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A REVIEW OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION FUNDING IN MICRONESIA 1986–2003

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The recent political independence of Micronesian communities that once formed the United Nations Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TTPI) (administered by the United States) has driven some rapid and wide-ranging developments. Not all changes have been welcomed by local communities, and a strong desire for valued cultural elements to be preserved in culturally appropriate ways has emerged. Current management of formal historic preservation processes in Micronesia predominantly follows western concepts, particularly those used by the United States of America. Historic Preservation legislation originating in the U.S. has been largely transferred into local Micronesian legal and administrative frameworks.

With few exceptions, historic preservation in Micronesia is also largely funded by external entities, and once again, the United States provides the bulk of that funding. The cultural differences that are clearly apparent between the U.S. and Micronesian political entities continue to generate misunderstandings, confusion, and frustration on both sides. Donor funded preservation programmes tend to preserve cultural elements that are favoured by those donors and, in the past at least, local preferences have often not been given the emphasis they deserve. Funding of historic preservation in Micronesia involves several sources and there are significant differences between the Freely Associated States (FAS) and Guam and the CNMI.

In Micronesia, historic preservation has not always been the formal process it is today—rather, it was previously incorporated as part of the normal activities of daily life. While this is still the case within some cultures today, particularly those that are more traditional in character, external pressures are mounting. Cultural influences introduced from external and largely colonial sources have resulted in some elements of traditional Micronesian cultures losing popularity and becoming less frequently practiced (O'Neill & Spennemann 2006a; 2006b; 2006c). Consequently, the traditional,

informal processes of cultural reinforcement and development began to weaken.

As a formal practice, Historic Preservation in Micronesia began at about the same time as it did in the United States and, based upon American perceptions of geo-political realities at the time, was a natural offshoot of the U.S. programme (King 2006). The Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TTPI) was a United Nations mandated territory perceived by American militarists and some politicians as critical to American purposes. The doctrine of “strategic denial” drove America’s management of the territory during the international con-

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frontation of the “Cold War” (Petersen 2004; Chutaro and Heine 2003). As such, it was politically expedient for the United States of America to demonstrate it considered the TTPI part of U.S. territory. One way to do so was to implement elements of U.S. legislation locally—and the legislation relating to Historic Preservation was easily and quickly imported.

Within the TTPI, responsibility for historic preservation was initially centred in Saipan, then the headquarters of the TTPI. A Historic Preservation Office was established in 1974. It had a small staff and a limited budget furnished by the U.S. Historic Preservation Fund, administered by the U.S. National Park Service (NPS). It was given the enormous task of preserving heritage throughout nearly 15 million square kilometres of the TTPI.

Significant political, linguistic and cultural differences had long existed between the sub-districts of the TTPI. These resulted in the emergence of several Micronesian political entities—the CNMI, the FSM, the RMI and the ROP. In tacit recognition of the variety of cultures within Micronesia, Historic Preservation Offices were established in each entity. Further, in addition to a National Office in the FSM, separate offices were also established at the state level (Chuuk, Kosrae, Pohnpei and Yap). With the assistance and strong encouragement of the U.S. NPS, the individual HPOs within Micronesia are developing a strong ethos of working together to achieve their joint and several ends.

This paper will consider the nature, extent and management of funding provided to the political entities of Micronesia for Historic Preservation purposes. The efficacy of donor-imposed “guidelines”, managerial controls, bureaucratic regulations such as formal auditing and reporting procedures, and the impact of cultural differences between donor and recipient entities will also be addressed.

This paper draws on published sources, unpublished archival files held by the U.S. NPS and on interviews with key staff.

FUNDING FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Funding of historic preservation efforts in Micronesia occurs on different levels and there

are significant differences between the Freely Associated States (FAS) and Guam and the CNMI in how that funding is raised. Historic preservation management processes, functions and attitudes in Guam and the CNMI are much more closely oriented to U.S. mainland states than are those of the FAS. For instance, Rudo (2001) noted “Guam and the CNMI are much more assimilated to sort of mainland U.S. values. They are much more integrated into the U.S. style of capitalist economy whereas the Micronesian nations either haven’t made that transition yet or are only starting to.”

All Micronesian political entities receive funding through Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) grants to perform approved projects. Those funded through the HPF need not directly involve preservation of a specific element of heritage. Some of the funding may be used for training, or travel, or administration purposes – though all must have a preservation connection. For example, an acceptable training program may involve techniques to preserve World War II relics, or travel expenses may cover attendance at NPS meetings in either the U.S.A. or a Micronesian country.

