



**Statement of the Society for American Archaeology
On the removal of archaeological materials from the Diamond Tail Ranch
By cast members of "The Maze Runner: The Scorch Trials" during filming**

October 13, 2015

SAA has learned that, according to media accounts, one cast member of the "Maze Runner: The Scorch Trials" movie admitted on the air to taking Native American artifacts from a private ranch in New Mexico where filming was taking place, despite warnings by the land owner not to do so. He further alleged that other cast members did the same. Later studio statements have denied anything was taken from the Diamond Tail Ranch.

Had the cast taken artifacts from tribal or federal land, the cast members would certainly be liable for prosecution under several federal laws, including the Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA) and perhaps the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act. They may still be liable under state or local laws, however, as well as ARPA's provision against transporting archaeological materials removed illegally from any location.

However, we stress that, regardless of whether it is technically legal, it is still unethical to damage archaeological sites (including removing objects or human remains).

SAA supports remarks by representatives of Pueblo tribes decrying reports of these removals for their disrespectful and unethical nature. Further, SAA lauds the petition by fans of the "Maze Runner" series denouncing cast member comments for their cultural insensitivity.

Even if no items were actually taken, SAA calls upon the producers, director, and cast members of the "Maze Runner" series to apologize to New Mexican tribes for using "stealing from an Indian burial ground" for film publicity. This constitutes an insensitive breach of protocol by people using traditional Indian lands.