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# PRESERVING THE FORT ROSS ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORD<sup>1</sup>

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## ABSTRACT

A major archaeological program is currently under way at Fort Ross State Historic Park, located on California's North Coast. The two major aspects of the program concern the Native Alaskan Village site and the Russian Orthodox Cemetery. Traditionally, little has been known about either the Village or Cemetery, and this lack of understanding has made their protection more difficult. It is the author's contention that the Fort Ross archaeological resources must be made more visible if they are to be preserved. This paper, then, is a discussion of the rationale behind the program's implementation.

## INTRODUCTION

Fort Ross State Historic Park (hereafter, FRSHP), located on the Sonoma County coast in northern California, is an internationally-significant historic resource (see Farris 1989; Lightfoot et al. 1991). The park contains numerous archaeological sites, many of them associated with the Russian-American Fur Company's 1812-1841 outpost, "Colony Ross." Currently, a major scientific undertaking, known as the Fort Ross Archaeological Project, is underway at FRSHP. The project is being conducted under the direction of Dr. Kent Lightfoot, of the University of California at Berkeley (hereafter, UCB), and has involved the archaeological programs of UCB, Sonoma State University, and Santa Rosa Junior College. Additionally, a second project, the Russian Cemetery Restoration Project, is also underway at FRSHP, under the direction of Dr. Lynne Goldstein of the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee.

The preservation and interpretation of cultural resources are two of the more important goals of

the California Department of Parks and Recreation (hereafter, DPR). Naturally, these goals pertain to archaeological sites as well as other kinds of cultural resources. Archaeological preservation, or, perhaps more accurately, "conservation," is accomplished by the DPR to a relatively high degree, in comparison to other public land stewards. However, the interpretation of the archaeological record is only occasionally undertaken. Those projects recently conducted at FRSHP serve as examples of how both interpretation and preservation can be realized, and how the former might positively affect the success of the latter. This paper, then, is a discussion of the Fort Ross archaeological program, and a synthesis of the rationale behind its implementation.

## BASIS FOR PRESERVATION

FRSHP is an approximately 3,000-acre unit of the California State Park System. It was acquired by the State of California in 1906, in order to protect the last architectural remnants of the old Russian compound. Later acquisitions, including

a 2,000-acre purchase in 1991, have allowed the park to absorb into its holdings, the surrounding historic viewshed, and the associated archaeological sites found outside the compound.

The historic landscape that comprised the heart of Fort Ross was acquired by the State of California in recognition of its extreme significance, and in order to protect and preserve it for future generations of Californians. These lands were transferred to the DPR in recognition of this Department's responsibility for managing such resource-sensitive properties. Indeed, the Mission Statement of the DPR makes clear the reason why Fort Ross became a state historic park:

The function of the California State Park and Recreation Commission and the Department of Parks & Recreation is to acquire, protect, develop, and interpret for the inspiration, use, and enjoyment of the people of the State a balanced system of areas of outstanding scenic, recreational and historic importance. These areas shall be held in trust as irreplaceable portions of California's natural and historic heritage.

If the concept of "historic preservation" is truly to have meaning, then it is at FRSHP that "preservation" will ring true. Parks such as FRSHP are created in order that we, as a society, might preserve some representative sample of what our world was once like. As we continue to develop and change forever the natural and cultural landscapes around us, parks like Fort Ross become environmental islands (and, perhaps eventually, "sacred" lands, such as Yosemite National Park), to which our population can escape in order to better appreciate our natural and historic heritage.

Another aspect of parks such as FRSHP is that they represent moral and legal commitments to the belief in and necessity of preservation. Indeed, as a society, we justify much of our development and destruction of the environment on the fact that we have preserved representative samples of outstanding resources, be they the finest of the old-growth redwoods, the most scenic of the beaches, or the most significant of the

archaeological sites. These outstanding resources are set aside and protected from development and destruction, so as to explain and justify our inability to protect other aspects of our world. Parks are a basic element of our civilization, and that fact should not and must not be separated from any review of developments that encroach on park values. FRSHP represents a "set-aside" where some of California's finest archaeological resources were deemed to be "irreplaceable" portions of our state's historic heritage, and were thus acquired so as to protect them, and hold them in "trust" for future generations. FRSHP exists in part due to the tremendous destruction realized this century by California's archaeological record. Therefore, those development projects which are not consistent with park values, should be perceived as threats to the reason and being of the park. Such projects undermine the very foundation of the preservation movement, and are an affront to our own moralistic definitions of what civilization entails.

