

EXCAVATION CRITERIA

PURPOSE

The Excavation Criteria contained herein establish Department policy on the excavation of archaeological sites. These criteria answer two commonly asked questions:

- A. What is a Chapter's justification for excavating an archaeological site; i.e., under what conditions shall excavation be deemed appropriate and for what purposes shall it be done?
- B. Under what guidelines does a Chapter control the excavation; i.e., how shall an excavation be conducted?

GENERAL POLICY

General policy covering excavation activities are listed below as found in the *Articles of Incorporation* (1965, as amended) and *Constitutional Bylaws* (1986) of the Arizona Archaeological Society (AAS).

- A. The AAS shall "...operate exclusively for charitable, scientific or educational purposes in such manner as the Board of Directors may deem best, particularly for the purpose of studying and preserving the archaeology of the Southwestern United States." (*Articles of Incorporation*, Article IIIa)
- B. "No member shall participate in any excavation of any historic or prehistoric ruin, burial ground, or other archaeological or historic site, except where such excavation is performed for the accomplishment of one or more of the objectives of the Society as set forth in the *Articles of Incorporation*, and is in accordance with the laws of the State of Arizona, and the laws of the United States of America relating to such excavations. Any archaeological field project of the Arizona Archaeological Society, or a Chapter of the Society, shall be under the supervision of a Project Director approved by the State Board of Directors and/or, if applicable, the Department of Certification, or the Chapter initiating the project." (*Constitutional Bylaws*, Article II, Section 7)
- C. "Each Chapter shall furnish to the State Board of Directors at the annual meeting, a list of the Chapter's past year archaeological field projects. This list may be included as part of the written report given by the Chapter President at the annual meeting or mailed to the Secretary of the Board prior to that meeting." (*Constitutional Bylaws*, Article II, Section 11)
- E. "Each Chapter shall furnish to the Chairman of the State Board of Directors a written notice, containing all available information, of any new field projects to be undertaken. Any emergency field projects that are undertaken immediately shall be reported to the Chairman of the Board within two (2) weeks after starting the project." (*Constitutional Bylaws*, Article II, Section 11-A)

GENERAL POLICY (continued)

- F. "The income from sale of publications, gifts and other sources, together with dues of Associate members and a portion of other annual dues to be fixed by the Board of Directors, shall constitute the working capital of the Board of Directors. This income is for operations, publications and other current expenses consistent with the purposes of the Society." (*Constitutional Bylaws*, Article III, Section 4)
- G. "The results of all excavations or other research which is carried out by any Chapter of the Society shall be reported and filed with the Secretary of the Board of Directors, with a copy to the editor." (*Constitutional Bylaws*, Article IV, Section 3)
- H. "The Archivist [of each Chapter] .. shall act as custodian of all records relating to excavations, site locations, maps, collections of artifacts, and similar and related records of the Society Chapter." (*Constitutional Bylaws*, Article VI, Section 13)

DEPARTMENT POLICY/EXCAVATION CRITERIA

- A. Department policy on archaeological excavations conducted by a chapter as part of a Certification Class shall be consistent with general policy as set by the AAS in its Articles of Incorporation and Constitutional Bylaws, as described above.
- B. Excavations conducted by a chapter as part of a Certification Class are deemed appropriate and allowable only when done for research, educational, or preservation purposes.
- C. Excavations conducted by a chapter as part of a Certification Class are not deemed appropriate nor are they allowed when:
1. They would produce monetary profit or material gain so as to violate the charitable status of any chapter or the AAS.
 2. There is good reason to believe the legal owner of an archaeological site will receive significant monetary profit or material gain from the excavation itself or from the materials excavated.
 3. Any individual other than the legal owner of an archaeological site will benefit either monetarily or materially as a direct consequence of the site being excavated by the AAS. Excluded from this are payments made to individuals or organizations for support and contracted services (e.g., backhoe operator fees, payments for artifact analyses, consultation fees, etc.).
 4. There is no research design and no professional archaeological advisor.

DEPARTMENT POLICY/EXCAVATION CRITERIA (continued)

