



## Annual Report: 2021

### 1. Administrative Details

1.1 - Name of National Committee: United States Committee of the Blue Shield

1.2 - Date Report Completed: February 15, 2022

1.3 - Reporting period covered: 01 January 2021 – 31 December 2021

1.4 - Names, positions and emails of all those who were the governing body/ trustees / principal officers on the date the report was approved or who served during in the reporting period:

Patty Gerstenblith, President  
Brian Daniels, Vice President  
Laurie Rush, Secretary  
Perry McGowan, Treasurer  
Jacob Nadal  
James K. Reap  
Timur Tusiray  
Corine Wegener  
Eryl Wentworth

1.5 - Address of the main office:  
U. S. Committee of the Blue Shield  
17605 Charity Lane  
Germantown, MD 20874

1.6 - Website and social media (if applicable):  
Website: <https://www.uscbs.org/>  
Twitter: [https://twitter.com/uscbs\\_org](https://twitter.com/uscbs_org)  
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/uscbs.org>

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## 2. Income:

What is the total income of your committee? What are the primary sources? (Donations, grants, etc?)

USCBS receives unrestricted income from membership dues and donations.

## 3. Report of Activities: Achievements & Performance

Explain the activities & projects carried out over the year under the Areas of Activity

The annual report should tell the story of the organisation and put into context what was achieved in the reporting year against the achievement of its longer-term strategy. The annual report under this section should Provide a clear review of the organisation's performance for the relevant year as well showing how the current year's strategic performance links to the achievement of the longer-term strategy of the organisation.

These could include: grants applied for; talks given; conferences held; training courses run; work to support new legislation; working groups attended, etc.

Please provide as much detail as possible – for example, length of event, audience, and so on.

USCBS is governed by a Board of Directors composed of heritage, cultural, legal and financial professionals from across the United States. Meetings are held periodically during the year. The organization receives financial contributions from, and offers annual membership to, individuals and institutions. Members receive period communications on developing issues, events, and news. The organization has approximately 100 members and has established Memoranda of Understanding with cultural affiliates with which it regularly collaborates.

2021 was a year of rebuilding for the USCBS after the death of its President, Dr. Nancy Wilkie, who was integral to the organization's operations. Members of the USCBS Board have continued to engage in outreach on issues of cultural heritage protection through public speaking and participation in legislative activity.

### 3.1 - Law, policy development and implementation:

USCBS members have continued our working partnerships with the United States Military and Department of Defense. USCBS provided Leader Professional Development sessions for the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division JAG Corps and through their work as staff of the Smithsonian Cultural Rescue Initiative (CRI), members support and agreement with the U.S. Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command related to implementation of the 1954 Hague Convention. Among these activities is a working group on Department of Defense policies.

One Board member serves as Chair of the Blue Shield International Working Group on International Trafficking in Cultural Property.

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The U.S. Committee of the Blue Shield led a coalition consisting of the American Anthropological Association, American Institute for Conservation of Historic & Artistic Works, American Schools of Oriental Research, Antiquities Coalition, Archaeological Institute of America, Association of Academic Museums & Galleries, Association of Registrars and Collections Specialists, Society for American Archaeology, and U.S. National Committee of the International Council on Monuments and Sites in support of improving the U.S. process for conducting an international loan of cultural objects. Enacted as Section 1216 of the National Defense Authorization Act of 2021, this legislation aids the protection of international cultural heritage and facilitates more effective international cultural exchange.

In the United States, international loans of cultural objects are governed by the Immunity from Seizure Act, which was enacted in 1965. This law had not been substantially revisited since that time. Among other purposes, the amendments to the Immunity from Seizure Act were intended to: (1) enable the international loan of artifacts for research, study, and conservation, in addition to the purpose of display; (2) permit the movement of a loan object from a foreign mission to a U.S. institution to qualify as an importation for the purpose of achieving immunity from seizure; and (3) clarify existing statutory language about loans and non-profit organizations.

Members of the USCBS Board participated in preparation of the United States report to UNESCO on implementation of the 1954 Hague Convention, the first such report that the United States submitted since becoming a State Party in 2009.

USCBS members gave presentations to allied professional associations on topics in law and policy of cultural heritage preservation. These included:

- “NATO, Cultural Heritage and the Way Forward,” The American University of Rome, March 16, 2021
- “Advocacy in Action,” The National Society of The Colonial Dames of America and the Smithsonian Institution, April 6, 2021.
- “Law and Preservation,” The National Society of The Colonial Dames of America and the Smithsonian Institution, April 6, 2021.
- “Safekeeping Tomorrow,” The National Society of The Colonial Dames of America and the Smithsonian Institution, April 7, 2021.
- “Preserving the Past: Archaeological Heritage, The Art Market and Conflict in The Middle East,” Archaeological Institute of America Wilkie Lecture in Archaeological Heritage, April 7, 2021.
- Iraq's Ancient Heritage Cultural Heritage Webinar Series: Protecting Iraq's Ancient Cultural Heritage, The American Archaeological Research Institute in Iraq, May 25, 2021
- The protection of cultural property in time of conflict: US implementation of the 1954 Hague Convention and the Blue Shield Movement, University of Kent (UK) Centre for Heritage, May 27, 2021
- USCBS National Committee Report at the Blue Shield International meeting, October 22, 2021
- “Combatting Cultural Property Crime: Innovations at the Intersection of Law and Cultural Property Crime,” 2021 Transatlantic Cultural Property Crime Symposium, November 8-10, 2021
- Presentations at the Blue Shield International 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference, December 14-15, 2021

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### 3.2 - Education, training, and capacity building:

Education and training activities are an active part of USCBS work, including fellowships with graduate and postgraduate legal scholars interested in public heritage protection law.

