

Archaeological Site Etiquette Guide

Welcome to the past! The Coconino National Forest contains some of the nation's - and indeed the world's - greatest sites. Please take a few minutes to familiarize yourself with this guide, which will facilitate an enjoyable visit for you, AND for other who follow you!

Archaeological sites on the Coconino National Forest are the remains of a long occupation of prehistoric, protohistoric, and historic cultures. They are a fragile and non-renewable resource. We are all stewards of these treasures. We must preserve these ruins for public enjoyment, education, and for their scientific values. The following will help minimize impacts to archaeological sites:

1. Walls are fragile and continue to deteriorate - that is why they're called ruins. Climbing, sitting, or standing on walls, picking up or moving rocks compromises these sites.
2. Artifacts, where they lay, tell a story. Once they are moved, a piece of the past is forever lost. Removing artifacts or piling them up in a site destroys the story they can tell.
3. Cultural deposits, including the soil on an archaeological site, are important for scientific tests used in reconstructing past environments, such as the kind of plants utilized by the inhabitants of long ago. Adding anything (such as offerings, etc.) to a site destroys the dating potential.
4. Fire destroys prehistoric organic materials and destroys the dating potential of artifacts. It also damages rock art by covering it with soot. Absolutely no fires, candles, smudging or smoking in sites. Camping is not allowed at Palatki or Honanki, and is discouraged at all archaeological sites.
5. Drawing, scratching, carving, painting, and oil from even the cleanest hands can cause deterioration of the drawings. The dating potential is easily destroyed. Please assist those scientists trying to unravel the meaning of the symbols painted and pecked on stone. Refrain from touching the rock art. Mindless graffiti destroys rock art and is disrespectful to contemporary Native Americans.
6. Fragile desert plants and soils that are part of archaeological sites are destroyed when you stray from the trail. Also, snakes and other small desert animals make their homes in the bushes, under rocks and in burrows ... you may disturb them. Please stay on trails ... they are there for a reason. Bicycles and motorized vehicles are not allowed beyond the parking lot.
7. Animals damages sites by digging, urinating and defecating in them. They can destroy fragile cultural deposits and frighten other visitors. No pets allowed in these sites.

All archaeological and historic sites on the Coconino National Forest are protected by the Archaeological Resources Protection Act. These laws prohibit digging, removing artifacts, damage and defacement of archaeological resources on public lands, and provide felony and/or misdemeanor prosecution with imprisonment up to ten years and fines up to \$100,000.

If you see people vandalizing sites, please report it as soon as possible by calling the Coconino National Forest Fire Dispatcher's 24-hour line at 928-526-0600. By following these simple guidelines, YOU help preserve these unique and fragile remnants of OUR American heritage. Thanks for your cooperation, and we hope you enjoy your visit.

Information provided by the Red Rock Ranger District - 928-282-4119