

A PhotoPoint Archival System

By Stephen V. Cofer-Shabica

Case and others (1982) describe a system of documenting natural and human-related physical changes in natural and cultural resources within units of the National Park System. The documentation system has multiple uses, is aesthetically unobtrusive, and sufficiently permanent to provide natural and cultural resource base information today and in the future.

The preservation of the photographic products (in this case, 35mm color transparencies, black and white negatives, and B&W color-separation negatives) is discussed. They suggest that metal cabinet-type slide storage files or metal slide storage boxes be used for the archival storage of original transparencies, and the B&W negatives. Regardless of the method used, they caution that the environment surrounding the storage area be temperature and humidity controlled, to ensure long-term preservation.

The maintenance of a constant temperature/humidity environment often is difficult in parks. Thus, in 50 to 75 years, as the color dyes fade, the recorded images will lose much of their information. Black and white color-separation negatives are costly, since three negatives are required for each preserved image. These negatives also need proper temperature/humidity control, although it is not as critical as with the color transparencies.

Advances in computer technology over the past five years have provided a means of archiving photographic products over long periods of time. The introduction by the Eastman Kodak Company of a compact disc (CD) photographic process provides photographers and resource managers with a relatively permanent, inexpensive, and easily stored means of archiving photographic slides, negatives, or prints. This system allows up to 100 color transparencies to be placed on one CD, at a current cost of less than \$20 per disc. The photographs may then be displayed either with a Kodak Photo CD Player connected to a television, or a CD ROM (XA) drive connected to a personal computer. In addition, duplicate copies of the photographs can be reproduced from the CD as well as additional discs made.

The use of the compact disc for storage of critical natural and cultural resource photographs and color transparencies should allow managers to archive such products permanently.

Cofer-Shabica is Resource Management Specialist at Cumberland Island National Seashore.

References

- Case, J. P. Toops and S. Shabica. 1982. Reference marker-photopoint resources management system. NPS SE Regional Office, Atlanta. Research/Resources Management Report SEF-62. 30pp.

The use of trade names does not imply U.S. Government endorsement of commercial products.