



## FEDERAL PRESERVATION PROGRAM NOTES

### BRAC and Archeological Collections

**Introduction.** Military installations are the home to vast archeology resources. The archeological resources – the sites and objects left by those who came before us, as well as the associated records from archeological work – tell us about the diverse cultural heritage of the United States. The people who lived long before us, their religions, technologies, and houses, and the environments in which they lived can be discovered through archeology. The Federal Government must curate the Archeology Collections that come from these sites for future use in research, interpretation, preservation, and resource management activities. These Archeology Collections are national assets

Installations must comply with federal regulations ["Curation of Federally-Owned and Administered Archeological Collections \(36 CFR Part 79\)."](#) Part 79 contains the definitions, standards, procedures and guidelines to preserve collections of prehistoric and historic material remains, and associated records, recovered under the authority of:

- the Antiquities Act (16 U.S.C. 431- 433),
- the Reservoir Salvage Act (16 U.S.C. 469-469c),
- section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. 470h-2), and
- the Archaeological Resources Protection Act (16 U.S.C. 470aa-mm).

**What are Archeology Collections?** A collection as defined in 36 CFR Part 79 is “material remains that are excavated or removed during a survey, excavation or other study of a prehistoric or historic resource, and associated records that are prepared or assembled in connection with the survey, excavation or other study.” Material remains are “artifacts, objects, specimens and other physical evidence that are excavated or removed in connection with efforts to locate, evaluate, document, study, preserve or recover a prehistoric or historic resource.” There are many classes of material remains, such as artifacts of human manufacture (e.g., tools, pottery, basketry), by-products or debris from the manufacture or use of man-made or natural materials (e.g., lithic debitage, slag, shell), organic material (e.g., vegetable remains, coprolites), human remains, environmental specimens (e.g., pollen, seeds, soil samples), natural objects used by humans (e.g., rock crystals, pigments), and others.

Associated records as defined in 36 CFR Part 79 are “original records (or copies thereof) that are prepared, assembled and document efforts to locate, evaluate, record, study, preserve or recover a

prehistoric or historic resource. Some records such as field notes, artifact inventories and oral histories may be originals that are prepared as a result of the field work, analysis and report preparation. Other records such as deeds, survey plats, historical maps and diaries may be copies of original public or archival documents that are assembled and studied as a result of historical research.” Classes of associated records include, but are not limited to: site forms, field notes, maps, photographs, negatives, laboratory reports and data, electronic data, reports, and administrative records relating to a project (e.g., scope of work, budget, permits, contracts, NRHP nomination) and the curatorial management of a collection .

***What is Curation?*** According to 36 CFR Part 79, curation involves “managing and preserving a collection according to professional museum and archival practices.” The Federal agency, such as a Military Department, on whose land a collection is recovered, is responsible for the curation of the collections, including any funding to non-federal repositories that curate federally owned or administered collections.

Satisfactory curation occurs when:

1. Curation facilities have adequate space, appropriate containers, appropriate environmental conditions, and appropriate security controls.
2. Qualified museum professionals are responsible for the long-term care and management of the collections, including inventory, accessioning, cataloging, evaluating and documenting collections, periodic inspection, and appropriate conservation;
3. Archeological materials are maintained so that their information values are not lost through deterioration, and records are maintained to a professional archival standard;
4. Curated collections are accessible to qualified researchers, educators, and for traditional religious rituals or spiritual activities within a reasonable time of submitting a request;
5. Collections are available for interpretive, educational, and traditional religious purposes, subject to reasonable security precautions; and,
6. All necessary inventory, consultation, and repatriation efforts related to the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act are performed.

*Ownership.* While the Federal government may enter into a contract, memorandum of agreement, or other appropriate written instrument to provide long-term curation services by non-federal repositories, the Federal Government cannot transfer ownership.

If an installation has an agreement with an off-installation repository to store, care for, and/or display Federal archeological collections, the installation must ensure that responsibility for maintaining the agreement with the repository is transferred to another military entity.

A closing installation must ensure that collections and all associated records housed at the installation are moved to an appropriate repository and the agreement with that repository is maintained by another military entity.

#### ***Useful Internet URLs for Further Information.***

- **36 CFR 79**  
Regulations - <http://www.cr.nps.gov/aad/tools/36cfr79.htm>  
  
Summary information - [http://www.cr.nps.gov/aad/collections/laws\\_04.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/aad/collections/laws_04.htm)

- **Managing Archeological Collections: Technical Assistance**  
<http://www.cr.nps.gov/aad/collections>

*September 26, 2006*



NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF STATE  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICERS

NCSHPO

