

From: Utah Professional Archaeological Council, Non-Sites Ad Hoc Committee

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To: Utah Professional Archaeological Council Executive Committee

The following guidelines on post-World War II featureless artifact scatters is presented to the Executive Committee of the Utah Professional Archaeological Council (UPAC) by the UPAC Non-Sites Ad Hoc Committee, which was tasked to evaluate documentation of artifacts from the recent past and develop appropriate guidance.

The Ad Hoc Committee presents the following guidelines to the UPAC Executive Committee for review. This Committee requests that the following guidelines be submitted to the general UPAC membership to vote for or against the proposed guidelines.

If the UPAC membership supports the guidelines, this Committee recommends presenting this document to Federal and State agencies in the State of Utah as a guideline for the documentation of Post-World War II Featureless Artifact Scatters.

**Guidelines for Recording
Post-World War II Featureless Artifact Scatters
Utah Professional Archaeological Council
Non-Sites Ad Hoc Committee
November 2023**

I. Introduction

The proposed guidance is provided to assist Federal and State agencies and consultants working in Utah with the recording of post-World War II featureless artifact scatters.

A. Purpose of UPAC Guidelines

The Utah Professional Archaeological Council (UPAC) has a goal of “providing advice to the State, Federal and other regulatory agency archaeologists upon request or as deemed appropriate” (UPAC Bylaws Article III Section I.f.). This goal aligns with Federal Regulations directing agencies to “consider other applicable professional, State, tribal and local laws, standards and guidelines” when completing identification efforts [36 CFR 800.4(b)(1)].

UPAC can provide professional advice to Federal and State agencies and consultants to help steer archaeological identification and documentation efforts. The following guidelines do not serve as a mandate to Federal or State agencies, but rather provide guidance to encourage Federal and State agencies to adopt better practices for identification efforts.

B. Need for UPAC Guidelines Related to Post-World War II Featureless Artifact Scatters

In general, the numbers of artifacts, features, and debris that have been created, disposed of, or abandoned during the recent past has grown at an exponential rate (Yoder 2014). As the population of the U.S (and the world) increases, the cultural and physical modifications to the landscape have increased. As a result, we see a growth in the widespread deposits of objects, artifacts, and debris. There are even discussions that we have entered a distinct geologic age, the Anthropocene, which is defined by the substantial modifications that humans have made to the Earth.

The increase in manufacturing and the general affluence of American society since the mid-1900s has dramatically changed the human landscape. It is time for UPAC to recommend more efficient ways to document the debris deposited on the landscape from the recent human past. These guidelines will help focus documentation efforts on those historic features, structures, objects, artifacts, or sites that can meet National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) eligibility requirements and reduce the documentation efforts on historic resources that do not qualify for National Register eligibility.

These UPAC guidelines are not intended to diminish the value of historic resources or to pit the value of prehistoric resources against the value of historic resources. These guidelines are intended to encourage a thoughtful approach to the level of documentation needed for features, structures, objects, artifacts, or sites that are ubiquitous in the recent past and that may have existing documentation through other means such as historic records, agency permits, patents, public records, etc. Archaeological documentation practices regularly change over time and the Committee recommends a change in the approach for how archaeologists document Post-World War II featureless artifact scatters.

C. Overview of How UPAC Guidelines Align with State and Federal Regulations

The following UPAC guidelines comply with Federal statutes and regulations and align with National Register Guidance.

The predominant Federal statute for cultural and historic documentation and preservation is the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966 as amended (54 USC 3001 - 3071). The NHPA established Federal policy for historic preservation; created the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation; codified the NRHP; established the concept of the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO); and directed many other historic preservation actions.

The statute directed Federal agencies to “take into account the effect of [Federal undertakings] on any historic property” (54 USC 306108) and to ensure that “historic property under the jurisdiction or control of the agency is identified, evaluated, and nominated to the National Register” [54 USC 306102(b)].

D. Regulatory Identification and Documentation Requirements

The NHPA Section 106 regulations [36 CFR 800.4(b)] direct Federal agencies to “take the steps necessary to identify historic properties within the area of potential effect” and to make a “reasonable and good faith effort to carry out appropriate identification efforts.” Historic properties are “any prehistoric or historic district, site, building, structure, or object included on, or eligible for inclusion on, the National Register” [54 USC 300308].

Documentation standards in 36 CFR 800.11(e)(3) specify that documentation of historic properties shall include “a description of the affected historic properties, including information on the characteristics that qualify them for the National Register.” National Register Bulletins and the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards and Guidelines provide additional guidance on how to document historic properties. It should be noted that none of these regulations or guidance documents require identification or documentation of cultural resources that are not historic properties. Because Federal regulations are completely silent on documentation requirements for cultural resources that do not meet the definition of a historic property, agencies and SHPO’s have often developed guidelines or policies that vary between agencies and between states.

The UPAC is recommending the following guidelines for documentation of Post-World War II featureless artifact scatters that do not meet National Register eligibility criteria.

