

0020

*OK Incoming
c/025/0805*

From: Joe Helfrich
To: OGMCOAL
Date: 5/1/2008 4:16 PM
Subject: Fwd: Draft Alton comments
Place: OGMCOAL
Attachments: 07-1471.doc

Please file in C/025/0005 Task#2910 incoming.....thanks, Joe

>>> Matthew Seddon 5/1/2008 2:58 PM >>>

Per our conversation today, attached are our draft comments. Per that same conversation, based on the issues that have arisen, Lori and I will work to coordinate our comments in order to streamline the review process.

Matt

Matthew T. Seddon, Ph.D., RPA
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
Utah State Historic Preservation Office
300 Rio Grande St.
Salt Lake City, UT 84101
801-533-3555
FAX: 801-533-3503
mseddon@utah.gov
<http://history.utah.gov/>

MEMORANDUM

To: Joe Helfrich, UDOGM

From: Matt Seddon, Deputy SHPO

Date: May 1, 2008

Subject: Comments on Alton Coal Cultural Resource Management Plan (CRMP) and Data Recovery Plan (07-1471)

cc: Lori Hunsaker, PLPCO

The attached comments are for UDOGM's consideration on the above referenced documents. We recommend that if UDOGM, the proponent, the proponent's consultant, or any other party feels that these comments are unclear or they do not wish to follow the recommendations that communication with UDOGM first and then our office be followed prior to finalizing the draft plan. If we receive a final plan that does not incorporate our comments or resolve our concerns we may have additional questions. Such questions could add unnecessary and undesirable time delays, therefore we recommend good communication to clear up any issues prior to finalizing the plan.

Comments on Cultural Resource Management Plan (CRMP)

Introduction – Page 1 – Because of the need for the CRMP to fully describe the entire project area and the complexity of the issues, this section needs to be expanded. As it currently stands, the section provides primarily an introduction to the archaeological sites in the project area and a description of the phases of excavation. To fully describe the project area and cover the compliance needs of UDOGM, OSM, BLM, and other involved agencies, this description needs to:

1. Describe the entire project area, making clear the distinctions between private, BLM, and transportation routes.
2. Describe all the relevant laws (e.g. NEPA, Section 106, Utah Code 9-8-404, etc.) and how they apply to the project.
 - a. It is both acceptable and desirable for this description to make the necessary distinctions between directly and indirectly connected actions. For example,

- this is the necessary and appropriate place to describe how the private lands/UDOGM action is legally separate from the BLM action.
- b. Indirect effects, such as transportation should be described here.
 - c. The involved agencies and their roles should also be described in this section.
3. The section should then conclude with a clear description that all involved agencies are aware that while not directly connected, the actions are related, and that therefore a comprehensive approach to Section 106 and Utah Code 9-8-404 compliance is being undertaken via this document.
 4. After that point, summarizing the general cultural resources approach as described would be appropriate.

Effected (sic) Environment – Pages 1 on – As long as we are commenting on more substantial matters, we note that the correct term is “Affected Environment.” This section needs to include the entire project area, including potential transportation routes, with maps, rather than focusing solely on the archaeology. To be clear, this is not solely a document describing archaeology, it is a compliance document describing the entire project. It needs to accurately describe the entire compliance project and all the compliance issues.

Other cultural resources such as the National Register of Historic Places Historic District in Panguitch should be mentioned in Table 2.

Consequences of Project Phases, Phase I, Page 23 (also, Phase III Page 24)

The description of the public involvement process on the bottom of this page and on the bottom of Page 24 does not meet our previous suggestions. In an email to the entire project team that we sent on 1/22/2008 we stated:

Given the high public interest in this project, and the overall size of the potential effects, I recommend that the public be more involved than is usual (i.e. be more than simply the passive recipients of whatever mitigation project we archaeologists deem they are worthy of receiving). I suggest that planning for public input into the research design and excavation approach be established in the CRMP. Let's define "the public" based on the interested parties (more than just USAS, probably also members of the towns of Alton and the surrounding area, tribes, as well as other citizens of the state). Let's then find out what the public are interested in learning and receiving from this project. It's their heritage, their interests should go right into the research design. The public should also be consulted early and often regarding "public mitigation products." We should not simply decide what they want out of it. The CRMP seems to be a good place for laying out a good process for both identifying the relevant public and defining meaningful consultation with that public.

