

## **WORKING FOR THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT: ANTHROPOLOGY CAREERS**

SHIRLEY J. FISKE

*Consultant and Adjunct Professor, University of Maryland*

*The federal government is arguably the largest employer of anthropologists outside of academia. The most comprehensive data on numbers of anthropologists are from the U.S. Office of Personnel Management. These data and their limitations are described. This chapter argues that applied and practicing anthropology are at historic employment levels, with at least five agencies having “institutional presence” of in-house anthropologists. Much of the growth is based on statutes enacted in the 1960s and 1970s, and solidified by anthropologists who codified their use around agency missions. Five agencies with institutional presence are highlighted, as examples of careers in the federal government. In addition the chapter describes careers and career paths in the federal government for a number of specialty areas including international development, both as a consultant and as a full-time permanent government employee, cultural resource management, the legislative branch, forensic and physical anthropology, natural resource management, and defense and security sectors, by using interviews and career cameos of senior anthropologists in those agencies. The chapter concludes with specific information on where to find vacancy announcements and how to respond to them; collective experience of lessons learned in seeking federal careers; and the author’s views on the importance of engagement for anthropologists in policies, issues, and program management in the federal sector. Keywords: federal government, applied anthropology, anthropology careers, policy*

### **THE LARGEST MARKET FOR ANTHROPOLOGY CAREERS**

The federal government is arguably the largest employer of anthropologists outside of universities if one includes regional and international posts such as foreign service. Not surprisingly, archaeologists account for the great majority of federal hires in anthropology, with cultural anthropologists next, and the number of biological, physical and linguistic anthropologists far fewer.

It is difficult to generalize about anthropological careers in the federal government. Jobs range from work with consulting firms with contracts from the federal government, to employment in the foreign service, to archaeologists in cultural resource management, and social science analysts in the legislative branches. The work varies from managing offices of planners and policy analyst, to leading teams of scientists in reviewing programs,

assessing public health or social impacts, evaluating federal programs, and directing foreign assistance programs in-country.

The federal governmental sector, along with its allied institutions—consulting firms, contractors, universities—the partners and recipients of contracts, grants, and cooperative agreements—is an economic engine that provides a huge market for anthropologists who seek applied and practicing careers in public issues, management, and policy.

#### **HOW MANY ANTHROPOLOGISTS WORK FOR THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT?**

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM), which tracks the federal government's workforce, identifies 7,500 *social scientists* (job series GS-101) including anthropologists, behavioral scientists, geographers, sociologists, and planners working for the federal government in 2006. In addition, anthropologists are hired under the GS-190 job series, *general anthropologist*, and GS-193s, *archaeologists*. These two job series are specific to anthropologists, meaning that only anthropologists generally qualify. OPM data show 144 general anthropologists and 1,150 archaeologists working for the federal government (see Table 1).

Although OPM data are the most comprehensive data available, they vastly underrepresent the actual number of cultural anthropologists and archaeologists working for the federal government, because many are working in job categories such as social scientist, program analyst, planner, or behavioral scientist. In addition these data do not reflect part-time positions or those who work on contract to the federal government; nor do they include foreign service and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) civil service positions and contractors. Still, it is safe to argue that the number of job positions identified for anthropologically trained individuals in the civil and foreign service is far greater than at any time in U.S. history.

#### **WHERE DO ANTHROPOLOGISTS WORK? INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF ANTHROPOLOGY IN FIVE FEDERAL AGENCIES**

Anthropologists have developed institutional presence in at least five federal agencies—a historical “first” for professional anthropology. By institutional presence, I mean a critical mass of in-house, permanent expertise from anthropologists working on public issues. To give an idea of anthropology careers in these agencies, I highlight here examples from the U.S. Census Bureau, the National Park Service (NPS), National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and USAID. These concentrations of anthropological expertise usually result from the hard work and bureaucratic wisdom of dedicated individuals who have devoted their careers to establishing an agency-codified basis for social science research and promoted the hiring of additional social scientists to fill agency needs.

At the U.S. Census Bureau (Department of Commerce), anthropologists have played a critical role in identifying the causes of and recommendations for overcoming the

**TABLE 1.** Employment of Selected Social Science Job Series As of June 2006

EMPLOYMENT AS VALUES	0101-SOCIAL SCIENCE	0190-GENERAL ANTHROPOLOGY	0193- ARCHEOLOGY	TOTAL 190 AND 193
Cabinet Level Agencies				
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE	2,358	40	177	217
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE	202	2	446	448
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE	47	1	0	1
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE	1,807	0	0	0
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR	8	0	0	0
DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY	2	0	10	10
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION	41	0	0	0
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES	1,088	3	0	0
DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY	210	60	0	60
DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT	23	0	0	0
DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR	81	38	512	550
DEPARTMENT OF STATE	17	0	0	0
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION	25	0	0	0
DEPARTMENT OF TREASURY	33	0	0	0
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS	1,585	0	0	0
Cabinet Level Agencies	7,527	144	1,145	1,289

*Continued*

TABLE 1. *Continue*

EMPLOYMENT AS VALUES	0101-SOCIAL SCIENCE	0190-GENERAL ANTHROPOLOGY	0193- ARCHEOLOGY	TOTAL 190 AND 193
Medium Independent Agencies (100-999 employees)	2	0	0	0
U.S. INSTITUTE OF PEACE				
PRESIDIO TRUST	0	0	2	2
PEACE CORPS	2	0	0	0
Medium Independent Agencies (100-999 employees)	4	0	2	2
COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS	3	0	0	0
Small Independent Agencies (less than 100 employees)				
VALLES CALDERA TRUST	0	0	2	2
INTER-AMERICAN FOUNDATION	17	0	0	0
OFC OF NAVAJO AND HOPI INDIAN RELOCATION	1	0	0	0
Small Independent Agencies (less than 100 employees)	21	0	2	2

Source: U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM).

traditional undercounts of nontraditional households and populations in U.S. decennial censuses. They have also led to documenting the changes in family structure of marginalized or underdocumented groups (Schwede et al. 2006). The Bureau has used anthropological expertise to critique and improve its methods and approach to enumerating the national population, develop reliable methodologies for identifying marginalized and difficult-to-enumerate populations, including homeless, mobile populations (gypsies, migrant workers), urban American Indian households, and to recruit community-knowledgeable people to help conduct the census. The work of anthropologists and other social scientists within the Bureau (and contracted studies from outside) has led to the recognition that accurate enumeration is enhanced by local knowledge of communities and rural areas (see U.S. Census Bureau 2004).

