



# Foundation Document Overview

## Pipestone National Monument

Minnesota



### Contact Information

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## Purpose

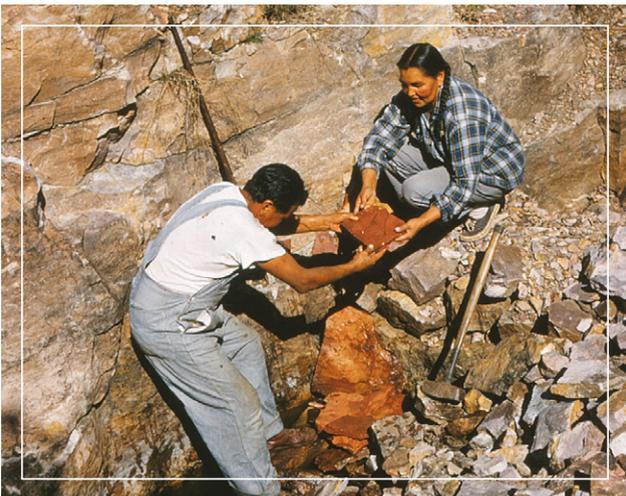


*The purpose of PIPESTONE NATIONAL MONUMENT is threefold:*

*To administer and protect the pipestone quarries, reserving the quarrying of pipestone for American Indians of all tribes.*

*To preserve, protect, and interpret the cultural and natural resources associated with Pipestone National Monument.*

*To provide for the enjoyment and benefit of all people.*



## Significance

Significance statements express why Pipestone National Monument resources and values are important enough to merit national park unit designation. Statements of significance describe why an area is important within a global, national, regional, and systemwide context. These statements are linked to the purpose of the park unit, and are supported by data, research, and consensus. Significance statements describe the distinctive nature of the park and inform management decisions, focusing efforts on preserving and protecting the most important resources and values of the park unit.

- Pipestone National Monument is the only location where American Indians have quarried red pipestone (catlinite) from very early times to the present.
- Pipestone National Monument is an American Indian sacred site associated with spiritual beliefs and cultural activities.
- Pipestone National Monument is significant for its history of American Indian and European American contact and exploration in the early 1800s, specific quarrying rights, and the Pipestone Indian School (1893–1953).
- Pipestone National Monument protects a significant cultural/ethnographic landscape.
- Pipestone National Monument is significant for the landscape it protects, which consists of the tallgrass prairie that developed in association with the site's distinct geologic and hydrologic features. These features combine to provide an unusual array of habitats supporting a diverse assortment of prairie plants and animals, rare habitats, federally listed threatened and endangered species, and globally rare remnant plant communities.



## Fundamental Resources and Values

Fundamental resources and values are those features, systems, processes, experiences, stories, scenes, sounds, smells, or other attributes determined to merit primary consideration during planning and management processes because they are essential to achieving the purpose of the park and maintaining its significance.

- A Sacred Place for American Indians
- Ongoing Traditional Use by American Indians
- Holistic Landscape
- Museum Collections



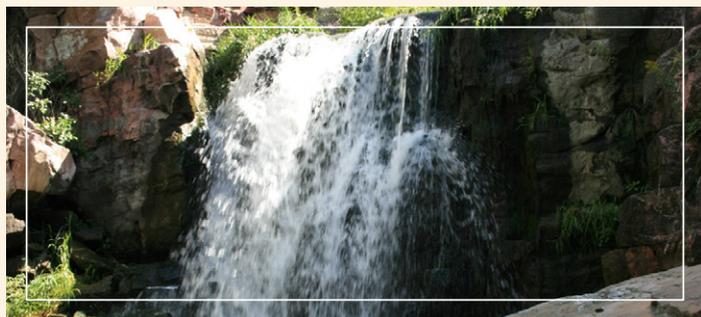
Pipestone National Monument contains other resources and values that may not be fundamental to the purpose and significance of the park, but are important to consider in management and planning decisions. These are referred to as other important resources and values.

