

**Missions Initiative: An International, Multi-Disciplinary Partnership for Cultural Resource Management**

R. Brooks Jeffery

Within the Vanishing Treasures network of parks in the Intermountain Region (IMR), there are four National Park Service (NPS) units whose resources are focused on Spanish Colonial missions: Pecos NHP, Salinas Pueblo Missions NM, San Antonio Missions NHP, and Tumacácori NHP. In addition, the Spanish Colonial Research Center and Western Archeological Conservation Center provide valuable support to the mission parks. While each park is distinct in its expression of the sixteenth to nineteenth century mission enterprise, all the mission parks share common characteristics and issues ranging from comprehensive interpretation themes and standardized preservation treatments, to site management and funding sustainability.

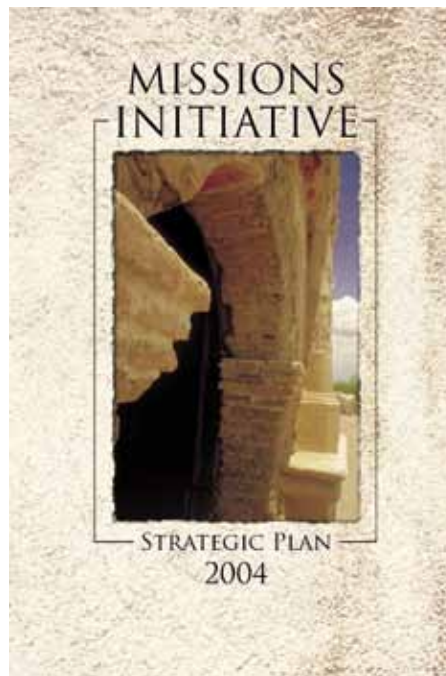
Spanish Colonial missions, and their challenges, are not restricted to NPS nor to the United States. Hundreds of missions are scattered throughout the world as an enduring legacy of Spanish colonial expansion. In the vice-royalty of New Spain, generally the southwestern US and the entirety of Mexico, mission communities were established on both sides of what is now an international border. These sites are currently administered by multiple entities ranging from federal stewardship agencies such as the National Park Service and its Mexican counterpart, the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (INAH), to state parks, and private ecclesiastic dioceses.

In 2002, various IMR superintendents requested the assistance of the Desert Southwest Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (DS-CESU) in creating a preservation program specifically for Spanish Colonial mission resources. With NPS staff guidance, the University of Arizona's Planning Program in the College of Architecture, Planning, and Landscape Architecture produced the 2004 Missions Initiative Strategic Plan that established the program.

As a collaborative effort between NPS and INAH, the goal of the Missions Initiative is to protect cultural resources and promote heritage tourism through the re-establishment of historic links among Spanish Colonial mission communities on both sides of the international border. At its core, the Missions Initiative is focused on the development of an international, multi-disciplinary partnership that envelops a

broad network of federal, state, and local stewardship agencies, Native American communities, and academic and ecclesiastic institutions, as well as a myriad of non-profit and research organizations who are all stakeholders in this common purpose.

Today, the Missions Initiative is hosted by the University of Arizona's Heritage Conservation Program that has, since 2005 been directing the development of strategic planning objectives, a work-plan of projects, and the implementation of \$210,000 of funded projects. The Heritage Conservation Program consists of both an interdisciplinary graduate curricular program representing the disciplines of anthropology, archeology, architecture, landscape architecture, materials science, and planning, as well as an outreach program based in the University's Drachman Institute. Together they provide a balanced combination of service-learning student engagement, research, and project management expertise that is ideal for the Missions Initiative. The University of Arizona is a partner agency of the CESU in both the Desert Southwest and the Colorado Plateau regions; involvement that further extends the partnership model to the benefit of both the university and the regions' parks.



*Figure 1: The Missions Initiative Strategic Plan, a product of two years of collaborative efforts by representatives of the National Park Service and the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (INAH), continues to guide the Missions Initiative's efforts.*

**Missions Initiative Time Line**

**1998** NPS/INAH International Memorandum of Understanding (IMOU) authorizing a five-year work plan of technical exchange and collaboration.