Board members participated in the publicity and grading of entries in the American Red Cross essay competition on the subject of protection of cultural property in armed conflict.

### 3.3 - Proactive protection and risk preparedness:

The organization maintains a website and a Facebook page to further its membership and public outreach efforts to build aware of CPP. It has established Memoranda of Understanding with selected partner organizations with which it shares programming.

### 3.4 - Emergency response in disaster, domestic emergencies, and armed conflict:

USCBS members gave a webinar for the Armenian scholarly and heritage community in response to the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh, including ongoing satellite imagery monitoring and analysis of Nagorno-Karabakh region, by members affiliated with Smithsonian Cultural Rescue Initiative (CRI) and Virginia Museum of Natural History Cultural Heritage Monitoring Lab.

In the Middle East, members are engaged in ongoing collaboration with heritage professionals in Syria and Afghanistan about risks to cultural heritage in situations of conflict. A partnership with the Prince Claus Fund provided funding for the Afghan National Museum to salvage damaged collections in Ghazni.

In the Caribbean region, with support from the Prince Claus Fund, members supported emergency response for Our Lady Church fire at Sans Souci in Haiti with Quisqueya University. Members engaged with the Foundation for Advancement in Conservation (FAIC) National Heritage Responders (NHR), the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA), and the US Cultural Heritage Coordinating Committee (US CHCC) to provide emergency assessments in Puerto Rico and the Bahamas.

The work of USCBS is closely integrated in the United States with other organizations, including NHR, CRI and Heritage Emergency National Task Force (HENTF). Collectively, and with support from a variety of local responders, these organizations responded to storm-related disasters in the Gulf Coast, and fire-related disasters in the western States. Members also provided webinars and ongoing consultation on disaster recovery to institutions in Lebanon affected by the explosion of fertilizer storage in the Port of Beirut, in partnership with Smithsonian CRI, Blue Shield Lebanon, IFLA, and US CHCC.

### 3.5 - Stabilisation, post-disaster recovery, and long-term/ongoing support:

Members affiliated with the Smithsonian gave ongoing support to work in the Middle East and Caribbean. These included stabilization projects in Iraq such as the rehabilitation of the Mosul Cultural Museum and the archaeological site of Nimrud, the National Museum of Afghanistan's ongoing CPP efforts, and support for Syrians for Heritage (SIMAT) to continue protection and stabilization activities in Northern Syria.

Members are involved in ongoing collaboration with heritage professionals in Iraq and Georgia about risks to cultural heritage in situations of conflict and prepared a report on damage to the Mosul Cultural Museum for the Smithsonian Institution and Louvre Museum's "Mosul Museum Project: Phase 1."

### 3.6 - Co-ordination (of Blue Shield and with other relevant organisations):

The work of USCBS is closely integrated in the United States to other national activities coordinated by government and non-governmental organizations. Chief among these are the American Institute for Conservation (AIC), Foundation for Advancement in Conservation (FAIC) National Heritage Responders (NHR) and Alliance for Response (AFR), the Smithsonian Cultural Rescue Initiative (CRI), Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and Heritage Emergency National Task Force (HENTF). Collectively, these agencies and their partners presented training on developing disaster response plans and salvaging collections, as well as convened teams to monitor developing severe weather events to provide information to collections at risk.

USCBS participated in the preparation of the first US national report to UNESCO on compliance with the 1954 Hague Convention.

USCBS has provided supporting assistance to the initiatives of the Slovakian cultural community to organize Blue Shield Slovakia, a new national member organization in development in 2020 and 2021.

Members of USCBS hold a variety of positions with allied NGOs and in government and support projects and ongoing programs including with the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD), AIC and FAIC, FEMA, HENTF, US CHCC, CRI, ALA, Archaeological Institute of America, and IFLA.

## 4. Main issues faced:

What are the main issues faced by your committee?

We are planning a 2022 annual meeting and undertaking a more extensive evaluation of appropriate activities for us to undertake

## 5. Future goals

Describe future plans to achieve strategic goals

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Our goals are re-establishing our basic functioning, re-engaging with our membership, sponsoring public programs on a regular basis, and exploring new ways of engaging with, for example, the establishment of the AOC 38G team in the military working on cultural property protection and with the Cultural Heritage Coordinating Committee.

## **6. Other**

*Through its connection to Newcastle University, BSI is sometimes able to access funding that can be shared with research institutions to further the work of Blue Shield. Does your national committee have any connections with research institutions interested in its work (e.g. in risk management, heritage protection, etc.). If yes, please supply the names and contact details here.*