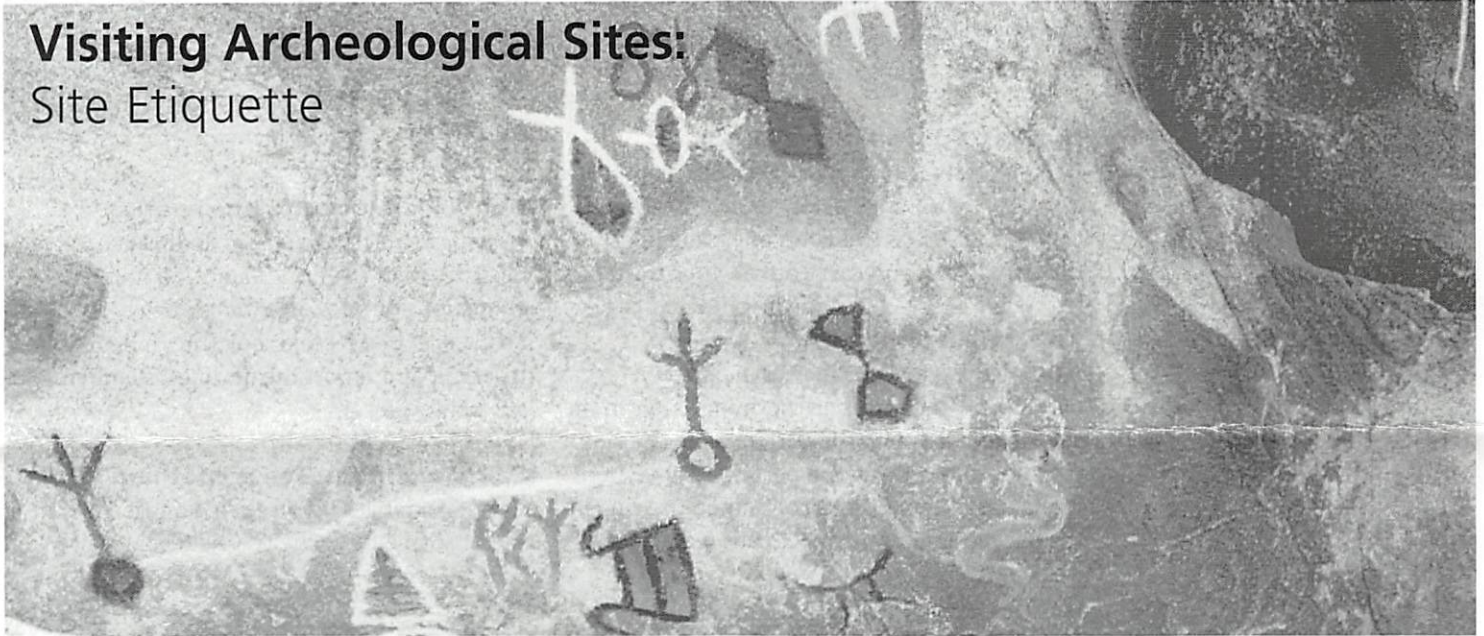




Visiting Archeological Sites: Site Etiquette



Traces of past peoples can be found across Joshua Tree National Park. These sites contain evidence of human history going back more than 8,000 years. They are also places of religious and cultural importance to modern Native Americans. As park visitation continues to increase, these sites are at greater risk of damage. Please be a courteous guest when visiting archeological sites on public lands and help preserve our nation's history for future generations.

Who Lived Here?

The area which is now Joshua Tree National Park has been home to people for over 8,000 years. The best well-dated evidence comes from after the end of the last ice age, with artifact assemblages referred to as the Pinto Complex (8,000-4,000 years ago). Evidence of Paleoindian occupations (15,000-10,000 years ago) has been found outside of the park's boundary. The presence of these groups within the park can only be confirmed with scientific study of intact, undisturbed sites and artifacts.

The ancestors of the Cahuilla, Chemehuevi, Mojave, and Serrano Indians began living in the area seasonally at least 3,000 years

ago, but also have local ties to the peoples of the far distant past. Today the descendants of the people who inhabited park lands for thousands of years are spread across 15 federally recognized Native American tribes located throughout southern California, southern Nevada, and western Arizona.

The sites used by people long ago hold special significance to living descendants. Rock shelters, petroglyphs and pictographs, and milling sites are direct, physical and spiritual links to the past. These sites can also help us understand what life was like for people living here in the past, and possibly help us understand how to live today.

Sensitive Sites

As with many things in the desert, archeological sites are often more delicate, fragile, and vulnerable than they appear. Pigments painted on granite hundreds of years ago can quickly be erased by careless touches. UV exposure from flash photography will fade pictograph pigments and accelerate their deterioration.