- D. Excavations undertaken for research purposes are justified only when the rationale for the excavation is explained in a research design, there is a professional archaeological advisor overseeing the work, and it is reasonable to assume they would produce:
1. Information relevant to current regional research questions concerning the history or prehistory of the Southwest.
 2. Information relevant to current scientific questions concerning human behavior and cultural systems in general.
 3. They may provide AAS members with training commensurate with the Certification Program guided by a professionally adequate, clearly explained research design under the direction of a Department of Certification approved professional archaeologist.
- E. Excavations conducted for preservation purposes are justified only when guided by a research design and when undertaken:
1. For purposes clearly explained in a professionally adequate research design.
 2. To protect important scientific information from natural and human-caused forms of deterioration and damage (i.e., protection is afforded through data retrieval).
 3. To assess the need for physical protection at a site as determined through controlled archaeological testing.
- F. Archaeological sites can be excavated for preservation purposes only after all other alternative protection measures have been exhausted or deemed inappropriate. Examples of alternative measures include (but are not limited to) stabilization, establishing a preservation easement, patrolling, signing, fencing, burying a site, etc.
- G. A written agreement shall be made between the excavating Chapter and the owner or managing agency of the archaeological site that is to be excavated. Any permits (either Federal or State) necessary for the excavation shall be obtained beforehand. The written agreement shall state (as a minimum):
1. That all parties find the Research Design/Work Plan acceptable.
 2. That the Chapter has made a good faith attempt to gain permission from the land owner to ultimately have all materials excavated from the site curated in an appropriate repository.

3. That the land owner will abide with the Department's policy and applicable Federal or State laws and/or regulations regarding the handling and treatment of human remains.

DEPARTMENT POLICY/EXCAVATION CRITERIA (continued)

H. Native American human remains and/or funerary objects may be discovered prior to, or during, excavation. (If the likelihood of encountering human remains and/or funerary objects during the course of excavation on State or private lands is high, the Chapter is encouraged to contact the Arizona State Museum prior to undertaking excavation and obtain copies of current, relevant guidance provided by the Museum.) In accordance with State laws ARS 41-844 and ARS 41-865, and the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, such remains and objects shall be treated as follows:

1. On Federal Land

If materials are encountered on federal land, which appear to be human remains and/or funerary objects, all the activities that might disturb the remains and/or objects must stop. Individuals in charge of the excavation must take steps to protect the remains and/or objects, and immediately notify the responsible federal lands manager. The federal land manager will consult with the appropriate Indian tribes and will provide guidance on what to do.

2. On State Land

If materials are encountered on State Land, which appear to be human remains, objects buried with them, objects used in Native American ceremonies, or other objects of special significance to Native Americans, all activities that might disturb the remains or objects must stop. Individuals in charge of the project must notify the Arizona State Museum of the circumstances of the find within three working days. The Museum will consult with appropriate groups and will provide guidance on what to do.

3. On Private Land

If human remains or objects buried with them are encountered on private land, the landowner or landowner's agent is required to notify the Arizona State Museum before further disturbing the remains or objects. The Museum then has ten days, or more if permitted by the landowner, to consult with any groups that may be culturally related to the remains, and to carry out the decision about what to do with the materials.

4. The Arizona State Museum may be contacted in writing by addressing correspondence to: Director, Arizona State Museum, University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona 85721. The Museum may be contacted by telephone at (602) 621-4794, 621-4795, or 621-6281.

5. Every effort shall be made to maintain the safety and security of the human remains and/or objects while decisions about what to do are being made. If a determination is made by the Arizona State Museum in consultation with the landowner that human remains, objects buried with them, and/or objects of special significance to Native Americans are to be excavated as part of a certification class, the following procedures shall be implemented and closely monitored:

DEPARTMENT POLICY/EXCAVATION CRITERIA (continued)

- a. Any legal requirements shall be satisfied prior to continuing any work that may directly affect the remains or materials.
 - b. Excavation and recording of human remains shall be conducted by AAS members under the direct supervision of either the excavation Project Director, or a qualified professional archaeologist or physical anthropologist.
 - c. Human remains shall not be displayed to the general public and shall be treated with respect and deference at all times.
 - d. No human remains will be left exposed overnight or over a weekend. Every effort will be made to provide for 24 hour on-site security when burials are undergoing excavation.
 - e. As may be permitted by the appropriate federal agency or the State Museum, human remains shall be documented within the guidelines of each particular excavation regardless of their ultimate disposition. This may require contracted analysis with specialists outside of the Chapter conducting the excavation. All contracted specialists who analyze or handle human remains shall comply with the Department's policy statement.
 - f. Failure to comply with the Department's policy regarding treatment of human remains may be grounds for termination of membership, subject to an investigation of conduct as specified in Article II, Section 6D, of the Society's Constitutional Bylaws, and may subject individuals to civil and/or criminal penalties in accordance with the provisions of State laws ARS 41-844 or ARS 41-865.
- I. Methods and techniques used in field excavation, laboratory analysis, and report preparation will be consistent with current scientific standards.
 - J. The extent of archaeological investigations (e.g., excavation, limited testing, surface collecting, etc.) at any one site shall be commensurate with its level of threat or data potential. As a general rule, no more than 50 percent of any site shall be excavated. An exception to this is when the site is being

excavated for preservation purposes, and more than 50 percent of it is in imminent danger of being completely destroyed from either natural or human causes.