The NPS (U.S. Department of the Interior) has developed long term, in-house expertise and programs with archaeologists and cultural anthropologists, particularly the use of ethnography and rapid appraisals to ascertain local views and voices of traditionally associated people who have lived in, near, or used a park's resources. The Ethnography Program was firmly based on statutory requirements from NEPA, American Indian Religious Freedom Act, Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, and the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). The ethnography program includes park and regional ethnographers and a small staff in its Washington, D.C., headquarters. Anthropologists in regional offices and parks do research to ensure that program planning and park management respond to the voices of traditionally associated peoples and that national parks interpret the cultural meanings of park resources in appropriate ways. In addition, the NPS is also the cornerstone for the robust federal archaeology program—see the Archaeology/CRM section below. The NPS programs are among the most visible to anthropologists because of the long-term commitment of a number of individuals and the development of many training workshops, partnerships and networks of affiliates, contractors, and grant recipients, who share resources and views (Crespi 1999; NPS 2003; Schafft 2004).

The NMFS (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration [NOAA]) has established a strong corps of social scientists including many anthropologists in regional and headquarters offices in addition to the more traditionally recruited economists and fishery biologists. The goal is to improve the ability to predict social and cultural impacts of alternative fishery management policies and actions on fishing families and communities. Like the NPS capabilities, NMFS's social-analytic strength has developed through the perseverance of a number of individuals who have systematically supported the need for more social science data in planning documents, directives, and annual plans. In addition, NOAA has funded many anthropologists through universities on research and extension efforts (Fiske 1990, 1999). A boost to the NMFS program occurred when the 1996 Sustainable Fisheries Act included amendments mandating that NMFS take into account the effects of fishery management alternatives on fishing communities' "sustained participation" in the fishery, and to minimize adverse effects on the communities to the extent possible (Clay and Olson 2007). Funding for the growing network of anthropologists and social scientists in regional

offices and science centers was at last included in the FY2001 budget (Colburn et al. 2006).

The mission of the CDC, located in Atlanta, Georgia, is to develop and implement programs for disease prevention and control, environmental health, and general health promotion and education. The agency's mission expanded as the nation's health profile changed from its early work on insect-borne diseases in WWII, to infectious diseases, chronic, and noninfectious conditions. More recently, the agency has taken on environmental health issues, as well as injuries and homicides. There are about 45–55 anthropologists working for the CDC, including contractors, student interns, postdocs and others who are not FTE (full time permanent) civil servants. About half to two-thirds are FTEs. The number of anthropologists at the CDC has increased steadily since 1992, as have the areas of specialization where they are hired. The historical base for anthropologists at the CDC has been in the Division of HIV/AIDS Prevention, but anthropologists now work in prevention research and methods, tuberculosis, diabetes, immunization services, health communications, and environmental hazards divisions, among others.

The CDC is a case where a critical corps of anthropologists developed without a national legislative mandate for social impacts (such as NEPA), in concert with public health issues and agency's mission to promote health. The behavioral and social sciences at the CDC have had a notable impact on the public health agenda and programs in the United States (see Fiske 2007a).

USAID has developed a critical mass of anthropologists since the early 1970s. To date the majority of them work as institutional contractors, contractors in consulting firms, or NGOs. A handful of anthropologists have reached senior executive levels at USAID in both the civil and foreign service. A conservative estimate would be that there are 25 to 30 people with advanced degrees (Ph.D. or master's) in anthropology who are USAID direct hires. In addition, there are an estimated 100 to 200 anthropologists on contract at any given time (Atherton, personal communication, May 2005). USAID is unique among federal agencies in the extensive use of contractor hires. Since 1992, the change in the direct-hire workforce, in both USAID Washington and overseas, has declined by about 1,000 positions (500 positions each), or a 31 percent decrease in Civil Service and 29 percent in foreign service positions (USAID, Quarterly Workforce 2006). Anthropologists tend to work in areas such as rural and agricultural development, as contract officers, in program evaluation, women's initiatives, governance and democratization, and as mission directors in the foreign service, as examples.

#### **WHAT TYPES OF CAREERS CAN ANTHROPOLOGISTS EXPECT IN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT?**

I considered two ways to approach this question: by federal agency and by specialization. Hopefully the most informative and least confusing is to talk about federal careers

by specialty such as development assistance, natural resource management, or cultural resource management.

In gathering information for this article, I conducted in-depth interviews with eight anthropologists about their careers working for the federal government. My hope is that including cameos of their work and lives as anthropologists working for the federal government will put a face on the diverse ways that anthropologists have developed careers in the federal government. This chapter also includes insights from my 24 years of experience in the executive and legislative branches of government, as well as with local and national professional associations.

### **Careers in International Development**

Most anthropologists who want to do applied work have aspirations of working abroad in some aspect of international development or assistance. Following are two cameos illustrating different approaches to careers in international development and assistance, both of whom consider themselves to be working for the federal government.

***International Development as a Government Employee.*** USAID comprises two different services, the civil service and foreign service. The majority of anthropologists have appointments in the foreign service, but Joan Atherton is a career direct hire (FTE) at USAID, who started at USAID in 1979. She has over 25 years of experience in rural development and agricultural policy, the Africa Bureau, and central policy units in the Office of the Administrator at USAID.