Those archaeological sites located within FRSHP are among the best protected of any public-owned sites in California. The park's primary archaeological sites (those located adjacent to the Russian compound) have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Fort Ross is listed on the Historic American Buildings Survey, and has been designated a State and National Historical Landmark, as well. Other protection is made available by the California Coastal Zone Conservation Act of 1972. The Fort Ross sites are best protected, however, by inclusion in the state historic park. Additionally, the park's General Plan (Carlson 1976) created a "Zone of Primary Cultural Interest," and includes within it the park's primary archaeological sites.

FRSHP was acquired in order to protect and preserve these sites, and they have been deemed to be "irreplaceable" portions of California's historic heritage, to be held in "trust" for future generations. Indeed, Section 1832.1 of the DPR's Operations Manual states that, "The Department of Parks and Recreation is the 'conscience' of state government in relation to identification, descrip-

tion, protection, preservation, and interpretation of significant archeological sites, deposits, and remains throughout California" (DPR 1979). In order to accomplish this, the Resource Management Directives of the DPR mandate that:

(50) The Department shall maintain a statewide inventory of all known archaeological sites, shall participate in planning for preservation and protection of archaeological resources in California, and shall be responsible for protection, preservation, and interpretation of archaeological sites in the state park system.

The preservation of cultural resources is mandated by numerous other DPR directives. For example, in former DPR Director Henry Agonia's *Directions: A Focus for Action* (Agonia 1990), ten directives were presented for the Department. Three of them concerned the proper management of cultural resources:

Foster a sense of responsibility on the part of the public for the natural, cultural, and recreational resources of California.

Protect significant natural, cultural, and recreational resources.

Expand our commitment to natural and cultural resource management and protection programs.

Current DPR Director Donald Murphy (1992) has recently presented a list of six important goals for this Department. Two of them concern cultural resources:

**Advocacy:** CPS [California Park Service] will position itself at the forefront of positive change by assuming the lead role in proposing and supporting beneficial mission-related legislation, in educating our legislative leaders about the recreational, environmental and financial importance of state parks and cultural resources, and in opposing legislation that could be detrimental to the mission of the state park system. We must also establish and nurture our local communities as bases of support for the state park system.

**Public awareness:** CPS will continue its role as

one of the nation's preeminent authorities on parks and cultural resources. We will maintain our role as leaders, not only in the eyes of other park professionals, but also in the public's eye. We will undertake initiatives to make sure that opinion leaders and the public are aware of the benefits of the California park service.

Recently, Governor Pete Wilson (1992) endorsed historic preservation with his *Executive Order W-26-92*, which mandates each state agency:

(1) To administer the cultural and historic properties under its control in a spirit of stewardship and trusteeship for future generations; and

(2) To initiate measures necessary to direct its policies, plans, and programs in such a way that state-owned sites, structures, and objects of historical, architectural, or archaeological significance are preserved, restored, and maintained for the inspiration and benefit of the people; and

(3) To ensure that the protection of significant heritage resources are given full consideration in all of its land use and capital outlay decisions.

Given all of the resource protection cited above, it is quite apparent that historic properties, such as FRSHP, should be and will be protected for future generations. But can they really be preserved? In spite of all this apparent protection, there is reason to fear that they cannot be preserved.

## THREATS TO THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORD

The Fort Ross archaeological record is very well protected, and yet, it is not. Coastal erosion and other natural processes (including the destructive effects of gophers, wild pigs, acidic soils, and wildfires) are chipping away at the resource base. Indeed, coastal sites along the entire California coast are being impacted by erosion. Archaeological projects, including the Fort Ross Archaeological Project, have been initiated in order to evaluate

and salvage precious samples of the eroding sites. Such projects include Sonoma State University's excavations at MacKerricher State Park (White 1989), Sinkyone Wilderness State Park (Waechter 1988), and Salt Point State Park (Lightfoot et al. 1991:82-83).