**2002** NPS/INAH Program of Collaboration 2002-2006 adopted including research & academic exchange, conservation & management, education & training, and cultural tourism & promotion incorporating bi-national cultural heritage resource themes: US/Mexico Missions, Camino Real de Tierra Adentro, Camino de los Texas, and the Mimbres-Paquimé Connection.

**2003** Strategic planning meetings of the Mission Parks Initiative Working Group in Tucson, Albuquerque, and El Paso that included representatives from six INAH state offices, eight NPS parks/units, and the University of Arizona where program objectives were presented and discussed.

**2004** Missions Initiative Strategic Plan published, codifying a series of guiding principles and strategic directions that continue to guide its development. See Missions Initiative website for the complete document.

**2005** Administration of Missions Initiative assigned to University of Arizona through a cooperative agreement and defined scope of work.

**2006** Missions Initiative working group meeting held in Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua, Mexico that included representatives from INAH, NPS, University of Arizona, and Cornerstones Community Partnerships, where institutional structures, specific projects, and funding sources were identified to implement the program's goals (see Mission Initiative Projects).

**2007** First of four annual Missions Initiative update articles in *Revista*, the quarterly journal of the Southwestern Mission Research Center (SMRC).

**2008** Presentation at *California Mission Studies Association Annual Conference* in Rio Rico, AZ.

Received grant from Southwestern Foundation for Education and Historical Preservation to provide post-production of TICRAT videos for dissemination on Missions Initiative website.

*Common Ground* (Spring 2008) article published "International Effort Aims to Boost Research, Heritage Tourism" <http://www.nps.gov/history/commonground/>

Missions Initiative presentation "Heritage Without Borders: Missions Initiative" at *CESU Annual Conference*, Washington DC; meeting with NPS Office of International Affairs to discuss renewal of IMOU with INAH.

TICRAT AZ | SON conducted at Tumacácori NHP, Arizona and Pitiquito, Sonora (see TICRAT Adobe Workshops project).

Missions Initiative update article in SMRC's *Revista*.

Missions Initiative presentation at *IMR Stewardship Conference* in Tucson, AZ; Missions Initiative and Vanishing Treasures identified common goals and benefit to integrate activities.

**2009** New bilingual Missions Initiative website launched.

*Archaeology Southwest* (vol. 23, no. 2) article published, "The TICRAT Model: A Binational Adobe Workshop" <http://www.archaeologysouthwest.org/what-we-do/information/asw/23-2/>

Missions Initiative Working Group meeting in Tucson AZ. Completed activities were discussed and future direction of training and education curriculum was confirmed.

(Continued Next Page)

Field visit from NPS' Historic American Landscapes Survey (HALS) and Cultural Resources Geographic Information Systems (CRGIS) divisions from Washington DC to discuss integration of Missions Initiative inventory databases with existing national databases toward the creation of a Kino Missions cultural landscape nomination for potential designation as a World Heritage Site.

Mission Sites Inventory project funding approved from San Antonio Missions NHP.

TICRAT project funding approved from Tumacácori NHP.

Missions Initiative update article in SMRC's *Revista*.

Missions Initiative presentation "Heritage Without Borders: Missions Initiative" at the *George Wright Society Biennial Conference* in Portland OR.

2010 NPS' Spanish Colonial Research Center collections index translated into a searchable database and integrated into the Missions Initiative website meta-database (see Mission Sites Inventory and Meta-Database project).

Preservation Best Practices project funding approved from Tumacácori NHP.

Missions Initiative update article in SMRC's *Revista*.

2011 TICRAT | baja california conducted at Mission San Vicente Ferrer near Ensenada, Baja California, Mexico (see TICRAT Adobe Workshops project).