- Historic Trails, Stone Steps, Bridges, and Dams
- Nicollet Marker and Carving
- Federally Listed Threatened or Endangered Species
- Night Skies, Soundscape, and Viewshed
- Art Collection

## Interpretive Themes

Interpretive themes are often described as the key stories or concepts that visitors should understand after visiting a park—they define the most important ideas or concepts communicated to visitors about a park unit. Themes are derived from—and should reflect—park purpose, significance, resources, and values. The set of interpretive themes is complete when it provides the structure necessary for park staff to develop opportunities for visitors to explore and relate to all of the park significances and fundamental resources and values.

- In traditional and contemporary American Indian cultures, pipes represent both a symbolic and tangible connection with spiritual and everyday life.
- Continuation of the ancient practice of quarrying pipestone by hand at Pipestone National Monument illustrates the vitality and continuity of American Indian cultures in the 21st century.
- Many American Indians regard the landscape protected at Pipestone National Monument with reverence and respect, as a sacred and spiritual place of great importance and significance—a place to honor traditional ways and celebrate living cultures.
- For many generations, American Indians gathered in the area of the national monument to seek the sacred red stone, catlinite. When European Americans entered the surrounding area to farm its fertile prairie soils, misunderstandings and tensions inevitably developed as a result of profoundly different beliefs about the meaning and significance of the land.
- The unique components of the remnant prairie ecosystem thus far demonstrate resilience to past patterns of land use in and around Pipestone National Monument. The survival of this fragile prairie through



# Description

Pipestone National Monument is in southwest Minnesota, just north of the city of Pipestone in Pipestone County. The city of Pipestone, population 4,359, borders the park. The town and the park developed in concert with one another and still maintain a strong connection. The park encompasses 301 acres of landscape protecting cultural, archeological, and natural resources, many of which are considered ethnographic resources because of their strong historical and ongoing associations with American Indian tribes.

The park is part of a vast landscape valued by American Indians, most of which has been heavily modified by agricultural, industrial, and residential development. The national monument and other areas protected by state, federal, and tribal entities are the last vestiges of the landscape traditionally associated with American Indian tribes. In American Indian cultures, identity commonly is tied very strongly to place, and these areas are very significant to many tribes.

The park protects quarries of pipestone (catlinite) that has been mined and used by American Indians from prehistoric times to the present. The pipestone is carved into objects, most notably pipes, for use in sacred rituals. As a result, the quarries remain a site of sacred importance and are a pilgrimage location for many American Indians. Active quarrying and carving by tribal members, as well as ceremonies using the pipestone pipes, continue to this day.

Thin layers of pipestone are found between thick layers of quartzite overburden that must be removed using only hand tools. Years of work may be required of a quarrier to yield significant amounts of pipestone. Over time, the brick red pipestone of this area came to be preferred by American Indians because it was both soft and durable, making it ideal for pipe carving. The red pipestone was a prized trade item between tribes across much of the Great Plains and beyond. Pipe bowls of the red catlinite, plus pipe stems and tobacco were stored in animal-skin pouches or in bundles with other sacred objects, and ashes were disposed of only in special places.

Today, catlinite carved pipes are appreciated as works of art, as well as for their ceremonial uses. Pipestone National Monument has a collection of more than 90,000 archeological and archival items, including a number of carved pipes, documents and photographs, tools, potsherds, leather goods, and natural history specimens. In 1966, Pipestone National Monument was listed in the National Register of Historic Places for its cultural importance, archeological resources, and the Three Maidens petroglyphs.

When Pipestone National Monument was established in 1937 it contained a native tallgrass prairie ecosystem. Since then, additional prairie has been added to the park through boundary expansions in 1956 and 2007. The soils and climate in which the tallgrass prairie thrives are highly suitable for agriculture, and as a result tallgrass prairie ecosystem only occupies 1% of its former range in the United States. Some of that remaining prairie is within Pipestone National Monument.

The paved 0.75-mile Circle Trail allows visitors to view the quarries and other locations associated with American Indian use of the site and European exploration. These key features include Winnewissa Falls, a plaque commemorating the Nicollet expedition, approximately 150 years of names carved into rock, several unique rock formations, native tallgrass prairie, and vegetation that looks much as it did before the arrival of European settlers. The Mission 66-era visitor center provides information and orientation to the park. Visitors can also visit the quarry north of the visitor center, the demonstration quarry south of the visitor center, Pipestone Creek, and Hiawatha Lake.

