



**MICA Group Cultural Resource Fund
Phase 2 Project Closeout Report
Montana State Historic Preservation Office, Montana Historical Society**

**Access to Antiquity: Making Montana's State Antiquities Database More Effective and Accessible
(Grant TFR16-01434)**

1. ***Please briefly describe your project.*** The project consisted of completing the upgrade of the outdated Montana State Antiquities Database to a newer web-based platform, featuring a fully developed map interface and integration of documentation on recorded cultural resource sites and surveys, along with tracking of project data and National Register eligibility findings. In addition to descriptive and locational information on over 59,000 recorded historic, archaeological and traditional cultural properties, the statewide database stores and provides access to over 37,500 survey, inventory, and research reports. As the primary repository and clearinghouse for cultural resource information in the state, the Montana State Antiquities Database is the foundation on which historic preservation planning and decision-making is made at the state level.
2. ***What goal(s) were you hoping to achieve?*** The goal of the upgrade of the Montana State Antiquities database was to make it more efficient – and thereby more effective and accessible to the Montana State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), Tribal Historic Preservation Offices, partners, and those dependent on accurate and comprehensive cultural resource information on a timely basis.
3. ***What has been the result or outcome of your Phase 2 grant? Please be as specific as you can.*** The goal of the project was achieved. Under contract to the Montana State Information Technology Services Division (SITSD), the State Antiquities Database was successfully transformed to a fully integrated web-based platform featuring Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping of site and survey locations; scanned digital records with optical character recognition (OCR) text, drawings and photographs; and a multi-relational database structure with flexible search, editing, and data creation functions. Funding from our Phase 2 MICA Cultural Resource Fund grant made it possible to complete the upgrade as designed both on budget and on time by the beginning of 2017. Specific outcomes include a cultural resource information resource that is more stable, more user-friendly, and more readily sharable with existing and new partners under data-sharing agreements (presently, limited to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Montana Tribal Historic Preservation Offices (THPOs).
4. ***What has the grant meant for your tribe, state, community, or program?*** For the Montana State Historic Preservation Office, the new integrated State Antiquities Database is a much-

welcomed improvement over our old system of tabular and disconnected information management. Everything from data entry to searching and retrieving information is made easier and more reliable. The ability to visualize site and survey locations on topographic maps or, optionally on aerials, while simultaneously reading descriptive texts with photographs and illustrations makes the process of identifying and understanding cultural sites and their place more meaningful. Our online partners, the BLM and THPOs, appreciate the intuitive and explorative nature of the system. It is much more efficient and user-friendly. Other agencies, professional consultants, proponents, and the public have benefited by SHPO's ability to find and provide better cultural resource information on request, as needed and appropriate. In recognition of this successful transformation and complex data migration, the Montana State Information Technology Services Division Director and Chief Information Officer (CIO) Ron Baldwin awarded SHPO Cultural Records Manager Damon Murdo and Cultural Records Assistant Michele Phair with Recognition for Excellence in Connecting People with Information (see attached article and photograph).

5. ***Did your project change in the course of completion? Did anything happen that was unexpected?*** There were some ups and downs in the process of upgrading the Montana State Antiquities Database, most notably in the difficulty of migrating existing old coded information to the newer format. More clean-up and editing of data involving SHPO staff and knowledge was necessary than expected, and is an ongoing process. A few anticipated features, including some mapping capabilities, have likewise been postponed to a next phase. Budget-wise, we were able to complete the project as planned; however, we needed to allocate more funds from the BLM to make-up a shortfall in anticipated SHPO file-search revenue. All in all, the project stayed on course with only minor modifications.
6. ***Did your Phase 2 grant help establish new partnerships, i.e. did new groups, community members, tribes, local, state, federal, or tribal agencies or departments who weren't originally involved become involved as a result of the grant?*** See below, Question 9. The University of Montana Department of Anthropology has become an active participant and partner in the ongoing development of the Montana State Antiquities Database.
7. ***Did the grant help leverage additional funding (tribal, state, federal, local, private, foundation)? From whom and how much additional funding did you receive? Did your State contribute matching funding? How much? Were you able to use the grant or project as match funding to apply for another grant?*** No additional funding was obtained beyond the original budget for the project which in addition to the MICA grant for \$40,000.00 also included direct project funding from the Bureau of Land Management (\$26,432.22), the **SHPO federal Historic Preservation Fund (HPF: \$41,118.90)**, and SHPO revenue funds (\$21,992.05) for a total direct contribution of \$89,547.17 from other funders (see attached Financial Report). The project would not have been completed without the Phase 2 grant from the MICA Group Cultural Resource Fund. The MICA grant was also used as part of the required 40:60 state match to the annual allocation from the federal HPF that SHPO receives through the National Park Service.
8. ***Did your project receive donated time, materials, or expertise (in kind)? (If possible, please estimate the value of the time spent).*** While not a true donation, SHPO staff participated in the upgrade of the State Antiquities Database with worktime involved in all aspects of the

contracted project, including pre-planning, planning, meetings, design, menu creating, testing and data migration. An estimated 1470 hours of labor was contributed by SHPO Cultural Records Manager Damon Murdo and SHPO Cultural Records Assistants Stephanie Meredyk (former) and Michele Phair (current). This can be valued at approximately \$29,500.00 in labor, funded by federal SHPO HPF.

9. ***What is the next step in your project? Will any part of the project continue?*** Development of the upgraded Montana State Antiquities Database is an ongoing process. While major “bugs” were fixed as part of completing the upgrade, a wish-list of additional optional programming changes and improvements is being maintained pending future funding. Entry of backlog “legacy” data and data cleanup/editing are also ongoing. Presently, while records and scanned documents exist, only about 65% of sites and 45% of inventories are included in our Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping layers. Boundary shape files must be created for the remainder of sites and surveys to be added to the maps. Since the upgrade of the database, additional funding from the Bureau of Land Management has enabled SHPO to contract with the University of Montana Department of Anthropology for students to create these digital data. This mutually beneficial relationship provides valuable work experience for students while also bringing knowledge and understanding of cultural resources into the process of data entry and adding to the State Antiquities Database. Because of the upgrade, SHPO is able to provide secure online access to the database by the University for this purpose. With respect to access by THPOs, SHPO has currently entered into data-sharing agreements with the Salish-Kootenai, Rocky Boy (Chippewa-Cree), and Crow THPOs that enable use of the State Antiquities Database. SHPO will continue to promote participation and use of the State Antiquities Database by all tribes.
10. ***Was your project a continuation of Phase 1?*** No. However, our Phase 1 grant produced records, data, and maps for Montana railroads that are now included in the State Antiquities Database.
11. ***Please include attached Financial Report.*** See attached Financial Report.
12. ***Photographs (optional)*** See attached.

Attachments:

Montana State Antiquities Database upgrade (sample screenshot)
Montana SHPO Cultural Records staff recognition (Montana Historical Society newsletter)
Montana State Information Technology Services Division (SITSD) recognition of excellence

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