*InsideNPS* article published, "The 2011 TICRAT Preservation Workshop: A Successful Partnership Between the U.S. and Mexico" <http://inside.nps.gov/index.cfm?handler=viewnpsnewsarticle&type=Announcements&id=10301>

*Bionero* (Ensenada-based regional newspaper) article published "Impulsan Arquitectos Construcción y Conservación de Edificaciones de Tierra" <http://www.bionero.org/estilo-de-vida/impulsan-arquitectos>

Tumacácori NHP's Missions 2000 database was integrated into the Missions Initiative's website meta-database (see Mission Sites Inventory and Meta-Database project).

Missions Initiative Working Group meeting (via phone) with Chief of HALS Paul Dolinsky regarding Kino Missions World Heritage Site nomination update.

2012 Sister Parks Arrangement signing ceremony between Casa Grande Ruins NM and Paquimé Archaeological Zone held at Casa Grande Ruins NM (see IMOU & Sister Parks Arrangement project).

Missions Initiative Working Group conference call to discuss current challenges and future projects.

Missions Initiative presentation at XXV Aniversario de la designación de Monte Albán como Patrimonio Cultural de la Humanidad in Oaxaca, Mexico.

2013 TICRAT | arizona conducted at Casa Grande Ruins NM, Tumacácori NHP, Western Archaeological Conservation Center, and University of Arizona (see TICRAT Adobe Workshops project).

Missions Initiative presentation to the VII Encuentro Internacional Sobre Barroco – Migraciones y Rutas in Arica Chile as part of a counterpart program, Ruta de las Misiones, directed by the Fundación Altiplano in northern Chile.

High Country News article published "Debating Preservation in the Southwest's Spanish Missions" <http://www.hcn.org/issues/42.21/debating-preservation-in-the-southwest-s-spanish-missions>

## Missions Initiative Objectives

In order to be successful, the Missions Initiative needed to be a multinational, multi-institutional, and multidisciplinary partnership that collaborated on mutually beneficial projects that protected mission resources and benefited the communities in which they reside. These principles evolved into a set of broad objectives codified in the 2004 Missions Initiative Strategic Plan (Figure 1) from which a five-year work plan and specific projects were developed. For more information on these foundational documents, please see the Missions Initiative website, [www.missions.arizona.edu](http://www.missions.arizona.edu).

From its inception, the Missions Initiative has been guided by a series of overarching principles.

*Enhance communication among those involved in the management of mission sites on both sides of the international border.*

Fundamentally, the Missions Initiative is a collaborative partnership with the goal of re-establishing historic links among individual sites and communities in Mexico and United States while respecting the diverse economic, cultural, geographical, and institutional contexts of the region. This required the establishment of a network of stakeholders representing the varied affiliations associated with mission resources (please see the Missions Initiative website for the Partner List). The Missions Initiative also provides international forums of exchange and instruments of collaboration related to the conservation and management of mission-related cultural heritage sites. To achieve this, the Missions Initiative strives to provide training workshops, conferences, research projects, and symposia where experts are invited to exchange knowledge and develop best practices. Equally important is the establishment of bilingual communication vehicles, including the Missions Initiative website (Figure 2), that can be used as clearinghouses for the activities and projects of partner and affiliated groups, as well as for journal and news articles to disseminate mission preservation efforts to professional, academic, and public communities.

*Develop consistent standards for documenting, preserving, and interpreting the cultural resources of mission sites in the U.S. and Mexico.*

Mission sites are often thought of as singular buildings or objects needing to be conserved. For the Missions Initiative, our definition is intentionally broader and more inclusive. From our perspective, mis-



Figure 2: The Missions Initiative website, is a bilingual clearinghouse for the partnership's projects and activities and an increasingly important resource for technical content.

sion sites are more accurately defined as cultural landscapes that include historically affiliated indigenous archeological sites, water utilization systems (canals, cisterns, dams, etc.), agricultural production sites (orchards, vineyards, mills, and croplands), human transportation systems (trails and roads), support buildings and structures, as well as the mission churches themselves. These geographically specific cultural landscapes are, in turn, part of an integrated mission network that spans a vast geographic area that is now unfortunately divided by an international border and by multi-institutional ownership.