Joan joined USAID at a time when the agency was particularly receptive to anthropologists after a series of influential IPAs (rotaters from academic positions) had laid the groundwork for an *ex ante* social analysis and impact evaluation program—both of which benefited from anthropological knowledge and ethnographic grounding. A number of anthropologists were hired at that time, most of whom were in the foreign service. All have risen to senior levels in USAID. Joan worked for ten years in the rural development office of USAID's policy bureau on issues such as land reform, integrated rural development, and pastoralist development. She spent another dozen years in the Africa region office, first in the planning office and then managing a field program from Washington, D.C., involving the nine Sahelian states in West Africa. She was recruited in 2006 into the central policy office and is now working across U.S. agencies involved in development assistance to improve U.S. coordination with other donors of foreign aid, including nations, the World Bank, and other multilateral organizations.

Her advice for job seekers for foreign service or civil service portions of USAID is to have a substantive specialty that supports the USAID's mission. USAID doesn't hire anthropologists as an occupational specialty. An anthropologist might be hired, for example, as an *agricultural officer*, but not as an anthropologist per se. "Anthropology is valued because working cross-culturally is an important value in USAID, but a mission-specific, secondary field is important."

Joan points out that once hired, anthropologists have been very successful as direct hires: "A number of them have become Mission Directors, which is the top job in any

[assisted] country where they have a lot of decision-making authority and they can inject an anthropological perspective into anything they do. Some of them have also fairly senior positions in the Washington hierarchy. But [anthropologists] have to be willing . . . to trade off their niche of being a technical expert for actually moving into senior management.”

***International Development as a Contractor.*** John Mason, formerly Executive Associate at Development Associates, Inc., based in Arlington, Virginia, developed a successful career working for the federal government while never actually being a direct hire with the federal government. He calls his current work “AID-linked,” meaning the government is the client. “So it is government work . . . the critical part is ‘paid for by the government.’” John has a Ph.D. in Anthropology from Boston University, uses Arabic and French professionally, and specializes in the Arab Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa. He has worked for almost four decades in international development, including over a decade overseas in Arab, African, and Caribbean countries. He worked for six years in evaluation research and four years in disaster management for an institutional contractor, placed inside USAID in their offices. Prior to and following those posts, John worked for a number of different consulting firms on USAID contracts. Notably, he was project director for the monitoring and evaluation of the USAID-funded economic growth strategy for Egypt, including a \$400–\$500 million budget per year.

He chose this career path (consulting versus permanent government employment) because being a contractor allows the anthropologist to keep his or her specialty, and practice hands-on development anthropology more directly. As he explains it, “it is not that USAID does not look for specific skills in direct-hires. The fact is that they do not end up using them very much over the course of a career (except perhaps in navigating the bureaucratic culture of the agency), and they [the skills] therefore fade.” For example, John noted, “I kept my Arabic up because I use it in my work. Would USAID people keep up their Arabic? Less than likely—they do not get back out to the same countries. They’re assigned worldwide, and you do not always have your choice.”

John’s advice to graduate students is to “study those things that you really like to study. Do not necessarily aim for a specific job or career, but see where it takes you. Be sure to master a language—that’s invaluable.” John was able to make the consulting world work for him and his family, and was able to maintain his specialty, the Arab Middle East, which kept his interest and allowed him to keep his skills in an area that he loved.

### **Archaeology and Cultural Resources Management (CRM)**

By far the largest number of anthropologists hired by the federal government are archaeologists—approximately 1,153 archaeologists compared with 144 general anthropologists (see Table 1). This does not even include the vast number of archaeologists who have made careers working in CRM as contracting archaeologists in firms that work primarily with federal (but often state or private) funding through contracts and grants, or those archaeologists who are hired part time. Also, the majority of the archaeologists’ jobs are not in Washington, D.C., but in regional or district offices in western states



where there is vast acreage of public lands under the management of the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), NPS, the Department of Defense (DoD)—military reservations and in the Corps of Engineers (ACOE)—and other land management bureaus and agencies.

The successful growth in the number of federal archaeologists can be traced in part to the cumulative effect of legislative statutes, executive orders, and specific agency directives that mandate preservation and conservation of historic resources; the early existence of the archaeology job series; and the gearing-up of federal agencies to meet the preservation and environmental requirements mandated by laws, especially the Antiquities Act of 1906, NHPA and its amendments, and NEPA (1969).

The employment trends are positive and dramatic. In 1989, it was estimated that there were 300 to 400 FTE archaeologists. “The biggest employer of archaeologists is the BLM of the Department of the Interior with 120 full-time archaeologists (plus 60 or so part timers) and the Forest Service of the USDA with 100” (Gyrisco 1989:109). Eighteen years later, the Department of the Interior is still the largest federal employer of archaeologists, increasing to 512, and the USDA Forest Service is second with 446. The DoD—the ACOE and other branches—is third, at 177 archaeologists. Each federal department and agency is responsible for ensuring that its actions, or those it permits, licenses, or funds, do not destroy significant archaeological resources—without some mitigation of the adverse impacts.

The NPS internal and external programs, the USFS, the Advisory Council for Historic Preservation, and the Smithsonian Institution all have significant numbers of archaeologists, primarily in the management and technical assistance areas. The NHPA has spawned state-based offices, the State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs), which are funded through federal appropriations and state contributions. As federal agencies hired professional archaeologists in the 1970s to meet their legal requirements, this

eventually led to the hiring of professional archaeologists by state agencies and private firms that found themselves required by federal agencies to carry out necessary cultural resources studies. By the end of the 1970s, federal and state agencies had developed a network that included hundreds of professional archaeologists filling positions in headquarters, regional and local offices, undertaking a variety of activities to implement CRM laws, policy regulations and guidelines. [McManamon 2000]

This helped establish a national network of professionally qualified archaeologists in the public sector in states across the nation (McManamon 2001; NPS 1994, 1998).

Looking to the future, McManamon observes that archaeological retirements in NPS and other land management agencies are reaching critical proportions. The NPS will likely lose individuals with hundreds of years of experience in the next five years. Unfortunately, the trend is not to advertise and refill the positions. The positions are being filled by bringing in temporaries, junior people on detail, or creating shared positions. This personnel strategy leaves a huge gap in institutional and specialized knowledge in public archaeology programs (McManamon, personal communication, May 2007).