- K. The use of backhoes is restricted to the removal of sterile overburden; testing the subsurface components on large sites; or excavating sites that are in imminent danger of being destroyed through natural forces.
- L. Excavations cannot be undertaken under severe time constraints, except when done for preservation (salvage) purposes where the site is in imminent danger of being destroyed through natural forces or human forces.

DEPARTMENT POLICY/EXCAVATION CRITERIA (continued)

- M. Required logistical support will be identified in a Research Design/Work Plan approved by the AAS State Board of Directors, and/or, if applicable, the Department of Certification or the Chapter initiating the project prior to undertaking an excavation. This support will be provided upon commencement of excavation activities. Logistical support includes, but is not limited, to:
 - 1. Temporary artifact storage area.
 - 2. Laboratory facilities.
 - 3. Necessary personnel for all phases of the research project.
 - 4. All monies as needed for procurement, contract, curation, and other support costs.
- N. A Research Design/Work Plan shall be developed prior to undertaking any excavation. An exception to this is in the case where there is insufficient time to complete such a document due to the site being in imminent danger of being destroyed by natural forces or human forces. In all other instances, components of the Research Design/Work Plan shall include:
 - 1. Precise statement of purpose and goals.
 - 2. List of relevant scientific research questions to be addressed.
 - 3. Discussion of the methods and techniques of field excavation and laboratory analysis.
 - 4. Designation of individual responsibility concerning all fieldwork, laboratory analysis, report writing, and dissemination of findings to the scientific community and the general public.
 - 5. Description of how the excavated materials will be curated or otherwise disposed of, as appropriate (this will also be specified in any Federal or State permits).

6. Identification of Project Director who has demonstrated the ability to undertake and complete a research project of similar scope as that being proposed, and who is responsible for the completion of the project.
 7. Estimation of time involved for all phases of project with approximate completion dates and manpower estimates.
- O. All Research Designs/Work Plans are subject to peer review and approval through a simple majority vote of the Chapter's membership as recommended by its Board of Directors.

DEPARTMENT POLICY/EXCAVATION CRITERIA (continued)

- P. Archaeological testing of sites (limited subsurface investigations for planning or evaluation purposes) and surface collecting are to be procedurally treated the same as formal excavations in regard to Department policy. Because of the limited nature of these archaeological undertakings, the treatment given to them (e.g., the development of a Research Design) is expected to be fairly simple. As a general rule, the treatment given to them should be commensurate with the nature and extent of proposed testing or surface collection.
- Q. Upon completion of all excavations and other archaeological investigations, the results shall be documented in a professional quality report, and submitted to the Department, the land owner, and the institution that issued the site number, and it shall contain the following information as a minimum:
1. Title Page - Include a title page with a notation indicating that the work was an undertaking of the appropriate Chapter of the AAS.
 2. Table of Contents - Include a table of contents with a list of numbered tables, figures, and plates, as appropriate.
 3. Abstract - Provide a 250-word or less abstract of the project. The abstract must outline the report contents and refer to specific highlights of the findings.
 4. Background - Provide a brief summary of the project and surrounding environment as a context for the data recovery work. Discuss and reference previous archaeological work in the area.
 5. Summary - Describe the involved archaeological site including materials present, physical attributes, environmental setting, cultural/temporal affiliation, and function. Identify the significant values of the site (e.g., scientific or educational).

6. Research Orientation - Discuss the research orientation for the data recovery work performed, including the regional research questions and specific study topics investigated.
7. Description of Work Performed - Completely and accurately describe the fieldwork and analysis methods used, the dates of fieldwork, number of crew members, and the number of person-hours involved.
8. Results and Evaluation - Present the results of fieldwork and analysis and discuss these in the context of the original Research Design. Evaluate the success of the data recovery work performed in terms of its contribution to regional research questions and the objectives of the Research Design.

DEPARTMENT POLICY/EXCAVATION CRITERIA (continued)

Q. Upon completion of all excavations (continued)

9. Recommendations - Suggest future data recovery methods and recommend research questions for future archaeological investigations in the area, and if appropriate, on the site.
10. Appendices - Include appendices describing any special studies performed and a report of work hours expended by task.
11. Bibliography - Include a bibliography of all references cited in the report following the Editorial Policy and Style Guide for American Antiquities.
12. Maps - Include map(s) showing at a minimum the site area boundaries, land ownership, and units excavated or collected.
13. Illustrations - Include sufficient drawings, profiles, and figures to illustrate the data.
14. Tables - At a minimum, include a tabulation of materials and samples recovered and items curated.
15. Photographs - Include photographs as needed to illustrate the data.

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