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## **Archaeological Vandals Punished**

Tucson, Ariz. – Six vandals from Sahuarita have been fined more than \$43,000 and sentenced to five years supervised probation as a result of the damage they inflicted on an archaeological site known as Indian Kitchen southeast of Tucson.

The five adults involved – Johnathan Lopez, 23; Andrew Magallanes, 21; Robert Norton, 23; Cynthia Norton, 20; and Vilma Curiel, 22 – all pleaded guilty on June 6, 2011, to Defacing an Archaeological Resource.

U.S. Magistrate Judge Jacqueline Marshall fined each \$7,848; a juvenile involved was required to pay \$4,000 in restitution. An investigation conducted by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) led to the prosecution of the defendants, which was handled by Assistant U.S. Attorney Ann DeMarais, District of Arizona, in Tucson.

The archaeological site, known as Indian Kitchen, was first used by members of the prehistoric Hohokam culture as a food-processing area. A massive rock formation there contains 33 mortar holes in the bedrock which were used by these ancient people to grind grain.

In March 2009, a BLM law enforcement ranger observed that the archeological site had been damaged by graffiti when he was patrolling BLM-administered public lands west of Sahuarita. A cleanup effort was launched by the BLM to remove the massive amount of graffiti spray-painted on the rocks. Unfortunately the cleanup was unsuccessful in removing all of the graffiti, and paint is still visible. The damage done was estimated to exceed \$40,000.

“Unfortunately, the damage to this important archaeological site can never be fully repaired,” commented BLM Tucson Field Office archaeologist Amy Sobiech. “We hope, though, that the fines imposed on these six individuals will serve as a deterrent to prevent future vandalism.”

– BLM –

*The BLM manages more land - 245 million acres - than any other Federal agency. This land, known as the National System of Public Lands, is primarily located in 12 Western states, including Alaska. The Bureau, with a budget of about \$1 billion, also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. The BLM's multiple-use mission is to sustain the health and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. The Bureau accomplishes this by managing such activities as outdoor recreation, livestock grazing, mineral development, and energy production, and by conserving natural, historical, cultural, and other resources on public lands.*