



Council of Allied Societies

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June 2021 News and Notes:

Message from the Chair, Steve Tomka

Well, 2021 is nearly half-way in the history books and the heavy burden of the Covid months seems to slowly be lifting as well. I hope you all are feeling some sense of relief and can feel some hope for a better future returning into your lives. I see that hope here in Texas where our state society is preparing for their annual Field School to be held in the City of Kerrville in the Texas Hill Country. I hope that many other regional and state-wide societies are in the same position feverishly pulling together the last few details as they prepare for their own field schools. In many ways the field schools embody the best of the partnerships between the professional and avocational membership of the Society and offer a week-long opportunity to learn from each other, light the flame of excitement in the hearts of a new generation of kids, young adults, and students and visit with folks that we have not seen since the last field school.

It is also an occasion when we take stock of who is missing from among the regulars at the field school and appreciate their memories and share their stories around the evening campfires. There are so many such individuals from the camp bosses to the cooks, the lab director, the crew chiefs who became mentors to the next generation of camp attendees who play a key role in making the field schools a memorable event each year. I know that each society takes the opportunity to recognize their own key individuals who represent the glue that holds things together and pulls miracles out of the hat, and I would like to suggest that if you would like to recognize such individuals in an extra-special manner, please put together a brief bio and a highlight of their role in field schools past and share it with us. We will be happy to share it with the SAA membership at large.

Stay safe and healthy, enjoy the summer, and take part in as many archaeology-related activities and opportunities as your state organizations offer. Best wishes from all of us at CoAS.

Spring CoAS Newsletter is [now available](#). Share far and wide!

The 2021 SAA Awards Presentation is now online!

The Society for American Archaeology Awards recognize and honor knowledge and professional achievements at all career levels--from student and early career archaeologists

to those who have made lasting contributions to the Society and the profession. We weren't able to honor the 2021 recipients in person this year, but we've put together an [online awards presentation](#) and hope you will join us in celebrating this year's recipients. Feel free to share the [link](#) and the news! (*Leadership note: It may appear from the presentation that Steve is leaving CoAS - that is an inadvertent typo - Steve will remain our fearless leader!*)

News from SAA Government Affairs re: STOP Act

We have posted ([CoAS eCommunity](#) and [CoAS Facebook group](#)) the letter written by SAA and other concerned organizations to congressional members urging passage of the STOP Act (S. 1471 / H.R. 2930).

May 2021 Government and International Government Affairs Update

From Deborah L. Nichols, Ph.D., RPA, SAA President

The cultural heritage safeguards established by the National Historic Preservation Act, National Environmental Policy Act, and the Department of Transportation Act constitute the foundation upon which most of the archaeology that is done in the U.S. takes place. The review procedures set forth in the regulations implementing Section 106 (NHPA), NEPA, and Section 4(f) (DOT) ensure that while roads, bridges, and other critical infrastructure development can place, heritage resources impacted by such activity are taken into consideration during the planning stages.

Over the past few federal surface transportation bills, we have seen efforts to “streamline” the review processes be enacted into law. Some of these were reasonable, others less so. One misconception, however, underlies all of the attempts to alter the above and other environmental and cultural resources laws and regulations, and that is the belief that these rules somehow drastically impede federal undertakings and stunt economic growth, and must therefore be rewritten.

Such was the motivation behind the Trump Administration's changes to the NEPA regulations, changes which we strongly opposed. Now that the Biden administration has taken office, one of our top priorities has been to support the revocation of those changes. To that end, we recently held a meeting with staff members of the White House's Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), to give them the facts about cultural resources reviews—that they are there to ensure that project impacts to resources are considered and addressed and not to delay project delivery. We also asked how the SAA can help in improving the NEPA regulations and intend to provide the administration with a “best practices” document that highlights how archaeologists work to protect heritage resources, and how the regulations can ideally support that activity. For its part, the CEQ is engaged in a far broader scope of work than just repealing the Trump changes. It is seeking ways to not only strengthen the NEPA regulations, but also to address other critical environmental issues such as climate change, sustainability, and environmental justice.

We look forward to continuing this dialogue with the CEQ and other agencies in the months ahead.

From David Lindsay, Manager, SAA Government Affairs

The stakes of the infrastructure debate in Washington keep going up, along with the amounts of money that the White House is requesting in its budget. The administration is standing firm on its \$1.5 trillion infrastructure proposal, while the Republicans have offered a \$938 billion alternative, one that omits some of the president's suggestions to address issues such as climate change and environmental justice. On Friday, May 28, Biden announced that he is seeking \$6 trillion in spending for FY22, and that his budget envisions annual deficits exceeding \$1.2 trillion for at least a decade. That last estimate might be on the low side, because it counts on a phasing out of tax breaks for the middle and lower classes in 2025, as well as substantially higher taxes on corporations and the very wealthy. If either or both of those tax changes fail to materialize, the deficits could be substantially higher. The SAA continued its advocacy efforts for appropriations for FY22 by submitting testimony to the Senate Interior Appropriations Subcommittee on May 6. As with the House version, the testimony urges appropriators to increase funding for archaeologist positions at the Department of Interior, as well as other cultural resources programs, in order to prepare for the increased compliance work that will be required for new infrastructure projects.

SAA Archaeological Record Vol. 21, No. 3 is now available!

<http://onlinedigitations.com/publication/?i=708266&ver=html5&p=1>

CoAS Facebook Group is growing!

Invite all of your members and chapters to join our Facebook group. It is a great place to post your upcoming Society activities and events.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/saacoas>

New CoAS/SAA Mailing Address

CoAS will have a new mailing address starting July 1:

SAA/Council of Allied Societies
Attn: Carla Fernandez
1990 K St NW, Suite 401
Washington, DC 20006

Carla's phone number and email will remain the same. Please note that phones will not work on June 23 and there may be delays in responses June 24 thru 28th.