Location and placement of artifacts is vitally important when studying archeological sites. If a site has been even minimally disturbed, the information contained in the artifacts can be lost forever. The spatial relationship of seemingly insignificant stone chips, tools, and bits of pottery to each other and the natural surrounding are crucial to archeological investigations and understanding past lifeways.

House Rules

The following rules exist to protect both archeological resources and your experience here in Joshua Tree National Park. Damage is punishable by stiff fines, even if it was unintentional and inadvertent. These rules are here to help you enjoy your time here; do not let a careless mistake ruin your Joshua Tree experience.

Visit Only If Invited

Please visit only sites that are marked as open to the public. If the site is not signed as open, it is closed per 36 CFR 2.1(a)(5). Check with park staff for a list of open sites.

Keep Your Feet Off the Furniture

Walk carefully and avoid trampling artifacts, standing, climbing, or leaning on rock art and historic structures. Do not climb into rock shelters and alcoves containing rock art.

House Rules, continued

Don't Touch the Paintings

Never apply chalk, water, or other substances to rock paintings (pictographs) or carvings (petroglyphs). Rock surfaces are very fragile – do not touch, climb, or lean on any rock art.

Don't Eat or Pee in the Parlor

Food attracts critters that may nest in or disturb sites. Orange peels, apple cores, and other food scraps *will not* biodegrade in the desert. Pick up and carry out all your trash.

No Smoking Indoors

Never light campfires in rock shelters or overhangs. Campfires are permitted *only* in the steel-lined fire pits provided in campgrounds. No backcountry fires are permitted anywhere in the park. If you find a rock-lined fire ring in the backcountry, note the location and report it to a ranger.



Leave no trace: take only photos.

Don't (Re)Move the Knicknacks

Moving artifacts, even a short distance, destroys their scientific value. Do not make collections or piles of artifacts. Leave all artifacts in place – take a picture, note the location, and report the findings. Removing artifacts is illegal.

Call Mom If You See Something Wrong

Contact a ranger if you see a damaged site or suspicious activity. Call dispatch at 909-383-5651.

Sites to Visit

The sites listed below are the *only* sites that are approved for visitors to explore and discover.

Barker Dam Rock Art Site

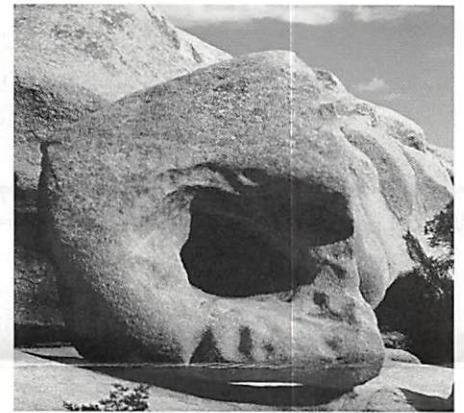
Large petroglyph and pictograph panel
(Located along Barker Dam Loop Trail)

Indian Cave Boulders

Rock shelter, mortar holes, milling stone
(Located at west end of Ryan Mountain parking area)

Hidden Valley Rock Art Site

Eroded boulder cavity with pictographs
(Located in Hidden Valley Campground near site #12)



Hidden Valley Rock Art Site

Laws and Regulations

Archeological Resources Protection Act – ARPA – 16 USC 470

National Historic Preservation Act – NHPA – 54 USC 300101 et seq.

The Archeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA) of 1979 (Public Law 96-95, 16 USC 470) establishes civil and criminal penalties for unauthorized excavation, removal, damage, alteration, defacement or attempt to excavate, remove, damage, alter, or deface any archeological resources found on public lands. Any person who counsels, solicits, or employs any other person to violate the prohibited acts listed above is subject to the same penalties as the party who damaged or attempted to damage archeological resources. Unintentional and inadvertent damage to archeological resources is punishable by civil penalties [equaling the combination of the archeological or commercial value of the archeological resource and the cost of restoration and repair of the resource and archeological site involved].

Both ARPA (16 UCS §470hh(a)) and the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) (54 USC §307103(a)) provide for the confidentiality of archeological site locations. Information concerning the locations and nature of archeological sites cannot be disclosed unless it has been determined that disclosure of such information would not create a risk of harm.

36 CFR Part 2 – Resource Protections, Public Use, and Recreation

§2.1 – Preservation of Natural and Cultural Resources

(a) Except as otherwise provided in this chapter, the following is prohibited:

(1) Possessing, destroying, injuring, defacing, removing, digging, or disturbing from its natural state:

(iii) Nonfossilized and fossilized paleontological specimens, cultural or archeological resources, or the parts thereof.

(5) Walking on, climbing, entering, ascending, descending, or traversing an archeological or cultural resource, monument, or statue, except in designated areas and under conditions established by the superintendent.

§2.31 – Trespassing, Tampering and Vandalism

(a) The following are prohibited:

(3) Vandalism. Destroying, injuring, defacing, or damaging property or real property.