

The Smithsonian Center for Materials Research and Education (SCMRE) is slated to be eliminated as of December 31, 2001 and its research program terminated. The Center, established in 1963, is a world leader in preserving cultural heritage by conducting archaeological materials research and conservation studies and by training hundreds of researchers from the U.S. and over 40 countries in conservation, preservation, and materials research.

Smithsonian Secretary Small is asking Congress for an increase in the SI 2002 budget of 8.1%, or \$40 million. The total request amount for fiscal 2002 is \$494 million. Small's proposed budget cuts within SI would eliminate SCMRE, which has 37 job slots, only 29 of which are now filled due to a previous freeze on hiring.

The justification for these cuts is that these activities and programs are claimed to be unnecessary and do not contribute to the SI and its "new" research priorities. Closing SCMRE is a clear statement by SI upper management that they do not value studies contributing to the long-term preservation of SI collections.

What the Loss of SCMRE Means

World Leader In Preserving Cultural Heritage.

A unique research laboratory for materials analysis and preservation of cultural patrimony whose researchers have published over 1000 journal articles. Among SCMRE's many successes have been establishment of standards for museum climatology, objects transport, photographic preservation, the storage of natural history specimens, and archival collections.

Conservation Window To The World.

For 15 years, SCMRE has sponsored a program of Pre- and Post-Doctoral Fellowships in Archaeology and Materials Analysis, and yearly internships for conservators. Active programs with over 10 universities in the U.S. and enduring relationships with archaeologists, conservators, and museum professionals in more than 200 institutions in 40 nations.

Cutting Edge Technologies And Partnerships To Study Archaeological Artifacts And Materials.

Through 28 years of experience, SCMRE has pioneered in trace element analysis of over 25,000 artifacts to source and provenance materials, to establish provenance of goods used for trade and tribute, and to establish trade patterns in the Americas, Asia, and Africa. Thousands of chemical and microstructural studies of ceramic, glass, and metal artifacts from hundred of archaeological sites have led to the understanding and reconstruction of many prehistoric and historic technologies.

Reduction In Educational Opportunities.

Scientific research has been disseminated in the fields of museum climatology, ancient DNA, preservation of blood residues, trace element studies, technological studies, conservation of cultural icons and artifacts now exhibited in several national museums, as well as conservation and materials analysis

training. SCMRE staff have taught in interdisciplinary pilot programs in local high schools that are designed to link art, archaeology, and science to empirical practice.

What You Can Do to Protest the Cut of SCMRE

Before May 7, You Can Express Your Protest By Writing To The SI Board Of Regents Who Must Approve Secretary Small's Proposed Budget Cuts.

Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist
Supreme Court of the United States
1 First Street, N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20001

The Honorable Thad Cochran
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Bill Frist
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Robert Matsui
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Ralph Regula
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Sam Johnson
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Anne d'Harnoncourt
Director, Philadelphia Museum of Art
Benjamin Franklin Parkway and 26th Street
Philadelphia, PA. 19130

Manuel Ibanez
7737 Starnberg Lake Drive

Corpus Christi, TX. 78413

Dr. Walter Massey
President, Morehouse College
830 Westview Drive SW
Atlanta, GA 30314

Homer Neal Director, ATLAS Project
University of Michigan
Physics Dept., 375 West Hall
Ann Arbor, MI 48109

Howard Baker
810 Penn. Ave., NW
Washington, D.C. 20090

Alan Spoon
7300 Loch Edin Ct.
Potomac, MD 20854

Hanna Gray
University of Chicago
501 So. Ellis Ave.
Chicago, IL. 60637

Barber Conable
The World Bank
1818 H St., NW
Washington, D.C. 20433

Wesley Williams
7706 Ga. Ave., NW
Washington, D.C. 20090

Below is a letter that was sent by SAA president Bob Kelly to all members of SI's Board of Regents

Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist
Supreme Court of the United States, 1 1st St., NE
Washington, D.C.

Honorable Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist:

I am writing to you as President of the Society for American Archaeology (SAA), a Section 501 (c) (3) organization that was founded in 1934 and is incorporated in the District of Columbia. With more than

6600 members, SAA is the leading professional organization of archaeologists in the United States. Among the Society's primary objectives is advocacy of the protection of archaeological resources and promotion of research on the archaeology of the Americas.

I am writing to ask that the Smithsonian Institution Board of Regents not terminate the Smithsonian Center for Materials Research and Education (SCMRE). For nearly 40 years the SCMRE has been a leader in preserving cultural heritage and in advancing research into world prehistory. It has trained hundreds of researchers in the U.S. and some 40 other countries. The SCMRE has been instrumental in establishing standards for museum archive and storage climate controls, object transport, and photographic preservation, as well as DNA analysis, preservation of blood residue, trace element studies and conservation of cultural icons. It has presented over 500 training courses for conservators, and has sponsored a series of pre-and post-doctoral fellowships in Archaeology and Materials Analysis for 15 years. The Center pioneered research into trace element analysis, and has conducted research projects for nearly 30 years into prehistoric exchange and trade in the Americas, Africa and Asia. There is no other comparable center in the U.S. Indeed, research projects all over the world will suffer if the SCMRE is dismantled.

In 1829 the English scientist James Smithson left his fortune to the people of the United States to found an institution for the "increase and diffusion of knowledge." The "diffusion" of knowledge speaks to the Smithsonian's educational mandate, and the "increase" in knowledge speaks to its research mandate. Smithson wisely saw that research without education is worthless, and that education without research is stifling. The SCMRE is an essential part of the Smithsonian's research mandate. The Society for American Archaeology urges in the strongest terms possible that the Smithsonian Board of Regents retain the Center for Materials Research and Education.

Sincerely,

Robert L. Kelly, Ph.D.
President, Society for American Archaeology

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me at SAA.

Donald Forsyth Craib
Manager, Government Affairs, and Counsel
Society for American Archaeology
Tel: (202) 789-8200
Fax: (202) 789-0284
donald_craib@saa.org