

Facts for Feds:

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National NAGPRA Program Reorganized

Issue: The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) was signed into law by President George H.W. Bush in 1990. NAGPRA governs the return Native American human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, and objects of cultural patrimony to tribes and lineal descendants. Because implementing NAGPRA can be challenging and complex, the National NAGPRA program consists of a variety of activities designed to assist tribes, lineal descendants, museums, and Federal agencies that have NAGPRA responsibilities.

Status and Need: Implementation of the statute is entrusted to the Secretary of the Interior, who previously had delegated this responsibility to the Departmental Consulting Archeologist and, more recently, the Assistant Director for Cultural Resources. Among several issues related to program operations, there were expressed concerns that the available resources should focus upon improved implementation. Recent reviews demonstrated the need to undertake reorganization into a separate National NAGPRA program.

Action: In September, 2002, National NAGPRA was established as a separate program within the National Center for Cultural Resources Stewardship and Partnerships, National Park Service. Since then, staffing changes have added new personnel as well as converted others to full-time Federal employee status. The new Program Manager is Dr. Robert Stearns. The program staff are Robin Coates, Dr. Mary Downs, Dr. Martha Graham, Dr. C. Timothy McKeown, Dr. Paula Molloy, Dr. Karen Mudar, and Cynthia Murdock.

On behalf of museums and Federal agencies, National NAGPRA publishes notices in the Federal Register prior to the repatriation of Native American human remains and cultural items. National NAGPRA also maintains informational resources, such as the Native American Consultation Database, designed to further assist tribes, museums, and agencies in carrying out their NAGPRA responsibilities.

National NAGPRA also administers the NAGPRA Grants program, which provides support to Indian tribes, Native Hawaiian organizations, and museums in implementing the statute. The FY2002 appropriation is \$2.4 million; the FY2002 application deadline is *March 8, 2002*. National NAGPRA also provides training opportunities for tribes, museums, agency personnel, and others who are interested in better understanding and implementing NAGPRA.

Promulgation of NAGPRA regulations is another area of program responsibility. The National NAGPRA program currently is addressing reserved sections of the regulations, which include the civil penalties final rule and proposed rules on future applicability and disposition of culturally unidentifiable human remains. In addition, staff members serve as a source of information on civil penalties and NAGPRA compliance issues. National NAGPRA also provides administrative and staff support to the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Review Committee, chartered in 1992 to monitor implementation of the statute and make recommendations to the Secretary and Congress. The review committee's 23rd meeting will be held *May 31-June 2, 2002, in Tulsa, Oklahoma*.

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