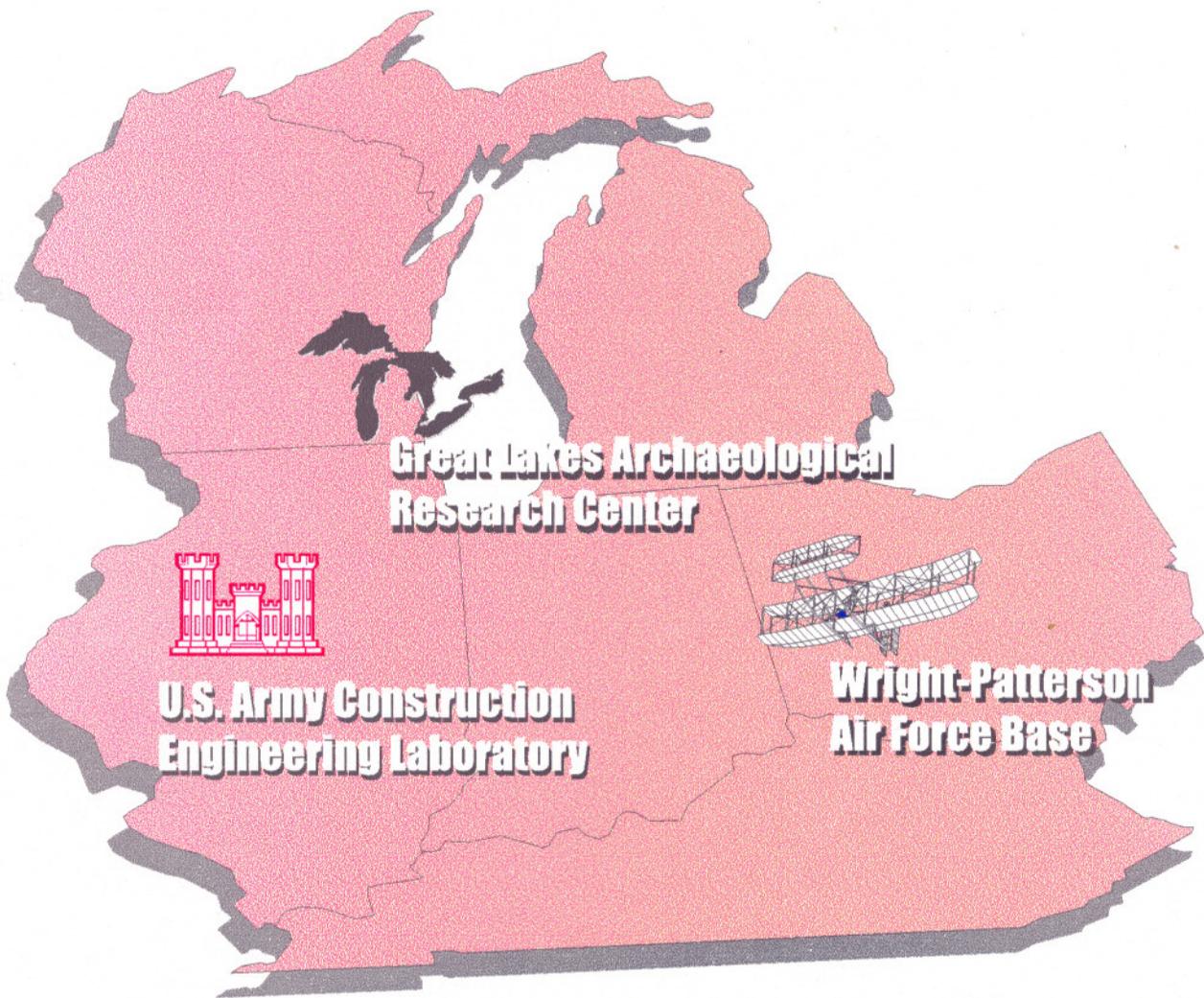


# An Archaeological Curation-Needs Assessment for Wright-Patterson Air Force Base

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**US Army Corps  
of Engineers®**  
St. Louis District

**Mandatory Center of Expertise for  
the Curation and Management  
of Archaeological Collections**

# REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

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**An Archaeological Curation-Needs Assessment  
for Wright-Patterson Air Force Base**