Attempting to balance the historic and contemporary definition of the Spanish Colonial mission enterprise, the Missions Initiative has been developing a framework of scholarly and technical cooperation to identify, document, conserve, and interpret mission sites on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border. For documentary resources, this requires the consolidation, publication, and dissemination of research relating to Spanish Colonial history that is located in archives throughout the world. To this end we are encouraging active scholarly involvement from a multitude of universities, religious institutions, public agencies, and independent researchers. For mission-related artifacts, buildings, and cultural landscapes, this requires the development of consistent criteria for documentation, evaluation, interpretation, resource management, and preservation treatment of a diverse collection of sites whose stewardship spans various institutional jurisdictions. For all these cultural resource types, multidisciplinary educational programs and field-based technical training are necessary to ensure the preparedness of current and emerging professionals to safeguard these resources into the future.

*Support economic development of mission communities through the promotion of heritage tourism.*

Mission sites have historically been and often continue to be the cultural, social, and economic anchor to the communities and regions they were created to serve. The Missions Initiative identifies opportunities for heritage tourism – regionally and internationally – as part of a larger economic development objective. By recognizing both the historic and contemporary interconnected network of mission sites, the Missions Initiative can help guide the development of international tourism strategies designed to deliver direct social and economic benefits to contemporary communities. This includes coordinating binational mission tour programs with state, national, and international trails associations (including the existing network of *caminos reales*), facilitating institutional agreements with nonprofit organizations and private tour providers who support heritage tourism, and the continued development of community and institutional capacity to support economic development through authentic heritage tourism. The Missions Initiative acknowledges and draws on the experience of other collaborative efforts to manage similar cultural resources. This includes recognizing the continued need for consultation with indigenous communities in the United States and Mexico, thereby reconciling the interests of multiple jurisdictions and addressing border security concerns.

#### Missions Initiative Projects

In 2006, several priority projects were identified to begin implementing the Missions Initiative objectives outlined above. Each of these projects, and those subsequently identified, were defined as task agreements that would be funded either by individual NPS mission park units or by regional NPS offices such as the Intermountain Region International Conservation Program (IM-RICO, now MABCO). It's important to understand that these Missions Initiative projects are not specific to any one park, but rather designed to impact all the mission parks as a model of cooperative investment and benefit consistent with the program's guiding principles. All these projects were administered and facilitated by the University of Arizona Heritage Conservation Program through the auspices of the CESU partnership. Additional information on these projects can be found on the Missions Initiative website, [www.missions.arizona.edu](http://www.missions.arizona.edu).

#### TICRAT Adobe Workshops

A critical preservation component of the Missions Initiative is the documentation and dissemination of traditional building practices. This ensures the appropriate restoration, maintenance, and stewardship of the integrated cultural heritage for current and future generations on both sides of the international border. The disappearance of these traditional skills is a concern shared by both NPS and INAH and is reflected in the creation, and success, of NPS' Vanishing Treasures program.

Since 1994, NPS and INAH have been collaborating with New Mexico-based Cornerstones Community Partnerships to conduct workshops. Known as TICRAT (*Taller Internacional de Conservación y Restauración de Arquitectura de Tierra* – International Workshop on the Conservation and Restoration of Earthen Architecture), these workshops teach field-based skills and disseminate adobe and plaster techniques to a number of communities, primarily in New Mexico and Chihuahua. By gathering adobe experts from both Mexico and the United States and working

with local communities to preserve their adobe architectural heritage, TICRATs have become an effective grass-roots effort to counter the disappearance of traditional building practices.

Consistent with its goals, the Missions Initiative expanded the TICRAT model to target regions throughout the Missions Initiative network in both Mexico and the United States (Fig. 3). TICRAT AZ | SON took place in 2008 as a binational adobe workshop held at both Tumacácori NHP, Arizona and Pitiquito Sonora. TICRAT | baja california, which followed in 2011, was based at Mision San Vicente Ferrer near Ensenada, Baja California, Mexico and drew professionals from throughout the southwestern parks. Most recently, in March 2013, TICRAT | arizona took the model further by holding workshop sessions at the prehistoric (but still earthen) Casa Grande Ruins NM, as well as at Tumacácori NHP, with conservation laboratory tours at NPS' Western Archeological Conservation Center and the University of Arizona.