In Guam and the CNMI, funding is also received from processing and licensing development applications or from fining developers for non-compliance. This was also the case in the RMI, but in Guam and the CNMI this type of funding is more common. For instance, Bulgrin (2002) expressed his opinion that most of the drive for preservation projects in the CNMI is a result of development. He also noted the application of fines and how those fines were used by giving some illustrations:

“To give you some idea of the kinds of fines that did happen. Our museum on Saipan is the old Japanese Hospital, much of the renovation occurred through fines or through repayment in kind by contractors. Our office, the same thing. We recently had an outdoor sink and a major concrete pad put in for an archaeological lab area, including concrete legs for our drying screen and that was about a \$1200 fine for a contractor that had destroyed a World War II site.” (Bulgrin 2002).

Russell (1999) explained that there was “a lot of competition” for CNMI government

funding. What typically happened was for the CNMI HPO to receive enough funds “to basically keep an office opened but not funds sufficient to go out and renovate buildings or structures and really take care of them properly.”

Historic Preservation Offices may also apply for grants from external governments and non-government organisations. For example, Mead (2002) noted the diversification of funding achieved by the Alele Museum in the RMI including obtaining significant funds from the Republic of China, Australia and FEMA among other sources. Although Alele and the RMI HPO work closely together, they are separate organisations and these types of funds are not usually accessible by the HPO as it is a government department.

Some funding is also received from Micronesian governments, a fact which demonstrates a level of commitment to the preservation of their heritage. Look (2001) referred to the Yap legislature providing separate, non-HPF, funding to “rebuild traditional men’s meeting houses... to keep the traditions and crafts alive that were disappearing.” It is however true that much of the national income received by Guam, the CNMI and the FAS currently comes from the United States Federal Government as conditions of covenant agreements.

MANAGEMENT PROCESSES

Several Micronesian HPO and U.S. NPS staff, and some Micronesian government officials are becoming increasingly frustrated with processes for communicating, defining, prioritising, recording and reporting historic preservation projects. Whenever an HPO wants to fund activities through the HPF, it must be able to “tie them back to the major programme areas because we [U.S. NPS] have to be able to justify the use of grant funds” (Falk-Creech 2001). Many involved in these activities perceive the forms required by the U.S. Government bureaucracy to be almost endless and unnecessarily complex. The inordinate complexity of government forms is acknowledged almost universally but when cultures with little history of either forms or writing are involved, the complexity of the entire process

increases greatly. When those cultures also do not speak English as their primary or preferred language, any strict insistence on a bureaucratically correct completion of forms becomes a potentially expensive and frustrating burden to both parties. In such circumstances, increased demands are made on limited resources and the administrative share of expenditure increases. This is largely self-defeating as available funds are used to satisfy bureaucratic demands instead of financing preservation projects.

The frustration is abundantly clear and may be illustrated in the following examples. A comment (informal but nevertheless very emphatic) was made by one of the Micronesian Historic Preservation Officers during the Micronesian Endowment for Historic Preservation (MEHP) meeting in Pohnpei in 2001. In the context of a discussion on the complexities and mutual frustrations of the process, he said; “it is almost not worth our while bothering with the HPF any more”. Furthermore, one NPS officer noted that another Historic Preservation Officer had stated that his country should pull out of the HPF process completely because the U.S. Government put too many restrictions on what could be done with the grants and how they had to be used, audited and reported.

Much time and effort is expended by NPS staff on controlling/managing what are at times minor amounts of money allocated to Micronesian HPO’s. One extreme example illustrates this well. A letter (ref H36 PGSO-PC) written by the NPS and dated August 9, 2000 included the statement, “The Federal share of the Prehistory of the Northern Mariana’s Symposium project has been decreased by \$0.80 and amended from \$4,000 to \$3,999.00” (sic). This letter required several follow-ups and several responses, and the cost of mailing them was greater than the amount in question. It resulted in a great deal of frustration at both ends of the postal service, all in an attempt to account for the miniscule amount of 80 U.S. cents. Much time, energy and expense were spent by both the NPS and the Micronesian HPO to “correct” a matter involving less than one U.S. dollar, all in order to fulfil a small part

of a huge bureaucracy's reporting and budgetary requirements.

From the viewpoint of Micronesian requirements, this was an absurd waste of resources. And, when one considers the size of the United States budget it is difficult not to agree. However, from the viewpoint of a culture such as that of the U.S. central bureaucracy, it was seen as an essential part of good management.¹

THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION FUND

The U.S. Historic Preservation Act of 1966 authorised the Secretary of the Interior to grant funds for historic preservation in Micronesia. In 1986, the legislation was amended so that it could be applied to the Freely Associated States of Micronesia (FAS). The HPF grant program provides funding to FAS Historic Preservation Offices. Grants are based upon detailed submissions of proposed projects that may be approved, subject to specifically articulated conditions. This financial support is provided so the following specific functions, as reported by Falk-Creech (2002), may be performed:

