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**CONSERVATION OF MUSEUM OBJECTS  
FOR THE  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE,  
NEZ PERCE NATIONAL HISTORIC PARK**

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by

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in partial fulfillment of  
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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### **Background and Objectives**

The Statement of Work for this project stated that the Nez Perce National Historical Park (NEPE) and the Alfred W. Bowers Laboratory of Anthropology would work cooperatively to assess and stabilize the condition of 1,100 to 1,164 artifacts collected from the Big Hole Battlefield, a unit of NEPE and the site of a tragic attack by the U.S. Army on a Nez Perce camp, August 9-10, 1877. In the years that followed the attack, it became known that the Battlefield was littered with innumerable artifacts. Attempts to understand the complexity of the site officially began with both amateur and professional surveys of the Battlefield. As a result of these efforts approximately 3,000 items have been collected from the Battlefield and are in various states of stability. More than 1,000 of these items have never undergone modern laboratory treatment to insure stabilization or long-term preservation. These items consist of various metal types (including steel, iron, brass, copper, and lead).

The objective of this project was to apply modern conservation treatment to these artifacts, thereby securing the intrinsic value of these artifacts. Additionally, this project was to provide a record of each artifact treated and the type of treatment used.

### **Findings**

The Laboratory of Anthropology treated 1,961 artifacts from 19 November 2004 to 21 July 2005. During the course of this work another 942 artifacts were brought in for conservation and treatment in addition to the 1,164 original artifacts. A total of 145 items (including six artifacts listed in the inventory but not received) were left untreated. Since the majority of items submitted to the Laboratory were of similar classes the treatments were quickly routinized and unremarkable. Few of the items ( $n=25$ ,  $>1\%$ ) submitted for conservation were found to be degraded to the point that further work was not recommended. Additionally, some items were coated with paint and were therefore not subjected to any treatments. Please see Appendix 5 for a comprehensive listing of all items not treated.

In all cases where treatments were applied, the results were acceptable and long term stabilization secured.