Archaeological sites are also being impacted by way of cultural processes. Impacts are realized as a result of illegal collecting ("pothunting") activities, by the degradation brought about by excessive site-visitation, and by the effects of the current fiscal recession and, consequently, government's growing failure to protect its public resources. Archaeological resources throughout the State Park System are potential casualties of these impacts, Fort Ross included.

Fort Ross might serve as an example, then, of how California's "protected" cultural resources are threatened. In the following, I discuss the kinds of impacts, actual and potential, that threaten the FRSHP archaeological record, and the strategy that has been employed to combat them.

Coastal erosion constitutes one of the greatest natural threats to the archaeological resources of FRSHP, and, in fact, the entire coastline of California. Although it is understood that coastal erosion is a natural process that cannot be eliminated, it can be slowed in certain situations. Engineered solutions, such as the rip-rapping of an exposed site, are costly, and cannot realistically be employed at every endangered site. With relatively small amounts of funding available for such projects, it is first necessary to evaluate the relative significance of endangered sites so as to best utilize our monetary assets. At FRSHP, at least three archaeological sites are being severely affected by coastal erosion. Two of these sites, SON-1453 and SON-1454/H, both of which contain pre-Contact deposits situated on the edge of a terrace immediately north of Fort Ross, were test excavated by crews from Sonoma State University, under the direction of Dr. David Fredrickson, and Santa Rosa Junior College, under the direction of Thomas Origer, in 1988 (Lightfoot et al. 1991:82-83). Endangered portions of

the site deposits were excavated and analyzed, and thus serve as important samples should the sites be totally lost. A third site, SON-1898/H, located on the north side of Fort Ross Beach, was excavated by crews from the University of California at Berkeley, under the direction of Dr. Kent Lightfoot, in 1988-1989. This site represents a Russian-era work site with both primary and secondary deposits of Russian, native Alaskan, and native Californian materials. Whereas no further work (or stabilization) is anticipated for SON-1453 and SON-1454/H, it is not yet clear what will become the fate of SON-1898/H. An engineered solution to the site's erosion may yet be attempted by the DPR.

Other natural impacts, including the adverse effects of wild fires, have happened to the Fort Ross archaeological sites. A wild fire in 1991 burned a substantial area within FRSHP, and resulted in significant damage to SON-177, a large Kashaya Pomo ridge-top residential site. Through the use of prescribed burning, and the archaeological survey work that accompanies it, it is possible to lessen or eliminate the adverse effects of wild fire on archaeological resources (Parkman et al. 1981). To date, control burns have not been implemented at FRSHP, although they have been initiated at nearby Salt Point State Park (see Bramlette and Fredrickson 1990).

The adverse effects of feral pig rooting have been relatively severe at FRSHP, especially in the upland meadows and ridgetands. The pigs often root the upper 10-20 cm (sometimes more) of site deposits in their search for edible foods. Although the DPR has conducted a successful pig-eradication project at nearby Annadel State Park, little has been done to eliminate the problem at FRSHP.

The Fort Ross archaeological sites are also being adversely affected by cultural processes. For the most part, these cultural impacts are gradual, and often more a matter of resource degradation than outright destruction. For example, with an ever-increasing park attendance, those sites adjacent to the Russian compound are experiencing increasing amounts of pedestrian and vehicle

compaction, as well as illegal artifact collection. In the case of the latter, many tourists follow an old American custom of taking home a souvenir of their visit. These souvenirs are normally "only" an artifact or two, and might consist of a square nail, an especially attractive ceramic sherd, a glass bead, gun flint, or stone projectile point. Although it is illegal to collect artifacts within a state park, there is insufficient staffing at FRSHP to prevent it. The Native Alaskan Village site, located immediately adjacent to the compound, is the most heavily collected site, since it receives most of the visitors. More serious collecting ("pot-hunting") has not been noted at FRSHP in recent years, although serious incidents have been recorded at nearby Salt Point State Park, and at the Duncan's Landing Rockshelter site (SON-348/H). The Duncan's Landing incidents resulted in the site being sampled, then protected by an engineered solution that included the placement atop the site of a protective mesh of fencing and fill material (see Parkman 1993; Schwaderer et al. 1990).