The typical TICRAT runs approximately



Figure 3: While representing a large geographic region, the Missions Initiative has identified sub-regions based on the north-south axes between American and Mexican states that were historically linked.

one week and accommodates approximately 30 participants: a combination of NPS and INAH craftsmen as well as other public agency officials, academics, private sector building professionals, community participants, and students representing states on both sides of the border. Mexican and American master teachers and participants work side-by-side in a bilingual setting. The programs consist of a pre-workshop review of technical content and videos that are available on the Missions Initiative website, workshop presentations, tours, and most importantly, hands-on field sessions. The field sessions cover the technical areas of building assessment and stabilization, adobe brickmaking, lime production, as well as plaster and pigment application. In addition to the rich discussions during the field sessions and over meals, TICRATs usually include roundtable discussions of current issues facing adobe conservation and the preservation of mission communities, as well as the commonalities, differences, and future trends of cultural resource management in both countries. (Figures 4-8)

While the fundamental goal of the TICRAT is to develop partnerships between preservation colleagues in Mexico and the United States, the 2008 TICRAT also coincided with the U.S. State Department-sponsored visit of a delegation of cultural heritage specialists from Afghanistan who participated in all of the activities of the workshop. In addition, they gave a presentation on Afghan traditions of earthen architecture and the challenges of preservation within a climate of conflict. (Figure 9)

The impact of the TICRAT model of assessment and preservation treatment of traditional building materials can be mea-



Figure 4: One module of TICRAT 2013 focused on the creation and application of a natural paint mixture made with pigments, cactus juice, and lime plaster.



Figure 5: Former Tumacácori NHP Superintendent Lisa Carrico (left) with University of Arizona Dean Janice Cervelli (second left) putting mud into an adobe brick form during TICRAT 2008.



Figure 6: INAH restoration architect Abby Valenzuela Rivera demonstrating lime slaking - the hydration process in the production of lime plaster - as part of TICRAT 2013.



Figure 7: Mexican and American TICRAT 2011 participants work side-by-side on the mud plaster repair at Mision San Vicente Ferrer near Ensenada, Baja California, Mexico.



Figure 8: While the exchange of technical knowledge is one goal of the TICRAT workshops, another, equally important goal is sharing experiences and building relationships across disciplines, institutions, and international boundaries.

sured in many ways. In the three Missions Initiative-funded TICRAT workshops held so far, 47 NPS employees, representing 15 park units throughout the Intermountain Region, have participated. Each of the TICRATs has also engaged with local communities elevating the status of local mission communities as drivers of heritage tourism as well as the investment in the traditional building trade professionals that are needed to sustain them. Equally important has been the involvement of university students of all disciplines, both domestic and international, who represent the next generation of cultural resource professionals and stewards of mission sites (Figure 10). To ensure that the impact of the content of each TICRAT extends beyond the participants' experience and is accessible to as broad an audience as possible, videos and digital presentations of each of the 2008 TICRAT sessions are available on the Missions Initiative website in both English and Spanish. These mate-



Figure 9: As part of an international training program funded by the U.S. Department of State, participants of TICRAT 2008 included a team of archeological site managers from Afghanistan.



