

## Cultural Resources Do's and Don'ts

The Forest Service is charged with preserving and protecting the Nation's irreplaceable cultural and historic heritage on National Forest lands. We encourage visitors to enjoy their national heritage in a manner that leaves it undisturbed for the education and enjoyment of future generations of Americans. Please remember:

### DO's

Do visit and enjoy the prehistoric and historic heritage sites that are developed for interpretation. These special places are preserved by the Forest Service for the education and enjoyment of the American people.

Do be good stewards of your heritage resources on Forest lands. Report any vandalism or artifact looting you observe to the nearest Ranger District or Forest Supervisors office. Do try to write down license plate numbers and other distinguishing features of vehicles and people engaged in vandalism or looting. Do not confront these individuals on your own.

Do leave what you find in their place. If you find arrow heads or other prehistoric artifacts on the National Forest leave them in place, mark their location on a map if you have one, take a picture if possible and report this information to the nearest Ranger District or the Forest Archaeologist.

Do volunteer – there are numerous opportunities on National Forests across the nation to become a Forest Service volunteer working with Forest Service archaeologists, historians and other historic preservation professionals to do research, stabilization and restoration of important heritage resource sites. Check out the nation-wide heritage volunteer opportunities on the Passport In Time web site. ([www.passportintime.com](http://www.passportintime.com))

### DON'Ts

Do not dig in prehistoric or historic sites or areas.

The disturbance or “looting” of any archaeological or historic site on federal lands is a serious violation punishable by law. Several federal laws, including the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979 (ARPA), provide protection for archaeological sites and artifacts on military bases, national forests, national parks and other federal lands. ARPA is a general intent rather than a specific intent statute. This means that an individual does not have to know that his or her actions were illegal or even know that he or she was on federal land to violate the act. If damage is severe and intent can be shown, federal agencies can charge the perpetrators with theft and destruction of government property. The penalty can be up to 10 years in prison and/or up to \$10,000 for each offense.

Montana state laws protect archaeological sites on state property. Human burial sites are protected regardless of their location, ethnicity or antiquity. Violating or desecrating graves is subject to prosecution under federal and state law.

Do not use a metal detector to locate and excavate on a prehistoric or historic heritage site.

Metal detectors may be used on public land in areas that do not contain or would not reasonably be expected to contain archaeological or historic resources. ARPA exempts the collection of coins for personal use if the coins are not in an archaeological or historic site.

The most common form of metal detector use is searching for lost coins, jewelry, and incidental metal items having no historical value. Such use is common in developed campgrounds, swimming or fishing access areas, and picnic areas and requires no permit. However, one must assume personal responsibility to notice if the area may indeed contain archaeological or historic resources and if it does, cease metal detecting.

Do not geocache irresponsibly. An out door game played with a GPS unit, topographic map and compass, this modern version of the treasure hunt has become increasingly popular in recent years. Please do not put geocaches in or adjacent to archaeological or historic sites. Hiding caches by digging in an archaeological site or placing them inside or under historic buildings can cause irreparable harm to the scientific and historic values we're trying to preserve. Do not build rock cairns to hide geocaches. These cairns can be confused with Forest Service trail markers, mineral claim markers and historic or prehistoric trail features.

Do not deface rock art panels. Adding initials, slogans or other graffiti to these important heritage sites destroys their cultural and aesthetic value. It is disrespectful to the Indian people who consider these prehistoric resources sacred.

Do not collect "barn wood" or other items from historic sites or buildings for personal use in handicrafts. As mentioned above, these sites-even those that appear as ruins-are protected by historic preservation laws.