Kate Winthrop is Acting Federal Preservation Officer at Bureau of Land Management (part of the Department of the Interior) while her supervisor is detailed on another assignment. Kate's Ph.D. is from the University of Oregon. She and her husband started their own CRM contracting firm in Oregon for the first ten years of her career, contracting primarily to the federal government. When a friend told her that he was leaving his job with the BLM in Oregon, he urged Kate to apply for the job of District Archaeologist. Kate found that working in a district office provided a great deal of scheduling flexibility in a family-friendly atmosphere: "The pay is good, you get your benefits, you have a lot of control over your schedule, you're doing interesting work, you have a career path that you can progress along. If you come in as a GS-7 or GS-9, you can work up to a 9, 11, or 12; so I think it is a good option for women." She worked in a district office doing identification of historic and archaeological properties, evaluation, mitigation of impacts—basic compliance work for Section 106 of the NHPA.

In 2000, a BLM archaeologist who was liaison from BLM to the Army Environmental Center in Maryland was retiring and asked Kate to apply. The timing coincided with flexibility in family responsibilities. The job was a two-year detail to the Army, but her FTE transferred from Medford, Oregon, to Washington, D.C. When the detail ended, she reported to the Washington office as a staff archaeologist. Now that she is based in Washington, D.C., Kate does very little fieldwork. "What I do, generically, is provide technical assistance and guidance to people in the field. Field offices cope with many different issues and situations. Our job in the Washington office is to assist with these issues and to ensure compliance with laws, regulations, and policies, and provide consistent guidance to the field." She gives the example of archaeologists with training in Native American sites, who then find themselves assessing historic buildings, and need help finding appropriate expertise.

Kate's job in Washington, D.C., also includes dealing with policy: "Policy starts in Washington, and it is part of the job staff specialists to make sure their program's interests stay on the radar screen of policy-makers and that policies are appropriate and conform to law and regulation."

Overall, Kate's feeling is that the federal government can provide a very satisfying career for archaeologists. She strongly recommends getting a background in GIS—something she didn't have. On standards or certification for archaeologists, DOI uses the Secretary of the Interior's standards and anyone, including contractors who want to be hired by the Department of the Interior, must meet these standards. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for "Professional Qualifications Standards," developed by the NPS, is available at the website [http://www.cr.nps.gov/local-law/arch\\_stnds\\_9.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/local-law/arch_stnds_9.htm).

### **Careers in the Legislative Branch**

The Legislative Branch includes the U.S. Congress (the offices of Members, Congressional committees, and the administration of Congress) and organizations that provide analyses, briefs, projections, and advise Congress on the operations and performance of programs funded by the federal government—the Government Accountability Office (GAO); the

Congressional Research Service (CRS); the Library of Congress; and the Congressional Budget Office (CBO). There are anthropologists who work in three of the legislative branch organizations, but the total number of anthropologists is less than 15. Most are social science analysts, program evaluators, methods specialists, or specialists in an area of interest to Congress.

The GAO is the largest of the legislative agencies and has regional offices outside the Washington, D.C., area. Phillip Herr is a Ph.D. cultural anthropologist from Columbia University who has worked for GAO for 17 years, starting as a GS-12 social science analyst in 1989. He has recently been selected as a candidate for the federal government's top echelon of professional managers, the Senior Executive Service (SES). After a rotation on the Hill, a rotation to Harvard's Kennedy School of Management, and the World Bank, he will likely become director of the International Affairs and Trade Division, which works on USAID, State, U.S. Trade Representative, United Nations, and multilateral issues. His work as a division director will involve the management and production of reports for 10–12 active projects staffed by senior-level GS-15s—about 25 to 30 staff. His job will be to make sure the reports come together, and that the data are good, accurate, complete, and well argued. At the end of the day he ends up with a written report, a briefing. He will be the one giving testimony to Congress in Congressional hearings.

Phil thinks of GAO as an “applied research job.” “Congress needs numbers, context, objectives, and help in answering the questions, ‘Does it work?’ and ‘How can it be improved?’” Originally hired as a social science analyst and promoted to senior evaluation analyst, the fact that GAO does not hire anthropologists as a professional category does not bother him—he observes that economists and attorneys are the only ones who wear their professional “stripes.”

He's satisfied with GAO work because “you get to make a difference. You are objective in your work, and you are respected for it. You are not in anybody's back pocket, like a contractor. You are not beholden to anyone. As a taxpayer, we deserve good value for our money. Government oversight is an important role—it is checks and balances. It is important to answer the question: ‘Is this a good investment for our \$100 million?’ that Congress asks GAO to investigate.”

### **Natural Resources Management and the Environment**

Natural resource management includes national forests, national parks, wildlife, rangeland resources, oil and gas, marine resources such as fisheries, and environmental health among many areas. Anthropologists work for the USFS; the Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Minerals Management Service, and NPS; at NMFS in both Washington, D.C., and regional offices; and the Environmental Protection Agency, among other environmentally focused agencies. Two examples of anthropologists follow—one was hired as an anthropologist, and the other as a senior social scientist. Also see Gildea in this volume, who provides insights from an anthropologist working in a NMFS regional office.

Mark Schoepfle is Park Ethnographer in the Park Ethnography Program, in the NPS's Washington, D.C., headquarters. Mark is a Ph.D. cultural anthropologist with theoretical and methodological roots in ethnoscience and cognitive anthropology from Northwestern University. Mark's first jobs were working for the Navajo Nation, instilling ethnographic skills among Navajos conducting ethnographic research among their own communities. He begins his count on his "federal career" when he arrived in Washington, D.C., to work for the then-General Accounting Office (GAO) in 1990, and moved to the NPS in 1998 as a coordinator and implementer of a database that was a key component in the development of the Parks' Applied Ethnography Program. He has just completed a draft Park Ethnography Manual, now under review, pursuant to Director's Order 28B, which "promotes a common management framework for planning, reviewing, and undertaking ethnographic research." It provides comprehensive guidance to the Service on topics such as defining characteristics of ethnography and ethnographic research, minimal standards of ethnography, and the competencies needed for cultural anthropology and ethnography.