As currently stated, public involvement has already determined that only USAS chapters are relevant. Furthermore, the public involvement occurs well into mitigation efforts and has already determined a particular public outcome. This does not appear to meet the comments provided above. We reiterate our recommendation that the CRMP lay out a public involvement plan that:

1. Makes efforts to fully define and identify stakeholders (beyond USAS) who have interests in the cultural resources in this project area. This needs to start at the beginning of the project, not at Phase III (as suggested on Page 24). As currently stated, the Phase I public outcome has already been determined and the only open-ended input will be taken when Phase III is well underway.
2. Provides a process for incorporating public interests and desired mitigation outcomes into the decision of what public products will be part of the project.

In other words, we need to find the public, listen to what they want, weigh and consider the input, and then provide public output that meets those interests and not what a bunch of professional archaeologists think that some small segment of the public would want. Such an approach should help reduce public concern and provide a more meaningful outcome.

Consequences of Project Phases, Phase II, Page 24 – As currently stated this reads “Research would proceed to Phase II, upon Alton Coal Development, LLC’s acquisition of federal coal managed by the Bureau of Land Management.” We find this statement very confusing as our office has heard over and over that such acquisition is not guaranteed and that lack of guarantee is what separates the two actions (private and BLM). Please clarify to us and in the document what the relationship is in order that it is clear. Notably, this statement also reads as predetermination, which could be problematic in a NEPA setting. We recommend that NEPA specialists, the proponent, and other outside parties who have a clear understanding of this document and the overall laws and process read this entire document carefully before it is finalized.

Comments on Data Recovery Plan

We previously commented on a draft of this plan on 12/18/2007 in an email to the authors with copies to other team members. Our comments will therefore be confined to areas where those previous comments appear to have not been addressed. All other areas were addressed, thank you.

Research Domains and Questions – Pages 24 on – In our email of 12/18/2007 we stated:

Lori and I recommended that the broader research design incorporate the spate of recent work (e.g. Kern, Sand Hollow, HRA's work near St. George, Joel Janetski's work in Escalante) that provides refined research questions for the broader region and which are applicable to the Alton Amphitheater/Sink Valley area.

Aside from a single reference to one portion of the Kern report (page 28), and a very general question about “how systems compare” to Coral Canyon, Quail Creek, and Sand Hollow sites (page 28) this comment does not appear to have been addressed in a substantial manner. We are not recommending that a brief citation to these works appear somewhere in the research design or the culture history, or that very general questions be posed, but that the recent data be taken seriously and questions and models provided by that research be explicitly incorporated or used as starting points. More refined research questions could actually make data recovery and subsequent research more efficient. We recommend the following:

Research Domain 1 – Chronology -

Berry, Chapter 27 in Kern Report Vol IV – Page 581 on Virgin Anasazi dating

Reed, Chapter 29 in Kern Report Vol IV, Page 601, summarized projectile point model could potentially be tested or data from project could be evaluated in terms of model.

Revised chronologies have been proposed by Seddon and Reed, Kern Report Vol VI, Chapter 1, as well as for the Archaic period Vol IV, Chapter 10. These models could be

proposed as testable or open to refutation or refinement with specific description of how the data from this area can be used for such issues.

Research Domain 2 – Site Function, Use History, and Artifact Distributions –

Chapter 11 of the BYU Sand Hollow report describes specific site functional types and models that could be evaluated. These types appear amenable to investigation or testing with data from the project sites.

