



CENTER FOR DESERT ARCHAEOLOGY

## Preserving the Places of Our Shared Past

### STRATEGIC PLAN

Updated September 2010

Approved by the Board of Directors on March 13, 2008  
Update approved by the Board of Directors on December 4, 2010

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**Center for Desert Archaeology  
Strategic Plan  
Updated September 2010**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **The Updating Process**

During the month of September 2010, Center staff members meet several times to review and update the Strategic Plan. Staff members participating included: Debbie Lee, Mat Devitt, Andy Laurenzi, Rob Jones, Kate Sarther Gann, Doug Gann, Bill Doelle, Jacquie Dale, Jeff Clark, Linda Pierce, Deb Huntley, and Paul Reed.

### **The Initial Planning Process**

The initial strategic planning process began with a one day staff retreat, held on May 24, 2007, in Tucson, Arizona. That meeting focused on the Center' current activities and short term objectives for the rest of 2007. At that meeting, the need for a more directed long term strategic planning effort was identified.

We chose to follow the strategic planning and self-assessment process laid out in the following publications:

Drucker, Peter F.

1999 The Drucker Foundation Self-Assessment Tool: Participant Workbook. The Drucker Foundation, New York and Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.

Stern, Gary J.

1999 The Drucker Foundation Self-Assessment Tool: Process Guide, Revised Edition. The Drucker Foundation, New York and Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.

Board member Peter Boyle admirably served as facilitator for each of the strategic planning sessions, held in Tucson on November 14, 2007, and January 22, 2008.

Staff members participating in at least one meeting (5/24/07, 11/14/07, or 1/22/08) included: Jeff Clark, Tiffany Clark, Jacquie Dale, Bill Doelle, Doug Gann, Linda Marie Golier, Dave Gregory, Brett Hill, Deb Huntley, Rob Jones, Debbie Lee, Fred Nials, Linda Pierce, Paul Reed, Kate Sarther, Tobi Taylor, and Aaron Wright

### **Organizational Background and History**

The Center for Desert Archaeology was incorporated as a private nonprofit institution in 1989. It has its roots in the Arizona Division of the Institute for American Research, which was established in Tucson by William Doelle in 1982. From its earliest days, the organization has existed to pursue research, preservation, and education activities focused on southwestern archaeology.

The Center is governed by a nine-member Board of Directors, with additional guidance from a seven-member Advisory Board comprised of professional archaeologists. Its President and CEO, Dr. William H. Doelle, has led the organization from its inception. Staff currently consists

of nine full time permanent employees, two part-time permanent employees, and two Preservation Fellows. The Center's main office is located in Tucson, Arizona, while employees also live and work from a distance in Farmington, New Mexico; and Bisbee, Arizona.

The Center is supported through memberships, donations, grants, and endowment earnings, and has approximately 1,000 members and donors throughout the United States and internationally. A private gift in 1997 established the Center's general endowment fund. That endowment has played a critical role in the maturation of the organization, helping the Center transform from a locally-focused and supported organization into a well-respected regional institution with ongoing projects throughout the Greater Southwest.

The organization is building a preservation archaeology network across the Southwest, combining active research, public involvement, and stewardship efforts to increase protection of archaeological and historical resources. Partnerships between the Center and other institutions and with volunteers play key roles in the successful implementation of this network.

## **CUSTOMERS**

*The primary customer of an organization is the person whose life the organization most wants to impact/change on a regular, ongoing basis. The primary customer is not necessarily someone you can reach or someone you can sit down with and talk to directly. Identifying the primary customer puts priorities in order and gives a reference point for critical decisions.*

### **The Center for Desert Archaeology's Primary Customer:**

People, individually or as community members, who find meaning in the places of the past and are willing to act on its behalf.

Because of our mission's strong focus on preservation, it is important to explicitly acknowledge the place of the archaeological record itself. Archaeological resources are important because of their value to our primary customer. Therefore, the archaeological record is a major responsibility of the Center, but not directly a primary customer.