Rob Winthrop is the Senior Social Scientist in the Division of Planning and Science Policy, BLM, DOI. He is a cultural anthropologist with a Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota. Rob joined the federal government in 2003, after being a successful owner of his own consulting firm in Oregon.

Rob was hired to improve the quality of social science work in the BLM, although his duties are broad. Rob's core responsibilities include an initiative to stem an apparent slow drain of social scientists from BLM. Agency data indicate that since the late 1970s and early 1980s, there has been a decline in the number of social scientists in state, district, and federal offices. Rob suspects the decline suggests "the general diagnosis that management has not perceived what social science staff provide as being critical to their decision-making responsibilities."

As part of his assessment of the issue, Rob was tasked to develop and manage an outside assessment team to advise BLM management on quality and need for social science data. Other duties included defining the scope of work and reviewing the social and economic impact assessments that are required by NEPA under the Energy Policy Act of 2005. The BLM lands are prime lands for oil shale development and other oil and gas development, and social and economic impact assessments must be completed by the federal government prior to taking action on permits.

We do not have as specific mandates as MMS or NMFS—they have fairly specific language in their organic act. BLM has fairly general language; NEPA says you have to look at the social as well as the environmental impact; and BLM's organic act, the Federal Land Policy Management Act, has similar language, broadly, but nothing comparable to the Endangered Species Act, or the NHPA. Because we have NHPA, we have about 160 archaeologists, and we have less than 16 FTE social scientists—mostly economists, with two anthropologists and two social scientists. The social types, sociologists and anthropologists, are definitely the minority. Working on issues that involve all three disciplines is a plus in this position.

Rob's assessment of his job is that while his responsibilities are particularly programmatic or mission driven, there is a great deal of opportunity to get involved in

cutting-edge issues where anthropology can make an important contribution, such as valuation of nonmarket goods and developing indicators of sustainability for rangeland systems. “And that means economic and social indicators. One of the things we are looking at is what factors promote land fragmentation.”

### **Military and National Security**

Defense and intelligence agencies are again interested in anthropology in the aftermath of the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. According to the OPM data, 40 anthropologists and 177 archaeologists work in the DoD (see Table 1). The large number of archaeologists in DoD can be explained by the historic preservation and NEPA needs of military bases and ACOE; however, increasing numbers of cultural anthropologists are working for the Defense Department in the post-September 11, 2001 (9/11) days. A GAO study on federal ethnography, for example, describes the use of ethnography by the Defense Human Resources Center to supplement their Youth Attitudes Tracking Study (YATS) to understand factors affecting youths’ propensity to join the military and strengthen recruitment (U.S. Government Accountability Office 2003). Other anthropologists are studying organizational culture and behavior in the defense and intelligence agencies in order to understand and improve military recruitment and training, and intelligence analysis (e.g. Johnston 2005). A number of anthropologists work for war colleges, either on contract to them or on loan from a university, and at least one anthropologist works as an advisor to the top leaders of the Pentagon.

Much of the interest, ironically, is because of anthropology’s success in marketing what it does, which is to provide nuanced information about cultures and behavior in the context of rapidly changing global and state circumstances through ethnography and other methods. The defense and intelligence community’s interest is largely generated by needs that developed after the tragedy of 9/11 and the ensuing war on terrorism and Iraq. The DoD apparently realizes the shortcomings of lack of knowledge about Iraq and Afghanistan for troops in the field, the inability to predict the insurgencies in Iraq, and the failures of reconstruction efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan. They believe they need to incorporate anthropological insights and approaches to training, decision making, and preparing troops for deployment.

The surge of interest, and the conditions under which anthropologists produce information for the military and intelligence sectors, is once again the topic of intense scrutiny by the anthropology community and the two national associations to which most cultural anthropologists belong—the AAA and the Society for Applied Anthropology (SfAA). Requests by the CIA to advertise job positions for anthropologists were denied by the Executive Boards of both organizations. This stimulated a debate and actions on the ethics of anthropological engagement with the two “communities” and the assessment of “the varied roles practitioners and scholars are playing in intelligence and national security agencies” (Fluehr-Lobban and Heller 2007). The AAA established an Ad hoc Commission on the Engagement of Anthropology with U.S. Security and Intelligence Communities, and reported its results in November 2007.

As reported in the *New Yorker*, anthropologist Montgomery McFate, a consultant to the Pentagon, believes that “the American government needs ‘granular’ knowledge of the social terrains on which it is competing” (Packer 2006). According to the article, the Army is launching an initiative known as Human Terrain Teams, for which they are actively recruiting social scientists. The teams go to “Iraq and Afghanistan with combat brigades and serve as cultural advisors on six-to-nine-month tours” (Packer 2006; see also Stannard 2007). The initiative has been criticized by the AAA and other groups because of concerns about breaching professional ethics regarding transparency, lack of informed consent, and inability to prevent doing no harm to the community under study, in addition to jeopardizing the profession of anthropology.

I interviewed a Ph.D. cultural anthropologist in the Intelligence Community (IC), who declined to be identified. His background includes working for the Institute for Defense Analyses (IDA) for 13 years, a federally funded Research and Development center, located in the Office of the Secretary of Defense. In the IDA, employees work for an independent not-for-profit contractor, funded by the federal government. Most of his work was organizational analysis related to personnel and readiness, internal organizational studies preparing DoD armed services employees for deployment. He worked on assessments of training needs, organizational change, group behavior such as building team cohesion, and live war games. During this period he also did a detail (rotation) at NASA to work on group behavior.

He currently works for the IC as a Lessons Learned Program Manager and is working on “Corporate Lessons Learned,” which can be life-saving tips, or problematic military issues such as integrating armed service reserves with active forces, tactical to organizational. Much of current research agenda for behavioral and social scientists derives from the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission.