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Prepared for  
and  
Submitted in fulfillment under agreement with  
Wright-Patterson Air Force Base  
Dayton, Ohio

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
St. Louis District  
Mandatory Center of Expertise for the  
Curation and Management of Archaeological Collections

Archaeological Curation-Needs Assessment  
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1996



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# Executive Summary

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## Problem

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Federal archaeological collections are a significant and nonrenewable national cultural resource. However, curation of these materials has been largely substandard or ignored for over fifty years. The result has been a steady deterioration of these resources, which include many significant archaeological materials. A substantial number of these collections of our nation's heritage have been abandoned in the attics, basements, and closets of countless storage facilities across the United States. The improper care and subsequent deterioration of these collections not only violates the laws under which they were recovered, but also prevents educational and scientific use. Unfortunately, many collections of North American prehistory and history have been lost, with the considerable financial investment of the American public in archaeological recovery squandered. A substantial portion of these national cultural resources, however, still exists. Given proper housing and care, these nonrenewable resources can be saved for future generations. Wright-Patterson Air Force Base is committed to the long-term management of its archaeological collections.

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## Background

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Department of Defense (DoD) installations are responsible for the management of archaeological and historical collections. These collections are defined as material remains recovered during an archaeological investigation and/or any records assembled or generated during the recovery process. In those instances where no artifacts are recovered, a collection of associated records is nonetheless created. These records constitute a collection and must be handled accordingly. In those cases where both artifacts and associated records are generated, the associated records are sometimes separated from the material remains and curated at different repositories. This latter situation is problematic in that it results in the creation of two distinct collections for the same archaeological investigation. As mandated by federal laws and regulations, installations are required to ensure that all collections,

be they artifacts and records, or only records, are properly curated in perpetuity. Unfortunately, funding shortfalls, lack of consistent national policy, and a misunderstanding of the magnitude of the problem have prevented compliance.

Collections recovered from DoD installations are public property, the result of many years of archaeological research and the expenditure of millions of federal dollars. A federally sponsored mitigation program usually provides for the recovery of materials from archaeological sites, the analysis of recovered items, the publication and circulation of a final report, and the placement of collections in storage facilities for preservation, display, or future study. In the past, federal agencies gave little attention to the maintenance of collections once salvage programs were completed. Through the years, most collections have been stored free of charge by universities and museums. Inadequate funding and failing facilities now seriously hinder the ability of these institutions to adequately care for archaeological collections.

At the request of Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, the U.S. Army Engineer District, St. Louis performed a curation-needs assessment of repositories that currently hold Wright-Patterson Air Force Base collections. This project, which was managed by Jan Ferguson, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base historic preservation officer, was designed to assist Wright-Patterson in their efforts to comply with 36 CFR Part 79, Curation of Federally-Owned and Administered Archeological Collections. Fieldwork was performed during the period 11 to 13 March 1996 and is summarized in this report.

Research presented here identified slightly more than twelve cubic feet (12.15 ft<sup>3</sup>) of artifacts and less than fourteen linear feet (13.85) of documentation from archaeological investigations on Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. Collections of material and associated documentation are curated at two repositories: (1) the U.S. Army Construction Engineering Research Laboratory (CERL) in Champaign, Illinois, and (2) the Great Lakes Archaeological Research Center (GLARC) in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

## Issues

Several reports from projects conducted by CERL were not available for examination because they are not in a printed format (They only exist as working files on computer.). These are mostly draft reports, the only copies of which were sent to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base for review. Because the reports are currently under review at the Wright-Patterson Environmental Office, the references were not available for examination. In regards to the artifacts from Wright-Patterson that are held at CERL, our standardized archaeological objects forms indicate that all artifacts were examined despite the fact that not every collection is correlated with a report.

## Status of Artifacts

Wright-Patterson Air Force Base archaeological collections consist of approximately twelve cubic feet. The material consists of both prehistoric and historic artifacts (Tables 1 and 2). At the present time, none of the collections fully meet existing federal requirements for archaeological curation. All the secondary containers used to hold artifacts are plastic, zip-lock bags (four-mil and two-mil thickness). Secondary container labels are directly applied to the container. In most cases, the information contained on the label is consistent.