*The supporting customers of an organization are all the people who must be satisfied in order for the organization to succeed. There can be many supporting customers. They are engaged with the organization to "support" the accomplishment of the mission.*

### **Supporting Customers:**

The Center has a wide variety and large number of supporting customers. It is important to clearly understand and articulate which specific supporting customers are the target for each project undertaken by the Center in order to develop appropriate measures of success. Our supporting customers, in no particular order, include:

local communities  
members, donors, and funding agencies  
Native American communities

the media (both “old” and “new”)  
Center staff and Board members  
Professional archaeologists  
volunteers  
governmental agencies at all levels  
landowners  
developers  
avocational archaeologists  
other heritage or conservation groups  
undergraduate and graduate students  
adults with an interest in informal educational opportunities

## **SUMMARY OF MOST IMPORTANT POINTS IN THE ENVIRONMENT**

The following is a brief summary of opportunities, threats, strengths, and weaknesses that affect the context in which we pursue our mission. This information was gathered in 2007 and 2008 directly from staff during the planning sessions, from one-on-one interviews with key constituents, and from an online survey.

### **Strengths**

The Center for Desert Archaeology’s key strength is its commitment to the concept of “Preservation Archaeology.” The combination of research, preservation, and outreach pursued by the organization over the years is recognized as unique, effective, and important. We are successful in pursuing big picture research questions that explore the human condition from a long-term perspective. The experience, professionalism, quality, and commitment of the staff to the tenets of Preservation Archaeology is another strength. The organization is highly-respected among the professional archaeological community, and its quarterly *Archaeology Southwest* magazine is widely read and appreciated.

2010 Update: The Center’s uniqueness should be seen as a strength. There are no other organizations doing what we do, and so we have few competitors. The recent purchase of and move into our own building is also a strength in that it demonstrates an institutional longevity and grounding.

### **Weaknesses**

The Center suffers from a lack of recognition and/or clear understanding from the outside world regarding what it is that we do. Many still think the organization is a cultural resource management firm. As a private nonprofit, we don’t clearly fit into a neat category. We need to develop ways to better articulate what it is that we do, and why what we do is important. Marketing and outreach should be strengthened.

Another weakness is in organizing people to do the work of the organization. We need ways to put volunteers, including Board members, to more effective work that furthers the goals of the organization. Related to this is the need for a fulltime Executive Director, and the need for more effective ways to monitor progress and results.

It was recognized that the organization's efforts at resource protection have not kept pace with resources and efforts devoted to research. The connections between research projects and protection priorities need to be made more explicit, and more resources developed to support protection and outreach activities.

2010 Update: The weaknesses identified in the initial plan are still relevant. Significant progress is being made in addressing these weaknesses.

### **Opportunities**

The opportunities considered most important included:

- Connecting with Native American communities. As archaeologists, the material culture we study is the record of the ancestors of modern Native communities. Native communities share our concern for preservation and protection of prehistoric resources. We have had some success in working with Native American groups, but are a long way from truly collaborative relationships. The potential from such collaboration, both in terms of increasing our success in preservation and in coming to a richer understanding of the past, is great and should be capitalized upon.
- Partnerships. As a private highly respected nonprofit, the Center is uniquely situated to create and further more collaboration and partnerships between a wide variety of organizations, groups, and agencies. Some suggestions include changing academia by our philosophy and methods, networking with other organizations, more multi-disciplinary research, collaboration and uniting different constituencies to a common purpose, helping under-funded institutions with sites and collections, and data sharing.
- Enhanced and direct preservation outreach. Communities and individual landowners in the Southwest are looking for ways to preserve the unique heritage and character of their landscapes. The Center needs to devote more resources to taking advantage of this opportunity to preserve cultural resources.
- Curation crisis. While the current crisis regarding the lack of curation space and facilities is a threat to long-term preservation of cultural resources, it can also be seen as an opportunity. The crisis could be used to stimulate more preservation through avoidance and more use of existing collections.
- The Center has the opportunity to define, once and for all, what the "Preservation Archaeology" philosophy is. There was a call for Bill to write a public-oriented, hard-hitting book on preservation archaeology that would bring attention to the growing threats to cultural resources and share our tested methods for addressing those threats.
- 2010 Update: The financial crises of recent years have resulted in a significant slowdown in the pace of land development in the Southwest. This is an opportunity in that it has slowed the pace of resource loss due to growth.