He observes that the concept of anthropology “making spies” is an erroneous assumption, and is not a contemporary military model. DoD’s main purpose in engaging anthropology is to “protect people so they do not do ‘stupid things.’” In Somalia, for example, “they found that Marines at check points were misreading body language, facial expressions, tones and inflections . . . and getting killed.” McFate notes a similar situation in Iraq: “a gesture—arm straight, palm out—that means ‘stop’ in America but ‘welcome’ in Iraq. That difference translated into Iraqi families driving blithely toward a seemingly welcoming American soldier at checkpoints until shot as a presumed suicide bomber” (Stannard 2007).

Would he recommend working for the military or intelligence communities to grad students? He makes it clear that his choice was based on his experience and that he would *not* recommend it to all graduate students. For a graduate student to pursue a career in these sectors, “they have to want to believe in the value of helping to improve the military or intelligence services.” He stated that he gets “hate mail” from other anthropologists, primarily “older” anthropologists.

I (the author) recommend that if you choose to pursue a job in this line of work, you be fully conversant with the issues and ethical choices involved, and the relationship your knowledge will have on the people you are studying or the analysis you undertake.

Robert Albro, in a recent *AN* article (2006:5), points out that the discussion often turns on how research practice is conducted—the degree of “classified-ness” or secrecy of the work that is undertaken, including the public dissemination of results. The current AAA code of ethics states that anthropologists should engage in “appropriate dissemination of results.” Other concerns are whether embedding anthropologists with combat troops (in human terrain teams) breaches anthropologists’ code of ethics, particularly informed consent, transparency, and the ethical code to “do no harm” to the people we study. Anthropology as a discipline has an extremely uneasy relationship with the “exercise of power,” and particularly military power, and arguments are made that anthropologists working with the military are tacitly approving violence and hegemony of U.S. military and intelligence efforts. On the other hand, Montgomery McFate takes the view: “I see there could be misuse. But I just cannot stand to sit back and watch these mistakes happen over and over as people get killed, and do nothing” (Packer 2006).

### **Forensic and Physical Anthropology**

The Smithsonian Institution is not technically a federal agency, although it is argued that it is a public institution, receiving nearly 70 percent of its revenue from funds appropriated by Congress. Most anthropologists work in the Smithsonian’s National Museum of Natural History or the Folklife and Cultural Heritage Center, including at least 40 anthropologists that span specialties of forensic anthropology, cultural anthropology, archaeology, physical anthropology, and museum curation. The Museum of Natural History’s Department of Anthropology includes programs in Arctic Studies, American Indians, Latin American Archaeology, and Ethnology. The Division of Physical Anthropology, Human Origins, and Repatriation has a critical mass of well-known forensic and physical anthropologists (Fiske 2007b). For a description of the history and work of forensic anthropologists working in the Smithsonian, I recommend an excellent summary article by David Hunt (2006). The Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, which produces the Folklife Festival, Smithsonian Folkways Recordings and other programs, is headed by a cultural anthropologist (Kurin 2002).

### **HOW DO I APPLY FOR A JOB WITH THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT?**

The AAA, SfAA, and the Washington Association of Professional Anthropologists (WAPA) routinely offer workshops dedicated to finding a job with the government. WAPA was a pioneer in this effort, offering the very first workshops on “Building your 171,” the standardized form used for applicants to the civil service at the time. One of the best descriptions for finding employment has been written by Robert M. Wulff (1989), in *Stalking Employment in the Nation’s Capital* (Koons et al. 1989), and the strategies are still excellent advice.

## Job Announcements and Where to Find Them

The job announcement is an official request for applications published by a government agency. It specifies application procedures, deadlines, and defines the professional background from which the applicants must come. The most comprehensive listing of government jobs is the website of OPM, which provides employment information through USAJOBS, the federal government's employment information system ([www.usajobs.opm.gov](http://www.usajobs.opm.gov)).

Jobs can also be found by going to specific agencies' websites, like the CDC, NPS, or USAID, and looking at their openings (co-listed on the OPM site). Searches can be conducted by federal agency, geographical location, job series (GS-190, GS-193, or GS-101), or grade level. Most master's level jobs begin at GS-9 or GS-11; and most Ph.D.-level jobs begin at GS-12–14.

The USAID Careers Website has (1) the USAID GS Vacancy Announcements, (2) the USAID Business Opportunities page, which is where the contracts are listed, and (3) information on the foreign service opportunities. Of note is a Junior Officer (JO) program, launched in November 2006, to address the Agency's need for middle managers, replacing the former New Entry Professional and International Development Intern recruitment programs. All new recruitment advertisements will be issued under the JO program according to the USAID ([www.usaid.gov/careers/](http://www.usaid.gov/careers/)).

The Smithsonian Institution's job announcements are at [www.si.edu/oht/](http://www.si.edu/oht/). They are simultaneously posted at the OPM's USA jobs website.

## Job Applications and Forms

OPM has a "forms page" on their website ([www.usajobs.opm.gov/forms.asp](http://www.usajobs.opm.gov/forms.asp)), and you can find the OF 612 there, along with advice on other specific forms that may be required. OF 612 is the Optional Application for Federal Employment form. It is labeled *optional*, but good sense tells you that you should use it. OF-612 has blocks to fill out your work experience and history, including your job title, employer's name and address, and space to describe your duties and accomplishments, among other things. The blocks of work experience should be tailored to the job's requirements, so that a supervisor reading an applicant's work experience can see a clear translation to the job announcement's responsibilities. Job announcements will specify what forms are needed, and if a resume is needed in addition to the OF-612.

