

**THE CCPA AND NATIVE AMERICANS:  
PROSPECTS FOR FUTURE COOPERATIVE ACTIONS**

By

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The CCPA has been active, responsive, and in ways innovative in dealing with Native American issues and concerns. Encouraging progress has been made in mutual respect and collaboration. There is always plenty more to do, and it is important to continue to develop ideas / recommendations for future actions. Toward that end, a new “wish list” is offered.

- 1) Provide the CCPA Contexts to the relevant tribes; particularly to governmental offices designated to manage heritage matters and historic preservation.
  
- 2) Future Contexts should invite sections authored by American Indians regarding their perspectives on their ancient history.
  
- 3) Encourage and sponsor the authorship and publication of archaeological summaries designed for young Indian readers. This is not beyond the purview or abilities of the CCPA, eg., the CCPA’s sponsorship of Noble’s (2000) summary of Colorado Archaeology.
  
- 4) Ethnic (tribal) identification /cultural affiliation of archaeological sites should always involve direct contact, consultation, and communication with appropriate tribal group(s).

5) Ongoing dialogue can enrich archaeological discourse; The CCPA should explore mechanisms to make consultation more effective and easier. Consultation for many studies should involve more than a simple form letter, and could be enabled and engaged in for studies that don't require it. This would involve listening to tribal representatives about what they want to see happen with consultation. All published articles and reports pertaining to ethnic (tribal) identification of archaeological remains should ideally reference consultation projects, such as the circulation of draft works to the relevant tribe(s) for comment / input.

6) Work with other members of the archaeological community to encourage acknowledgement of and understanding of Native American concerns and issues, support for Native American involvement with archaeology, and recognition of the concerns and circumstances faced by practitioners of Indigenous archaeology. This should include the Colorado Archaeological Society, the San Juan Basin Archaeological Society, and the Loveland Archaeological Society, and any other entities involved with archaeology.

7) Take rapid, decisive, and public action to usefully assert expertise by refuting bogus claims about Indian history and archaeology, such as the "Ute Prayer Tree" controversy (See CCPA Position Statement on Bent Trees).

8) Author ethnohistorical/ethnographic overviews of the river drainages similar to the archaeological contexts created by the CCPA.

9) Develop a bibliographic guide to available publications on oral tradition / oral history. Develop a guide to tribal protocols for use of oral tradition in archaeological research.

10) Develop a critical perspective on archaeological terminologies. We question, for example, the utility and appropriateness of the terms "Prehistoric" and "Protohistoric." These terms denigrate Indigenous historical knowledge, implicitly assuming a vacuum of relevant knowledge regarding the past. Use of these terms

can be deemed insulting among American Indians, and can serve to maintain and reinforce existing public stereotypes and prejudices. While the single definition of “Prehistoric” (of, pertaining to, or existing in the period before written history) is clear to archaeologists, it is not clear in the public imagination. It becomes muddled in reference to the many definitions of “history”, which include a “narrative of events” (note that “narrative” does not preclude oral narratives), a “written account of events,” and the “events which form the subject matter of a history.” We argue that “Prehistoric” is an example of ideological hegemony, serving a hierarchical bias that sees written records as useful for analytical history, with oral tradition as somehow beyond the grasp of critical analysis. This encourages the impression that ancient culture history derived through archaeology is real history while oral tradition offers something less than real history.

Alternatives to the use of “Prehistoric” should be explored; versions of “Ancient History” would provide one option.

The term “Protohistoric” has similar issues, though less charged. The definition of “proto” employed is “earliest among the forms; original; primitive.” Yet the presence of European-derived trade materials at 16th to 18th century archaeological sites as making the sites primitively historical is debatable, and ignores the continuity of tradition-based material culture and adaptation. A possible exception could be sites post-dating the adoption of the horse. The term is not used in the Southern Colorado River Basin context (Lipe et al 1999). Its use in Eastern Colorado has been challenged, and we are in agreement with Clark (1999) that the period should not be defined by what occurs after the period, and that the term “Late Ceramic period” is preferable. Other areas of the state could replace “Protohistoric” with terms appropriate to the culture history of the area.

The terms “Prehistoric” and “Protohistoric” are currently entrenched in our use and thinking, and this legacy must be addressed to remove culturally insulting terminology and as a means to reducing bias and promoting the future development of the academic study of oral tradition as history.

The CCPA could form a committee to examine temporal /cultural terms appropriate for ongoing rethinking, revision, and refinement. Such a committee could potentially generate new ideas for further opportunities to promote productive dialogue on terms/ taxonomies that are not inherently depreciatory to descendant groups.

These ten points collectively take aim at promoting a long-term goal. The history of CCPA and Colorado archaeology unfolded from a world that centered the social production of race and racial identity systems. In that world a new field of study appeared during the 1990s. “Indigenous archaeology” slowly arose from a merging of academic archaeology and Indian Country. And now the future of archaeology as a profession requires storytelling that respects diverse voices and viewpoints worldwide. Colorado archaeology needs Indian voices. Indigenous archaeology needs partnership with the institutions of professional archaeology. Perhaps CCPA and Indian Country can together wish for new legacies of scholarship and a shared future for ancient history in Colorado.

Clark, Bonnie

1999 The Protohistoric Period. In *Colorado Prehistory: A Context for the Platte River Basin*, by Kevin P. Gilmore, Marcia Tate, Mark L. Chenault, Bonnie Clark, Terri McBride, and Margaret Wood, pp.309-335. CCPA.

Lipe, William D., Mark D. Varien, and Richard H. Wilshusen, editors

1999 *Colorado Prehistory: A Context for the Southern Colorado River Basin*. CCPA.

Noble, David Grant

2000 *Ancient Colorado - An Archaeological Perspective*. CCPA.