**Table 1. Presence/Absence (by Box) of Artifacts Curated at CERL**

<b>Box</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
Glass	+	+	+	+	+	+	-
Metal	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Brick	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
Wood	+	+	+	+	-	-	-
Historic Ceramics	+	+	+	+	-	-	-
Rock (non cultural)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Faunal	+	+	+	+	+	-	-
Plastic	+	+	-	-	-	-	-
Rubber	+	+	-	-	-	-	-
Soil	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Prehistoric Lithics	+	-	-	-	-	-	-

**Table 2. Presence/Absence  
(by Box) of Artifacts  
Curated at GLARC**

Box	1	2
Glass	+	-
Metal	+	-
Brick	-	-
Wood	-	-
Historic Ceramics	+	-
Rock (non cultural)	-	-
Faunal	+	-
Plastic	-	-
Rubber	-	-
Soil	-	+
Prehistoric Lithics	+	-

**Status of Human Remains**

No human remains were discovered in the archaeological materials from Wright-Patterson Air Force Base that were evaluated as part of this assessment.

**Status of Documentation**

Wright-Patterson Air Force Base records encompass 13.85 linear feet, including six reports. Field records, reports, and administrative records and photographic records were present in all of the collections examined. Administrative records include correspondence, scopes of work, proposals, and internal documents.

None of the records are managed according to professional archival practices. For the most part, the documents are still at the contractor that in most cases, is not equipped to provide the documents with the attention they require. Photographs are stored along with paper records; and cartographic records are folded and stored in file folders with other information. In summary, the records are receiving the worst treatment and are in the greatest danger of further deterioration. Efforts to correct this situation should be taken immediately.

## Corrective Actions

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A number of corrective actions are necessary to bring Wright-Patterson Air Force Base collections and those facilities housing them into compliance with 36 CFR Part 79. General recommendations include the following.

- a. Coalesce collections into a professional collections management repository located in the same state as the installation, if possible and feasible.
- b. Identify and systematically inventory all archaeological collections and associated documentation recovered from Wright-Patterson Air Force Base installations using one uniform system.
- c. Rehabilitate and/or conserve artifact collections, and archivally preserve documents and reports.
- d. Develop and implement uniform inventory procedures.
- e. Develop and implement formal archives management programs.

If implemented, these corrective measures would allow Wright-Patterson Air Force Base to meet the minimum federal requirements for adequate long-term curation of archaeological collections. By adopting this approach, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base has the opportunity to implement a plan that will serve its curation needs well into the next century.

## Acknowledgments

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We thank Jan Ferguson of Wright-Patterson Air Force Base for her assistance. We also thank John Isaacson and Mike Hargrave (U.S. Army Construction Engineering Research Laboratory) and John Richards (Great Lakes Archaeological Research Center) for their assistance during the fieldwork aspect of this project. We also thank Marc Kodack and Kristen Langness for their comments on earlier drafts of this report.



## Introduction

Wright-Patterson Air Force Base is responsible for archaeological materials and accompanying documentation (hereafter referred to as archaeological collections) recovered from their base. This responsibility is mandated through numerous laws, including the Antiquities Act of 1906 (P.L. 59-209), the Historic Sites Act of 1935 (P.L. 74-292), the Reservoir Salvage Act of 1960 (P.L. 86-523) as amended, the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (P.L. 89-665) as amended, and the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979 (P.L. 96-95). Preservation of federal archaeological collections is required by 36 CFR Part 79, Curation of Federally-Owned and Administered Archaeological Collections.

Furthermore, in 1990 the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (P.L. 101-601) (NAGPRA) was enacted to (1) identify the federal agencies with archaeological collections that contain Native American human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, and objects of cultural patrimony and (2) forge agreements between federal agencies and Native American Tribes and Native Hawaiian organizations on the repatriation or disposition of these remains and objects. All federal agencies are required to meet mandated deadlines for compliance with NAGPRA. A summary of unassociated funerary objects, sacred objects, and objects of cultural patrimony was required by November 15, 1993. Additionally, an inventory of

human remains and associated funerary objects was mandated by November 15, 1995.