Perhaps the greatest cultural threat at work at FRSHP is one of a more enigmatic and frustrating nature. It is a problem involving the uncontrolled growth of California's human population, its dwindling tax base and subsequent public program cuts, and the growing failure of governmental bureaucracies to uphold the public trust in terms of resource protection. This is especially troubling given California's history as a leader in historic preservation (Owens 1987). Although these new threats are partly a result of the current recession and California's changing demographics, much of the blame can be traced to the past 12 years of "Reaganomics": the "Trickle-Down" economic philosophies of the Reagan and Bush administrations. From the very start, the Reagan administration set a tone for what followed: that public lands, regardless of their status, were resource reservoirs to be exploited by private industry, be it ranching, mining conglomerates, lumber companies, or the oil industry. Even the deeds of President Bush, who wanted to be the "environmental president," did not match his campaign rhetoric (see Craig 1991). As a result,

parklands, forests, and wilderness preserves have undergone a 12 year siege, with disastrous results (e.g., see Anonymous 1990; Findley 1990). Indeed, the threats posed to parks by a resource-hungry American society are not unlike those facing parks throughout the developing world (e.g., see Lucas 1992).

The DPR has not been spared the growing confrontations between environmentally-motivated resource professionals and their politically-motivated agency heads (see Dillinger 1990). The following examples illustrate how difficult it has become to protect parklands from outside threats:

(1) California's Off Shore Oil: During the 1980s, both the Reagan and Bush administrations pushed to open the northern California coast to oil exploration. The Fort Ross coastline was part of the affected area. Experiences elsewhere indicated that off shore oil drilling requires extensive on shore processing facilities. Although it was feared that park values could be adversely affected by off shore oil drilling, state park staff were denied meaningful involvement in the democratic debates brought about by a concerned citizenry, which has to date halted the drilling. Although considered stewards of the parklands, park staff were practically silenced during these proceedings, and thus not allowed to best protect the parklands they serve.

(2) Flood-Control at Anderson Marsh: Since the late 1980s, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has attempted to build a by pass channel along Cache Creek and through Anderson Marsh State Historic Park. The channel would destroy a large portion of the Anderson Marsh Archaeological District, perhaps the best protected archaeological sites in California and the nation. Anderson Marsh State Historic Park was purchased by the state in order to preserve and hold in "trust" these sites as "irreplaceable" portions of the state's historic heritage. Although the Army Corps is prepared to conduct an archaeological mitigation project along Cache Creek, no amount of excavation can justify the destruction of "irreplaceable" resources held in the public "trust." Although there was a public

outcry against this project by many in the local community, DPR staff were, again, excluded from the debate by the state's decision to have the Army Corps' proposal handled by the office of the state's Secretary of Resources, who favored construction of the channel. Once again, state park staff were officially silenced, and thus not allowed to protect parklands.

A recent Caltrans project to widen State Highway 53 at Anderson Marsh State Historic Park has further indicated that government is either unwilling or incapable of truly preserving that which it claims to preserve. In the case of the highway project, "irreplaceable" portions of the state's historic and natural heritage were replaced by nearby parcels so as to allow for the construction of the expanded and rerouted highway atop some of the most significant and best-protected archaeological resources in California. Although considered an archaeological "preserve," the Anderson Marsh sites were not preserved. And it is not just archaeological sites that are in danger of disappearing. Caltrans plans to widen State Highway 101 through Del Norte Coast Redwoods State Park, in northwestern California, although to do so will mean the destruction of at least one hundred old-growth redwood trees, many of which are located in a memorial grove. These trees serve as living memorials for deceased individuals, the loved ones of whom have donated sizeable amounts of money to the state for this honor. If these trees and the Anderson Marsh archaeological sites are not safe from our development, then no site or tree in California is safe. And that is exactly my point!

