



Helping property owners  
and land developers meet  
the requirements of the  
Heritage Conservation Act

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# ARCHAEOLOGY

## Questions and Answers for Property Owners in British Columbia

### 1. Why should I be concerned about archaeological sites on my property?

Archaeological sites are protected under Provincial legislation, the *Heritage Conservation Act*. Permits are required to develop within archaeological site boundaries. Altering an archaeological site without a permit is illegal. The purpose of the *Heritage Conservation Act* is to encourage and facilitate the protection and conservation of BC's heritage, not to prosecute property owners. Fines can only be levied by a court, following formal, legal prosecution.

According to Provincial legislation, it is the responsibility of the homeowner to ensure that any archaeological sites on their property are preserved.

### 2. How do I find out if a protected archaeological site is on my property?

The province maintains a database of archaeological sites in British Columbia. Contact Kleanza for a quick and affordable search of the Remote Access to Archaeological Data (RAAD) database. RAAD searches start at \$150 and can advise you on the proximity of your property to known archaeological sites.

### 3. I've found out that I have an archaeological site on my property, but I want to develop. What do I do?

Legally, you are required to apply for a site alteration permit, from the Archaeology Branch, a division of BC's Ministry of Forests, Lands, and Natural Resource Operations. To receive a permit, the Archaeology Branch will need to know exactly where the archaeological site is located, the significance of the site, and how the planned development will affect the site. This information is gained during an Archaeological Impact Assessment (AIA), which includes a site visit(s) and reporting, and which is undertaken by a professional consulting archaeology firm under Provincial authority, such as Kleanza Consulting.

If the AIA shows that the planned development will not impact any archaeological materials or features in the site, no further permitting is required and you can carry on with the planned development.

If the AIA shows that the planned development will impact archaeological materials or features within a site, it may be necessary to complete an archaeological excavation to recover the information that will be destroyed due to the planned development. This stage of investigation is completed under a separate Site Alteration Permit, by a professional consulting archaeology firm, such as Kleanza Consulting.





**4. Are there any permits or approvals, other than a Heritage Conservation Act permit, required to carry out the site alterations, heritage inspections or heritage investigations described in permit applications?**

No other permits or approvals than *Heritage Conservation Act* permit issued by the Archaeology Branch are required to carry out the site alterations, heritage inspections or heritage investigations described in permit applications. However, property owners or developers may require other approvals such as forestry cutting permits or municipal development permits unrelated to the archaeological work.

**5. Are there any costs involved?**

The property owner is responsible for the costs of required archaeological studies. By taking early action to research if there are sites on your property and to try to avoid them, you can minimize costs.

At this time, the Archaeology Branch does not charge a fee for issuing permits. Price varies between archaeological consulting firms. Kleanza Consulting is pleased to offer a free cost estimate.

**6. Will a site on my property affect property value?**

There are two issues that may affect property values: how does an archaeological site affect the present use of my property and how will the site affect the future use of my property?

The current use of the property is seldom affected unless the use involves significant land alteration. A house on a fully developed lot is not affected by overlap with an archaeological site. An active gravel pit is a concern, because gravel extraction will damage or destroy a site.

New development, such as changing the building footprint, major landscaping, or installation of an in-ground swimming pool, will be a concern, because the new activity may damage the archaeological site. When planning for land use change, ensure that a professional consulting archaeologist is part of the planning process. They can determine if the new development will have an effect on the archaeological site.

In many cases, the archaeological site is not within the development zone. As an example, archaeological sites on waterfront properties are usually close to the water and are often contained within zoning setbacks protecting other environmental values.

The most elemental piece of information a property owner should have is the site record for the archaeological site on their property.

**7. How do I hire a professional consulting archaeologist?**

Kleanza Consulting would be pleased to answer any questions that you may have, and we perform our work throughout the province. The BC Association of Professional Archaeologists (BCAPA) provides an up-to-date list of archaeological consulting firms on their website: <http://www.bcapa.ca>