## Compliance Plan

In May 1995, as the first step in complying with 36 CFR Part 79 and NAGPRA, Jan Ferguson, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base cultural resource manager, contacted the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Mandatory Center of Expertise for the Curation and Management of Archaeological Collections (MCX) in St. Louis to discuss an interagency agreement that would address these requirements. After a series of consultations with Michael K. Trimble, director of the MCX, an approach was recommended that would identify and evaluate the collections from Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in accordance with the federal curation requirements of 36 CFR Part 79. Data gathered by the MCX would also provide Wright-Patterson Air Force Base with NAGPRA-compliance information. A memorandum of agreement was signed between the two parties that directed the MCX to conduct curation-needs assessments at repositories holding Wright-Patterson Air Force Base collections. According to this agreement, the MCX would provide Wright-Patterson Air Force Base with a general inventory of their archaeological collections that would outline their curation needs. Concomitantly, collections managers would

receive a plan addressing their specific curation needs and, when appropriate, the corrective actions required to bring their facility into compliance with 36 CFR Part 79.

In the Agreement, the St. Louis District agreed to provide:

1. professional and technical services to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base for the inspection and inventory of archaeological collections in selected repositories;
2. information that would enable Wright-Patterson Air Force Base to fulfill the summary requirements of NAGPRA;
3. a final report that (a) identifies all artifacts and associated documentation and (b) makes recommendations for compliance with the requirements of 36 CFR Part 79; and
4. a bibliography of reports associated with archaeological investigations performed on Wright-Patterson Air Force Base properties.

As part of the curation-needs assessment, personnel from the MCX would visit repositories to examine any reports, records, or inventory data associated with federal collections and would develop an annotated bibliography of reports, which includes a list of the associated archaeological materials and their present location.

## Methods

Collections from Wright-Patterson Air Force Base archaeological projects that are currently curated at the Construction Engineering Research Laboratory (CERL) in Champaign, Illinois, and the Great Lakes Archaeological Research Center (GLARC) in Milwaukee,

Wisconsin, were evaluated on 12 and 13 March 1996, respectively.

## Pre-Fieldwork Investigation

Assessment of each facility's compliance with 36 CFR Part 79 included a general records search of the (National Park Service) National Archeological Database for Wright-Patterson Air Force Base reports.

## Field Inspection and Assessment of Repositories and Collections

In order to assist Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, the MCX's assessments involved a two-step process.

1. An examination of all project and site reports, administrative files, field records, curation records, electronic media, and photographic records was performed to determine their presence or absence, the total length of each type of documentation, the physical condition of the containers and the records, and the overall condition of the storage environment.
2. An examination and evaluation of all archaeological materials included an assessment of (1) primary and secondary containers, (2) the degree of container labeling, (3) the extent of laboratory processing, (4) the material classes included in each collection, and (5) the condition of any human skeletal remains. Primary containers (e.g., acidic and acid-free cardboard boxes, cardboard, metal, and wooden trays, and wooden and metal drawers) are the receptacles that house an individual artifact or group of artifacts. Secondary containers (e.g., acidic paper bags, plastic sandwich bags, plastic zip-

lock bags, glass jars, film vials, aluminum foil, and small acidic and acid-free cardboard boxes) are the largest housing for artifacts within the primary containers.

### **NAGPRA-Compliance Assessment**

No human skeletal remains or sacred objects were noted by the assessment teams in any of the Wright-Patterson Air Force Base collections.

### **Report Preparation**

Following the completion of all fieldwork and research, the MCX will provide to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base:

1. a written report detailing the results of the curation-needs assessment including estimates of the sizes of the collections, their content, and their condition, and
2. recommendations for rehabilitation of the repositories and/or the collections, according to standards set forth in 36 CFR Part 79.



# Wright-Patterson Air Force Base

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## Installation Summary

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### Volume of Off-Base Artifact Collections:

12.15 ft<sup>3</sup>

Archaeological collections are housed at the Construction Engineering Research Laboratory (7.97 ft<sup>3</sup>) and the Great Lakes Archaeological Research Center (4.18 ft<sup>3</sup>).

### Compliance Status:

Material will require partial rehabilitation to comply with federal guidelines.

### Linear Feet of Off-Base Records:

13.85 linear feet

Records are housed at the Construction Engineering Research Laboratory (10.85 linear feet) and the Great Lakes Archaeological Research Center (3.0 linear feet).