E. Clarification and Summary

As decisions about appropriate identification, recording, and evaluation efforts are made by Federal and State agencies, in consultation with the Utah SHPO and other interested and consulting parties, neither UPAC nor any other party can dictate to an agency the appropriate methods for recording these or any other resources. However, UPAC provides the following advice and guidelines that can be accepted by Federal agencies per 36 CFR 800.4(b)(1) or by State agencies per Utah Code 9-8-404.

Arguments have been made regarding featureless historic artifact scatters and their categorical eligibility status under the NRHP (e.g., Yoder 2014). The methodology presented here refrains from categorical NRHP exclusion and non-recording of a particular site classification. The Committee acknowledges that post-World War II featureless artifact scatters are often evaluated as ineligible for the NRHP. The Committee also acknowledges that NRHP eligibility determinations are made by the agency official who needs some level of documentation to make an accurate NRHP determination on featureless artifact scatters.

Given that post-World War II featureless artifact scatters are commonly recommended and determined not eligible for the NRHP, a streamlined resource recording methodology is presented that should realize a substantial savings of time and be more cost effective. It will also ensure that potential historic properties are documented in the field and presented to agencies in pursuit of compliance with Federal and State cultural resource laws. In the era of field and office connectivity and digital workflows, the time savings will be meaningful while still meeting agency needs and

SHPO data requirements. The goal is a streamlined recordation and data delivery strategy that saves time and money, but also assures agencies and SHPO that a good faith documentation effort, as required by the National Historic Preservation Act and 36CFR800 and Utah Code 9-8-404, is met for this type of resource.

II. Recommended Guidelines

- A. **Recommended Best Approach.** The best approach to recording and evaluating post-World War II featureless artifact scatters should begin with the following:
1. Follow the procedures established in the regulations at 36 C.F.R. 800 and consult with relevant agencies and/or SHPO prior to undertaking archaeological survey efforts where this proposed methodology may be utilized.
 2. Make use of archival and historical data prior to, during, and after fieldwork to assist with determining the applicability of utilizing this proposed methodology. Understanding the historical context for applicable resources within a landscape or its relationship to other resources outside of the APE is critical for identifying the applicability of this methodology. Important resources which may be directly associated with post-World War II featureless artifact scatters may be found outside the APE and only identifiable through advance research.
 3. In cases where an identified resource does not directly align with the resource character bounds as described below, always conduct additional consultation with agencies and/or SHPO for applicability of utilizing this proposed methodology.
- B. **Methodology.** The goal of this proposed guideline is to provide the agency and SHPO with sufficient information regarding the resource in question that:
1. The resource can be relocated.
 2. The general characteristics of the resource are known.
 3. The applicability of the recording of the resource under this proposed methodology is clear.
 4. The eligibility of the resource to the NRHP is clear.
 5. Associated digital data are easily ingested into SHPO enterprise databases for archiving.
 6. The agency and SHPO are assured a good faith resource identification and recording effort was made.
- C. **Applicable Resources.** The proposed guidelines pertain to featureless artifact scatters that date to the post-World War II era that may qualify as a site under existing Utah SHPO and agency guidance. For the purposes of this proposal, applicable resources will have the following characteristics:
1. The artifact scatter may qualify as an archaeological site per current SHPO or agency guidance but is not eligible for the NRHP.
 2. Artifact scatters are not associated with nearby sites, features, or structures which would normally be documented as a cultural resource site, including, but not limited to, mining sites, homesteads, livestock management features, etc.

3. The artifact scatters cannot be definitively associated with a specific historic theme(s) or event(s) or individuals of historic importance.
4. Artifacts clearly date to the post-World War II period (i.e., post-1945).
5. The site location is not depicted on historic documents, including, but not limited to: General Land Office (GLO) plats; mineral survey records; United States Geological Survey (USGS) topographic maps; or Sanborn Fire maps.
6. Artifacts are mass-produced and do not include distinctive or unique artifacts. (See below for examples of Post-World War II [post-1945] mass-produced artifacts. Note: this list is not comprehensive.)

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plastic containers • Flooring • Farm equipment (post-1945) • Aluminum cans • Fiberglass • Industrial equipment (post-1945) • Paper/polyethylene containers • Firearm cartridges (post-1945) • 8-track tapes, cassette tapes • Sanitary cans (post-1945) • Appliances • CDs, DVDs, gaming cartridges • Glass bottles • Shoes (post-1945) • Cardboard, signs, paperboard • Abandoned vehicles • Clothing • Light bulbs (post-1945) • Polypropylene • Treated wood | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beverage cans (pull-tab and more recent) • Styrofoam • Polyester • Toys • Nickel-Iron batteries • Mylar • Metal cookware (pans, etc.) • Alkaline batteries • Particle board • Clay pigeons • Glass dishes, objects, or fragments (post-1945) • Disposable paper products • Automobile and recreational vehicle parts • Plywood • Wire, including barbed wire (post-1945) • Ceramic dishes (post-1945) |
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7. These are resources that exhibit brief episodes of historic post-World War II activity that are easily documented at discovery. The artifact scatters will lack significant artifact density and diversity of artifact classes. These unassociated artifact scatters portray very short term, task-specific actions of transient human use of the landscape, and a streamlined recordation of these resources shall satisfy the reasonable and good faith effort requirement of land managers under Federal and State regulations.
8. The determination that an artifact scatter qualifies as a post-World War II featureless artifact scatter—and therefore warrants limited documentation—versus standard site documentation is dependent on context and professional judgment. The recorder must consider the environmental context and potential for buried deposits when considering whether the resource warrants standard recordation as a site.

