



US Army Corps
of Engineers

Information Paper

Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA)

Operations and Maintenance (O&M)

Contact:

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Description: The Mandatory Center of Expertise (MCX) for the Curation and Management of Archaeological Collections (CMAC), St. Louis District, delivers centralized management, administration, and policy development for U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) wide compliance with archeological collections management. MCX CMAC provides overall management of the USACE’s Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) program and facilitates consistent nationwide NAGPRA program implementation and operation. NAGPRA addresses the recovery, treatment, and repatriation of Native American and Native Hawaiian cultural items by Federal agencies, which includes human remains, associated funerary objects, unassociated funerary objects, sacred objects, and objects of cultural patrimony, all of which are part of USACE's archaeological collections. MCX CMAC manages and facilitates inventorying and summarizing collections, consulting with Indian tribes, researching cultural affiliation and aboriginal occupation, and returning NAGPRA collections to the appropriate Indian tribes.

Status: NAGPRA related items within USACE collections are estimated to be more than 7,400 individuals and 505,000 objects. All 38 domestic Corps districts have completed the required NAGPRA initial summaries. Human remains, referred to as Ancestors, have been identified in collections from 26 Corps Districts. MCX CMAC works with districts to inventory the collections, publish compliance documents, and repatriate human remains.

USACE NAGPRA STATUS	
Districts with human remains and cultural items	26
Estimated number of ancestors	7,400
Estimated number of cultural objects	505,000
NAGPRA compliance documents filed	105
Ancestors repatriated	4,215
Cultural Objects repatriated	266,086

Importance: Respectful treatment and return of Native American human remains is critical to USACE’s relationship with Tribal partners. Centralized management and funding, along with MCX CMAC subject matter expertise, are critical for Corps-wide execution.

Authority: Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (P.L. 101-601) and implementing regulations (43 CFR Part 10)



Figure 1: Inspecting objects (image from National NAGPRA website)

Activities for FY24: Provide faunal review of collections from at least three districts to identify Ancestors that may have been unidentified; complete inventory verifications for at least two districts, coordinate publication of at least 10 notices, facilitate tribal consultation, and repatriate collections from at least three districts.

Activities after FY24: Continue faunal review of collections, inventory verifications, facilitation of consultation, and support of repatriation requests. Draft guidance and provide training to Corps district on updated regulations, which became effective 12 January 2024.

Financial:

FY23 Allocation: \$1,287,000
FY24 Presidents Budget: \$1,300,000