

APPENDIX III: PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH ACCIDENTALLY-FOUND ARTIFACTS/NATURAL SPECIMENS AT OHS SITES

Background:

Frequently site staff or visitors find artifacts, fossils, animal bones, or other cultural/natural specimens exposed on trails, along stream banks, in eroded areas, or in cultivated fields or gardens at OHS sites. Because these chance discoveries constitute part of the cultural resources of the particular site and can be important in the overall site interpretation, they should be collected, recorded, and preserved as part of the Ohio Historical Society's collections.

The goal of the following procedures is to establish a system by which artifacts and natural specimens discovered accidentally at the sites can be recovered, evaluated by relevant staff, cataloged, and properly curated. The curatorial staff and site personnel will collaborate on the decision whether the item(s) should be added to the permanent collections or to the education collection. Information regarding collecting/disturbing artifacts or natural specimens on OHS property will be provided to site staff, which they can communicate to visitors as needed. Visitors should be informed directly and via site regulation signs of the penalties for illegally removing items from the site. At the same time, they should also be encouraged to contribute to the preservation of the site's cultural and natural resources by either reporting objects they have seen or by giving them to site staff for safekeeping.

Please note that these procedures focus on accidental discoveries only. Formal archaeological or biological research projects on OHS properties require special permits.

Procedures for site staff:

Record the location and date of the discovery as soon as possible. Keeping a specific log book for recording found objects would be helpful

Observe the location where the item was found. Are there other artifacts or specimens near by? Are there any visible signs of a pit, midden, or concentration of items?

Inform relevant Collections/Curatorial personnel of the discovery

Place the item in a box or zip-lock plastic bag in which is included a label recording the location and date of the discovery

Store the item(s) in a safe location at the site until such time that you can bring them to the Registrar's storage area at the Ohio Historical Center for further evaluation and cataloging

If you find a bone which you think may be human or if you find a partially exposed human burial, contact the Archaeology staff at the Ohio Historical Center immediately. Also contact the county coroner who is responsible for determining whether the remains are of any medical-legal interest. In the case of a partially exposed burial, cover the remains with plastic or some similar material to protect them from exposure to the elements and from further disturbance. If the county coroner determines that the remains are not of any medical-legal interest, OHS archaeology staff will assess the situation and determine, in collaboration with site staff, whether the burial should be left in place (with proper protection) or removed, following established procedures, and curated. Human remains removed from a site which are identified as American Indian will be subject to NAGPRA compliance. (On 12 July 2002 the Society issued a moratorium on the recovery of all human remains. The directive and subsequent clarification included the following points: 1) Human remains and associated objects may be exposed so that information regarding their ancestry and antiquity may be gathered 2) Formal burials will not be removed from context and will be re-buried in place 3) The location of the burial will be recorded and measures will be taken to protect the burial from further disturbance.)

Site staff and curators together will decide whether particular items are to be placed in the permanent collection or the education collection; the objects will be cataloged in the permanent collection records. Since most sites are not equipped with collections storage space, items added to the permanent collections will be stored at the central collection facilities in Columbus. Items added to the education collections can

be returned to the sites if they can be incorporated into existing educational programs at those locations. However, they should be protected from unreasonable damage or theft. In those instances when objects are turned in by visitors, the relevant site and collections/curatorial staff will write a formal letter thanking the person(s) for their assistance in preserving the site's cultural resources.

The cultural and natural resources at OHS sites are protected by several provisions in state law:

Sec. 149.54 Archaeological survey or salvage on public lands; prohibitions; penalties

Requires permit from Director of OHS for any "...archaeological survey or salvage work on any land that is owned, controlled, or administered by the state or any political subdivision of the state, or at any archaeological preserve ... or at any state archaeological landmark.... Whoever violates this section is guilty of a misdemeanor of the second degree

Sec. 155.05 Violating rules at prehistoric parks

No person shall willfully violate a reasonable rule governing the access to prehistoric parks or historic grounds made by a person, association, or company owning or having custody of such parks or grounds, nor shall any person injure or mark structures, trees, or plants therein. Whoever violates this section is liable to such owners or custodians for damages.

Sec. 155.99 Penalties

Whoever violates section 155.05 of the Revised Code is guilty of a misdemeanor of the fourth degree.