Survey -	historic, archaeological, and traditional resources
Maintain -	an inventory of such resources
Register -	significant sites on the National Register
Integrate -	preservation concerns into all levels of civic planning
Foster -	public knowledge and appreciation of cultural elements
Provide -	information, education, and training
Review -	Federally funded, licensed, or permitted undertakings for projects which may affect historic properties

Over a seventeen-year period from 1986 to 2003, the HPF provided substantial amounts of money to the HPOs of the Freely Associated States of ROP, FSM and RMI, as well as to Guam and the CNMI to fulfil these tasks. Expenditures by the HPOs of the FAS were gathered in 2001 from archival records held by

NPS in Oakland, California, and are summarized in Table 1. Data for Guam and CNMI were not accessible during the time available for their collection. They were later provided by Falk-Creech (2002) for the period from 2001 to 2003, however, these were only available in total figures and thus could not be categorized in the same way as FAS data.

These data do not necessarily represent the total amounts that were available to be spent on preservation activities. They comprise those funds provided by the U.S. directly through the HPF and do not include funding from other governments, organisations, corporations or individuals. Neither do they include funding from the U.S. provided through other programmes. The total amount expended through the HPF in the five political entities of Guam, CNMI, RPO, FSM and RMI during this 18-year period was a little less than \$11 million.

These funds are not restricted to specific projects only. They may be used for a range of activities associated with preservation. For example, activities considered by NPS to be eligible include direct expenditures (such as preservation project costs, and site maintenance, acquisition and development costs). Eligible indirect expenditures include travel, planning, administration, public education, expenses associated with review boards, and so forth. Costs for the provision of "professional services" (for example, hiring an archaeologist or an ethnographer) may also be funded through the HPF. Although expensive, these services have now become a non-negotiable requirement by the NPS as it strives to build what it sees as greater levels of professionalism and preservation expertise within Micronesian communities.

Utilisation of HPF monies since 1986 by HPOs of the FAS has been summarized in three categories. Two large areas of expense (travel and personnel) have been separated out from total expenditure with the remainder (largely comprising costs that may be directly associated with preservation activities) categorized as "other". Comparison of these three categories illustrates some of the fiscal and management difficulties that the HPOs of the Freely Associated States experience.

Table 1 Historic Preservation Fund Contributions in U.S. Dollars

	FSM NATIONAL	CHUUK STATE	KOSRAE STATE	POHNPEI STATE	YAP STATE	FSM SUB TOTAL	RMI	ROP	FAS TOTAL	GUAM	CNMI
1986	0	11,854	22,200	10,655	8,600	53,309	23,326	18,000	94,635	n/a	n/a
1987	0	18,545	25,950	18,545	26,350	89,390	51,945	49,950	191,285	n/a	n/a
1988	18,000	23,000	28,970	22,300	31,000	125,258	59,441	57,227	241,926	n/a	n/a
1989	21,354	27,429	35,899	27,429	30,252	144,352	65,706	65,706	275,764	n/a	n/a
1990	23,548	33,357	33,357	33,357	33,357	158,966	72,450	72,450	303,866	n/a	n/a
1991	88,566	36,000	36,000	36,000	36,000	234,557	122,450	122,450	479,457	n/a	n/a
1992	92,976	36,000	36,000	36,000	36,000	238,968	122,450	122,450	483,868	n/a	n/a
1993	95,269	36,250	35,688	36,250	36,250	241,700	123,057	123,057	487,814	n/a	n/a
1994	100,087	43,050	37,216	43,450	43,050	268,847	157,000	157,803	583,650	n/a	n/a
1995	99,569	43,050	49,850	43,050	36,250	273,764	157,503	157,503	588,770	n/a	n/a
1996	99,569	31,250	43,050	44,550	43,050	263,465	149,625	149,625	562,715	n/a	n/a
1997	113,175	36,250	36,250	46,550	43,050	277,272	149,625	149,625	576,522	n/a	n/a
1998	79,176	0	59,668	59,666	59,666	260,174	149,625	149,625	559,424	n/a	n/a
1999	68,176	6,000	62,197	56,196	62,196	256,764	159,819	159,819	576,402	n/a	n/a
2000	79,176	29,632	116,578	52,577	58,577	338,540	160,847	160,847	660,234	n/a	n/a
2001	n/a	44,000	82,820	70,817	89,620	287,257	236,679	236,679	760,615	405,968	405,676
2002	n/a	26,000	62,000	44,480	166,800	299,280	197,073	197,073	693,426	338,033	337,790
2003	n/a	44,000	54,000	55,000	129,000	282,000	171,949	171,949	625,898	383,375	384,238

Notes: Data for 1986-2000 sourced from U.S. NPS archives in Oakland, CA; data for 2001-2003 sourced from Falk-Creech (2002). Cells showing "n/a" indicate the data was not available at time of compilation.