*Figure 10: Since their inception, TICRAT workshops have engaged local university students and community members affiliated with the mission sites to build partnerships and pride that will help maintain traditional building practices in the community and foster heritage tourism for the community.*



*Figure 11: TICRAT 2008 was filmed as part of a program to create web-accessible video seminars now available on the Missions Initiative website. Here, retired NPS adobero David Yubeta demonstrates for the camera a practical field method for determining the right material consistency for making adobe bricks.*

rials have now become a primary resource of adobe construction principles, technical skills, and the discussion of current issues for a worldwide audience. This invaluable web-based tool was made possible by a grant from the Southwestern Foundation for Education and Historical Preservation, demonstrating the opportunities for Missions Initiative funding partnerships outside the NPS. (Figure 11)

This adobe workshop was funded by three task agreements (2006 - IMRICO, 2010 - Tumacácori NHP, and 2013 - Tumacácori NHP). There is currently funding for two additional TICRATs for 2014 and 2015, the venues for which will depend on travel restrictions for NPS and Vanishing Treasures employees and parks, as one of the target audiences for the dissemination of traditional building techniques.

### *Mission Sites Inventory and Meta-Database*

While much of the attention is focused on the physical remains of the hundreds of mission sites in the states of California, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Coahuila, Nueva Leon, Tamaulipas, Chihuahua, Sonora and Baja California, efforts in the Inventory and Meta-Database task agreement are focused on making the thousands of documents and maps related to the entire Spanish Colonial enterprise accessible for research and interpretation. The goal is to provide a searchable, web-based, single-portal, meta-database that integrates mission-related documents and records from archives at national parks, academic institutions, and other archive repositories. Today, the Missions Sites Inventory and Meta-Database has integrated access to two significant databases from National Park Service units: the Spanish Colonial Research Center (SPCO) and Tumacácori NHP. SPCO's database represents 22 years of research into numerous archives from around the world, but until now had not been accessible outside the Center's location at the University of New Mexico. Tumacácori NHP's "Missions 2000" database has compiled Spanish mission records of the *Pimeria Alta* region (southern Arizona and northern Sonora, Mexico) containing baptisms, marriages, and burials from the late seventeenth century to the mid-nineteenth century. In addition to combining access to other documentary collections, future efforts will focus on the integration of mission-based resource location, condition, management, and protection data from multiple cultural resource management agencies (Figure 12).

This 2009 task agreement is ongoing and funded by San Antonio Missions NHP.



*Figure 12: The Mission Sites Inventory and Meta-Database project has developed a web-based, keyword search portal to access records and citations for Spanish Colonial documentary materials housed in multiple collections.*

### *IMOU and Sister Parks Arrangement*

The foundational instrument of collaboration for the establishment of the Missions Initiative was an International Memorandum of Understanding (IMOU) between NPS and INAH, adopted in 1998. In partnership with the NPS Office of International Affairs, this IMOU was renewed in 2011 enabling a second instrument of collaboration, a Sister Parks Arrangement (SPA), to be established between Casa Grande Ruins NM, Arizona USA and the Archaeological Zone of Paquimé, Chihuahua, Mexico, a UNESCO-designated World Heritage Site. This is only the second such agreement between cultural resource parks in the US and Mexico. The first was between Mesa Verde NP and Monte Alban Archaeological Zone.

All this background work culminated in a May 2012 signing ceremony with presentations and working group meetings at Casa Grande NM attended by Paquimé's director Eduardo Gamboa Carrera. (Figure 13) The signing ceremony was followed by an invitation to present at the "25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Declaration of Oaxaca and Monte Alban as World Heritage Sites" in Oaxaca, Mexico. This December 2012 conference included the participation of INAH directors from each of Mexico's 27 World Heritage Sites and motivated all of us to amplify the development of sister park relations between the two countries as a near-term goal.

Consistent with Missions Initiative objectives, the SPA outlined a work plan to facilitate the exchange of cultural resource management and technical expertise between the two parks. While neither of these sites is directly related to Spanish Colonial missions, the institutional agreement instruments that have been generated from this project will pave the way for future projects that do involve mission sites and that will further the objectives of the Missions Initiative and its integrated partner, the Vanishing Treasures Program.

This 2008 task agreement was completed in 2013 and was funded by Casa Grande Ruins NM.

