



# NEWS RELEASE

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## Nashville District wants to return Native American remains

**NASHVILLE, Tenn. (April 10, 2012)** – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Nashville District wants to return the remains of one Native American to their tribe after being found in Cheatham County last year.

The Corps is seeking comments on a plan to transfer custody of the human remains in accordance with the Native American Graves and Repatriation Act.

Dr. Valerie McCormack, Nashville District cultural resources manager, said the remains were discovered in October 2011 on a beach in front of a bank on Cheatham Lake. “The remains may have eroded from the river bank after the May 2010 flood, or they may have been looted,” she said.

After the 2010 flood there were numerous incidents of people looting Native American graves on the Cumberland River. It is illegal to remove artifacts from federal land, and punishment for illegally removing artifacts from Corps land can lead to a felony conviction and up to a \$500,000 fine under the Archaeological Resources Protection Act.

The Corps consulted with modern tribes whose ancestors lived in the Cumberland River Valley. The remains are suspected to date from a time period that makes it difficult to precisely pinpoint descendants. During historic time Chickasaws occupied lands in the Tennessee River Valley, but their hunting and trading area included a vast area including Cheatham County.

As part of the effort to return the remains to a correct Nation, the Corps is publishing public notices in the Tennessean, the Ada Evening News, home of the Chickasaw Nations, and the Tulsa World, home of many of the Nations that were removed from Tennessee.

If no other tribe or individual claims the remains before May 21, 2012, the custody of the remains will be transferred to the Chickasaw Nation.

Claims for custody can be submitted in writing to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Nashville District, (CELRN-PM-P), 801 Broadway, Nashville, TN, 37203. Call McCormack at 615-736-7847 for more information.

(The public can obtain news, updates and information from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Nashville District on the district’s website at [www.lrn.usace.army.mil](http://www.lrn.usace.army.mil), on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/nashvillecorps> and on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/nashvillecorps>.)

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