



shíshálh Nation Archaeological Best Management Practices Policy

PURPOSE

To ensure archaeological studies conducted within shíshálh swiya are consistent with the values and interests of shíshálh Nation, to minimize and mitigate potential impacts to shíshálh heritage properties through the promotion of responsible development practices, and to ensure archaeological study design prevents the undue loss of information where impacts to heritage properties are unavoidable.

SCOPE

All archaeological investigations conducted within the shíshálh swiya or pertaining to shíshálh heritage properties.

INTRODUCTION

Our swiya faces ongoing impacts from development and resource extraction, including significant impacts to known as well as unknown archaeological and cultural sites, features, and materials. It should be noted that, while archaeological studies can provide useful information and preserve excavated materials, the practice of archaeology is permanently destructive to our cultural heritage properties, and datasets produced by archaeological studies will always be incomplete. It is therefore imperative that all predevelopment planning ensures ground disturbing activities will be designed to minimize these impacts.

DEFINITIONS

“Archaeologically sensitive area” means an area within or in proximity to a registered archaeological site or within or in proximity to a shíshálh Nation heritage property.

“swiya” means the lands, birthplace, or “Territory” of the shíshálh Nation.

POLICY STATEMENTS

1. QUALIFICATION AND STAFFING

- 1.1. All archaeological studies shall be conducted by, or under the direct supervision of, qualified personnel well versed in shíshálh heritage policy and best management practices. Qualification pertains specifically to academic background (minimum of MA or BA with equivalent training in

Archaeology or Anthropology). Academic background without pertinent shíshálh specific experience/knowledge does not constitute qualification.

1.2. All archaeological personnel being deployed into the field should be competent in the following, unless directly supervised by qualified personnel:

- Interpretation of maps and recording of spatial data, including the accurate recording of shovel test locations, surface finds, and archaeological features.
- Broad interpretation and recording of environmental conditions and settings, such as common plant species, ability to broadly differentiate between seral and climax conditions or disturbed and undisturbed environments, general geological classification, etc.
- Standard data recording procedures, including taking field notes, labelling artifact and faunal bags, recording provenience, and taking suitable field photos (understanding that any ancestral burial photos will be done in respectful manner).
- Conducting pedestrian survey.
- Identification of major archaeological site and material types, including lithics, faunal remains, fire-altered rock, cultural shell deposits, culturally modified trees, rock art, habitation features or cultural depressions, resource gathering features, earthwork features, transportation features and any other anticipated site type.
- Maintenance and safe operation of equipment.
- Knowledge and identification of natural and cultural forces that impact archaeological sites.
- Awareness of concerns and protocols surrounding ancestral remains

1.3. Prior to any project, the archaeologist must ensure that they have available the staff, training, facilities, and resources needed to meet these best practices. Archaeologists should be aware of their limitations and subcontract specialists as appropriate, including, but not limited to, zooarchaeologists, archaeobotanists, human osteologists, lithic analysts, underwater archaeologists and wet site specialists

1.4. All archaeological personnel should be made aware of their responsibilities in maintaining confidentiality. This includes:

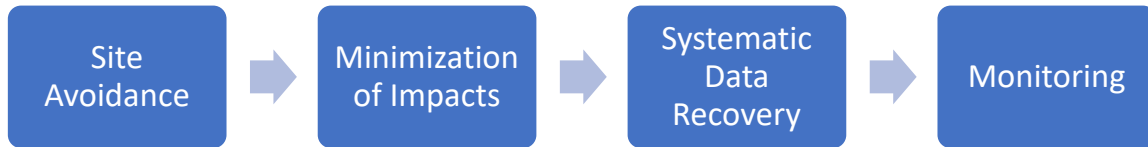
- Never sharing the locations of or sensitive information pertaining to archaeological sites with anyone who is not authorized to have this information.
- Posting any information about or photographs of archaeological sites, features, artifacts, or landscapes on social media or any other platform accessible by the public.

2. MITIGATION

2.1. Impacts of the proposed activity on archaeological and cultural sites, features, and materials should be assessed as early as possible to allow for optimal implementation of mitigation

strategies. Mitigation strategies should be refined to afford increased site protection as more information becomes available.

- 2.2.** The below mitigation hierarchy should be followed for any projects with impacts or potential impacts to archaeological sites. All possible measures should be considered and applied at one level before moving to the next:



Where site avoidance refers to total avoidance of impacts, such as by (re)designing developments to occur outside of site boundaries; minimization of impacts refers to the lessening of impacts, such as by (re)designing developments to occur partially or mostly outside of site boundaries, reducing depth of ground disturbance, or through measures such as cap and cover; systematic data recovery refers to systematic surface collection, excavation of evaluative units, or both; monitoring refers to the monitoring of the removal of archaeological deposits from within the site footprint by an archaeological professional.

