



Sacred Ground



The Three Maidens. This area has been designated as a sacred site by the Sisseton-Wahpeton tribe. Quarriers often place offerings of food or tobacco near the boulders to ensure good quarrying.

What does Sacred mean?

Sacred means many things to many people. For most, sacred refers to a religious purpose or belief. A sacred site is one that has been declared to be holy, or devoted to a religious ceremony or use.

Pipestone National Monument is a sacred area to many American Indians. The Monument is often used by Indians for prayer, comparable to Christians visiting churches. During your visit you will probably see small piles of tobacco, sage, or small pieces of cloth attached to trees. These represent prayers to an Indian person. Please do not disturb them.

Pipestone National Monument is a very active site for religious ceremonies. One of the more common activities is an Inipi, or sweat lodge ceremony. These acts of purification are very similar among different Indian cultures, and are conducted at various locations at the Monument.

Pipestone National Monument

Purpose

The legislative purpose of the Monument is threefold:

- To administer and protect the pipestone quarries, reserving the quarrying of pipestone for Indians of all tribes.
 - To preserve, protect, and interpret the cultural and natural resources associated with Pipestone National Monument
 - To provide for the enjoyment and benefit of all people.
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National Monument Significance

The following statements identify significant cultural and natural components of Pipestone National Monument's ethnographic landscape.

Pipestone National Monument is significant as the only location where Indians have quarried the red pipestone (catlinite) from very early times to the present.

The National Monument is significant as a sacred site associated with American Indian spiritual beliefs and cultural activities.

Pipestone National Monument is significant for its history of American Indian and European-American contact and exploration in the early 1800's, specific quarrying rights, and the Pipestone Indian School (1893-1953).

Pipestone National Monument protects a significant cultural/ethnographic landscape.

Pipestone National Monument is significant for the landscape it protects, which consists of the tallgrass prairie that developed in association with the site's distinct hydrologic features. These features combine to provide an unusual array of habitats supporting a diverse assortment of prairie plants and animals and rare habitats, federally listed threatened and endangered species, and globally rare remnant plant communities.