### *Preservation Best Practices*

This task agreement creates a compendium of preservation case studies and best practices that address the current lack of shared, multi-institutional knowledge in the area of preservation and cultural resource management of mission sites. The premise of this and other Missions Initiative projects is that Spanish Colonial mission resources know no jurisdictional

boundaries and individual site managers can learn much from the preservation practices of affiliated institutions, agencies, and governments outside the U.S. National Park Service whose shared goal is the preservation and stewardship of mission sites. The product of this project will be a bilingual, web-based set of concise



*Figure 13: Casa Grande Ruins NM Superintendent Karl Cordova (left) and Paquimé Archaeological Zone Director Eduardo Gamboa Carrera (right) signed a Sister Parks Arrangement agreement as a model program for binational communication, research, and exchange.*

summaries of best practices from selected mission sites throughout the Missions Initiative network. These best practices are based on a set of evaluative criteria ranging from technical practices, site management policies, and interpretive tools to financial support strategies and models for measuring economic development impact of heritage tourism on local communities. These summaries will be available as an online resource on the Missions Initiative website and will be published in serialized form through the Southwest Mission Research Center's journal, *Revista*. The ultimate goal is to highlight the success stories that exist throughout the Missions Initiative network and to provide heritage professionals of all disciplines with comprehensive tools for mission sites at all stages of preservation development.

This 2010 task agreement is ongoing and funded by Tumacácori NHP.

### *Missions Initiative Administration*

This is the umbrella task agreement that coordinates the efforts and products of the Missions Initiative's various proj-

ects, including the conferring of meetings with stakeholders, partners, and working groups. Fundamental to the administration of the Missions Initiative was the establishment of a centralized communications network. This has been largely accomplished through the development of the bilingual Missions Initiative website, [www.missions.arizona.edu](http://www.missions.arizona.edu). The website has become a central clearinghouse for the dissemination of Missions Initiative foundational documents, objectives, and activities. It has also become a repository for the products of our projects and a valued resource for its growing content.

This 2005 task agreement was completed in 2010, funded by IMRICO (now MABCO), and facilitated under the sequential leadership tenures of Ann Rasor (TUMA), Kathy Billings (PECO), and Jeremy Moss (TUMA).

### *The Future of the Missions Initiative*

A decade of organization management and projects has provided the opportunity to reflect on the successes and challenges of implementing and sustaining the Missions Initiative. Below are some of my observations as the Missions Initiative program looks forward to the next ten years.

### *Traditional Building Materials Training and Research*

The single most enduring legacy of the Missions Initiative has been its support of TICRAT. These adobe workshops have engendered a broad-reaching array of impacts, all of which are consistent with the program's objectives. There is a critical need in the parks, and other US cultural resource stewardship agencies, to develop, maintain, and enhance skill levels in traditional building practices. This should encompass the entire array of knowledge from traditional field-based technical skills to lab-based materials conservation research. The 2013 TICRAT experimented with the integration of field- and lab-based programs, as well as with the expansion of the relationship between national parks and universities as partners, with mutually beneficial goals of research, service-learning curricula, and workforce training. Recent working group discussions have identified a need to advocate for a long-term investment in park personnel training through a formalized curriculum focused on the traditional building practices of the American Southwest. While this could be a physical enterprise such as the National Center for Preservation Technology and

Training (NCPTT) or Western Center for Historic Preservation (WCHP), perhaps a better model might be a combination of web-based curriculum with hands-on workshops at various park venues. The emerging TICRAT model of asynchronous instructional videos, combined with interactive field and lab workshops has the potential to provide a self-sustaining program that could lead to certification appropriate to the needs of the NPS as well as other partner groups.

#### *Spanish Colonial Research and Scholarship*

While there has been a marked increase in historic preservation programs at public universities in the American Southwest, they have overwhelmingly been based in archeology and design disciplines, and not in the humanities. Their content has more often focused on providing tools to prepare cultural resource management and design professionals and less in the scholarly research and publication of Spanish Colonial history. Sadly, this appears to be a reflection of an age of decreasing funding for public universities and an increased focus on Science-Technology-Engineering-Math disciplines. This requires the Missions Initiative to develop even stronger collaborations with private universities, where much of this scholarship is centered, to integrate humanities based research with the science based foci of public universities.