### Compliance Status:

Records will require complete rehabilitation to comply with federal regulations and modern archival practices.

### Human Skeletal Remains: None

Status of Curation Funding: Currently Wright-Patterson Air Force Base has no formal curation agreement with any repository.

Recommended Curation Facility: Ohio Historical Society and State Museum of Ohio, Columbus.

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## U.S. Army Construction Engineering Research Laboratory Champaign, Illinois

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PERSON(S) CONTACTED: Mike Hargrave

Approximately, eight cubic feet (7.97 ft<sup>3</sup>) of artifacts and eleven linear feet (10.85) of associated records are currently housed at the

U.S. Army Construction Engineering Research Laboratory (CERL) in Champaign, Illinois. Personnel from CERL are responsible for and tasked with many different types of projects, including archaeological research conducted across the United States.

## Structural and Environmental Adequacy

Offices for CERL are housed in several buildings that are scattered throughout a research park. Most of the space consists of offices for staff and storage areas. The building where the Wright-Patterson archaeological materials are stored is structurally sound and has basic environmental controls in place, including janitorial service and pest control measures.

## Artifact Storage

Artifacts recovered from Wright-Patterson Air Force Base consist of prehistoric and historic materials (Table 3) that are stored in acid-free cardboard boxes and four-mil, zip-lock plastic bags (Figures 1 and 2). Both the cardboard boxes and the plastic bags are directly labeled (in black marker) with site number, date, investigator, and provenience. At the time of

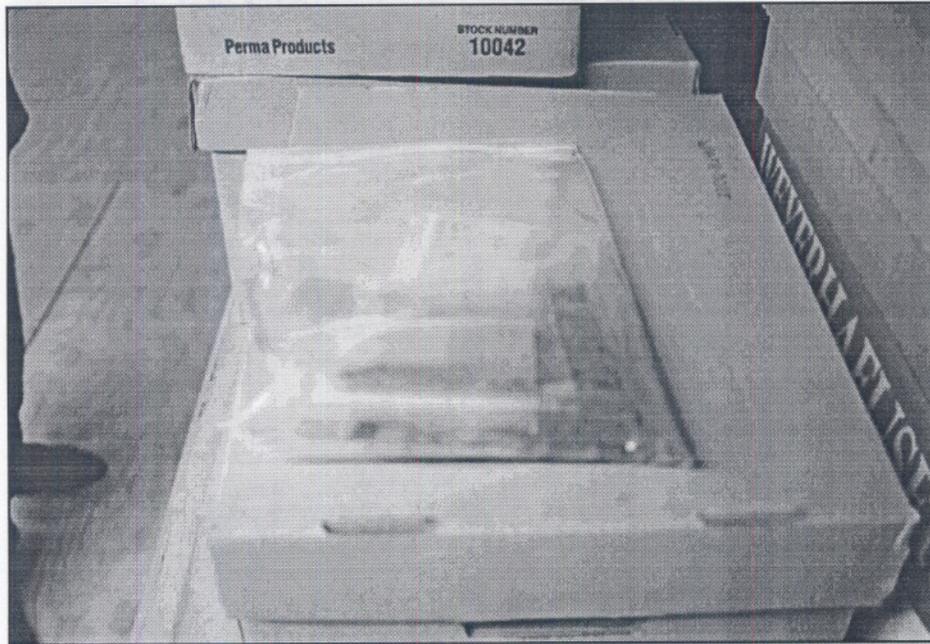
this assessment, the material was housed in an empty room that is being refinished as laboratory space. The materials require partial rehabilitation to comply with federal guidelines.

**Table 3. Volume of Artifacts Curated at CERL**

Material Class	Volume
Glass	1.4
Metal	4.94
Brick	0.4
Wood	0.45
Historic Ceramics	0.53
Rock (non cultural)	0
Faunal	0.10
Plastic	0.09
Rubber	0.01
Soil	0
Prehistoric Lithics	0.05
Total	7.97



**Figure 1. Wright-Patterson Air Force Base artifacts are curated in acidic cardboard boxes at the U.S. Army Construction and Engineering Research Laboratory.**



**Figure 2. Secondary containers for the Wright-Patterson Air Force Base artifacts at the U.S. Army Construction and Engineering Research Laboratory are zip-lock plastic bags.**

