

ARCHAEOLOGY BULLETIN

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE OREGON STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL PERMITS—RESEARCH DESIGNS

FEB 2020

Research designs are required with any Oregon State Archaeological Permit application. The following explains current SHPO guidance regarding research designs and what should be in a permit research design. A well written research design gives reviewers confidence in the archaeologist and the project. If your not sure if a state permit is required see Archaeology Bulletin 2.

Laws:

When an Oregon Archaeological permit is required the application must include a Research Design. Oregon Administrative Rule (OAR) 736-051-0080(4)(c) defines this requirement as “*A research design that explicitly develops the rationale behind the proposed research, giving the theoretical orientation, justification for problem selection, logic and procedures for the research strategy. The design must define the universe of study, establish realistic minimal expectations and a realistic schedule of research and provide justified recovery procedures;*”

Universe of Study:

This should include information regarding the location of the archaeological work along with pertinent information about the area history, including any previously identified archaeological materials, any previous work done to locate archaeological materials, a general history of the area including pertinent themes (e.g., mining, basketry material collection, fishing). This provides context for evaluating archaeological resources. For example, if the area falls within an area important for mining, do the archaeological resources relate to that importance. Sources can include SHPO records, historical documents, ethnographies, historical societies, local communities or group, most appropriate Tribes.

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Realistic Minimal Expectations and a Realistic Schedule of Research:

This information is driven by the universe of study and the ideas laid out in that section should influence the expectations. Based upon regional themes, site patterning, and past use, this section should discuss what site type(s) you expect to find, if any, or what additional information regarding a site that you expect to uncover. Research questions should be included that address expectations regarding the proposed archaeological investigations. Any research questions proposed by past investigations that could not be answered or found to be outside the previous scope of work, should be considered and addressed, as appropriate. There should be discussion as to what limitations or constraints are present that would prevent a full examination of the resource(s) (e.g., access, monitoring vs. excavations). Include a realistic timetable for archaeological and laboratory investigations based upon your expectations.

Justified Recovery Procedures:

Include methods for surface collection, if any, and subsurface investigation. If archaeological units are being utilized there should be discussion of where the units will be placed or how unit placement will be determined, the number of units, the size of the units, the proposed depth of investigation, how the units levels will be determined, and what will be done with excavated sediments (e.g., screen size, collecting column of midden material, wet screening vs. dry screening).

Additionally the methods section in the research design should answer the following questions, if relevant:

- How is the archaeological investigation being recorded?
- Will there be level forms or a sketch map or unit profiles created?
- What material will be collected in level bags and which material will be point provenienced?
- What equipment will be used to document the site (e.g., cameras, GPS, datum)?
- What lab procedures will be used to catalogue and analyze the artifacts recovered?
- Which photos will be taken?

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Tips and Tricks:

- The best research designs are concise and do not repeat information in multiple sections.
- Project information is not required but it can help justify some methods.
- Try to group information such as methods and curation to focus on reviewers areas of interest.
- If your research design proposes to not collect certain materials (other than FCR or modern) you have to consult with UOMNCH and have a letter from them agreeing to the alternative collection procedures. Any permit proposing these procedures without a letter will be returned.
- If proposing new methods outside of standard practices, please justify in methods section. If proposed new methods are rarely seen by our office please contact us before submitting the application to avoid potential delays.
- Anything that is in the research design is legally binding as a part of the permit and is subject to conditions and objections by reviewers.

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