Vol IV, Chapter 22 of the Kern report provides a detailed discussion of Southern Paiute site function and settlement organization and provides a limited test of the model. It seems that the large number of Southern Paiute sites in this project area could really help test this model if the research design were to explicitly consider this research.

Research Domain 3 – Subsistence and Environment

The Sand Hollow report Chapter 11, pages 422-426 provides a detailed discussion of Virgin Anasazi subsistence that can be used to provide more specific research questions.

The Sand Hollow report Chapter 11, pages 426-27 proposes that resource stress results in particular patterns of intensification that the large number of sites in the project area appear directly amenable to addressing.

The Sand Hollow report, Chapter 11, pages 428-434 (and referencing a significant body of work) examines questions of Southern Paiute horticulture that the large number of Late Prehistoric sites seem able to address.

The Sand Hollow report, Chapter 11, pages 435-439 proposes a model of post-contact Southern Paiute subsistence that the sites in the project area may be able to address.

The model of diachronic patterns in faunal exploitation in the Kern report, Vol IV, Chapter 30 and the model of diet breadth through time (Chapter 31) appear to provide fodder for relevant research questions. These questions can be much more refined than the very general questions posed in 3.2 of the draft report.

Research Domain 4 – Technology

The Kern report, Vol IV, Chapter 34 refines and defines a model of technology and mobility that can be used to develop more refined questions, particularly the conclusions on Page 683.

If thermal features are of interest, as suggested by question 4.2, the Kern report, Vol IV Chapter 9 provides a very explicit model of variation in thermal feature types over time that could be tested if features are found in the project area.

Models of pottery manufacture and mobility, such as Simms and Bright and the Kern report, Vol IV, Chapter 17, appear very very relevant to this project area.

The Kern report, Vol IV Chapter 38, provides models of trends in ground stone technology that could be used to refine the ground stone technology issue questions (3.3 and to some degree 4.1)

Research Domain 5 – Settlement Patterns and Mobility

The Sand Hollow report, chapter 11, pages 441-443 provides a number of theoretical models (population packing, hinge points, Virgin Anasazi subsistence, etc.) that while applied in the Sand Hollow report to the St. George Basin do not seem irrelevant here and which could be adapted for this project.

Vol IV, Chapter 14 of the Kern report, while comparing Fremont and Virgin Anasazi settlement patterns does provide new models of Virgin Anasazi settlement type that could be explicitly examined via research questions based on the model.

Vol IV, Chapter 20 of the Kern report provides a model of Late Prehistoric demography that, given the long time span of the sites in the project area and the large number of Late Prehistoric sites, could be tested with data from the project area.

Given the large number of sites and time breadth in the project area, the issues raised in the model of land productivity and hunter gatherer settlement strategies in the Kern Report (Vol IV, Chapter 33) could be adapted or used as the basis for forming more refined questions than the ones currently posed.

Goal 2 of the original draft, surface and subsurface

This goal appears to have completely disappeared. It was highly relevant, and we had only suggested on 12/18/2008 that the question be refined a bit. We stated:

In terms of the surface/subsurface question, which we agreed was good and was at least partially met by the excellent random sampling strategy (a provision for expansion would probably cover most other areas), we suggested further clarification of what that question entails. Thus, instead of simply asking "does the surface represent the subsurface," we recommended elaborating into all the related questions like "Do surface diagnostics reflect overall site dating?" "Are the functional interpretations derived from the surface assemblage supported by the subsurface assemblage?" "Does a site that appears to have significant data based on surface information have such data and what, if any, indicators in the surface assemblage suggest the presence of significant subsurface deposits?" "How much excavation is necessary in order to obtain a representative sample of subsurface artifacts?" "Can geomorphological evidence be effectively used to determine if the surface and subsurface assemblages are chronologically and functionally related?" And so on. Refining these questions may require slight refinements in the excavation/analysis approach.

Why has this question disappeared? We recommend that if it was considered relevant in the first draft, that it appears to still be relevant for the second draft with some refinement. We do not understand why an entire research question has evaporated from the second draft.