

## UW-Madison Indian Burial Sites Management Policy

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**Policy Statement:** The university is committed to protecting the structural and cultural integrity of Indian burial sites through careful management, so that current and future generations may have the opportunity to view the mounds and appreciate their significance.

**Background:** UW-Madison has stewardship responsibility for 37 ancient and sacred Indian burial mounds, located on the main campus and in the Arboretum. An additional 15 mounds are known to have existed, but these earthworks have either been destroyed or their above-ground contours are no longer visible. These cultural resources are both rare and regionally unique.

The university recognizes that the ancient Mound Builders left us an enduring, yet fragile, signature on the landscape as an expression of their relationship to the natural world and their fellow humans. We may not fully understand the role that mounds played in the lives of the Indian people who constructed them, however, we do appreciate that individual mound shapes and their placement on the land can tell us something about these people's beliefs and culture.

The university understands that mound sites derive meaning as individual earthworks, and as elements in a cultural landscape mosaic composed of thousands of mounds across the state and beyond. As such, the university is mindful of preserving views of individual mound contours, and longer views toward water features and the sky.

### **Burial mound management goals:**

1. Preserve structural integrity of mounds. The university will protect mounds from soil disturbance and erosion through the use of appropriate vegetation cover and structural barriers.
2. Manage vegetation to preserve visibility of mounds. The university will control vegetation to permit visibility of mound contours and the broader landscape setting.
3. Facilitate interpretation opportunities. In collaboration with knowledgeable representatives of the Indian, academic and regulatory communities, the university will provide educational materials and displays that convey our current understanding of the Mound Builders.
4. Manage contemporary structures adjacent to mounds. As resources and regulations permit, the university will re-route and/or remove structures such as sidewalks, utility lines, and trails that impinge on the mound sites.
5. Provide for compatible land uses on and adjacent to mounds. Where appropriate and consistent with preserving the integrity and sacredness of burial sites, the university will manage mound sites for research, teaching, ecological, and recreational uses such as: data collection, academic coursework, wildlife habitat, and hiking.

**Statutory protection:** The Burial Sites Preservation Law (Wis. Stats. 157.70) protects mounds from disturbance. The university must work with representatives of the Wisconsin Historical Society on projects that may affect the integrity of burial sites.

**Site boundary:** All main campus mound groups are catalogued with a 25-foot buffer zone.