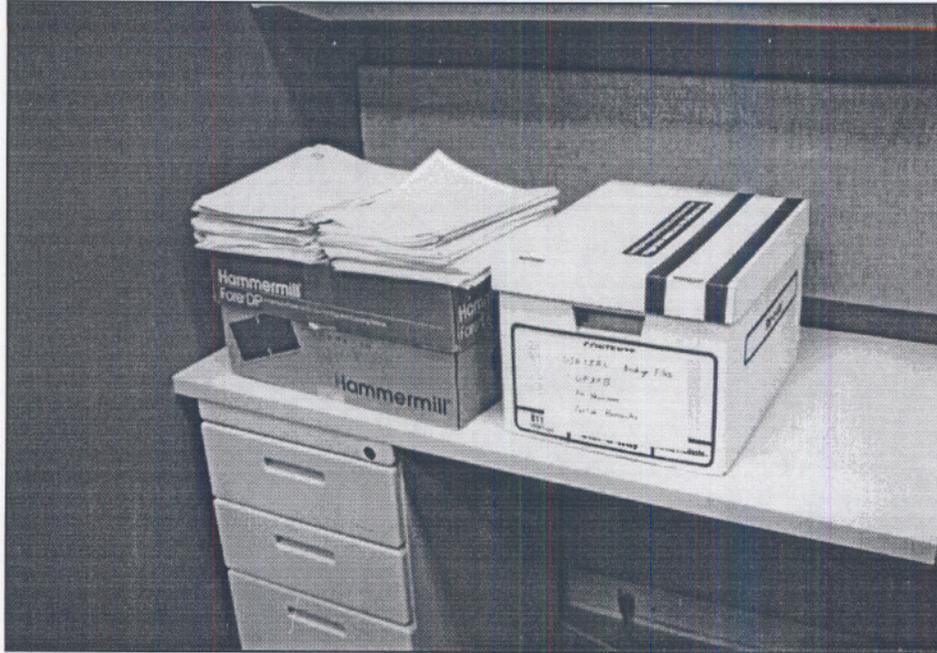
## Records Storage

Records generated from archaeological projects on Wright-Patterson Air Force Base consist of administrative, field, analysis, and report records. All associated documents (Table 4) are stored loose or in manila/accordion folders in two acidic cardboard boxes and in standard, letter-sized, metal filing cabinets (Figure 3). All folders and boxes that hold records are directly and consistently labeled with pen or black marker. Overall, all materials are in good condition, but will require complete rehabilitation to comply fully with federal guidelines.

**Table 4. Total Linear Feet of Records Curated at CERL**

Type of Record <sup>1</sup>	Length
Administrative	0.5
Background	0.5
Report	5.9
Survey/Excavation	3.1
Analysis	0
Photographic	0.85
Cartographic	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>10.85</b>

<sup>1</sup>**Administrative** records refer to any correspondence, office memos, or other transmittals pertaining to a particular project. **Background** records are those records generated prior to field research for a specific project (e.g., results from a site file search). **Report** records are copies of draft or final reports. **Survey/Excavation** records are forms that are generated during fieldwork. **Analysis** records are those forms or printouts generated and used to examine recovered information. **Photographic** records are any photos, slides, contact sheets, or negatives generated in the course of a project. **Cartographic** records are any maps, blueprints, and/or large-sized line drawings that are created for use during a particular project.



**Figure 3. Extent of Wright-Patterson Air Force Base associated documentation at the U.S. Army Construction and Engineering Research Laboratory.**

## Collections Management Standards

The U.S. Army Construction Engineering Research Laboratory is not a long-term archaeological curation facility; therefore they do not maintain collections management standards or written policies and procedures for curation. Their primary responsibility toward archaeological materials is to analyze and hold collections until permanent housing can be located. They have no curation and/or management standards and are serving only as an interim curation facility until permanent housing for the materials from Wright-Patterson Air Force Base is identified.

## Recommendations

1. Add acid-free label inserts (with provenience information) to all boxes and bags of artifacts.
2. Remove all contaminants (e.g., staples, paper clips, and rubber bands) from the documents.
3. Duplicate all paper records onto acid-free paper and place in acid-free folders labeled in indelible ink. Place all folders in acid-free cardboard boxes, and apply adhesive polyethylene plastic label holders, with acid-free inserts, to the boxes.
4. Arrange associated documentation according to modern archival procedures and create a finding aid for the documentation collection.
5. Make a duplicate copy of all the associated documentation, either on acid-free paper or archival microformat, and store these materials in a separate, fire-safe, secure location.

