



VVAC Records and Preservation Ethics

Adapted from the Guidelines to Implement SAA Ethic #7

- I. The same ethic of stewardship applies to collection and associated records as to *in situ* sites or other phenomena comprising the archaeological record.
- II. The integrity of collections, including their associated records, should be preserved and maintained. Field records are an integral part of a collection and are not the permanent property of an individual researcher or contractor.
- III. Field notes, photographs, maps, laboratory notes and data, and other records require the same levels of management, care and preservation as artifacts and other recovered items. Records generated during collections research and treatment should be deposited with the collection. Data and records created or stored in electronic formats are fragile and require specialized long-term care and management.
- IV. Archaeological excavation is a destructive process, and the resulting collections are finite, non-renewable resources. Efforts should be made to employ existing collections and databases to address research questions whenever possible, and prior to initiating new excavations or other destructive techniques.
- V. Archaeological projects should explicitly provide for the permanent curation of resulting collections at an appropriate repository. Collections and associated records – including all necessary permits and deeds of gift – should be deposited in a timely manner. The location, accessibility to, and any restrictions on the collections should be provided in research and compliance reports.
- VI. Access to archaeological collections and associated records should be provided to qualified users for scientific, educational and heritage uses. Under the rare circumstances in which access restrictions may be imposed due to issues such as applicable law, sovereignty, and cultural sensitivity, appropriate levels of access should be established in advance and clearly communicated to all parties.
- VII. As part of their training, professional archaeologists should understand the need for and basic principles related to the long-term preservation of archaeological collections, including curation, collections and archives management and conservation. Elementary training in these areas should be part of undergraduate and graduate level curricula in archaeology.