### GIVING THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORD VISIBILITY

Preserving archaeological resources, especially archaeological districts, such as Anderson Marsh or Fort Ross, is similar to the preservation of wilderness areas. No amount of human impact can be tolerated, especially that which is brought about by development and exploitation. The

philosophy of protecting archaeological resources on parklands, as opposed to those on non-parklands, is much like the distinction that exists between the concepts of "preservation" and "conservation," as delineated by Sierra Club founder John Muir, and forester Gifford Pinchot (see Muir 1901:270-271, 1908:217; Vickery 1986:88-91). Outside California's parklands, we are at best struggling to conserve our archaeological record, by attempting the preservation of some sites while allowing the destruction of others. In the case of many of the sites slated for destruction, we mitigate the loss by preserving archaeological knowledge based on salvage excavations. However, preserving knowledge derived from a destroyed site and preserving the site itself are two entirely different things. Within the parklands, our mission is to preserve the archaeological record, and that requires preserving each and every site. Every site is considered equally significant, and the whole (i.e., the district) is considered as important as any particular part (i.e., the site). Whereas conservation allows us to value individual trees, or archaeological sites, while devaluing the forest, or archaeological district, preservation means saving the entire forest, or district, so that we preserve the many relationships existing among the various parts. This, in turn, allows us to better appreciate a landscape's natural ecology, and the cultural dynamics of its human occupation.

Unfortunately, as increasing human population pressures turn parklands into environmental "islands," more and more adverse impacts loom on the horizon. When these impacts become real, the government usually confuses preservation with conservation, and thus determines how much of the resource is to be mitigated so as to allow the destruction of the other. In light of the destruction that has been done to California's archaeological record - scholars fear that 98% of the nation's archaeological record could be destroyed by the year 2050! (see Herscher 1989:68; Knudson 1989:71) - preservation is essential on parklands. Allowing developments to destroy park resources, even if a portion of the sites are excavated, is no different than allowing the clear-cutting of a

protected wilderness. The dilemma for park archaeologists, then, is how to bring about true preservation? That brings us back to Fort Ross, and the subject of this paper.

In 1988, we initiated the Fort Ross Archaeological Project in order to evaluate the impacts being realized by coastal erosion. Soon, the project was expanded in order to afford more visibility to the archaeological record. During the mid-1980s, it seemed as if the DPR viewed FRSHP as a relatively insignificant park, with law enforcement, rather than interpretation or resource management, being of primary concern. The historic interpretation that was available did not always appear to be entirely accurate (see Parkman 1992a). The Fort Ross Archaeological Project began with Dr. David Fredrickson's and Thomas Origer's field classes from Sonoma State University and Santa Rosa Junior College test excavating SON-1453 and SON-1454/H. That same year, Dr. Kent Lightfoot and a field class from the University of California at Berkeley began an investigation of SON-1898/H, the Fort Ross Beach site. The Berkeley work has continued at FRSHP, and has included a comprehensive survey of the park, and an investigation of the Native Alaskan Village site, SON-1897/H (Farris 1991, 1993; Lightfoot 1992; Lightfoot et al. 1991).

Additionally, the Fort Ross investigations have been supplemented by the Russian Cemetery Restoration Project, under the direction of Dr. Lynne Goldstein of the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee. From 1990-1992, field crews from Milwaukee excavated the historic cemetery to relocate what was thought to be about 50 Orthodox graves (Goldstein 1991). In fact, at least 136 graves were found during the excavation. This project was conducted under the close supervision of the Russian Orthodox Church, the Kodiak Area Native Association, and the Sonoma County Coroner's Office. Now that the cemetery has been redefined archaeologically, the next step in this sensitive and significant project is to return it to its historic appearance, by marking each gravesite with an appropriate grave marker.