## Great Lakes Archaeological Research Center Milwaukee, Wisconsin

PERSON(S) CONTACTED: John Richards

Approximately four cubic feet (4.18 ft<sup>3</sup>) of artifacts and three linear feet (2.96) of associated records are currently housed at the Great Lakes Archaeological Research Center (GLARC) in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

### Structural and Environmental Adequacy

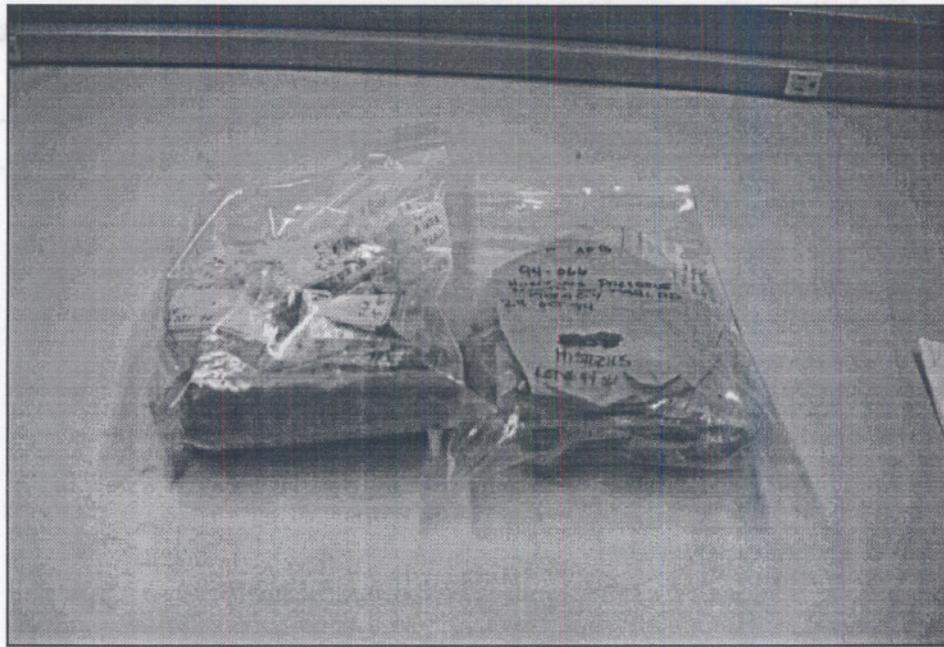
Most of the space at GLARC consists of storage areas and offices for staff. The building is structurally sound and has basic environmental controls in place, including janitorial service and pest control measures.

### Artifact Storage

Artifacts from Wright-Patterson Air Force Base consist of prehistoric and historic materials (Table 5) that are stored in acidic cardboard boxes and four-mil, zip-lock plastic bags (Figure 4). In most cases, the cardboard boxes and the plastic bags are directly labeled (in ballpoint pen and black marker) with site number, date, investigator, and provenience. The materials require complete rehabilitation to comply with federal guidelines.

Table 5. Volume of Artifacts  
Curated at GLARC

Material Class	Volume
Glass	0.03
Metal	0.17
Brick	0
Wood	0
Historic Ceramics	0.11
Rock (non cultural)	0
Faunal	0.02
Plastic	0
Rubber	0
Soil	3.07
Prehistoric Lithics	0.78
Total	4.18



**Figure 4. Close-up view of Wright-Patterson Air Force Base artifacts that are curated at the Great Lakes Archaeological Research Center in four-mil zip-lock plastic bags.**

## Records Storage

Records generated from archaeological projects on Wright-Patterson Air Force Base consist of administrative, field, analysis, and report records. Associated records (Table 6) are either bound, stored loose, or placed in manila accordian folders (Figure 5). Overall, all materials are in good condition but will require complete rehabilitation to comply fully with federal guidelines.