Most vacancy announcements will require a statement of KSAs—Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities required by the job. KSAs are usually taken from the position description for the job. An applicant should describe how his or her experience, education, or other factors provide the knowledge, skills, and abilities to qualify for the position. KSAs are so important to federal job applications that an entire industry is devoted to coaching people through the drafting process. Web searches can be very useful in finding help for drafting successful applications, all for free. Two websites, managed by the Center for Disease Control, and the University of Delaware, turned out to be very helpful ([www.cdc.gov/hrmo/ksahowto.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/hrmo/ksahowto.htm); [www.udel.edu/CSC/KSAs.pdf](http://www.udel.edu/CSC/KSAs.pdf)).



## WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED? ADVICE FROM ANTHROPOLOGISTS WITH FEDERAL CAREERS

The following recommendations and lessons learned are based on cumulative, collective experiences and observations of the author, supplemented by the insights from the interviewees, as quoted.

- (1) *Have a secondary specialty*: For cultural anthropologists in all federal agencies, but especially in international development, it is highly recommended to have a secondary specialty, which becomes a de facto marketing tool. It might be methodological, such as evaluation research, or qualitative methods; or it might be a substantive specialty such as public health, agriculture, public lands and resource management, housing policy, or any number of mission-related fields or analytic approaches.
- (2) *The importance of the “experience factor” for USAID hires and how to get it*: Having or getting the experience factor is a critical part of one’s preparation for development assistance jobs. According to Joan Atherton, “It is difficult to come direct from grad school, and be a viable candidate for a USAID job; even being an institutional contractor is very competitive, unless you can arrange an entry level or very junior job. Your fieldwork *might* get you there, but a lot of fieldwork is so theoretical, and not terribly pragmatic about actually running something, that I am not sure that [dissertation fieldwork] substitutes.” Joan suggests that if you have a degree and some amount of experience abroad, you might look for a job with an NGO, “but most of the institutional contractors, because they’re bidding on jobs, they want to demonstrate that their people have experience.” One option that Joan noted is to get a position as an administrative type—managing from the home office—and work your way into more field experience. “So the best potential for starting, if you have only a degree and no experience, is working for an NGO. They do not pay much; they are willing to take a risk, and it can work as a way of gaining international experience.”
- (3) *Get methodological and statistics training*: Most anthropologists wished they had taken or been offered additional training in graduate school to prepare them for a career in practice. Most mentioned the need for training in quantitative methods and research design, statistics, economics, applied research methods such as program evaluation, or GIS. I (Fiske) found that a familiarity with research design and methods were critical to me as a policy analyst and later as an anthropologist and program officer in NOAA. As Atherton puts it, “If you are commissioning studies and reports, the one job you do as a direct-hire is act as a quality control—you have to know whether you’re getting garbage or you’re getting something worthwhile. So I would say not to neglect the behavioral science side for the humanistic, and not focus entirely on the more qualitative methods, but learn the quantitative, too.” On the positive side, most anthropologists reported that they felt they received a very solid set of skills in interviewing and observation, and found those skills extremely useful in practice.

Many feel that familiarity with statistics is important. “You do need inferential stats, at least a semester, and a year is better. You need to know what a multiple regression is . . . and the same thing about non-parametric stats, those come in handy. You should be able to read an article and not be intimidated when people start using all

that jargon, and you should be able to tell your thoughts to someone who hasn't had any background in it, what's going on" (Schoepfle).

- (4) *Utilize internships, fellowships, and networking*: Internships provide a foot in the door, and an opportunity to learn the needs of an organization or agency. Take advantage of them if they are part of your graduate degree work, or use fellowships if you are post degree and want to enter the federal sector. They allow you to get into the agency and make ties and networks that ultimately are critical to job seeking. Networking is a lifelong skill that helps you make employment contacts and get information. Join interagency groups, professional groups, and local practitioner groups.
- (5) *Prepare with training specific to government work*: The author and others recommend training in federal laws (NEPA, etc.) applicable to your specialization. In addition, there is often a history of the use of social science and anthropology in a federal agency—it is useful to be familiar with it. I found that public administration skills such as understanding the federal regulatory process and U.S. Code, the civil service rights and responsibilities, and practical skills such as how to read and interpret the federal budget and the budgeting process were extremely useful. Most are learned on the job; but often you can find workshops, classes, or courses on these topics.

#### **CONCLUSION: WORKING FOR THE FEDS—VIEWS ON ENGAGEMENT**

Working for the Feds—is it an opportunity for anthropologists or is it working as a hired hand? An exciting career option or work as a desk-jockey? “Working for the Feds can be frustrating because you have the built-in dynamics of any large organization, and you add to them the scrutiny and oversight that a government entity is susceptible to. And you end up with a great deal of time that appears to be spent on things other than your core responsibilities. That’s as nice as I can say it. And it takes a lot of patience to do that, and not everyone wants to put up with that” (Winthrop).

In truth, there is probably a little of both—some drudgery and adversity; but overall, a great deal of opportunity to be involved, make a difference, and work on program and policy issues using anthropology. Archaeologists have successfully developed a strong professional presence in managing federal archaeological and cultural resources, which has dramatically affected the theory and practice of archaeology. Cultural anthropologists have an increasing role and presence in federal agencies and policy, from directing overseas missions for USAID to developing programs of research and lines of investigation in a surprisingly large number of cabinet-level agencies on domestic issues.

As a participant and analyst of the unfolding scenery during the last 20 years in the nation’s capitol, I am impressed by anthropology’s opportunities and successes. I urge anthropologists to engage outside the academy—in our roles as advisors, evaluators, decision makers, managers of studies, producers of critical knowledge, improvers of policy or process, providing voice for those with less access to policy and decision making. All of these are reasons to work for the Feds and have cumulative value. What we have to say is worth acting on, and working for the government is a commitment to social and institutional change—from within the bureaucracy and often in a participatory way

with communities. I would argue that we can and need to be a part of improving health care, avoiding undercounts, or ensuring equitable allocation of resources. The mark of a mature, professional discipline is its ability to intersect with ideas, policy, and issues in a constructive way. My hope is that this chapter will be of assistance to students and others in thinking about a career in the public sector and acquiring professional skills and perspectives to influence public policy through careers outside of academia.

