

## ASM Site Definition Policy

The following constitutes a revision to the Site Definition Policy issued from this office on July 1, 1987. It also incorporates certain points from the ASM Archaeological Site Recording Manual, ver. 1.1, December 1, 1993. The following criteria must be employed by all archaeological professionals in order for the Arizona State Museum to accept ASM site cards.

The purpose of the policy is to ensure that all substantial discoveries of archaeological finds are properly recorded as sites. At the same time, the policy seeks to prevent the recording as sites of isolated features devoid of chronological information. The determination of what constitutes an archaeological site is, to a certain extent, a matter of professional judgment. However, if certain minimal archaeological discoveries-(listed below) are encountered, then an ASM site card must be completed and submitted. In other words, if the archaeological discoveries exceed the minimum criteria listed below, a site card must be filled out. Sites that do not meet the minimum standards, but which the archaeologist deems worthy of site status, may also be assigned ASM numbers (assuming that a properly completed ASM site card is submitted to ASM).

Most archaeologists define sites based on consideration of age of remains as well as density and diversity of artifacts and features and the spatial arrangements of these remains within the area under consideration. The following guidelines should be used to define archaeological sites:

All sites should contain:

1. Physical remains of past human activity that are at least 50 years old.

Additionally, sites should consist of at least one of the following:

2. 30+ artifacts of a single class (i.e., 30 sherds, 30 lithics, 30 tin cans) within an area 15 meters (50 feet) in diameter, except when all pieces appear to originate from a single source (i.e., one ceramic pot, one core, one glass bottle),
3. 20+ artifacts which include at least 2 classes of artifact types (i.e., sherds, groundstone, nails, glass) within an area 15 meters (50 feet) in diameter,
4. One or more archaeological features in temporal association with any number of artifacts.
5. Two or more temporally associated archaeological features without artifacts.

Non-linear, isolated features without associated artifacts may be recorded at the discretion of the archaeologist. An "isolated feature" is defined as a feature that does not have any other features within a 100 meter (325 feet) diameter. This might include isolated rock piles, mine shafts, prospecting pits or unidentified depressions without artifact associations.

To reiterate, archaeological discoveries that satisfy the above criteria must be documented as sites in order to comply with Arizona State Museum requirements.