

MSU Archaeology Laboratory Archaeology Services Center

Mission, Location and Personnel

The Murray State University Archaeological Laboratory (MSUAL), directed by Dr. Kit W. Wesler, is located on the 3rd floor of Ordway Hall. The Laboratory's mission incorporates four main aspects: 1.) training archaeology students; 2.) curating archaeological collections from western Kentucky; 3.) maintaining a library of cultural resource management reports; and 4.) conducting archaeological research.

The Archaeology Services Center (ASC), which functions as a division of MSUAL, is located in Room 228 Wilson Hall. Affiliates include Dr. Kit Wesler (Director, MSUAL); Dr. Lara Homsey (Principle Investigator and geoarchaeology consulting), Dr. Anthony Ortmann (Principle Investigator and geophysics consulting); and Lori Roe, M.A., (Program Manager and ceramic analysis). ASC is responsible for 1.) training students in cultural resource management, 2.) conducting Section 106 compliance in western Kentucky and surrounding states, and 3.) serving as a Kentucky State Historic Preservation Office appointed repository for cultural resource management reports. This room is open to all professional archaeologists engaged in academic research and/or cultural resource management in western Kentucky and surrounding regions.

Legislative Background

All cultural resource management projects stem from Section 106 and 110 of the *National Historic Preservation Act* (NHPA) of 1966. Working in conjunction with the *Archaeological Resource Protection Act* (ARPA) of 1979 and *Executive Order 11593* (Nixon 1971), NHPA mandates that required archaeological surveys and assessments be implemented when federal money, land, or permits are used in development. These surveys and assessments must comply with guidelines set forth in the *National Environmental Policy Act* (NEPA) of 1969 and 36CFR Part 60.6 9 (Federal Register 42(19), 1977) to determine the impact development will have on historic properties within the area of potential effect (APE) which could be found eligible or potentially eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Historic properties are defined as prehistoric or historic cultural sites greater than 50 years of age.

Federal law also mandates the appointment of a State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) to serve as the review agency for cultural resource management reports for the state. In Kentucky, the SHPO office is administered through a governor-appointed Kentucky Heritage Council (KHC) in Frankfort. The KHC operates in conjunction with the Office of State Archaeology (OSA), a division of the University of Kentucky's Anthropology Department which administers the state's archaeological GIS. These offices are mandated by Kentucky Revised Statute (KRS) 704.050. The current manual of specifications guiding cultural resource management (CRM) in Kentucky is "Specifications for Archaeological Fieldwork and Assessment Reports" issued by the Kentucky SHPO in 2001 and revised in 2006. The current revision can be found on the KHC website at http://www.state.ky.us/agencies/khc/specs_reports.htm .

Services Provided

ASC is capable of providing comprehensive cultural resource assessment for Phase I and II projects. Generally, ASC does not undertake Phase III mitigation since most of its personnel are full-time faculty members or university students. Areas of focused services include small Phase I surveys (generally less than 20 acres though larger projects are feasible during summer and non-teaching months), geophysical consulting (ground penetrating radar and gradiometer surveys including cemetery survey and investigation), geoarchaeological consulting (alluvial stratigraphy, soil description, micromorphology, and raw material sourcing), and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Remote Sensing consulting (including map preparation, image analysis, and geodatabase construction) offered in conjunction with the Mid-America Remote Sensing Center (MARC).

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