



Ho-Chunk Department of Heritage Preservation
Cultural Resources Division
P.O. Box 667
Black River Falls, WI 54615
(715) 284-7181/ (800) 561-9918 FAX (715) 284-7449

Mound Preservation and Maintenance

Mound builders took great care in construction and maintaining their expressions of their religious faith. The most intimate human emotions were shared with the creator at these symbolic expressions of religion from birth to death.

It is through this intense faith that these mounds have endured nature's wrath for 1,000 years. Many were lost not to time, but to a new and indifferent people with religious intolerants that came and occupied this land. After the last 150 years, only a fraction remains of these sacred sites. The remaining mounds yet continue to endure and reflect the passion of faith that those who stood before them a thousand years ago.

The existing mounds continue to be threatened today by indifference. This lack of connection and respect for other religions is seen in how protected mounds are cared for. It is not uncommon to run power mowers over them that hack, and mutilate the delicate contours that were so patiently applied, or to allow trees and brush to grow that threatens the integrity and promotes deterioration of the mounds. Yet the caretakers of today would not plant trees in their house of worship or deface their family or church cemetery. It is with this concern to insure that these sacred sites remain for the next seven generations that the following educational guidelines are used in caring for these most sacred ancient sites.

Tree Maintenance

Tree removal: benefit: (1) promote light for growth of protective grass; (2) prevent tree falls and loss of integrity of mound.

Phase I. Remove all hazard dead leaning trees, decayed trees, trees with excessive branch loss.

Phase II. Remove all trees on mounds.

Phase III. Remove all trees within five feet of mounds.

Phase IV. Create an Oak savannah/White Pine grove or native grassland area.

1. Alternative: remove all low land trees that have surface roots and no taproots.

Note: 1. All cutting is done when ground is frozen to minimize ground disturbance.

2. No removal of stumps.

A new growth/suckers from stumps to be treated with herbicide, such as garlon, to limit growth of woody vegetation. Recommend painting or swabbing application method to reduce amount to herbicide used.

Ground Maintenance

The best method applied by mound builders.

Natural means: Prescribe burn – setting the area to fire.

Benefit: reduces the woody plants;

Lowers the ph;

Promotes growth of protective grasses;

Low cost.

Negative: not always possible due to fire hazards.

Mechanical

Mowing alternatives: (1) hand mow at a high setting to minimize ground disturbance; (2) mow around the mounds regularly and push mow mounds only in early spring to promote grasses and to remove emergent seedlings.

Benefit: high grass on mounds – discourages pedestrian traffic and provides a protective cover.

Negative: labor costs.

Prepared by: Ho-Chunk Nation Heritage Preservation Department, Jay Toth, Archeologist, Randy Polema, Aquatic Biologist, and David Olson, Forestry Tech.