

United States Attorney's Office
Northern District of Iowa



United States Attorney Kevin W. Techau

PRESS RELEASE

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For further information contact:

Timothy.Duax@usdoj.gov

(712) 255-6011

Sioux City, Iowa

**Former Effigy Mounds National Monument Superintendent
Admits to Stealing Human Remains**

Kevin W. Techau, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Iowa, announced that the former Superintendent at the Effigy Mounds National Monument, Thomas A. Munson, age 76, from Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, pled guilty this afternoon in federal court to one count of stealing human remains from Effigy Mounds National Monument.

The facts admitted at the plea hearing, and set forth in the plea agreement revealed that on about July 16, 1990, Munson voluntarily, intentionally and knowingly removed prehistoric skeletal human remains from the Effigy Mounds National Monument collection. He carried a box of human remains from the curatorial facility to his car, and directed a subordinate to do the same. Munson then drove the stolen items to his home in Wisconsin where he concealed them for more than twenty years. When the boxes were finally recovered, investigators discovered that several of the human bones were broken or fragmented beyond recognition.

As a direct result of Munson's crime, the National Park Service has spent \$83,905 in restoration and repair costs and will spend at least another \$25,000. Munson is responsible for at least \$108,905 in restitution to the National Park Service.

Munson was an employee of the National Park Service from July of 1964 to May 1994. He served as Superintendent at Effigy Mounds National Monument from February 1971, until his retirement in May of 1994. At all times during his employment, Munson was entrusted with preserving and protecting the sacred site.

United States Attorney Kevin W. Techau said following the plea, "It is a very sad day when a public official betrays the public's trust. This was a serious crime and the betrayal was compounded by a violation of the most sacred trust placed in Mr. Munson as the Superintendent of Effigy Mounds National Monument."

The guilty plea proceedings were held before United States Chief Magistrate Judge Jon S. Scoles. Sentencing will also be held before Judge Scoles. The date for sentencing will be set after a presentence report has been prepared. Munson remains on pretrial release pending sentencing.

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Munson faces a possible maximum sentence of one year's imprisonment, a \$100,000 fine, \$25 in special assessments, and one year of supervised release following any imprisonment.

The Effigy Mounds National Monument located in Allamakee County, Iowa and operated by the National Park Service was established by a Presidential Proclamation by Harry S. Truman on October 25, 1949 under the Antiquities Act of 1906. The monument was established primarily to protect over 200 known prehistoric earthen burial mounds, some in the shape of animals, constructed between 700 and 2,500 years ago. The monument land is held in fee simple by the National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior. The monument is an area of concurrent federal jurisdiction.

The following Tribes affiliate themselves with Effigy Mounds National Monument:

Crow Creek Sioux Tribe
Flandeau Santee Sioux
Ho-Chunk Nation
Iowa Tribe of Kansas & Nebraska
Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma
Lower Sioux Indian Community
Omaha Nation
Otoe-Missouria Tribe
Ponca Tribe of Nebraska
Prairie Island Indian Community
Sac and Fox Nation of Missouri in Kansas and Nebraska
Sac and Fox Nation of Oklahoma
Sac and Fox Tribe of the Mississippi in Iowa
Santee Sioux Nation
Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community of Minnesota
Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate Tribe
Standing Rock Sioux Tribe
Upper Sioux Indian Community
Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska and
Yankton Sioux Tribe

The case was investigated by the National Park Service and is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Forde Fairchild.

Court file information at <https://ecf.iand.uscourts.gov/cgi-bin/login.pl>.
The case file number is CR15-1030.

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