Under the direction of Drs. Lightfoot and Goldstein, and Dr. Glenn Farris of the DPR, the Fort Ross archaeological program has emerged as one of the nation's premier archaeological investigations, resulting in tremendous benefit to FRSHP and the DPR, the academic and professional communities, members of the Russian Orthodox and Native Alaskan communities, and the general public. As a result of these projects, the park's archaeological record has become increasingly more visible and interpretable. Indeed, the goals of the Fort Ross investigations include locating the remains of a native Alaskan house and the individual grave locations within the Russian Cemetery so that the two can be accurately reconstructed. There is currently little for the public to see outside the reconstructed walls of the Russian compound. This results in their false impression that Colony Ross was nothing more than a fort, when, in fact, the area outside the walls was a thriving settlement (Parkman 1992a). Just as the public fails to appreciate the history that characterized the area outside the walls, the government has failed to appreciate the nature and significance of the archaeological record found there. By reconstructing a portion of the settlement, we hope to provide the visibility necessary to better protect the archaeological record, and make irrelevant the old saying, "out of sight, out of mind!"

The Fort Ross archaeological record has also been made visible by the large amount of news media coverage generated about it (see Parkman 1992b). The interest of the news media in Fort Ross in 1991 resulted in local, state, national, and international coverage. As a result of the coverage, park visitation increased, with many of the visitors coming to see the Russian Cemetery or the Native Alaskan Village, and the archaeologists who were working there.

With the increased visitor and news media interest, the DPR appeared to grow more appreciative of FRSHP. In fact, in 1991, DPR presented its annual award for resource management to the Russian River District, primarily for its support of archaeological work at FRSHP. For the first time in years, it appeared that DPR

recognized the significance of the Fort Ross archaeological record, as well as their responsibility for managing it (i.e., through protection, preservation, and interpretation).

Whether park professionals will be allowed to manage the archaeological record, however, is another matter entirely. Regardless of their own sense of professionalism, the pro-resource and pro-park decisions made by state and federal park superintendents and resource managers are increasingly subject to override by the politically-appointed and politically-motivated agency heads. The past 12 years of officially-sanctioned anti-environmentalism have resulted in both state and federal bureaucracies top-heavy with non-environmentalists. The California State Park System is no exception. Among the upper management staff, resource management, especially the study and preservation of archaeological resources, is usually seen as a low priority, when compared to recreation, revenue generation, facility maintenance, and law enforcement.

Whereas the DPR was once the proud sponsor of resource preservation and recreation, its leadership during the Reagan/Bush era has increasingly identified recreation as the Department's primary mission, to the detriment of resource preservation (see Dillinger 1990:314-315). It was not until after World War II that recreation became recognized as an aspect of the DPR mission. By that time, an improved highway system allowed California's increasingly mobile population greater access to the far reaches of the state. Whereas resource preservation could not be viewed as a commodity for generating revenue, recreation could. As a result, there slowly developed an unconscious movement toward de-emphasizing resource preservation as an aspect of the Department's mission, while elevating the importance of recreation. During the era of Governor George Deukmejian (1983-1991), the administrations of DPR Directors William Briner and Henry Agonia actively endorsed the movement toward emphasizing the role of recreation in the Department's mission. This movement continues, and has been intensified by the current fiscal crisis facing the

DPR.

The de-emphasizing of resource preservation occurs at all levels of the DPR's operation. For example, the Department's official Mission Statement (quoted above) recently underwent several revisions. In at least one of these, the last sentence, which reads, "These areas shall be held in trust as irreplaceable portions of California's natural and historic heritage," was deleted. At the same time, and as a result of the recession-inspired reorganization of the DPR, the Department's Resource Protection Division, which for years has safeguarded park resources, has been renamed the Resource Management Division (while the Development Division has been renamed the Environmental Design Division) (DPR 1992). The word "protection," like "irreplaceable" and "trust," was apparently perceived as not being user-friendly. While these semantical changes may be purely coincidental, they might also be an indication of the environmental woes that are about to befall the DPR. Regrettably, it has been years since DPR's management (albeit with some exceptions) demonstrated the environmental sensitivity appropriate for an agency that might be considered the environmental conscience of state government.

