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Accessibility and Considerations with the Repatriation of Objects

The repatriation of material cultural heritage offers Native community members a process to reacquire artifacts covered by the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), including human remains and associated funerary objects; unassociated funerary objects; sacred objects; and objects of cultural patrimony (McManamon, 2000). Internet databases, such as the Notices of Intent to Repatriate (NIR) Database by the National Park Service (NPS), provide public information on accepted claims made by a tribe for NAGPRA-eligible artifacts held in a museum or Federal agency. It is important to note that the listing under the NIR database only covers Federal Register documents published by this agency, and other Federal Register documents are held with the National Archives and Records Administration. Searchable databases containing up to date repatriation records that are available to the public can increase accessibility to information and communication between Native communities and museums.



The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) signed into law on November 16, 1990 by President George H. Bush. (Photo courtesy of George H. Bush Presidential Library and Museum.
https://www.nps.gov/nagpra/FED_NOTICES/NAGPRADIR/index2.htm

National NAGPRA Online Databases

Notices of Intent to Repatriate Database

A Notice of Intent to Repatriate is published when a museum or Federal agency accepts a claim by a tribe for sacred objects, unassociated funerary objects, or objects of cultural patrimony. These notices represent active repatriation claims by tribes for the objects indicated.

The Notices of Intent to Repatriate published to date are provided below and are listed by date, the most recent first. The Notices of Intent to Repatriate, presented in its entirety below, may also be searched using the Federal Register document(s). Suggested search terms include names of tribes, names of institutions such as museums, names of Federal agencies, states, or specific types of objects. For best results, use quotation marks around groups of words, for example "park county" or "university of california." Use the postal code as well as the state name to find cultural items from a specific state.

Note: This listing covers only those Federal Register documents published by this agency, or by another Federal agency in cooperation with us. All other Federal Register documents are available from the National Archives and Records Administration.

- Jan 12, 2017 Notice of Intent To Repatriate Cultural Items: Denver Museum of Nature & Science, Denver, CO
- Jan 12, 2017 Notice of Intent To Repatriate Cultural Items: Arizona State Museum, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ
- Dec 16, 2016 Notice of Intent To Repatriate Cultural Items: Allen County Fort Wayne Historical Society, Fort Wayne, IN
- Dec 2, 2016 Notice of Intent To Repatriate Cultural Items: Peabody Museum of Natural History, Yale University, New Haven, CT
- Dec 2, 2016 Notice of Intent To Repatriate Cultural Items: U.S. Dept. of Defense, Army COE, Huntington District, New Haven, CT
- Nov 28, 2016 Notice of Intent To Repatriate Cultural Items: Peabody Museum of Natural History, Yale University, New Haven, CT
- Nov 9, 2016 Notice of Intent To Repatriate Cultural Items: Albion College, Albion, MI
- Nov 9, 2016 Notice of Intent To Repatriate Cultural Items: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Omaha District, Omaha, NE
- Oct 3, 2016 Notice of Intent To Repatriate Cultural Items: Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, Quincy, WA
- July 5, 2016 Notice of Intent To Repatriate Cultural Items: Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, IL
- July 5, 2016 Notice of Intent To Repatriate Cultural Items: Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, IL
- July 5, 2016 Notice of Intent To Repatriate Cultural Items: Stanford University Heritage Services, Palo Alto, CA
- June 8, 2016 Notice of Intent To Repatriate Cultural Items: Lakeshore Museum Center, Muskegon, MI
- June 8, 2016 Notice of Intent To Repatriate Cultural Items: Catalina Island Museum, Avalon, CA
- June 8, 2016 Notice of Intent To Repatriate Cultural Items: Catalina Island Museum, Avalon, CA
- May 11, 2016 Notice of Intent To Repatriate Cultural Items: Peabody Museum of Natural History, Yale University, New Haven, CT
- Apr 29, 2016 Notice of Intent To Repatriate Cultural Items: Robert S. Peabody Museum of Archaeology, Andover, MA
- Apr 29, 2016 Notice of Intent To Repatriate Cultural Items: Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA
- Apr 21, 2016 Notice of Intent To Repatriate Cultural Items: Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, KS
- Apr 13, 2016 Notice of Intent To Repatriate Cultural Items: History Colorado, Formerly Colorado Historical Society, Denver, CO

About NAGPRA DATABASES

National NAGPRA maintains several online databases designed to provide access to information on a variety of NAGPRA-related topics. All of the databases have search capabilities that allow the user to locate specific information. The databases are typically updated monthly. We understand that institutions and tribes may discover errors or matters that require updating, and we are pleased to work with them on an ongoing basis. Please contact the database administrator on how to make corrections to the databases. Sign up to be notified of future notifications of updates to the online databases.

