

Oregon Parks and Recreation Commission

February 24, 2016

Agenda Item:	9a	Information
Topic:	Heritage Division Report	
Presented by:	Chrissy Curran, Heritage Division Manager, Deputy SHPO	

Staffing Changes in Heritage Division

Ian Johnson, formerly the coordinator of the National Register of Historic Places program, has officially stepped into the role of Associate Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer. With nine years' experience at the SHPO, Ian now supervises all the SHPO staff except the Certified Local Government and archaeology programs, which remain under Chrissy's supervision. Jason Allen, formerly the compliance specialist, will take on the survey and inventory program, with assistance to National Register. We are currently recruiting for Jason's compliance position. On the Heritage side, Mike Gushard, our Heritage Outreach Specialist, resigned in January. We are currently recruiting for that position as well.

State Capitol Welcomes 2016 Oregon Heritage Conference

We are privileged to be conducting the Oregon Heritage Conference at the Oregon State Capitol May 4-7. This is a big anniversary year for key agencies and legislation in the heritage world, so commemoration and legislative history are the general themes of the conference. Keynote speakers include Bob Beatty, who is the Chief Operating Officer for the American Association for State & Local History, the only comprehensive national organization dedicated to state and local history; and Reiko Hillyer, a professor at Lewis & Clark College who will speak about power and place. The conference will include the annual presentation of the Oregon Heritage Excellence Awards with a banquet at the historic Reed Opera House in downtown Salem.

SHPO, Archaeologists, Partner with Private Landowner on Rare Archaeological Find

Late last year a private landowner near Turner discovered an incredibly rare cache of prehistoric "bifaces" on his property. A biface is a hand-sized stone tool (in this case, obsidian) used by Native Americans to create scrapers, knives, spears, or arrowheads. The 14 bifaces are rare because they are unfinished, or, "blanks." They had yet to be crafted into their final form when they were evidently stashed or abandoned thousands of years ago. Blanks would have been quarried from an obsidian source (perhaps in central Oregon), roughly worked (flintknapped) into a consistent shape and size, then transported along trade routes to consumers, who would reduce them into arrowheads or other tools. There are less than five sites like this one, out of the 35,000 known archaeological sites in Oregon.

Because it is such an important find, archaeologists across the state are contributing time and technology to study the cache, including SHPO staff. Archaeologists are offering excavation and reporting services, obsidian sourcing, illustrations, radiocarbon analysis, obsidian hydration dating, and 3D scanning and printing services at no cost to the landowner.

Archaeologists are hoping to learn more about prehistoric trade routes, once they discover where the obsidian came from and the age of the site. The landowner values education very highly, and is excited to work with the SHPO on outreach to schools and the general public.

Prior Action by Commission: none

Action Requested: none

Attachments: none

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