While the lack of environmental sensitivity among an organization's upper echelon might be acceptable for some agencies, it is unacceptable in the case of those responsible for environmental protection, such as the DPR and the National Park Service. A solution to the problem will be found in removing state and federal park agencies from political interference, while at the same time increasing the environmental professionalism of their staff (see Gordon 1989; Pritchard 1991).

## LOOKING TOWARD THE FUTURE

Although protected, the Fort Ross archaeological record is still far from being safe, given the many problems facing the DPR, the State of California, and the nation. Because of the state's current fiscal crisis, the DPR is undergoing a

drastic downsizing and reorganization. As a result of this reorganization, there is now very little archaeological oversight for FRSHP. In the new organization, there are no cultural resource specialists assigned to the park or the Russian River-Mendocino District Office. Oversight will come from Sacramento, where a single archaeologist assigned to the Northern Service Center will keep watch on FRSHP, as well as the numerous other state park units of the former Northern, Inland, and Central Coast Regions, which together comprise approximately two-thirds of California. It is an almost hopeless responsibility, and the Fort Ross archaeological record will certainly suffer.

At the same time, as a result of the state's fiscal crisis, the DPR's budget has been drastically reduced by the Governor. The late William Penn Mott, Jr., former head of both the DPR and the National Park Service, warned that the Governor's budget cuts, unless lessened in their severity, would destroy the park system (Philp 1992). While DPR's current director, Donald Murphy (a park professional promoted from within the Department), is attempting to make the cuts without jeopardizing park resources, the severity of the problem will almost certainly result in compromises. At Governor Wilson's mandate, the DPR is studying ways to open up parklands to private commercial ventures, so as to offset the budget cuts (see McHugh 1992). Golf courses, water slides, and bed-and-breakfast inns may someday be a common sight in parks. However, as Aldo Leopold (1966:289-290), the great American conservationist, pointed out, such "developments for the crowd" are a step backwards, and "merely water poured into the already-thin soup" (1966:290). Developments such as these "stultify the human spirit and stupefy the human mind," whereas parks should be places that "elevate the human spirit and enlighten the human mind" (Callicott 1989:265). Section 1801 of the DPR's Operations Manual makes a similar connection between parks and environmental awareness:

Sometimes, natural or cultural values may be of little interest, while the opportunity to enhance the

sites for provision of recreational opportunities is the prime park system value. But in every instance, the value of resources for park system purposes is not a commercial or commodity value, but rather an intrinsic value that is significant to human appreciation and enjoyment of the environment. It is this basic difference between park system values and commercial values that makes extremely difficult, if not impossible, the expressing of environmental values in monetary terms for conversion to or comparison with commercial values, despite many ingenious but inadequate attempts to formulate such expressions. It also requires of the resource manager in the state park system an orientation toward resources completely different from the attitude of the person who manages resources for commodity production. [DPR 1979]

In order to empower the DPR's resource managers in developing this orientation, or vision, they are provided (in Section 1801 of the Department's Operations Manual) with the following directive:

(2) To be effective, the state park system resource manager must be able to recognize the intrinsic and inspirational values of the environment, and must continually strive to defend them from destructive or damaging influences. [DPR 1979]

Additionally, park managers are reminded that park visitors, unless properly managed, can lead to the destruction of the State Park System:

Wise management of the environmental and cultural resources of the park system should be accompanied by an understanding and sympathetic management of people visiting units in the system. With the ever-increasing use of the state park system, skillful control and management of people will assume greater significance in total management of the system. Unless the significance of this management duality is recognized, and equal attention is given to management of both visitors and resources, the values the system attempts to perpetuate may be destroyed. [DPR 1979]

But the DPR's dilemma is how to provide for the increasing costs of preservation and public enlightenment when the funds come from the decreasing tax-base? Surprisingly, state govern-

ment's answer is to commercialize the parks, the very thing the DPR managers are supposed to be guarding against! To an increasing degree, DPR managers, like their U.S. Forest Service counterparts, are being asked to view park resources as commodities for economic exploitation. Of course, the commercialization of the parks must be seen as a giant step backwards, and perhaps even an abandonment of the DPR's mission. However, without completely overhauling the state bureaucracy and the collective consciousness of the California public, there are probably no immediate solutions to the dilemma. As Raymond Dasman noted in his classic study, *The Destruction of California*, "our very economic system prevents our doing the things needed to protect our environment from destruction" (1965:191).