### **Threats/Challenges**

The threats and external challenges considered most important included:

- The need to find effective ways to make the past relevant to people today and to share lessons from the past.
- Population growth and changing demographics. Growth is endangering cultural resources. Demographics are changing resulting in more retirees and recent immigrants to

the Southwest, and new ethnic mixes. These newcomers to the Southwest may have different values regarding cultural resources.

- Funding – big grants are increasingly hard to get. We need more private and corporate support.
- Connecting with Native American communities. We need to build credibility and trust with Native communities.
- Transition to new leadership if and when Bill retires.
- 2010 Update: The larger infrastructure for cultural resources protection is non-existent. In regard to environmental protection issues, there are numerous organizations working on the issues and there are ways for those interests to be consulted and represented when threats arise. There is no coordinated voice standing up for cultural resources protection in the same way. We need to become the ‘squeaky wheel’ to bring more attention to the resource protection issues.
- 2010 Update: Continuing degradation of cultural resources is a significant threat. Vandalism, off-highway vehicle use, and land development continue to result in the destruction of irreplaceable resources.
- 2010 Update: The legal system does not impose significant penalties when cultural resource protection laws and regulations are ignored. Many judges ignore federal sentencing guidelines.

## **MISSION, VISION, AND GOALS**

*Our vision statement is intended to communicate a picture of the organization’s desired future.*

### **Vision**

A society where the places of the past are valued as the foundations for a vibrant future.

*The mission statement explains why we do what we do. It shares the organization’s purpose, its reason for being and, in the end, says what we want to be remembered for.*

### **Mission**

The mission of the Center for Desert Archaeology is to preserve the places of our shared past.

Preservation. This mission statement is explicit about preservation. It is intended to broaden our conception of our mission. Its focus on preservation serves as a constant reminder to us regarding everything we do. We can ask ourselves regularly, how is what I am doing contributing to preservation?

- Developing easements and obtaining property donations are obvious examples of preservation.
- Conducting “big-picture” research that leads to new insights with exciting implications can help people to view the places of the past differently and to value them. That’s preservation.
- Getting our academic colleagues to conduct more research with existing collections and getting more funding institutions to support such research and to provide curation funding for excavated materials are also means of preservation.

- We can accomplish preservation in many ways—especially if we stay focused on preservation.

Places of the past. This is broadly conceived. In our goals, we call out archaeological sites, historic buildings, and cultural landscapes as explicit examples, but the artifacts within sites or in museums and the information from our research are all aspects of “places of the past” that are relevant to our mission.

Shared past. We do not automatically have the right to claim a particular aspect of the past as “ours.” We must work to build relationships with others who feel an ownership right to particular places—whether they are Native Americans, residents of a small town, or rural ranchers. While perhaps subtle, this is the “people” part of the mission statement. If we don’t earn the right to share it, we won’t succeed in preserving it.

## **GOALS**

*Goals flow from mission, build on strengths, address opportunities, and outline the organization’s desired future. They should be overarching and few in number. Goals make it absolutely clear where to concentrate resources for results.*

### **The Center for Desert Archaeology’s goals are:**

1. To conduct research related to past places to address questions of broad interest and connect people of today with the people and places of the past.
2. To promote an ethic of preservation through training and sharing of knowledge with the public and professionals.
3. To achieve long-term protection of cultural heritage – archaeological sites, historic buildings, and cultural landscapes – in the Greater Southwest.
4. To achieve long-term financial security and organizational viability.

## **OBJECTIVES**

### **Goal 1. Conduct research related to past places to address questions of broad interest and connect people of today with the people and places of the past.**

1-1. Improve understanding of prehistoric population change and its effects on Native American communities and cultural identities across the Greater Southwest, A.D. 1200 to 1700.

Methods/Measures:

- Staff research projects.
- Fellows’ research projects.

- More specifically, many of the measures of whether we have met this objective will be things like scholarly publications, conference presentations, and various outreach methods listed under Objective 2-3.

1-2. Increase Native American involvement in the Center's research process.

Methods/Measures:

- Native American Advisory Board
- Meetings/consults prior to developing research designs.
- Collaborative projects such as the San Pedro Ethnohistory Project.