- 2.3.** Where sites or site components are vulnerable to ongoing impacts caused by the development, such as increased public access, industrial activity, or changes to the landscape or environment that accelerate erosion, and Archaeological Management Plan (AMP) should be developed. This may include:
- Mitigation such as site capping and shoreline stabilization for erosion control.
 - Ongoing monitoring, assessment, and reporting.
 - Plans to divert foot traffic and other disturbances such as beach tie-ups from archaeological sites.
 - Plans for reconstruction of damaged cultural features (e.g., petroforms and shoreline features disassembled by employees, campers, and tourists).
 - Education of organizations, staff, and the public to mitigate impacts to obvious site deposits/exposures, especially in the context of tourism and cultural signage (e.g., “take only photos” approach to tourist engagement; implementation of chance find and reporting protocols).
- 2.4.** Routes for access, storage, and movement of heavy machinery should be established prior to the commencement of the project to ensure avoidance of any archaeological resources outside of the development footprint.
- 2.5.** Archaeological resources that are not at risk of being impacted should be left in place to the greatest possible extent.

2.6. If archaeological materials are encountered during non-permitted survey and are determined to be at risk of destruction or permanent loss, they may be collected with the following conditions:

- shíshálh Nation is alerted and justification provided;
- Their provenience is recorded and mapped, and an artifact catalogue is created; and
- They are submitted to the tems swiya museum curator as soon as possible

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL STUDIES

Archaeological studies include Preliminary Field Reconnaissance (PFR), Archaeological Impact Assessments (Section 12.2 of HCA) for all project components, Site Alterations (Section 12.4 of HCA).

3.1. All archaeological studies should adhere to the highest cultural and scientific standards. Cultural standards will be directed by the shíshálh Nation on a case-by-case basis.

3.2. Decisions about the recovery and recording of archaeological data should be grounded in an understanding of both their cultural significance and of their potential to resolve archaeological research problems important to the shíshálh Nation.

3.3. During archaeological survey, where exposures of subsurface cultural deposits or stratigraphy are encountered (tree throws, cut banks, etc.), they should be treated as subsurface tests in the following ways:

- Their exact location should be recorded and mapped;
- Stratigraphy should be inspected and documented;
- Where archaeological materials or any features providing significant information regarding landscape histories (e.g., burn layers evidencing past fire) are present or suspected, detailed descriptions and profile drawings need to be included in the report.

3.4. Where submarine impacts are anticipated, such as in (dock construction, dredging, rubble mound walls, etc.), options for underwater archaeological survey may be required.

3.5. Site deposits, shovel test locations, and EUs should be recorded and mapped using GPS.

3.6. Where any intact deposits are encountered or expected, at least one evaluative unit (EU) must be excavated. If more than four meters squared (4 m²) of intact deposits are encountered (or where deposits are extensive or are determined to have heightened significance), a minimum of two EUs are required. For any site components that contain over four meters squared (4 m²) of intact deposits, the shíshálh Nation must be contacted and a minimum of half of all intact deposits should be excavated via evaluative units.

3.7. The following should be included in EU excavation:

- Three-point provenience for all artifacts, and radiocarbon samples (preferably ungulate bone and/or charcoal) collected from intact deposits.

- Collection of shell samples for possible future analysis (e.g., stable isotope analysis) from intact deposits.
- Collection of bulk samples for storage and future floatation (floral analysis) and/or analysis. Bulk samples should be collected when unique features or deposits are encountered (e.g. sea urchin concentrations, herring bone concentrations, ash deposits at the base of cooking features etc.)
- Where formal tools are identified within intact deposits, radiocarbon samples must be collected if possible. The analysis report is to be submitted to the shíshálh Nation file lead, cc'ing sfeschuk@shishalh.com and lilxmit@shishalh.com along with photos and descriptive information of the associated tools.
- Where significant features (e.g. house depressions, earth ovens, cairns, subsistence features) are identified within intact deposits, radiocarbon samples must be collected in possible. The analysis report is to be submitted to the shíshálh Nation file lead, cc'ing sfeschuk@shishalh.com and lilxmit@shishalh.com along with photos and descriptive information of the associated features.
- Digital 3-D scans of evaluative units should be recorded prior to termination of the excavation (i.e. once sterile deposits have been encountered, or at maximum depths).

3.8. Where wet sites are anticipated, study plans should include protocols for handling wet site materials, including plans for transport to and storage/stabilization in a suitable, pre-arranged lab space. A wet site specialist must be consulting in the early stages of study planning to ensure that an appropriate wet site remediation kit is available on site, and that the appropriate methodologies are being utilised.

3.9. Faunal remains must be analyzed by a qualified professional trained in zooarchaeology with access to a suitable reference collection, alongside zooarchaeological guides. A suitable reference collection is a collection of undamaged, clearly labelled, and positively identified faunal remains or replicas.

4. ANCESTRAL REMAINS

4.1. The shíshálh Nation will determine the appropriate protocol and treatment of ancestral remains on a case-by-case basis.