In such a wide-spread region as Micronesia, which covers an area that is approximately the same size as the continental U.S.A., travel is not a “perk”, it is an expensive necessity. To make things worse, because of the dispersed nature of population centres, there is no realistic option but to use the most efficient, yet most expensive, form of transportation – air travel.

The states of the FSM (Chuuk, Kosrae, Pohnpei and Yap) are shown separately to more clearly permit comparison of the funding received by each of the FSM HPOs (Figure 1). It illustrates one of the difficulties the NPS has frequently experienced. NPS has attempted to formulate an equitable method of distributing HPF funding to the HPOs while at the same time encouraging “good management” and effective preservation of all Micronesian cultures. For instance, if available funds were to be dis-

tributed evenly between the three FAS entities, then distinctive Micronesian cultural groups within the FSM would not receive a share that could be considered equitable. This has been an on-going concern for NPS staff responsible for oversight of HPF programmes in the Pacific Basin region (Falk-Creech 2001; Rudo 2001). Although a formula of 52%:24%:24% had been agreed upon by all FAS HPOs in 1991 by which the FSM receives 52% and the ROP and RMI receive 24% of available funds.

Personnel and travel costs of the FSM National HPO have consistently exceeded all other expenses subsidized by HPF monies and are greater than the total allocation to individual state HPOs. Without implying these funds are not used effectively, what is consumed in this way cannot be used for actual preservation of heritage.