## INTERVIEWS

I greatly appreciate the time each person took to speak with me, their willingness to share their insights, and their editing of the cameos. In alphabetical order:

Joan Atherton, Senior Policy Advisor for Aid Effectiveness, Bilateral and Multilateral Donors Division, Office of Development Partners, USAID. November 8, 2006.

Charity Goodman, Ethnographer/Senior Social Science Analyst in the Applied Research and Methods Group, GAO; now a health policy analyst, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Department of Health and Human Services.

Phillip Herr, SES Candidate and Acting Director, Financial Markets and Community Investment, Governmental Accountability Office. October 24, 2006.

John P. Mason, Director, JMason and Associates, Colesville, Maryland. October 25, 2006.

Mark Schoepfle, Headquarters Ethnographer, Park Ethnography Program, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. November 2, 2006.

Kate Winthrop, Acting Federal Preservation Officer, Federal Preservation Office, Bureau of Land Management, Department of the Interior. November 10, 2006.

Rob Winthrop, Senior Social Scientist, Division of Planning and Science Policy, Bureau of Land Management, Department of the Interior. September 26, 2006.

## NOTE

1. Several website URLs are listed in this article. Over time their accuracy will diminish, so readers will need to turn to search engines more frequently to find the resources noted.

## REFERENCES CITED

Albro, Robert

2006 Does Anthropology Need a Hearing Aid? *Anthropology News* 47(8):5.

Clay, Patricia M., and Julia Olson

2007 Defining Fishing Communities: Issues in Theory and Practice. *NAPA Bulletin* 28:27–42.

Colburn, Lisa L., Susan Abbott-Jamieson, and Patricia M. Clay

2006 Anthropological Applications in the Management of Federally Managed Fisheries: Context, Institution History, and Prospectus. *Human Organization* 65(3):231–239.

Crespi, Muriel

1999 Seeking Inclusiveness. Theme issue, “Stewards of the Human Landscape,” *Common Ground*. Fall 1998/Spring 1999 issue. Washington, DC: National Park Service Departmental Consulting Archaeologist and Archaeology and Ethnography Program.

- Fiske, Shirley J.  
 1990 Anthropology and Marine Extension. Theme issue, *Practicing Anthropology* 12(4).  
 1999 Value of Ground Truth. Theme issue "Stewards of the Human Landscape," National Park Service. Washington, D.C., *Common Ground* (Fall 1998–Spring 1999).  
 2007a Anthropologists and the Public Health Agenda. Institutional Practitioner Profile: Dr. James Carey. *Anthropology Newsletter* 48(6):51–52.  
 2007b Work in Repatriation. Practitioner Profile: Dr. Dorothy Lippert. *Anthropology Newsletter* 48(4):41.
- Fluehr-Lobban, Carolyn, and Monica Heller  
 2007 Ethical Challenges for Anthropological Engagement. *Anthropology News* 48(1):4.
- Gyrisco, Geoffrey  
 1989 Archaeology. In *Stalking Employment in the Nation's Capital: A Guide for Anthropologists*. Adam Koons, Beatrice Hackett, and John P. Mason, eds. Pp. 109–117. Washington, DC: Washington Association of Professional Anthropologists.
- Hunt, David  
 2006 Forensic Anthropology at the Smithsonian Institution. *AnthroNotes* 27(1):6–12. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press.
- Johnston, Rob  
 2005 Analytic Culture in the US Intelligence Community. Washington, DC: Central Intelligence Agency.
- Koons, Adam, Beatrice Hackett, and John P. Mason, eds.  
 1989 *Stalking Employment in the Nation's Capital*. Washington, DC: Washington Association of Professional Anthropologists.
- Kurin, Richard  
 2002 The Silk Road Festival: Connecting Cultures. *Anthropology Newsletter* 43(6):47.
- McManamon, Francis P.  
 2000 The Protection of Archaeological Resources in the United States: Reconciling Preservation with Contemporary Society. In *Cultural Resource Management in Contemporary Society*, Francis P. McManamon and Alf Hatton, eds. Pp. 40–54. London: Routledge.  
 2001 Cultural Resources and Protection under United States Law. *Connecticut Journal of International Law* 16(2):247–282.
- National Park Service (NPS)  
 1994 Archaeology and the Federal Government. *Cultural Resource Management* 17(6). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior.  
 1998 The Power to Preserve. Public Archeology and Local Government. *Cultural Resource Management* 21(10). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior.  
 2003 Muriel "Miki" Crespi. National Park Service Chief Ethnographer. Her Professional Contributions to the National Park Service. Washington, DC: National Center for Cultural Resources, Archaeology and Ethnography Program.
- Packer, George  
 2006 Knowing the Enemy: Can Social Scientists Redefine the "War on Terror?" *New Yorker*, December 18: 60–69.
- Schafft, Gretchen  
 2004 Miki Crespi and the Applied Ethnography Program of the National Park Service. Theme issue, *Practicing Anthropology* 26(1):2–6.
- Schwede, Laurel, Blumberg, Rae Lesser, and Anna Y. Chan, eds.  
 2006 *Complex Ethnic Households in America*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Stannard, Matthew B.  
 2007 Montgomery McFate's Mission: Can One Anthropologist Possibly Steer the Course in Iraq? *San Francisco Chronicle Magazine*, April 29:11–16.
- U.S. Agency for International Development [USAID], Quarterly Workforce  
 2006 Profile Report, March 31. Washington, DC: USAID.

U.S. Census Bureau

2004 Census 2000 Topic Report No. 15 (TR-15). Census 2000 Ethnographic Studies. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Commerce.

U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO)

2003 Federal Programs. Ethnographic Studies Can Inform Agencies' Actions. General Accountability Office Report number GAO-03-455. Washington, DC.

Wulff, Robert M.

1989 Government Executive Branch Agencies. *In* Stalking Employment in the Nation's Capital: A Guide for Anthropologists. Adam Koons, Beatrice Hackett, and John P. Mason, eds. Washington, DC: Washington Association of Professional Anthropologists.