

SaveHistory.org is a campaign to end archaeological resource crime on Tribal lands and protect Indigenous history. Working closely with Tribal Historic Preservation Officers, land managers, and law enforcement, Save History helps Tribal Nations protect archaeological sites for future generations.



We protect cultural sites by **Detecting** archaeological resource crimes through site monitoring and community reporting.



Our team **Responds** to reported crimes and investigates them swiftly and effectively.



We **Prevent** archaeological resource crime through education and amplification of Tribal perspectives on the value of ancestral sites.



Our archaeologists and partners **Restore** damaged sites to aid in healing for Tribal lands and communities.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCE CRIME

Archaeological resource crime refers to looting and vandalism of archaeological sites. Looting involves stealing objects or human remains, often by digging into ancient mounds, graves, or homes. Acts of vandalism include damaging an archaeological resource by leaving graffiti, shooting at rock art, dumping trash, knocking over walls, or driving over sites.

AT LEAST **90%** OF ALL MAJOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES IN THE SOUTHWEST HAVE BEEN LOOTED OR VANDALIZED.

THE IMPACTS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCE CRIME

Indigenous people depend on ancestral sites as sources of cultural, spiritual, and historical identity. Vandalism and theft of cultural items or human remains undermines Indigenous patrimony, culture, and sovereignty. These acts disrupt the sanctity of burial grounds and harm Indigenous connections to land and heritage.

MORE THAN **70%** OF CULTURAL ITEMS SOLD AT OVERSEAS AUCTIONS WERE AFFILIATED WITH SOUTHWESTERN TRIBES.



Damage from a rock saw in an attempt to steal a petroglyph panel. IMAGE: WILLIAM DOELLE

WHAT DOES A CRIME AGAINST HISTORY LOOK LIKE?



Example of a looter's hole with loose sediment and damaged masonry. IMAGE: DUSTY WHITING

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES PROTECTION ACT

The Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA) is a US federal law that safeguards archaeological resources from looters, vandals, and traffickers by regulating access to archaeological resources on Tribal and public lands. People who violate ARPA face fines, forfeitures, and/or imprisonment.

ARPA prohibits:

- Excavating, removing, damaging, or otherwise altering or attempting to alter any archaeological resource on public or Indian lands.
- Trafficking archaeological resources from public or Indian lands in interstate or foreign commerce.

HOW TO VISIT SITES WITH RESPECT

Archaeological sites are fragile and non-renewable. The impacts of visiting sites can add up to significant damage over time. Yet, there are ways to appreciate these special places and preserve them for future generations.

- **Act like a guest** in the home of a new acquaintance. Many Indigenous people see what we call “archaeological sites” as family residences. Visit with respectful intent and behavior.
- **Leave artifacts** where they are. The connection Indigenous people hold to cultural material is broken when they are relocated, removed, or disrespected.
- **Leave no trace.** Look, but don’t touch. Touching rock art imagery or leaning, climbing, or camping on structures causes damage. Pack out all trash and stay on designated roads and trails.
- **Protect sensitive site locations.** Avoid sharing site locations on social media or the internet.
- **Respect cultural protocols.** Understand the cultural history of a place before visiting.
- **Appreciate sites from afar.** Think before clambering into or onto sites, especially caves, cliff dwellings, or any eroded ground surface.



Sign marking the boundary of Tribal lands in New Mexico

HOW TO SAVE HISTORY

Report looting, vandalism, or trafficking of archaeological materials. Call 911 in an emergency but prioritize your safety. In a non-emergency, call our tip line (**1-833-ENDLOOT**) or submit a tip to our website **SaveHistory.org/submit-a-tip**.

Visit and share our website with your community to hear stories from Indigenous people on why these places are important and worth protecting. Follow SaveHistory.org on Facebook and Instagram.



Law enforcement and archaeologists work together to investigate archaeological resource crimes. IMAGE: PK WEIS

 **AT LEAST 80% OF LOOTING INCIDENTS GO UNREPORTED.**



Call 1-833-ENDLOOT **Visit SaveHistory.org/SUBMIT-A-TIP**