

ARCHAEOLOGY ON PUBLIC LANDS

WELCOME TO THE RIO GRANDE NATIONAL FOREST!

YOU CAN HELP US PROTECT AND PRESERVE OUR SHARED
CULTURAL HERITAGE!

That means we would like you to help us keep an eye out for the extraordinary and usual!! That includes prehistoric and historic period artifacts, structures, and sites. If you come across, say, an arrowhead or pottery sherd:

- Please do not collect it but take a picture and a GPS location (we call this “catch and release”).
- If the artifact is in harm’s way (i.e. in a trail or a road), please move it to the side in a more protected area, as it probably eroded from somewhere nearby into the trail/road in the first place.
- Notify Price Heiner, Forest Archaeologist/Heritage Program Manager
719.480.1105 or price.heiner@usda.gov

It is important for you to know that both Forest Service Policy and federal law state that it is illegal to remove any artifact 50 years-old or older from public lands (*36 CFR 800, Title 18: Theft and Destruction of Government Property, the 1906 Antiquities Act, and the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966*). An artifact is defined as “anything that is or was made or used by people”. When in doubt about its age; please leave it where it lies and take a photo! Section 6(d) of the *Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA)* also aids law enforcement in levying fines, and even imprisonment for the removal or destruction of archaeological materials.

Removing artifacts is stealing and/or erasing knowledge and cultural heritage from posterity and the American public. Please, if you find something, share the data you collect with the Archaeologists on the Rio Grande NF. And like our friend Sherdy below says: “It may be the missing piece of the puzzle!”