Native American Consultation Database (NACD) is an easy way to identify a current official contact for Indian tribes and Native Hawaiian organizations. Names and addresses of tribal leaders are entered from the current Indian Affairs Tribal Leaders Directory as well as current contact information for each Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO). Maps showing the location of Indian reservations, Indian land claims, military installations, and Alaska boroughs are available to provide information that can be used during consultation. Use the state tables compiled from Indian Land Creations 1784-1984 as additional consultation resources. Changes in contact information or corrections to the data should be sent to NAGPRA_info@nps.gov. Updated Feb 2016

Summaries Database. Each record contains the name of the tribe(s) receiving a copy of a summary from a museum or Federal agency. Corrections, updates, and additions to this database will be made as museums and agencies continue to verify the data that have been entered, or submit revised summaries. A Statement of No Summary (SNS) is a communication that a museum or federal agency voluntarily sends to the National NAGPRA Program stating that the museum/agency does not have possession or control of any holding or collection which might contain unassociated funerary objects, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony. View the SNS listing. Updated Nov 2016

Notices of Inventory Completion (NIC) Database is a searchable library of published Federal Register notices pertaining to Native American human remains and associated funerary objects. Updated Jan 12, 2017

Notices of Intent to Repatriate (NIR) Database is a searchable library of published Federal Register notices pertaining to Native American unassociated funerary objects, sacred objects, and objects of cultural patrimony. Updated Jan 12, 2017

Notices of Intended Disposition (NID) Database completes the disclosure and public access of the NAGPRA compliance documents for public use, with new discovery information. Updated Dec 2016

Culturally Unidentifiable (CUI) Native American Inventories Database provides

Online Databases

- Grants
- Training
- Notices
- Documents and Publications
- Review Committee
- Special Topics
- Contact National NAGPRA

Notices of Intent to Repatriate (NIR) Database, National Park Service (NPS) found at <https://www.nps.gov/nagpra/online/db/index.htm>

The National NAGPRA Online Database does not appear to have any records relating to basketry from the Cahuilla tribe located in Southern California (observe red box in map). However, when Cahuilla basketry is searched, 1 record from 2013 was found in the database and pertained to basketry found in a burial. This was posted from the Coachella Valley History Museum in Indio, CA, and found within the database, but as a Notice of Inventory Completion submitted by the museum. Therefore, no notices of repatriation are found involving Cahuilla basketry.



Map of California displaying the geographic distribution of Californian Native communities through the state, noting the original location for the Cahuilla in California.



Conservator Cheryl Podsiki (Department of Anthropology, Field Museum) analyzing material culture with a non-destructive portable XRF spectrometer. (https://sarweb.org/?symposium_native_collections_and_pesticides-p:symposiums)

Once approved for repatriation, it is suggested to implement non-invasive testing on objects made from organic resources, such as animal and plant materials. Organic-based objects were commonly treated with pesticides as a past preservation method to protect an object from destruction by pests. Common pesticides applied to museum objects include, and are not limited to, heavy metals (lead, arsenic and mercury) as well as organic pesticides. These chemical elements can be harmful with prolonged contact with the skin or ingested, and should not be handled by children, the elderly or expectant mothers (NMAI Repatriation Department, 2014). A factor that could give a false positive for heavy metal pesticides can be from the object itself due to materials from its manufacture (i.e., applied pigments), or through exposure to lead-rich environments. These materials should also be

handled with caution. Some museums offer methods of qualitative analysis and information regarding the presence of harmful elements on an object. It is recommended to have the results interpreted by a toxicologist to determine the severity of the contaminant, and how to safely handle and store the object.

Sources:

McManamon, F.P. (2000). "The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA)," *Archaeological Method and Theory: An Encyclopedia*, L. Ellis (Ed.), New York: Garland Publishing Co.

NMAI Repatriation Department (2014) *A Step-by-Step Guide Through the Repatriation Process*, Washington, D.C: the National Museum of the American Indian.

National NAGPRA (2017). *Notices of Intent to Repatriate (NIR) Database is a searchable library of published Federal Register notices pertaining to Native American unassociated funerary objects, sacred objects, and objects of cultural patrimony.* National Park Service, Department of the Interior. Updated 12 January 2017. Web. Accessed 14 February 2017.