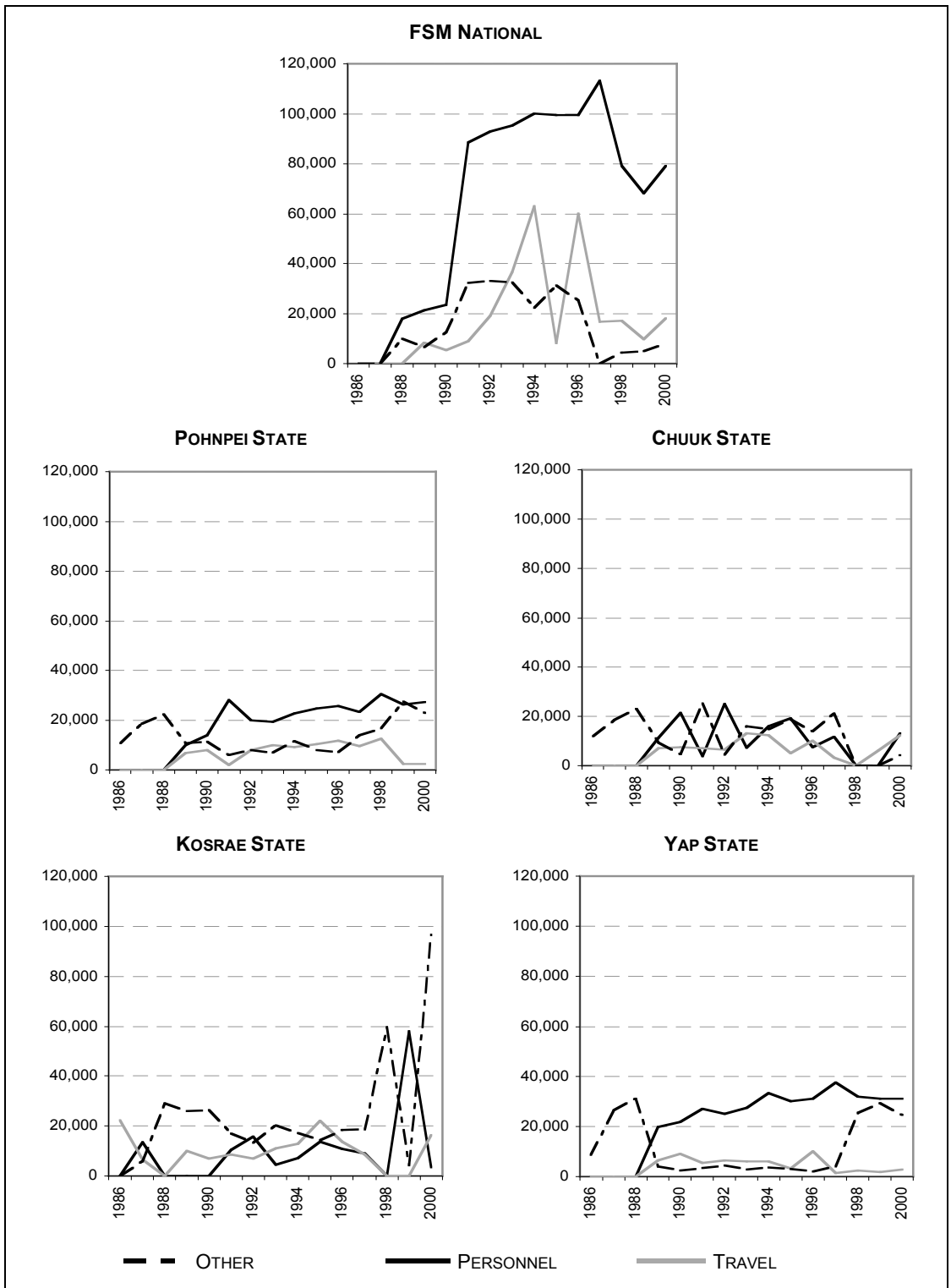


Figure 1 Spending of HPF Funds (FSM)

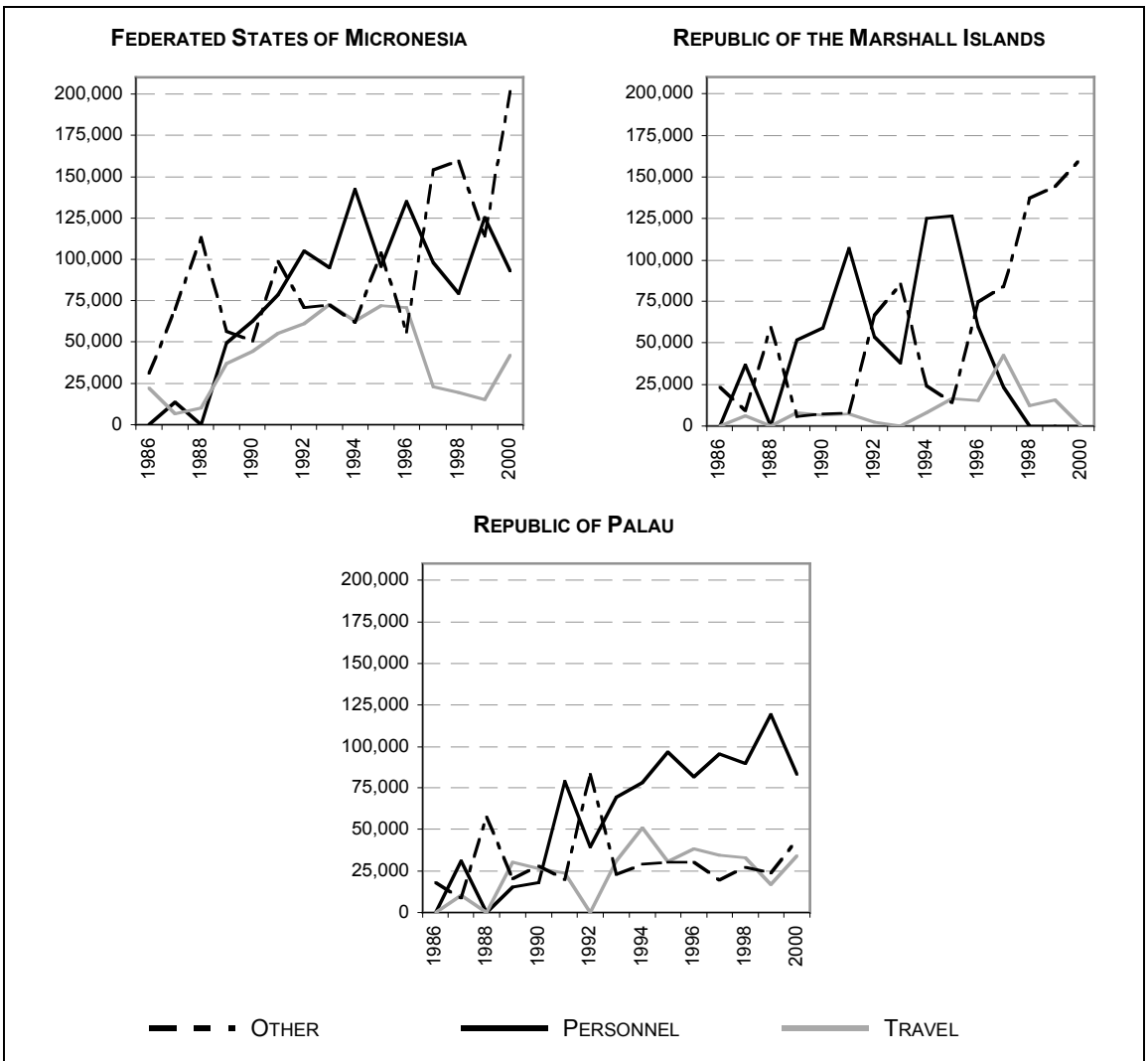


Figure 2 Spending of HPF Funds (FAS)

It is noteworthy that the smaller FSM state HPOs are frequently commended by NPS for the way their disproportionately smaller share of funding is used (Falk-Creech 2001; Rudo 2001; Look 2001). One of the areas for which they have particularly been praised, has been their initiation of smaller, less expensive, but more widespread community-based projects to restore sites and record oral traditions. These projects have developed over the past few years and have involved local communities closely. State HPOs have contributed technical advice and guidance, as well as some funding (typically consisting of relatively small amounts that range from hundreds of dollars to a few thousand). Local communities usually volun-

teer their time and knowledge as well as providing labour for site clearing, maintenance or rebuilding.