#### *Travel Restrictions*

One of the biggest impediments to implementing the Missions Initiative objectives is the increasing restrictions on travel by NPS personnel, both internationally and domestically. As just one example, the 2013 sequestration prevented seven NPS personnel from traveling to TICRAT|arizona in March, even after their registration and travel had already been paid. The consequence is that the intended international exchange has become increasingly one-sided, with only Mexicans being able to experience American parks and personnel. This will also create a barrier to the increased development of Sister Park Arrangements as a valuable park-to-park vehicle of collaboration. Another unintended consequence is that I, as a CESU partner without the same restrictions, am able to travel to represent the Missions Initiative, but am often also seen as representing the National Park Service, despite attempts to convince my Mexican colleagues otherwise. To help rebalance international

interaction, there is a need for the Missions Initiative to work with NPS' Mexican American Border Conservation Office (MABCO, formerly IMRICO) to advocate for and facilitate international relations, agreements, and projects.

#### *Communication, Communication, Communication*

The Missions Initiative needs to expand its strategic objective of communication by creating and maintaining more diverse media tools. In an era of limited travel funding, Missions Initiative partnership meetings are typically conference calls, but these are not effective because they cannot provide the quality of collaborative engagement necessary for the size of the group represented by the entire Missions Initiative network. In addition, personnel in NPS units, including the mission parks, change frequently so there is a need to continually educate the new personnel about the Missions Initiative's objectives, successes, and opportunities.

The website, our primary communication tool, currently reflects the incremental, project-based evolution of the Missions Initiative but is now undergoing a redesign to provide a more integrated user access interface. This will be an opportunity to tie together projects, thematic content, and search capacity to reflect Mission Initiative's new role as a content provider. The need to provide new, alternative methods of communications will require a consistent allocation of resources to be successful.

#### *Vanishing Treasures and the Missions Initiative: A Developing Partnership*

Over the last ten years, it has become clear that there was a great deal of overlap between the purpose, priorities, and objectives of the Missions Initiative and Vanishing Treasures Program. This is especially evident in the areas of traditional building practices, training, and efficient project implementation.

The Missions Initiative's multidisciplinary, multi-agency, multinational organizational structure, administered by an academic institution, presents a model that could benefit Vanishing Treasures, especially as it envisions its next generation of park professionals. The role of the university is also significant in its function as a neutral entity, providing it with a unique perspective from which to observe activities across multiple parks. Like Vanishing Treasures, it can provide communication, facilitation, and objective recommendations among and

between the parks; activities that if left up to the individual parks, would be difficult to advocate or implement.

A formal partnership between the Missions Initiative and Vanishing Treasures would also allow a vehicle for the National Park Service to look outside the agency for models of collaboration, resource stewardship, project facilitation, and cooperative ventures. Both the Missions Initiative partnership and the Vanishing Treasures Program are working to develop solid financial sustainability in an era of increasing demand and decreasing resources. Creating a partnership between the Missions Initiative and Vanishing Treasures will allow both to work collaboratively toward common goals without competition for resources, and to begin development of a nonprofit entity to seek funding from external sources for mutually beneficial projects.

Considering the impressive amount of work accomplished through its projects along with the equally impressive low total cost over the course of its existence, the Missions Initiative has been a tremendous success. However, if the Missions Initiative is to remain financially sustainable, it needs to develop a balance of funding sources from throughout its network of public, private, and nonprofit institutions, agencies, governments, and organizations. The partnership agreement currently under development with Vanishing Treasures is the first step in that direction. Creating a partnership between the Missions Initiative and Vanishing Treasures will allow both to work collaboratively toward common goals without competition for resources, and to begin development of a non-profit entity to seek funding from external sources for mutually beneficial projects. Considering the impressive amount of work represented in the Missions Initiative projects and the equally impressive low total cost, it is a tremendous bargain. However, if the Missions Initiative is to maintain financial sustainability, it needs to develop a balance of funding sources from throughout its network.

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