

NAGPRA

Review Committee Meeting Minutes Project

The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act Program is a division of the National Parks Service named after a crucial piece of legislation passed in 1990 called the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act. The program legislates cultural resource management and provides protections and repatriation of Native American and Native Hawaiian human remains and objects. NAGPRA ensures sensitive treatment of Native American human remains and other cultural items.



Since its first public meeting in 1992, 63 meeting minutes have been created but no tagging, indexing, or other search capabilities have been applied to the minutes, rendering them difficult to use for NAGPRA committee members.

Our group has created a limited-scope, high-level index/thesaurus and an accompanying thesaurus introduction to enhance the user experience. The minutes were combed through and indexed using a controlled vocabulary, and categorized by organization representation, reason for addressing the committee, meeting number, and page number.

NATIVE
AMERICAN
GRAVES
PROTECTION
AND
REPATRIATION
ACT

Notices are published in the Federal Register when they have determined that Native American human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, and/or objects of cultural patrimony are culturally affiliated and are eligible for repatriation:

57,847

human remains

1,479,923

associated funerary
objects

5,136

sacred objects

INTERESTING FACTS

➤ The most common action items brought before the Review Committee are requests for dispositions, requests for finding of fact/dispute, presentations, and public/written comments.

➤ There are currently 573 federally recognized tribes. Only these tribes and Native Hawaiian organizations recognized by the BIA may claim Native American cultural items under NAGPRA.

Our project will enable NAGPRA staff to effectively use their meeting minutes and make them searchable for common, specific issues they encounter regularly. It will decrease time spent searching through minutes to locate claims, disputes, comments, and other reoccurring issues, allowing not only more efficient use of time but also standardized and current information for specific instances. Because of this project, NAGPRA staff will be allowed to track how specific issues have changed or grown since the beginning of the program and allow them a more comprehensive view of procedural growth and current needs.