



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

National Park Service

[N6978; NPS-WASO-NAGPRA-NPS0042299; PPWOCRADN0-PCU00RP14.R50000]

Notice of Intended Repatriation: U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Petroleum Reserves, Washington, DC

AGENCY: National Park Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), the U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Petroleum Reserves, intends to repatriate certain cultural items that meet the definition of unassociated funerary objects, sacred objects, and/or objects of cultural patrimony and that have a cultural affiliation with the Indian Tribes or Native Hawaiian organizations in this notice.

DATES: Repatriation of the cultural items in this notice may occur on or after [INSERT DATE 30 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE **FEDERAL REGISTER**].

ADDRESSES: Send additional, written requests for repatriation of the cultural items in this notice to Dr. Michael G. Elliott, U.S. Department of Energy, John Weld Peck Federal Building, 550 Main Street, Room 7-010, Cincinnati, OH 45202, email *Michael.elliott@hq.doe.gov*.

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 U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Petroleum Reserves, and additional information on the determinations in this notice, including the results of consultation, can be found in the summary or related records. The National Park Service is not responsible for the determinations in this notice.

Abstract of information available

A total of 23 boxes of cultural items currently stored at California State University, Bakersfield (CSUB) have been requested for repatriation. The materials derive from eight federally authorized archaeological investigations conducted at the former Naval Petroleum

Reserve No. 1 (NPR-1), also known as the Elk Hills Oil Field, located in Kern County, California, prior to the property's privatization in 1998. The collection consists primarily of lithic materials, including stone tools and debitage, with additional shell beads and faunal remains. No artifacts were treated with potentially hazardous substances. Available documentation indicates that no human remains were included as part of these CSUB-held materials.

Formal consultation meetings and discussions were conducted with representatives of the Tejon Indian Tribe, Tule River Indian Tribe, and Santa Rosa Rancheria Tachi Yokut Tribe to discuss the repatriation regulatory process and to receive Tribal and CSUB input.

Determinations

The U.S. Department of Energy has determined that:

- The one or more unassociated funerary objects described in this notice are reasonably believed to have been placed intentionally with or near human remains, and are connected, either at the time of death or later as part of the death rite or ceremony of a Native American culture according to the Native American traditional knowledge of a lineal descendant, Indian Tribe, or Native Hawaiian organization. The unassociated funerary objects have been identified by a preponderance of the evidence as related to human remains, specific individuals, or families, or removed from a specific burial site or burial area of an individual or individuals with cultural affiliation to an Indian Tribe or Native Hawaiian organization.
- The one or more sacred objects described in this notice are specific ceremonial objects needed by a traditional Native American religious leader for present-day adherents to practice traditional Native American religion, according to the Native American traditional knowledge of a lineal descendant, Indian Tribe, or Native Hawaiian organization.
- The one or more objects of cultural patrimony described in this notice have ongoing historical, traditional, or cultural importance central to the Native American group, including any constituent sub-group (such as a band, clan, lineage, ceremonial society, or other subdivision), according to the Native American traditional knowledge of an Indian

Tribe or Native Hawaiian organization.

- The one or more sacred objects/objects of cultural patrimony described in this notice are, according to the Native American traditional knowledge of an Indian Tribe or Native Hawaiian organization, specific ceremonial objects needed by a traditional Native American religious leader for present-day adherents to practice traditional Native American religion, and have ongoing historical, traditional, or cultural importance central to the Native American group, including any constituent sub-group (such as a band, clan, lineage, ceremonial society, or other subdivision).
- There is a connection between the cultural items described in this notice and the Tejon Indian Tribe.

Requests for Repatriation

Additional, written requests for repatriation of the cultural items in this notice must be sent to the authorized representative identified in this notice under ADDRESSES. Requests for repatriation may be submitted by 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 a culturally affiliated Indian Tribe or Native Hawaiian organization.

Repatriation of the cultural items 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 U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Petroleum Reserves, must determine the most appropriate requestor prior to repatriation. Requests for joint repatriation of the cultural items are considered a single request and not competing requests. The U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Petroleum Reserves, is responsible for sending a copy of this notice to the Indian Tribes and Native Hawaiian organizations identified in this notice and to any other consulting parties.

Authority: Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, 25 U.S.C. 3004 and the implementing regulations, 43 CFR 10.9.

Dated: March 5, 2026.

Melanie O'Brien,
Manager, National NAGPRA Program.

[FR Doc. 2026-05037 Filed: 3/13/2026 8:45 am; Publication Date: 3/16/2026]