



**Contact:**  
Frank Cloutier, Public Relations Director  
[fcloutier@sagchip.org](mailto:fcloutier@sagchip.org)  
Marcella Hadden, Public Relations Manager  
[mahadden@sagchip.org](mailto:mahadden@sagchip.org)  
Phone 989.775.4096

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** – May 13, 2015

**The Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan to Repatriate Native American Ancestral Human Remains from the American Museum of Natural History, Toledo Zoological Society and Dearborn Historical Museum**

**Mt. Pleasant, Michigan** – The Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan and its Ziibiwing Cultural Society (Ziibiwing Center of Anishinabe Culture & Lifeways) will repatriate the ancestral human remains of forty-one (41) Native American individuals from the American Museum of Natural History, New York City, New York; one (1) Native American individual from the Toledo Zoological Society, Toledo, Ohio; and one (1) Native American individual from the Dearborn Historical Museum, Dearborn, Michigan during the week of May 18-22, 2015. The Ziibiwing Cultural Society has been working diligently on behalf of the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan, and in cooperation with the Michigan Anishinaabek Cultural Preservation & Repatriation Alliance (MACPRA), to bring home ancestors and their associated funerary objects from the numerous museums, universities and institutions across the country since the passage of the 1990 Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA).

NAGPRA requires museums and federal agencies to inventory and identify Native American human remains and cultural items in their collections and to consult with Federally-recognized Indian Tribes, and Native Hawaiian Organizations regarding the return of these objects to descendants or Tribes and Organizations.

The American Museum of Natural History posted a Notice of Inventory Completion in the Federal Register on February 4, 2015. In unknown years during the late 1800s, Harlan I. Smith collected the Native American human remains from burial grounds and mound features throughout Bay and Saginaw Counties. All forty-one individuals that Smith collected were gifted to the American Museum of Natural History in 1901. No known individuals were identified. No associated funerary objects were notated or gifted to the American Museum of Natural History. No additional lineal descendants or representatives of any Indian Tribe or Native Hawaiian Organization have come forward to request transfer of control. According to final judgments of the Indian Claims Commission, the land from which the Native American human remains were removed is the aboriginal land of the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan.

The Toledo Zoological Society posted a Notice of Inventory Completion in the Federal Register on March 16, 2015. In 1937, Native American human remains representing, at minimum, one individual were excavated from the Younge site (20LP1) in Lapeer County, Michigan, by Ms. Carmen Baggerly. The human remains were likely deposited in the University of Michigan Museum of Anthropological Archaeology by Ms. Baggerly after the excavation. The remains were transferred to the Toledo Zoological Society at an unknown date. No

additional lineal descendants or representatives of any Indian Tribe or Native Hawaiian Organization have come forward to request transfer of control. According to final judgments of the Indian Claims Commission, the land from which the Native American human remains were removed is the aboriginal land of the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan.

Native American human remains representing, at minimum, one individual (mostly complete) were excavated from the Fairlane Estate, Dearborn, Wayne County, Michigan. The location of the excavation on the Fairlane Estate is unknown. The excavation was done sometime in the 1950s per the article "Archaeological Survey of Fairlane" from a newsletter/journal on Dearborn history mentioning the excavation. The Dearborn Historical Museum has no other information.

The planned repatriation and reburial will be executed in collaboration with the American Museum of Natural History, Toledo Zoological Society, Dearborn Historical Museum and 10 Federally-recognized tribes and 2 State historic tribes that comprise the Michigan Anishinaabek Cultural Preservation & Repatriation Alliance (MACPRA) and the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians. All repatriation activities will be supported by a Repatriation Grant from the Department of the Interior, National Park Service, and the National NAGPRA Program.

"The work funded by these grants is a step toward addressing past violations of the treatment of human remains and sacred objects of native peoples, while restoring the ability of American Indian and Native Hawaiian peoples to be stewards of their own ancestral dead and cultural heritage." said National Park Service Director Jonathan B. Jarvis.

The Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan invites the interested public to the *Recommitment to the Earth Ceremony* to be held on Friday, May 22 at 12pm in the Tribe's Nibokaan Ancestral Cemetery. The cemetery was established in 1995 for the explicit purpose of reburying repatriated Native American ancestral human remains and associated funerary objects. The Nibokaan Cemetery is located on the Saginaw Chippewa's Isabella Indian Reservation, behind the Tribal Campground located at 7525 East Tomah Rd., Mt. Pleasant, Michigan. A *Journey Feast* to conclude the ancestral ceremonies and protocols will be held at 1pm on Friday, May 22 at the Ziibiwing Center of Anishinabe Culture & Lifeways, 6650 East Broadway, Mt. Pleasant, Michigan.

The Ziibiwing Center of Anishinabe Culture & Lifeways in Mt. Pleasant, Michigan is the Midwest's Premier American Indian Museum. Established in 2004, the Ziibiwing Center is a distinctive treasure created to provide an enriched, diversified and culturally relevant educational experience through its award-winning Diba Jimooyung (Telling Our Story) permanent exhibit, changing exhibits, research center, Ojibwe language immersion room, gift shop and meeting rooms. The Ziibiwing Center is a non-profit cultural center and museum belonging to the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan.

###