



## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### National Park Service

[N6864; NPS-WASO-NAGPRA-NPS0041842; PPWOCRADN0-PCU00RP14.R50000]

### Notice of Inventory Completion: Museum of the Cherokee People, Cherokee, NC

**AGENCY:** National Park Service, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** In accordance with the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), the Museum of the Cherokee People (MotCP) has completed an inventory of human remains and associated funerary objects and has determined that there is a cultural affiliation between the human remains and associated funerary objects and Indian Tribes or Native Hawaiian organizations in this notice.

**DATES:** Repatriation of the human remains and associated funerary objects in this notice may occur on or after [INSERT DATE 30 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE **FEDERAL REGISTER**].

**ADDRESSES:** Send written requests for repatriation of the human remains and associated funerary objects in this notice to Evan Mathis, Museum of the Cherokee People, P.O. Box 1599, 589 Tsali Blvd., Cherokee, NC 28719, email [evan.mathis@motcp.org](mailto:evan.mathis@motcp.org).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** This notice is published as part of the National Park Service's administrative responsibilities under NAGPRA. The determinations in this notice are the sole responsibility of the Museum of the Cherokee People, and additional information on the determinations in this notice, including the results of consultation, can be found in its inventory or related records. The National Park Service is not responsible for the determinations in this notice.

#### **Abstract of information available:**

Human ancestral remains representing, at least, one individual has been identified from an unknown archaeological site referred to as "Cherokee Lake." A total of 115 associated funerary objects are present with this individual, including 83 pot sherds, two rocks, six lithic flakes, six charcoal flakes, five pieces of shatter material, a complete calcaneus, a partial

metapodial, six pieces of burned animal bone, and five pieces of burned turtle shell. The unknown archaeological site is situated in an undisclosed “Cherokee Lake.” The undisclosed “Cherokee Lake” is most likely one of two locations. One “Cherokee Lake” is an artificial lake near Murphy, Cherokee County, North Carolina (an artificially dammed tributary of the Hiawassee River). The other “Cherokee Lake,” also referred to as “Cherokee Reservoir,” is an artificial lake in Jefferson County, Grainger County, Hamblen County, and Hawkins County in Tennessee (artificially dammed Holston River and its tributaries). After completing the consultation process with federally recognized Tribal Nations, this unknown site is culturally affiliated with the Cherokee Nation, the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, and the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians. This individual was removed from the unknown “Cherokee Lake” site in the mid-1960s by the unnamed father of Charles H. Powell of Bristol, Tennessee. Charles H. Powell transferred this individual to the Museum of the Cherokee People on January 4<sup>th</sup>, 1997, where they have been housed since. To our knowledge, no hazardous substances were used to treat any of the human ancestral remains.

### **Cultural affiliation**

Based on the information available and the results of consultation, cultural affiliation is reasonably identified by the geographical location or acquisition history of the human remains and associated funerary objects described in this notice.

### **Determinations**

The Museum of the Cherokee People has determined that:

- The human remains described in this notice represent the physical remains of one individual of Native American ancestry.
- The 115 objects described in this notice are reasonably believed to have been placed intentionally with or near individual human remains at the time of death or later as part of the death rite or ceremony.
- There is a connection between the human remains and associated funerary objects described in this notice and the Cherokee Nation; Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians; The Muscogee (Creek) Nation; and the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians of

Oklahoma.

### **Requests for Repatriation**

Written requests for repatriation of the human remains and associated funerary objects in this notice must be sent to the authorized representative identified in this notice under ADDRESSES. Requests for repatriation may be submitted by:

1. Any one or more of the Indian Tribes or Native Hawaiian organizations identified in this notice.
2. Any lineal descendant, Indian Tribe, or Native Hawaiian organization not identified in this notice who shows, by a preponderance of the evidence, that the requestor is a lineal descendant or an Indian Tribe or Native Hawaiian organization with cultural affiliation.

Repatriation of the human remains and associated funerary objects described in this notice to a requestor may occur on or after [INSERT DATE 30 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE **FEDERAL REGISTER**]. If competing requests for repatriation are received, the Museum of the Cherokee People must determine the most appropriate requestor prior to repatriation. Requests for joint repatriation of the human remains and associated funerary objects are considered a single request and not competing requests. The Museum of the Cherokee People is responsible for sending a copy of this notice to the Indian Tribes and Native Hawaiian organizations identified in this notice and any other consulting parties.

**Authority:** Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, 25 U.S.C. 3003, and the implementing regulations, 43 CFR 10.10.

Dated: January 9, 2026.

**Melanie O'Brien,**

*Manager, National NAGPRA Program.*

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