1-3. Improve understanding of the rise and transformation of the Chacoan regional system in the San Juan Basin, A.D. 900 to 1300.

Methods/Measures:

- Staff research projects
- Fellows' research projects.
- More specifically, many of the measures of whether we have met this objective will be things like scholarly publications, conference presentations, and various outreach methods listed under Objective 2-3.

Goal-specific funding strategies

**Goal 2. Promote an ethic of preservation through training and sharing of knowledge with the public and professionals.**

2-1. Define our "Preservation Archaeology" model.

Methods/Measures:

- *Kiva* or *American Antiquity* article.
- SAA or other conference session.

2-2. Integrate undergraduate and graduate students into practical training in preservation archaeology methods.

Methods/Measures:

- Preservation Archaeology field school
- Internships
- Student competitions or incentives for collections-based research.
- Preservation Fellowship program

2-3. Bring the message of Preservation Archaeology to nonprofessionals by enabling people to learn about the Southwest's past.

Methods/Measures:

- Website
- Museum exhibits
- *Archaeology Southwest*
- Publications
- Events (such as the Archaeology Café)



- Computer technologies

2-4. Develop vision for implementing community-based archaeology throughout the Southwest.

Methods/Measures:

Goal-specific funding strategies

**Goal 3. Achieve long-term protection of cultural heritage – archaeological sites, historic buildings, and cultural landscapes – in the Greater Southwest.**

3-1. Develop a Greater Southwest Cultural Resources Priority Protection Plan.

Methods/Measures:

- Develop database and spatial analysis capability to streamline watershed-based planning efforts. Benchmark: Completed and ongoing.
- Develop watershed/large-scale geographic cultural resources priority protection plans throughout Center service area. Benchmark: 3 watershed area/large-scale geographic planning areas completed.
- Develop outreach materials based in topical Center research as appropriate, including web-based tools, in support of landowner outreach, to assist collaborative conservation efforts and increase awareness regarding cultural resources protection priorities. Benchmark: Objective

3-2. Implement Protection Actions to Conserve the Priority Cultural Resources Areas of the Southwest.

Methods/Measures:

- Develop conservation strategies for Priority Areas identified through watershed/large-scale geographic priority setting planning efforts. Benchmark: Three conservation plans developed. Complete for San Pedro watershed in US and initiate in 2 other planning areas.
- Identify and cultivate key partnerships with NGO and agency land conservation organizations and agencies to promote Center protection agenda.
- Initiate landowner/land manager contacts within Priority Areas and implement conservation actions. Benchmark: 15 Landowner Contacts complete and 9 conservation actions implemented.

3-3. Develop policies and protocols regarding the protection and stewardship of real property interests held by the Center.

Methods/Measures:

- Organize files of existing property interests including off-site storage of original documents. Benchmark: Objective
- Develop draft Board policies for consideration by CEO and Deputy Director in key areas including conservation easement stewardship, acquiring and

managing fee land, and record keeping policies related to real property interests. Benchmark: Objective

- Develop staff protocols for acquisitions, fee property management, easement documentation, easement administration, easement monitoring, real property record keeping. Benchmark: Objective

3-4. Develop program structure and staffing/resource objectives.  
Benchmark: Objective

3-5. Secure funding in support of program.  
Benchmark: \$25K in funding secured annually.

Goal-specific funding strategies

#### **Goal 4. Achieve long-term financial security and organizational viability.**

4-1. Recruit, train, and retain a diverse and vibrant Board of Directors.

Methods/Measures:

- Meetings with Board members and prospects
- Board orientation sessions
- On-going Board education via staff presentations at Board meetings and monthly email updates.

4-2. Increase the number and amount of individual donations and successful grant applications.

Methods/Measures:

- Appeals
- Special events
- Private foundation research and new grant proposals
- Meetings with donors and prospects
- Success in meeting goals 1 – 3 is key to increasing funding.

4-3. Improve internal processes for increased organizational viability.

Methods/Measures:

- Working committees/task groups
- Defined policies and procedures

4-4. Develop a 20-year plan that addresses the need to achieve adequate staffing levels.

Integrated funding plan