



TO: MEMBERS OF THE STUDY COMMITTEE ON THE PRESERVATION OF
BURIAL SITES

FROM: Ellsworth H. Brown, Ph.D., Ruth and Hartley Barker Director

RE: August 2, 2016 meeting follow up

DATE: September 2, 2016

We are grateful to have been able to present you with an overview of the burial sites preservation law and the WHS's burial sites preservation program at the August 2, 2016 Study Committee on the Preservation of Burial Sites meeting. We heard concerns expressed during the meeting and are pleased to provide responses to some of those concerns.

WHS has reviewed internal standards and procedures relating to our ongoing burial program practices and policies. There are mechanisms in place that we will use moving forward that will streamline the process for developers, agencies and end users. We have provided a Time Frame outline showing response times we have implemented by policy for the primary burial law processes we carry out, and we describe our movement toward electronic submittal and review of proposals requesting burial site disturbance permits or authorizations. Please feel free to contact me if you have any further questions or comments.

1) Landowner/potential purchaser access to human burial site information.

The WHS provides information on human burial and other archeological sites to landowners, their agents, and potential purchasers of land. This information may be requested electronically or through the mail and is available free of charge. A form must be completed and submitted to request such information. Requesters do not need to visit the WHS office in Madison to obtain this information. A copy of the "Request to Obtain Information" form is attached to this memorandum.

2) Burial law process time frames.

The burial sites preservation law provides few formal time frames for processing requests for permits or authorizations to disturb human burial sites, to catalog sites or to provide final disposition for human remains. As a matter of policy, WHS has adopted time frames used in similar statutorily required review processes, particularly those processes described in other state and federal historic preservation laws. Attached, please find an outline of the primary burial sites preservation law processes with time frames currently used by the WHS.

3) Electronic submission and review of requests to disturb human burial sites.

The WHS has been studying this issue and has been working with in-house information technology specialists and with outside consultants to develop a mechanism to facilitate electronic submission of project materials. Over the past year, WHS has participated in a national dialog including surveys and discussions about converting all historic preservation offices throughout the country from paper submittal to electronic submittal capability. On August 1st, the WHS met for a half-day, in-house session to discuss design options. WHS is committed to converting its regulatory review office to a paperless, fully electronic office in the very short term. WHS will provide this Committee with status reports on this electronic submittal initiative at each of the Committee's upcoming meetings.