



Help Us Preserve Cultural Resources

Cultural Resource Damage

Damage to cultural resources is an ongoing threat at places like Saguaro National Park (SNP). Whether it is intentional vandalism or accidental, the results are usually not reversible. There are hundreds of Cultural Resource sites at SNP, including prehistoric petroglyph sites, artifacts scatters, and rock features, as well as historic sites like Gould Mine, Manning Cabin, and the many Civilian Conservation Corps picnic area features found throughout the Tucson Mountain District.

Cultural Resources as well as Natural Resources are protected by law and damage or theft of any resource is taken very seriously by Law Enforcement and park staff. The following is an account by SNP Ranger Karin Harvey, adapted from a published article in the Arizona Site Steward's newsletter *Arizona Watch*, volume 12, number 2, July 2002, of an incident that took place at the park in 2001.

In January of 2001 rangers at Saguaro National Park encountered two hikers in a closed area of the park. In addition to having a dog off leash and a bouquet of wildflowers, one of the hikers had 14.5 pounds of fragmented bedrock with petroglyph markings (see photo at lower right), a large carpenter's hammer, and two large screwdrivers in his pack. The hiker took the rangers to the rock art site in the park where he had removed and collected the rock art fragments. The hole in the bedrock measured 14 by 15 inches with an average depth of 3 inches (see photo at upper right).

The law enforcement staff at SNP worked closely with archeologists from the Western Archeological and Conservation Center of the National Park Service and a professional rock art conservator to develop an assessment of the damage and an estimate of costs for restoration and repair. The documents and the case incident report were presented to an assistant United States attorney here in Tucson, Arizona.

The United States government accepted a plea to a misdemeanor count of the Archeological Resources Protection Act of 1979, 16 USC470ee.

The hiker will receive 18 months probation and will pay restitution of \$7,637.00. In addition the individual will make a formal apology to the local Native American Tribes and perform 60 hours of community service. The money will be used to fund an educational display for the park's visitor center on archeological resources and the Archeological Resource Protection Act.



Damaged petroglyph panel with section removed by vandals.



The remains of the prehistoric petroglyph panel and confiscated tools sit on the tailgate of the Law Enforcement vehicle.

Cultural Resource Brief

Visiting the Park

Please remember that park resources belong to all of us and it is up to the public as well as the park staff to see to it that the wonderful resources of Saguaro National Park remain in their natural condition, unmarred by careless visitors or malicious vandals, for all future generations to enjoy.

Remember that all cultural resources as well as natural resources are protected by law. Please stay on the trails, and remember that off-trail hiking is not allowed in either District below 4500 feet.

When encountering artifacts, please do not pick them up, but if you do accidentally pick up an artifact remember to put it back in the same spot from which it came. The location of artifacts within an archeological site can yield important information to the archeologist.

When visiting the petroglyphs please stay on the designated trail and do not touch the petroglyphs; oils from your hands can actually damage the rock surface. Stepping on the rocks can dislodge petroglyph boulders as well as the petroglyph panels themselves. We invite you to take lots of photographs, but please don't leave any fingerprints.

Please do not scratch, write, or otherwise mar the petroglyphs or bare rocks associated with the petroglyphs. Modern initials and designs scratched or otherwise put onto the rocks take away from the beauty of the petroglyphs and from the visitor experience. At Signal Hill, if you look carefully you can see areas that have been vandalized by inconsiderate visitors.

Also, please do not scratch, write on, spray paint or otherwise mar any concrete, stones or other resources within the park.



Reporting Violations

If you should happen across someone vandalizing a site or otherwise disturbing resources do not take any action yourself, but please call Park Watch (see below) as soon as you are able.

For more information contact:

Ronald Beckwith ph: (520) 733-5160
Archeologist email: ronald_beckwith@nps.gov
Saguaro National Park
3693 S. Old Spanish Trail
Tucson, AZ 85730

Some of the Laws that Protect Cultural Resources

- Antiquities Act of 1906 (Public Law 59-209; 34 STAT. 225; 16 USC 431-433)
- National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Aka NHPA)
- Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979 (aka ARPA) (16 USC 470)
- Native American Grave Protection and Repatriation Act (aka NAGPRA) (25 USC 3001)
- Executive Order 11593 of 1971
- Theft of Government Property (18 USC 641)
- Destruction of Government Property (18 USC 1361)
- Illegal trafficking in Native American Human Remains and Cultural Items (18 USC 1170)