Allowing the HPOs to use the traditional skills and knowledge resident within communities in this way has proven to be a most effective pathway for preserving local heritage. As well as providing culturally appropriate avenues for transferring traditional knowledge, it also helps build a stronger sense of ownership of culture and of belonging within communities. In a questionnaire distributed throughout Micronesia (O’Neill 2005), a question was posed as to whether local communities should more actively protect their heritage. Responses (n=258) show both genders strongly agreed

with the proposition ($LA=2.34$). The data was tested for significance at the level of $\alpha=0.05$ and was found to be statistically significant ($P=0.02$)².

This involvement by local communities is not simply a “cheap and easy” way to complete a project. Considerable additional social benefits accrue from it. The project itself becomes an extremely effective vehicle for transferring cultural learning. Younger members of the community learn about their culture in practical ways and in a manner that is entirely appropriate to their culture. This preservation method also provides an effective tool for the preservation of two central and critical elements of traditional Micronesian society – acknowledgement of position and payment of respect. It enables older community members to gain respect from younger members of their society, retain pride in their heritage, and intensify their own sense of usefulness and purpose through using their knowledge and skills.

Comparing total funding for the FSM to that of the RMI and the ROP shows some similarities in patterns of spending (Figure 2). Note that the scale used for the graphs here is different to that used in Figure 1.

The three FAS countries have experienced a consistent rise in the share of funds specifically used in the category of “other”. This change in

the pattern of spending shows that a greater percentage of monies provided by the HPF is being more directly utilized to preserve heritage now than was the case earlier. This trend is particularly noticeable in the RMI where a further change has occurred. There has also been a noticeable reduction of HPF-funded expenditure in the categories of “travel” and “personnel”. The same cannot be said for the FSM however, where expenditure on “travel” and “personnel” still demand a higher percentage of HPF monies than it does for either of the other two FAS entities.

FUNDED PRESERVATION PROJECTS

The same archives of the U.S. NPS that provided the above summaries of funding also provided information regarding numbers of projects undertaken by the HPOs in the FAS. However, this data do not permit dollar value comparisons nor do they show the comparative size or complexity of the projects. During the period from 1986 to 2000, HPOs in the FAS conducted 1,090 separate preservation projects funded through the HPF. These data have been summarized in two ways.

Figure 3 shows the number of projects each HPO undertook during five three-year periods. Overlaying this is the total HPF monies provided to each HPO.

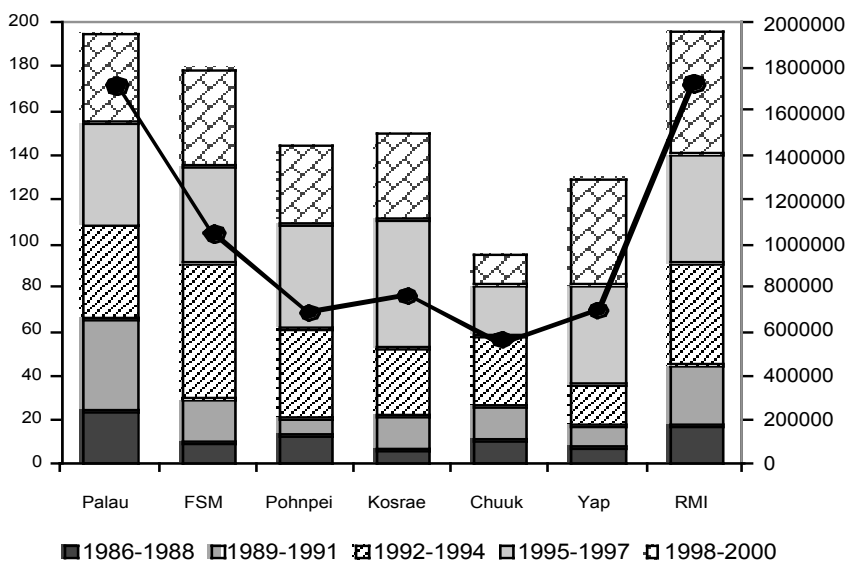


Figure 3 Preservation Projects by HPO over 3 Year Periods & HPF Funds (US Dollars)

Similarly, Figure 4 shows the number of projects undertaken during each three-year period by the HPOs, overlaying which is the total monies provided by the HPF to the Freely Associated States of Micronesia. The data collected is for the period from 1986 to 2000, the period for which data was available at the time of collection.

