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ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE NEW DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION

John Coster
Department of Conservation
Auckland

The recent reorganisation of agencies responsible for environmental administration in New Zealand began in effect with publication of the report "Environment 1986" in 1985. This report recommended the dismembering of the two main agencies responsible for the Crown estate, the New Zealand Forest Service and the Department of Lands and Survey. Subsequently, two profit-oriented corporations (the Land Development and Management Corporation and the Forestry Corporation) and an environmental protection agency (the Department of Conservation) took over the land management functions of these two agencies. The Department of Conservation came into existence, under the Conservation Act 1987, on April 1st this year. The Department has a major role as an advocate for conservation values. It is also responsible for the management and administration of national parks and reserves, foreshores, some lake and river margins, former forest parks, forest and wildlife sanctuaries and some other areas of Crown Land. Of particular relevance to archaeology is the fact that the Department's empowering Act gives it responsibility for the management of historic places (including archaeological sites) on land under its care. The Historic Places Trust, responsible for administration of the Historic Places Act 1980, is an integral part of the Department.

The Department's structure reflects a philosophy of devolution of responsibility to regional and field staff, rather than one of centralised control. Eight regional offices, each under the control of a Regional Manager, service 34 districts, each managed by a District Conservator. The Department at present employs 14 archaeologists, divided almost equally between Central Office and three of the eight regions. The former archaeology section of the Historic Places Trust is now part of the Department's Science and Research Directorate, with five staff based in Wellington and two Regional Archaeologists in Hamilton and Auckland respectively. The Auckland Regional Archaeologist also supervises a group of waged workers who undertake a variety of investigatory and mitigation work required under the Historic Places Act. In addition, the Hokitika region employs one archaeologist on its permanent staff as a Conservation Officer, the Hamilton region employs one on contract and the Auckland region employs five on contract or wages. These last seven individuals were formerly employed by the New Zealand Forest Service or the Department of Lands and Survey. The Department of Conservation is now the only government agency in New Zealand which employs archaeologists.

It is not clear at present how archaeology will be structured in the new Department, although the subject is under active consideration. No firm decision has yet been made, for example, on how the archaeological requirements of the Historic Places Trust will be serviced. Nor is it clear what the precise role of the Trust's Archaeology Committee, or of the Central Office Science Directorate archaeologists, will be. One recent proposal relating to the regions is that, in addition to the two regional archaeologists, eight contract archaeologists should be employed in the Auckland region and one further staff position created in the Hamilton region. These would replace the existing positions outlined above.

The nine archaeologists in Auckland would, it is suggested, be divided between a 'Regulatory and Research Unit', responsible to the Central Office for administration of the statutory requirements of the Historic Places Act, and a 'Management and Research Unit' which would be responsible to the Regional Manager for the management of historic places, other than buildings, on land administered by the Department. If this model is successful in the Auckland region, it may be extended to other regions.

It must be stressed that none of the above proposals are firm. Neither at central nor at regional level is it clear exactly how the Department's archaeological effort will be organised. Nor is it yet clear how the separate groups of archaeologists employed at regional and central levels will relate to each other. There has been considerable internal discussion on alternative models, and a lot of thought being put into them. There are still, however, a great number of questions and relatively few answers. With that in mind, I should like to offer some personal observations on the structure of public archaeology in New Zealand.

Firstly, I believe it is important that public archaeology, or cultural resource management, in New Zealand should be as broadly based and flexible as possible. In crude terms, I feel that the more people employ archaeologists, in different ways and in different places, the better. It is only thus that we as a profession can be fully in touch with the conflicting demands of the society that we serve and with the multiplicity and subtlety of the threats to the resource that we are committed to protect.

I see the continued employment of archaeologists by museums, universities and development agencies as being a vital counterpoise to the potentially narrow regulatory and conservation management roles of archaeologists employed in the Department of Conservation. The more I see of public archaeology in New

Zealand, the more sceptical I become of any simplistic structural model based on McKinlay's (1973:64) call for an all-encompassing 'State Archaeological Agency' or the emphasis of McFadgen and Daniels (1970) on 'sites-as-sources-of-scientific-information' as a rationale for protecting our historic heritage. The more holistic our approach, the more we can incorporate archaeology, history and traditional Maori values into a recognisable overall pattern of protected natural and cultural landscapes. The more we can involve local communities in the protection of these values, the better the chances of survival of our archaeological sites. I would be deeply concerned if our administration of public archaeology moved away from a broad-based model towards the type of hierarchical, centralised, inflexible structure which has in the past characterised much of New Zealand's bureaucracy. In this regard, I am uneasy about the fact that whereas on March 31st, three separate government agencies employed archaeologists, that number was reduced to one on April 1st. At the same time, I see the employment of management-oriented archaeologists directly responsible to Regional Managers, in line with the Department's general philosophy of delegation of responsibility to the Regions and Districts, as being a hopeful sign for the future. This is not to deny the importance of the Central Office Science Directorate, and the Trust's Archaeology Committee, as co-ordinating bodies. They could provide a broader perspective and promote overall policies and priorities to guide the future course of site inventory, assessment, management and regulation throughout the country. Of particular significance is their role in ensuring that professional standards are maintained within the Department.

The second point which concerns me is the lack of open debate about archaeological options for the new Department of Conservation within the archaeological community over the last couple of years. Prior to the establishment of the Department, a number of groups, including staff of the Universities of Auckland and Otago (e.g. Anderson *et al.*, 1985), the Institute of New Zealand Archaeologists (1985, 1986), the New Zealand Archaeological Association (Jeal, 1986), Historic Places Trust staff (1986; Anon, 1985; Bulmer, 1986) and the Archaeology Committee (N.Z.H.P.T., 1986) made their own submissions on the subject. These submissions were, however, generally uncoordinated and often disparate. Only one has been published in the Newsletter and that incompletely. I know of only one public discussion, organised by the Institute of New Zealand Archaeologists in Auckland in August 1985, which has addressed the issues of public archaeology under the new environmental administration. At no time has a group representative of all the archaeologists involved met to discuss the likely effects or nature of the proposed changes. I do not think that the

lack of information available at the time was sufficient reason for this lack of debate. Rather, I see an unwillingness among archaeologists, myself included, to put aside perceived personal advantage and openly discuss the fundamental differences of opinion, often based on personalities, which exist among those responsible for public archaeology in New Zealand. I still believe, however, that it is not too late for the wider archaeological community, through the New Zealand Archaeological Association, to have an influence on the course of events in the near future. I would hope that the Association might initiate action to this end. Failing that, I would hope at the very least for open discussions among those Department of Conservation employees who are directly involved.

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