

# Reporting Archaeological Sites to the State Historic Preservation Office

## Who Discovers Archaeological Sites?

The public, including avocational archaeologists, artifact collectors and property owners, plays an important role in discovering, recording, preserving and understanding Ohio's history.

## What Does Archaeology Have to Do With Historic Preservation?

One of the goals of the State Historic Preservation Office is to "discover and conserve archaeological sites and material." The Ohio History Connection cooperates with the Archaeological Society of Ohio in "taking inventory...of significant designated and undesignated state and local sites" [Ohio Revised Code 149.30(m)].

## Why Should Sites Be Reported?

Archaeological sites recorded with the State Historic Preservation Office can sometimes be protected from construction projects which would otherwise destroy them. Often construction projects can be redesigned to avoid destroying important archaeological sites, but only if the State Historic Preservation Office knows about their existence before construction begins.

Each year archaeologists in the State Historic Preservation Office review thousands of federal and some state projects for their impacts on archaeological sites. We maintain paper and computerized maps and other records of all known sites in Ohio and coordinate archaeology programs, including grants, for archaeological survey and excavation and permits to collect artifacts or conduct archaeological investigations on state lands.

## Are There Laws About Collecting Artifacts?

There certainly are. It is illegal to collect artifacts from state property in Ohio without

first obtaining a permit from the Ohio History Connection. Likewise, it is illegal to collect artifacts from federal property anywhere without first obtaining a permit from the federal government. Collecting artifacts from private property without permission from the property owner is also illegal. Theft of artifacts from private property and transporting them across state lines may also be a violation of the Archaeological Resources Protection Act, a federal law. Criminal and civil penalties associated with violations of this law can be severe. To discourage such activities and punish the guilty, the federal government actively pursues cases of this nature.

## What Is Used to Record Archaeological Sites?

With the goal of increased cooperation between the State Historic Preservation Office and the public in mind, in 1986 the State Historic Preservation Office developed a Preliminary Documentation Form for Archaeological Sites.

## How Much is the Form Used, and How Useful Is It?

Over 2000 sites have been reported to the State Historic Preservation Office by the public using the *Preliminary Documentation Form*. This cooperation has helped the State Historic Preservation Office in its work with federal, state and local agencies and others in our goal

to identify, evaluate and protect important archaeological sites.

The information provided on the Preliminary Documentation Form also is of great research value. The site numbers assigned to each site are often used by artifact collectors and avocational archaeologists to catalog and keep accurate records of their collections.

## How Are My Property Rights Affected By Recording a Site?

Recording archaeological sites with the State Historic Preservation Office does not affect property owners' rights to develop their property or to continue current land use practices such as agriculture. Nor does it mean that archaeologists from the State Historic Preservation Office or another agency are going to confiscate artifacts in collections from such sites or attempt to take control over the property through eminent domain. If property owners are interested in protecting important archaeological sites on their property from future development and destruction the State Historic Preservation Office will work with them to do so.

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State Historic Preservation Office  
800 E. 17th Ave., Columbus, Ohio 43211-2474  
p. 614.298.2000 f. 614.298.2037  
[www.ohiohistory.org/shpo](http://www.ohiohistory.org/shpo)

Monday-Friday 9 a.m.-5 p.m.  
(Individual staff hours may vary)  
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