



Inuit Heritage Trust’s Nunavut Archaeology Guidelines

Introduction

Inuit are the Rights Holders of Nunavut’s cultural heritage. The archaeological record is an important part of this heritage and the significance it holds for Indigenous Peoples is widely accepted. Inuit, however, have little access to Nunavut archaeology materials and data and the practice of archaeology in Nunavut continues to dispossess and disconnect Inuit from tangible and intangible parts of Inuit cultural heritage.

Inuit Heritage Trust, Inc. (IHT) was created through the Nunavut Agreement and ratified in 1994 as representing Nunavut Inuit interests in Nunavut’s cultural heritage. This document outlines IHT’s Archaeology Guidelines for researchers proposing to undertake archaeology in Nunavut.¹ They have grown out of the guidelines and principles developed in 1994 by Inuit during the Ittarnisilirijit Conference in Iglulik. These Guidelines are designed to advance Inuit governance in Nunavut’s cultural heritage as well as strengthen relationships between archaeologists and the communities they work within. They were developed and submitted in 2021 to the Department of Culture and Heritage (CH) as recommendations for revising the Government of Nunavut’s (GN) current [Guidelines for Applicants and Holders of Nunavut Archaeology Permits](#). During a meeting between IHT and CH in October 2022 it was decided that the recommendations be published as IHT’s Nunavut Archaeology Guidelines. Currently, IHT and CH are working in partnership to update the archaeology permitting process and procedures.

IHT’s Nunavut Archaeology Guidelines incorporate the five priority areas of Inuit Tapariit Kanatami’s (ITK) [National Inuit Strategy on Research](#) (NISR) to increase the benefits of Nunavut archaeology projects for Inuit and move Nunavut archaeology from a process of extraction to one of investment.² They require archaeologists engage with communities beyond the limited duration of the field season and prioritize building capacity among Inuit.³ They enhance the ethical conduct of Nunavut archaeology by addressing Inuit priorities, concerns, and interests and improving Inuit access to archaeological materials and data.

¹ In this document researchers includes permit applicants proposing archaeology work for the purpose of research, education, or as cultural resource management (CRM) prior to development.

² ITK’s five priority areas of the NISR include: advance Inuit governance in research, enhance the ethical conduct of research, align funding with Inuit research priorities, ensure Inuit access, ownership, and control over data and information, and build capacity in Inuit Nunangat research (ITK 2018).

³ Article 37.1.1 of the Nunavut Agreement (1993) states that implementation includes “provisions for training..[are].. essential for Inuit to benefit from the Agreement” (p.9). The recommendations identify ways Permit Holders can contribute to this process.