Palau (195) and the RMI (196) show approximately equal numbers of projects completed. The total of those conducted within the FSM (699) is far higher due to the number of offices involved (FSM National – 179, Chuuk – 95, Kosrae – 150 Pohnpei – 145, and Yap – 130). Although dollar values of HPF monies follow a similar, though more exaggerated, pattern, the differences between the FSM and the other FAS are not so marked. This illustrates the large number of projects completed by the

FSM states while receiving disproportionate levels of funding, features that have distinguished the FSM Historic Preservation programme for years.

The rapid increase in the number of projects undertaken during the period is clearly shown in Figure 4. The increase climaxed in 1998 with an annual total of 115 projects throughout the FAS. The year 2000 however saw an even more rapid decline as the number of projects fell by 50% to just 57, the smallest number of projects undertaken in a decade. The pattern of funding approximates that of the number of projects. Although not surprising, this confirms that a reasonably close correlation exists between the amount of funding made available through the HPF and the number of projects undertaken.

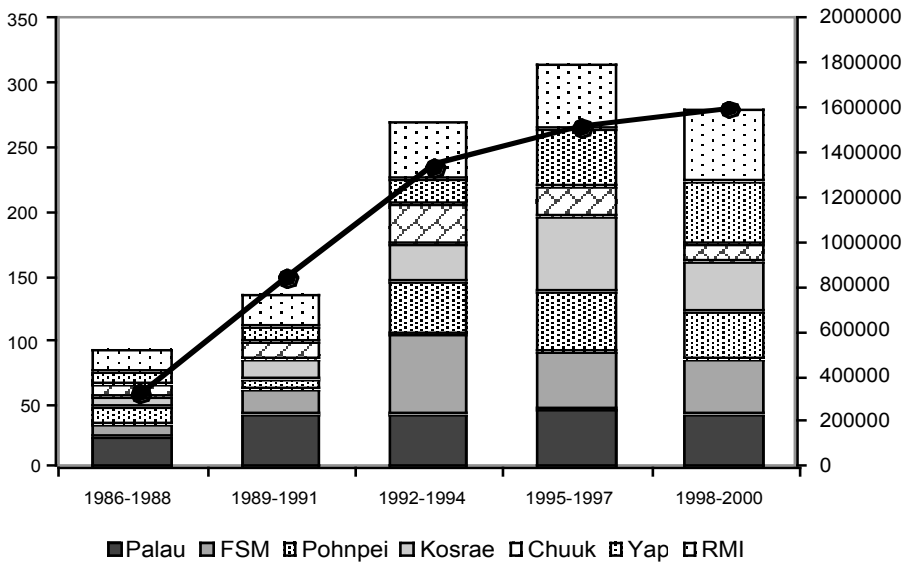


Figure 4 Preservation Projects by 3 Year Periods over HPOs & HPF Funds (US Dollars)

Average cost per project (in U.S. dollars) has been calculated by dividing the total HPF monies received by each HPO by the numbers of projects undertaken (Table 2). Naturally, the simple number of projects does not realistically represent the effectiveness of a programme and neither can the average cost alone be con-

strued an accurate measure of efficiency. Nevertheless, this table provides an interesting comparison that supports comments made by NPS staff regarding the large number and lower cost of many projects undertaken by FSM state HPOs.

Table 2 HPF Dollars (US) per Project

	PALAU	FSM	POHNPEI	KOSRAE	CHUUK	YAP	RMI
1986-1988	5,216	1,800	3,679	11,017	4,854	8,244	7,484
1989-1991	6,205	6,673	13,827	7,017	6,452	9,961	9,652
1992-1994	9,603	4,727	2,822	3,630	3,603	6,406	8,750
1995-1997	9,929	7,098	2,854	2,189	4,807	2,719	9,321
1998-2000	11,471	5,148	4,679	6,114	2,545	3,682	8,398

Source: U.S. National Park Service archives

The 1,090 projects or activities undertaken by the FAS during the period under review have been summarised into nine outcome categories and the data sorted in descending order according to the number of activities (Figure 5). This shows that the two strongest categories, “Documentation” and “Historic Preservation Operations”, alone account for almost half of the total number of activities. On the other hand, management of existing sites amounts to less than 9% of the projects, which raises the question, what happens to sites once preserva-

tion projects have been completed? The very small number of “Research” projects (amounting to only one percent of all projects undertaken between 1986 and 2000) tends to support Bulgrin’s (2002) comments regarding a lack of research emphasis in the CNMI. He explained, “I would rather be doing more research-oriented archaeology, but the vast majority of my time has been spent dealing with... very large projects, multi-million dollar projects”.