D. Reporting Requirements. The following are minimum documentation standards for post-World War II featureless artifact scatters. These are best practices, not rules. In many cases, a brief discussion with the agency or SHPO should be sufficient to determine whether these documentation standards are appropriate. Consultants should always consult the lead agency for any deviations from this list or for any agency specific requirements.

1. Provide a brief discussion paragraph(s) within the Results section of the report summarizing the number and general composition of featureless artifact scatters documented within the project area. Include a brief discussion and justification for why resources were recorded using this guidance rather than documented with a standard cultural resources site form.
2. Provide the following information in the report for each artifact scatters. (This information may be presented in table format and may be combined with the Isolated Find table in the report. An example of such a table is provided in **Table 1.**)
 - i. Brief description of resource (2–3 sentences) summarizing: approximate number and type of artifacts present, general distribution/spatial extent of artifacts, and brief interpretation of date/function of artifact scatter.
 - ii. Centroid UTM of the artifact scatter.
 - iii. Overview photograph of the artifact scatter. The Committee recommends a minimum of one photograph per artifact scatter to show the setting and location of the artifact scatter. (The photographs could be inserted with the table or included in an appendix).
3. Submit a GIS dataset that includes GPS centroid location, unique ID, and brief description. (This can be submitted in the same GIS dataset with Isolated Finds).

Table 1. Example of documentation for post-World War II featureless artifact scatters in a table format. This table could be combined with the isolated finds table for the report or attached as an appendix. (If combined, add a notation to indicate which resources qualify for streamlined recording per this UPAC proposed methodology).

Unique ID	Class	Description	Estimated Age	UTMn	UTMe
U23UC0001-01	Historic	Artifact scatter: Three sanitary can (completely cut around opening), one sanitary can (rotary cut opening), and church key-opened steel Beverage can with faint and indistinct writing in a 10 m area. Sanitary cans were introduced ca. 1904 (Rock 1988). Flat-topped steel beverage cans were produced from 1930 to 1970 (Polk 2017). Rotary can openers were introduced in 1925 (Polk 2017).	Post WWII*	607973	607973
U23UC0001-02	Historic	Artifact scatter: Thirty-two ice pick-opened steel beverage cans with faint, indistinct writing. Flat-topped steel beverage cans were produced from 1930 to 1970 (Polk 2017). Utah 1955 license plate with bullet holes. Appears to be a single episode refuse dump dating post 1955.	Post WWII*	608052	4511311
U23UC0001-03	Historic	The artifact scatter consists of likely-historic artifact scattering, dating to post-1945, and is composed primarily of plastic and Styrofoam artifacts, several tin cans and a variety of unknown metal pieces. Plastic artifacts include a variety of water jugs (n=3; gallon size), beverage bottles (n=~15), plastic utensils (n=~10) and other fragmentary plastic pieces. Styrofoam is entirely fragmentary with pieces number in the hundreds. The original form and function of the Styrofoam is unknown. The cans (n=8) include two identifiable Folgers coffee cans that date to the 1960s. The scatter does include used disposal diapers and has an early version 8-Track Tape of The Beatles, strongly suggesting a domestic association. Overall, the age of the artifact scatter is unknown, but likely dates to the 1960s or later, when plastic and Styrofoam were mass-produced and widely used. The site is likely the result of a single episode refused dump along Wells Draw Overlook Road.	ca. 1972	605149	4511339

*Note: These are resources which may qualify as an archaeological site per current agency and Utah SHPO definitions but, due to their composition and dating to post-WWII, also qualify for streamlined recording per UPAC Post-World War II Featureless Artifact Scatter Guidance.

Selected Bibliography

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2019 *Utah Bureau of Land Management Digital Data Standards*. Copy available through the Utah Bureau of Land Management.

2020 *Cultural Resource Fieldwork Guidelines and Standards; BLM Supplement H-8110 - Utah*. Copy available through the Utah Bureau of Land Management, Salt Lake City

Bureau of Land Management and the Utah State Historic Preservation Office (BLM and SHPO)

2020 *State Protocol Agreement between the Bureau of Land Management and the Utah State Historic Preservation Office*. Copy available through the Utah BLM State Office or online at https://www.blm.gov/sites/blm.gov/files/Utah_SHPO_Protocol_2020.pdf

Utah State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)

2019 *Archaeological Compliance Guidance*. Copy available through the Utah State Historic Preservation Office, Salt Lake City.

Yoder, David T.

2014 Interpreting the 50-Year Rule: How a Simple Phase Leads to a Complex Problem. *Advances in Archaeological Practice* 2(4): 324–337.