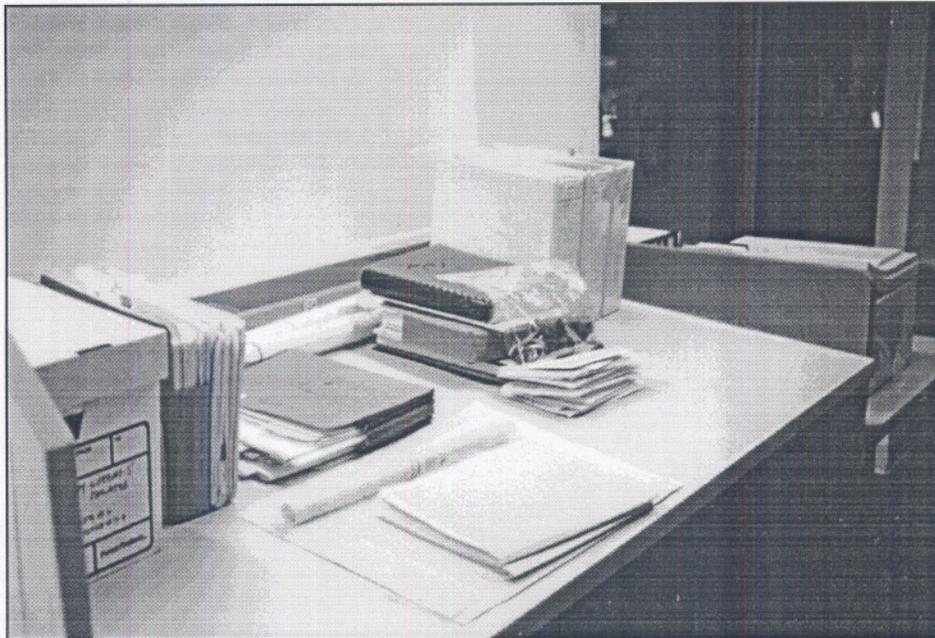
## Collections Management Standards

The Great Lakes Archaeological Research Center is not a long-term archaeological curation facility; therefore they do not maintain collections management standards or written policies and procedures for curation. Their primary responsibility toward archaeological materials is to analyze and hold collections until permanent housing can be located. They have no curation and/or management standards and are serving only as an interim curation facility until permanent housing for the materials from Wright-Patterson Air Force Base is identified.

**Table 6. Total Linear Feet of Records Curated at GLARC**

Type of Record <sup>1</sup>	Length
Administrative	0.77
Background	0
Report	1.44
Survey/Excavation	0.08
Analysis	0.23
Photographic	0.25
Cartographic	0.19
<b>Total</b>	<b>2.96</b>

<sup>1</sup>**Administrative** records refer to any correspondence, office memos, or other transmittals pertaining to a particular project. **Background** records are those records generated prior to field research for a specific project (e.g., results from a site file search). **Report** records are copies of draft or final reports. **Survey/Excavation** records are forms that are generated during fieldwork. **Analysis** records are those forms or printouts generated and used to examine recovered information. **Photographic** records are any photos, slides, contact sheets, or negatives generated in the course of a project. **Cartographic** records are any maps, blueprints, and/or large-sized line drawings that are created for use during a particular project.



**Figure 5. Extent of Wright-Patterson Air Force Base associated documentation at the Great Lakes Archaeological Research Center.**

## Recommendations

1. Remove artifacts from their current primary containers and place in acid-free boxes with acid-free labels placed in inert plastic sleeves.
2. Label all artifacts using acid-free paper inserts placed directly in secondary container. Similarly, add an acid-free, removable label to the front of each box indicating primary container contents.
3. Remove all contaminants (e.g., staples, paper clips, and rubber bands) from the documents.
4. Duplicate all paper records onto acid-free paper and place in acid-free folders labeled in indelible ink. Place all folders in acid-free cardboard boxes, and apply adhesive polyethylene plastic label holders, with acid-free inserts, to the boxes.
5. Arrange associated documentation according to modern archival procedures and create a finding aid for the documentation collection.
6. Make a duplicate copy of all the associated documentation, either on acid-free paper or archival microformat, and store these materials in a separate, fire-safe, secure location.



Figure 5. Extent of Wright-Patterson Air Force Base associated documentation at the Great Lakes Archaeological Research Center.

### 3

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