With the increased pressure to commercialize the parks, there will come pressure to bend the rules, and further deprioritizing of resource protection and preservation as elements of the DPR mission. In fact, the DPR recently held much-needed empowerment workshops which instructed its staff to break the rules if the result benefits the program (see Anonymous 1993). While there is a genuine need for empowerment, it must be properly applied, otherwise there is the risk of adversely affecting park resources. For example, it is probable that the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970 will be one of the rules broken.

Earlier fears of environmental backsliding led to the formation of the California Parks and Conservation Association in 1989, comprised mostly of concerned state park professionals. A similar organization of U.S. Forest Service professionals, the Association of Forest Service Employees for Environmental Ethics, was begun that same year. Both organizations were formed in response to a similar problem - the destruction and plundering of public lands by outside interests, and the inability or unwillingness of agency management to prevent it.

The recent vision of the DPR, and the federal

government, has been one that involved the privatization and commercialization of public lands (see Lopez 1988:81-82). This is the conservative agenda. Many believe that it must be replaced, instead, by a long-term vision involving the "greening" of public lands. Society's anthropocentric tendencies are endangering our public lands at a time when we desperately need to adopt a more biocentric vision (see Callicott 1989:264-265; Leopold 1966:261-262, 271-272; Norton 1984). Be it a wilderness or an archaeological district, parklands must be protected at all costs. It may even become necessary to redefine public parks as "sacred" places, for that is surely what they shall become in the 21st century. Indeed, Yosemite National Park is already considered a sacred place by many!

Archaeologists must share in a vision that looks beyond our immediate condition, and recognize the future for what it will be. Preservation may not save our planet, but it can serve as an important step toward changing the way we think about our place in this world, and that may prove to be our salvation. The preservation of an "irreplaceable" portion of the cultural environment can facilitate the preservation of that which is irreplaceable in the natural environment, both being part of a common struggle to raise the American consciousness in regard to resources and public lands.

## CONCLUSIONS

In closing, I would like to offer several recommendations that might better enable the protection of the Fort Ross archaeological record:

- (1) The DPR must expand its commitment to cultural resource management by increasing the number of cultural resource specialists on its staff, providing them with more representation within the Department, and allowing them greater authority in policy-making decisions.
- (2) The DPR must interpret the archaeological record. This means increasing the number of interpretive specialists on staff. Archaeologists

also need to become more involved with public education. There is a tremendous need to make the archaeological record more visible to the public, so as to ensure their appreciation of it.

(3) The DPR must be more responsive to the public (see Dillinger 1990:315). (For example, the Fort Ross Citizens' Advisory Committee was disbanded by the state several years ago, against the wishes of the Committee, and at a time when the DPR most needed its input. This occurred at the same time that the DPR was acknowledging its need for public involvement [see Agonia 1990].)

(4) Finally, the DPR's cultural resource specialists must develop a strong, environmentally-grounded philosophy for handling their responsibilities, and this philosophy must be endorsed by the DPR.

According to the late Edward Abbey (1989:-84), "Wilderness begins in the human mind." I believe that preservation begins there, too. Indeed, it is a new cornerstone of our ever-evolving collective consciousness. To deny preservation is to admit that which is savage about our society, whereas to defend it, is to admit that which is civilized. It is our challenge, then, to help lead the way toward a greater and more responsible civilization, where the preservation of our natural and cultural landscapes are considered utmost duties of both the individual and society. It is in such a society that the Fort Ross archaeological record might be truly preserved.

#### NOTES

1. This paper expresses the personal opinions of the author, and does not necessarily reflect the official position of the California Department of Parks and Recreation.

I thank my many friends and colleagues who read and commented on earlier versions of this paper. I also acknowledge my appreciation to the many fine men and women of the California State Park System, who through their efforts have made this System the finest in the nation, and who now

struggle to keep it so.

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