



# SOUTHERN UTE INDIAN TRIBE

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## **Southern Ute Indian Tribe Welcomes Establishment of Tribal Historic Preservation Office**

Southern Ute Indian Reservation – The Southern Ute Tribal Council is happy to announce the identification of the Tribal Historic Preservation Office (THPO). The National Park Service formally approved the Tribe’s plan to establish a THPO. The Tribe’s Cultural Preservation Department, Native American Graves & Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) staff will assume the responsibility of review pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act upon completion of the development of its THPO.

The Tribal THPO will assume the following functions: direct and conduct a comprehensive survey and maintain an inventory of historic and culturally significant properties on tribal lands, identify and nominate eligible properties to the National Register of Historic Places and otherwise administer applications for listing historic properties on the National Register, develop and implement a comprehensive, historic preservation plan covering historic, archeological, and traditional cultural properties on tribal lands, and advise and assist (where appropriate) Federal and State agencies and local governments in carrying out their historic preservation responsibilities, among others.

“The idea of a THPO predates the establishment of the Cultural Preservation Department and it is a momentous time to see the visions of our past Tribal leaders come to fruition,” stated Chairman Melvin J. Baker.

According to the congratulatory letter sent to the Tribe from the National Park Service, the Southern Ute Indian Tribe is the 203<sup>rd</sup> Tribe to assume such duties. The new responsibilities were previously that of the State Historic Preservation Officer. In 2006, the Southern Ute Indian Tribe along with the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe signed the Process for Consultation, Transfer, and Reburial of Cultural Unidentifiable Native American Human Remains and Associated Funerary Objects Originating From Inadvertent Discoveries on Colorado State and Private Lands with the State of Colorado. This was one of the very first within Indian Country and had since helped strengthen the relationship between the Tribe and State, Local Government, and Federal Officials.

“Now, the Tribe can continue to protect and preserve all cultural resources that include culturally significant places and resources within the exterior boundaries of the Reservation, but with greater emphasis – guaranteeing their existence for future generations to carry on our Ute way of life,” shared Mr. Garrett Briggs, NAGPRA Coordinator.

The Tribe will also be eligible to apply for federal funding for the newly established THPO Office. The Tribe will not assume the responsibility for assisting in the certification of local governments and evaluation of Investment Tax Credits rehabilitation projects as authorized under the National Historic Preservation Act.

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