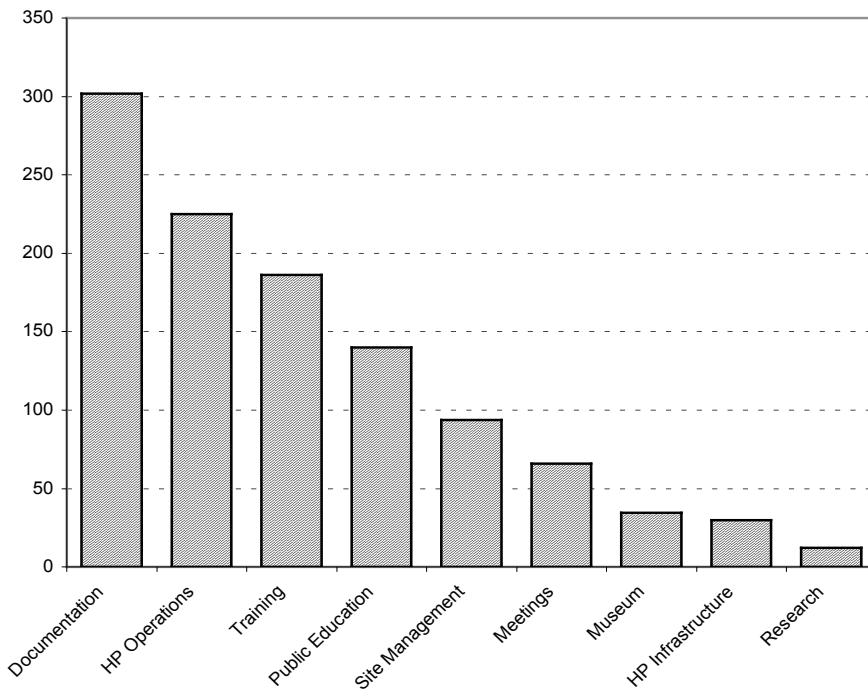


Figure 5 Number of Projects Summarised by Category

IMPLICATIONS

What does this data suggest for the future of historic preservation in Micronesia? Clearly, historic preservation as a formal process is a modern concept originating in and practiced by western societies today. It frequently involves considerable expense and it demands political and governmental involvement. In many instances, this takes control away from local communities and inhibits their right to choose which elements of their culture they wish to retain, discard or modify. In traditional societies such as those of Micronesia however, historic preservation has historically involved local communities in processes that are very different from the legislative, U.S.-based idea. These local communities may range in size from family groups through villages, islands, atolls and associations of atolls. The maintenance of culture and preservation of heritage in such circumstances involves the daily practice of culture in maintaining traditional knowledge systems rather than legislated preservation of tangible aspects of the built environment.

The success experienced with small, community-based preservation projects in the FSM suggests that there may be considerable room for such projects throughout Micronesia. However, donor-imposed rules for project selection, project management and project reporting are clearly impacting the types of preservation projects that are being funded and their management.

The political entities of Guam, the CNMI, RPO, FSM and RMI have minimal, internally-generated funding available to spend on historic preservation and are largely dependant on HPF grants. That so much of this limited funding is allocated to projects that are acceptable

to external donors suggests that historic preservation in Micronesia is being largely driven by the preferences and cultures of external donors. That such a small fraction of that funding is allocated to the management of existing heritage sites, and an even smaller fraction to heritage research, suggests further that donors are not interested in the same types of heritage as are the Micronesian HPOs. It also tends to confirm that Micronesian preferences for historic preservation are centred on intangible heritage (O'Neill & Spennemann, 2006). In these circumstances, it is relevant to ask how much empowerment Micronesians really have in terms of preserving those elements of their heritage most significant to them.

ENDNOTES

- 1 It should be noted, though, that the mandated requirements to implement the GAO rules of accountability with regard to Federal grants force NPS staff, as Federal employees, to pursue such miniscule amounts lest they themselves be in dereliction of their own duties. It should also be noted here, that NPS staff in the period covered in this review were extremely committed to the Micronesian programs and dedicated hundreds of hours of unpaid overtime to the region. Throughout, NPS staff were proactive and helpful in guiding the Micronesian programs in solving any discrepancies and accounting issues through ongoing reminders, advice and feedback.
- 2 Not only did a greater proportion of women agree with the proposition (92% males and 98% females), but they also agreed in much stronger terms (males $LA = +2.19$ and females $LA = +2.48$).

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[Editorial note: This paper was altered after initial publication to rectify a formatting error that resulted in near blank pages]