IHR Fellows Program

2007-2008: The Humanities and Sustainability

Sustainability, Sense of Place, and Cultural Preservations

*Project Directors:*

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*Abstract:*

This is a transdisciplinary field study of senses of places held by three different ethnic groups focused on the cultural landscapes in the Superior, Arizona region. This landscape is endangered by two potential developments: resumption of copper mining; and/ or continued development of urban sprawl encroaching on a rural landscape. Some places in this landscape are culturally very significant to the Yavapai, the Western Apache and the Hispanic community in the town, as well as forming important landmarks in the region. The community of Superior is also attempting to craft a sustainable future that is not dependent upon mining, having learned a bitter lesson when a prior mine shut down and turned it into a semi-ghost town. The town supports renewed mining, but wants it to be sustainable. We see this as a unique opportunity to research and develop an understanding of how to examine the difficult issues of differences in cultural meanings in sense of place and issues of cultural preservation before massive forces change the scenic and historic character of the area. We will use several distinct methods and do multi-sited examination of the issues of place, sustainability and cultural preservation. Taking basic data before the area is significantly changed will allow us to use this as a pilot project for additional funding.