

Archaeological Site Visitors Etiquette Guide

Gila National Forest

Archaeological sites on the Gila National Forest are the remains of a long occupation of prehistoric, protohistoric, and historic cultures. They are a fragile, and non-renewable resource. You and the Forest Service are responsible for the stewardship of these ruins both for public enjoyment and education, and preserving their scientific values.

PLEASE HELP PRESERVE AMERICA'S SITES

1. Walls are fragile and continually deteriorating. That is why they are called ruins. Don't climb, sit, or stand on walls or pick up or move rocks.
2. Artifacts, where they lay, tell a story. Once they are moved, a piece of the past is forever destroyed. Don't dig, remove artifacts, or pile them up in a site.
3. Contamination of cultural deposits are important for scientific tests used in reconstructing past environments. For instance, from such information we know that the Mogollon who lived here were farmers. Don't add anything (offerings) to a site!
4. Fire destroys prehistoric organic materials, ruins the dating potential of artifacts, and damages or even destroys rock art by covering them with soot. Absolutely no fires or smoking (even candles) in sites!
5. Oils from hands can cause deterioration of the drawings and ruin the dating potential for future scientists trying to unravel the meaning of the symbols painted on stone. Don't touch rock art.
6. Graffiti is a sign of disrespect for the ancient heritage of this important site. Subtle symbols of the past have been mindlessly destroyed. Don't draw or scratch graffiti on rocks or cliff faces.
7. Fragile desert plants and soils are destroyed when you stray from the trail. Also snakes and other small desert animals make their homes in the bushes and under rocks and in burrows... you may disturb them. Stay on trails...they are there for a reason.
8. Animals damage sites by digging, urinating, and defecating in them. They can destroy fragile cultural deposits and frighten other visitors. No pets allowed in the sites

If you see people vandalizing sites, please report it as soon as possible to the patrolling ranger or the Gila National Forest Fire Dispatcher 24 hour line 575-538-1644.

All archaeological sites on the Gila National Forest are protected by the Archaeological Resources Protection Act and other laws which prohibit digging, removing artifacts, damage, and defacement of archaeological resources on public lands and provides for both felony and misdemeanor prosecution with imprisonment and fines up to 10 years and \$100,000.

By following these simple guidelines, YOU help preserve these unique and fragile remnants of OUR American heritage. Thanks for your cooperation, and we hope that you enjoy