.”

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