



## SOCIETY FOR AMERICAN ARCHAEOLOGY

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **The Past at Risk: Society for American Archaeology Committee to Address Threat of Climate Change to the Archaeological Record**

**Washington, D.C.**—Climate change isn't just imperiling the future; it's also putting the past at risk. In response to the need to protect the archaeological record from the effects of climate change, the Society for American Archaeology (SAA) announces the formation of the Committee on Climate Change Strategies and Archaeological Resources.

“In addition to irreplaceable cultural heritage, the archaeological record gives us incredible insight into how past cultures adapted to environmental changes,” said committee chair Dr. Thomas McGovern, a professor with the Department of Anthropology at Hunter College. “Losing access to that knowledge now, when we most need it, would be devastating. We are facing a global threat, and SAA is working with international allies to organize a broad-based response.”

The new committee will have two major tasks: surveying what is happening to archaeological resources due to climate change and exploring and supporting policies that will help SAA and the archaeological community respond to the crisis.

The committee plans to begin by gathering data from a variety of resources in order to develop a comprehensive overview of the status of archaeological resources and currently available research and policy. The committee welcomes advice and expertise from the SAA community and especially bearers of local and traditional knowledge. “The threats to heritage and science are interwoven and our response needs to combine the strengths of all the communities affected,” said Dr. McGovern.

Climate change and archaeology was the subject of the President's Forum at SAA's 81st Annual Meeting in Orlando . "There's so much that needs to be addressed when dealing with climate change issues," said SAA President Diane Gifford-Gonzalez. "We look forward to adding the voice of the archaeological community to the international climate resiliency conversation."

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*For more on the international perspective see:*

*[What History Gives, the Sea Steals](http://www.hakaimagazine.com/article-long/what-history-gives-sea-steals)* by Elizabeth Preston, Hakai Magazine  
(<http://www.hakaimagazine.com/article-long/what-history-gives-sea-steals>)

*Global Environmental Change Threats to Heritage and Long Term Observing Networks of the Past*  
(<http://ihopenet.org/global-environmental-change-threats-to-heritage-and-long-term-observing-networks-of-the-pas/>)

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***About the Society for American Archaeology*** *The Society for American Archaeology is an international organization dedicated to the research, interpretation, and protection of the archaeological heritage of the Americas. With more than 7,900 members, the Society represents professional, student, and avocational archaeologists working in a variety of settings, including government agencies, colleges and universities, museums, and the private sector.*