

The British Columbia Archaeological Site Inventory and the Provincial Heritage Register

The Archaeology Branch contributes to a centralized listing of protected heritage sites and objects by collecting, maintaining and distributing information for:

1. Provincial heritage sites (i.e., land that is designated under Section 9 of the Heritage Conservation Act (HCA)) that are archaeological¹ in nature
2. Heritage sites and objects that are included under an agreement with First Nations (under Section 4 of the HCA)
3. Known heritage sites that are protected under Section 13(2) of the HCA.
These would include:
 - a. Burial places²
 - b. Aboriginal rock paintings or carvings²
 - c. Sites that contain artifacts, features, materials or other physical evidence of human habitation or use before 1846²
 - d. Heritage wrecks²

The Archaeology Branch stores these records in the British Columbia Archaeological Site Inventory. This inventory and other records contributed by the Heritage Branch for buildings, structures and other non-archaeological sites are combined to form the Provincial Heritage Register.

Collecting archaeological site information

There are three common sources of information for the British Columbia Archaeological Site Inventory:

1. Information submitted by the general public
2. Site information collected by a qualified professional archaeologist working under a Heritage Conservation Act permit
3. Non-permitted submissions by archaeological researchers

The Archaeology Branch encourages archaeological site information to be submitted by the general public for inclusion in the inventory. Observations regarding individual sites may be reported to the Archaeology Branch. Archaeological Site Inventory staff will assist in gathering the required site documentation. [Contact information](#) is available on our website.

¹ An archaeological site is defined as a geographical location that contains physical evidence of past human activity for which the application of archaeological methods of inquiry (e.g., site survey, excavation, data analysis) are the primary source of information.

² These criteria are abbreviated. For a full description of protected heritage site types, please see Section 13 of the Heritage Conservation Act.

Specific requirements for permitted or non-permitted submissions by archaeological researchers can be found in the [Minimum Content and Format Requirements for Recording Archaeological Sites](#) bulletin. Briefly, archaeological site information is collected using the [British Columbia Archaeological Site Inventory Form](#) and the contents of the form are prescribed by the [British Columbia Archaeological Site Inventory Form Guide](#). Heritage shipwreck information is collected using the [British Columbia Shipwreck Recording Form](#) and [Guide](#).

Archaeological site records may be submitted to the Branch via mail or email. If authorized, archaeological researchers can directly enter their site information into the database using the Archaeological Data Import Facility. [Mail and email addresses](#) can be found on our website.

Maintaining Archaeological Site Information

Archaeological site information records submitted to the Archaeology Branch are reviewed by staff for accuracy, completeness, and consistency with the British Columbia Archaeological Site Inventory Form Guide, applicable permitting methodology and conditions, and relevant bulletins³. Upon acceptance of the site form, a unique identifier for the site is issued (the Borden Number). In the case of permitted work, the Borden Number is transmitted to the permit holder.

British Columbia Archaeological Site Inventory records containing both textual and spatial data are stored electronically in the Heritage Resource Inventory Application. A paper copy of the record is archived on site.

Borden numbers are issued within 10 working days of receiving an acceptable site form, and all site data is entered into the database within 45 working days.

Distribution of Site Information

Archaeological site information is sensitive as releasing this information into the public domain may result in looting and destruction of a site. Therefore, the Archaeology Branch controls and releases information on a “need to know” basis pursuant to Section 3(3) of the Heritage Conservation Act.

The different methods of accessing information, the types of information disclosed to various client groups, and limitations concerning data use and distribution are detailed in the [Access to Archaeological Site Information](#) policy. Briefly, archaeological site information may be requested by:

- Personally completing a data request form at the Archaeology Branch

³ Bulletins relevant to the review of site forms include:

Bulletin 12: [Defining Culturally Modified Tree Site Boundaries](#)

Bulletin 16: [Using the Archaeological Site Inventory Form and Detailed Data Table to Record CMT Features](#)

Bulletin 19: [Minimum Content and Format Requirements for Recording Archaeological Sites](#)

Bulletin 22: [Enhanced Site Form Mapping Standards](#)

- Submitting a data request form⁴ by fax ([Fax Number](#))
- Mailing a data request to the Archaeology Branch ([Branch Address](#))
- Submitting an online data request via the [Archaeology Data Request Form](#)

Records for specific archaeological sites are provided where it can be shown that distribution of the records will benefit the management or conservation of these sites. Site specific archaeological information is not provided to support general research, avocational interest or any merchantable product.

Contact Information

Any questions regarding this policy should be directed to:

Manager
Archaeological Site Inventory Section
PO Box 9816, Stn Prov Govt,
Victoria, BC V8W 9W3

Tel: (250) 953-3357
Fax: (250) 953-3340

Approval: Justine Batten

Date: October 15th, 2008

⁴ [Data request forms](#) are available on the website or by [contacting the Archaeology Branch](#).