4.2. Any human osteological analysis must be approved by the Nation, informed by cultural protocols, and conducted by a qualified specialist in human osteology.

5. REPORTING

5.1. All reports produced from archaeological data collected within the swiya must be submitted to the Rights and Title Department.

5.2. Reports should include the use of she shashishalhem wherever possible. This includes the naming of locations and descriptions of artifacts, faunal remains, features, and site uses.

Archaeological personnel who work regularly in the swiya should contact the Nation for a copy of the she shashishalhem dictionary.

- 5.3. Reports should include the use of traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) and ethnographic data, where appropriate. Archaeological personnel can contact the Nation for relevant TEK and ethnographic information pertaining to ongoing projects.
- 5.4. Reports should make any limitations of data explicit, including:
 - Differentiating between raw data, interpretation of data, and conjecture;
 - Highlighting any gaps in evidence that have produced the reported conclusions; and
 - Presenting directions for future hypothesis testing.
- 5.5. All reports where archaeological sites or shíshálh cultural features are recorded should include a summary of past, future, and ongoing impacts, including potential impacts, to aid in the development of mitigation strategies and archaeological management plans.
- 5.6. Chronological information should try to employ direct dating method, where available. In cases where direct dating is impractical, relative dates are acceptable.
- 5.7. Any identified areas of subsurface archaeological potential (AOPs) should be included in reports with an accompanying justification for this identification, including an explanation of all contributing factors (e.g., landform, microtopography, cultural values, etc.). These may be arranged in a significance matrix or explained in writing. AOP shapefiles must be sent to the Nation's Rights and Title GIS Department.
- 5.8. The identification of AOPs should be based on archaeological field observations and in shíshálh values, knowledge, practices, and interests. Broad knowledge of Northwest Coast archaeology is not adequate to interpret shíshálh sites.
- 5.9. Diagrams depicting profiles of a representative sample of positive shovel tests should be included in reports. Where evaluative units have been excavated, the report should include profile drawings (minimum 2 profiles per evaluative unit).

6. MAPPING AND SHAPEFILE REQUIREMENTS

- 6.1. Where areas of raised archaeological potential (AOPs) are identified, shapefiles with an accompanying description are to be sent to the Nation's Rights and Title GIS Department, cc'ing the shíshálh Nation file lead and lilxmit@shishalh.com.
- 6.2. Maps or descriptions of the exact locations of archaeological sites are not to be distributed to proponents on small scale/residential projects, excepting site boundaries that overlap with the property or development area. Where midrange or overview maps contain archaeological sites, geo-masking methods such as the use of random perturbation donuts or bounding boxes should be employed.

7. SUBMISSION OF ARTIFACTS

- 7.1. All artifacts recovered from sites within the swiya must be submitted to the tems swiya museum and are considered property of the shíshálh Nation.
- 7.2. Artifact and faunal catalogues should include a field for she shashishalhem words or descriptors (e.g., deer remains described as hupit).
- 7.3. All artifacts should be photographed, and digital copies with the artifact number in the photo and/or file name must be provided with the submission.
- 7.4. Any conservation interventions and treatments performed should be outlined in a report provided with the submission.
- 7.5. A report outlining what materials have been submitted to the tems swiya museum curator and what materials are still being processed in the lab should be prepared annually.

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Smith, C. (2020). Ethics and Best Practices for Mapping Archaeological Sites. *Advances in Archaeological Practice*, 8(2), 162-173.

APPROVAL AND REVIEW HISTORY

Version 1 approved by:	Divisional Manager, STLM	2022-11-30
	Chief and Council	2022-11-30
Version 2 approved by:	Divisional Manager, STLM	2025-01-23
	Chief and Council	2025-01-23

Next review date: 2030-01-23

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- shíshááh Nation Declaration
- shíshááh Nation Lands and Resources Decision-Making Policy
- shíshááh Nation Heritage Policy



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NATION

11.7C

MINUTE OF DECISION

DATE: 2024-12-04

FILE NO: x100.101_x100.103_x306.301

RE: Rights & Title Policy Reissues – Substantive Changes

WHEREAS: The shíshálh Nation Chief and Council accept and approve the above recommendation to issue the attached policies: shíshálh Nation Heritage Policy and shíshálh Nation Archaeological Best Management Practices

AND THAT: The above policies have been edited for the purposes of alignment with present practice and modern archaeological standards, consistent language, and formatting;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED: That the shíshálh Nation Chief and Council provide non-opposition and sign a Minute of Decision to be attached to the aforementioned policies in order to certify them as official documents.

shíshálh Nation Council




l'he hiwus yalxwem'it
Chief Lenora Joe



híhewus ch'elkwilwet
Councillor Raquel Joe



híhewus o'shale
Councillor Rochelle Jones



híhewus xwa'
Councillor Philip Paul



híhewus tituya
Councillor Keith Julius