

By Loren Woerpel, Noc Bay Trading Company

MAKING A PERSONAL PIPE

The Black Soapstone provided in this kit is found in many locations in the northeastern part of the United States. It was used for pipe making by many of the Native people that lived and traded throughout this area. The type of pipes that were made included hand pipes without stems to elbow pipes and effigy pipes with stems.

The stone can be shaped and smoothed by using tools that are normally used to carve and work hardwoods. There will be personal preferences in the choice of tools but these suggestions will work.

Looking over the blank stone provided, notice that the blank has been drilled for the stem in one direction and for the bowl in the other. The bowl is slightly shorter than the stem extension. Laying this out, plan your shape and design by drawing with pencil on the stone on both surfaces or on a paper pattern. See Figure 1.

You can rough shape the bowl by starting with either a rasp file or work it down slowly by carving with a knife. When you get close to the shape you want, use a medium sandpaper to work over all of the surfaces to smooth it out. Continue to smooth with a fine sandpaper. Figure 2

When the outside is about finished, use a pocket knife to carve open the bowl hole. This hole will bevel from top to bottom as in Figure 3.

Do a final smoothing with a fine grain emery cloth.

Using the medium sandpaper, work down the stem blank provided. Finish off with the fine sand paper.

When both stem and head are finished the way you plan, you need to rub a coating of hot beeswax on the surfaces of both. Warm the beeswax up in a pan until it melts. Use a soft rag to apply the hot wax.

Figure 1

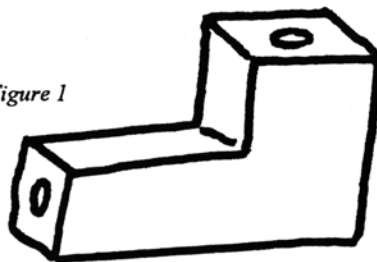


Figure 2



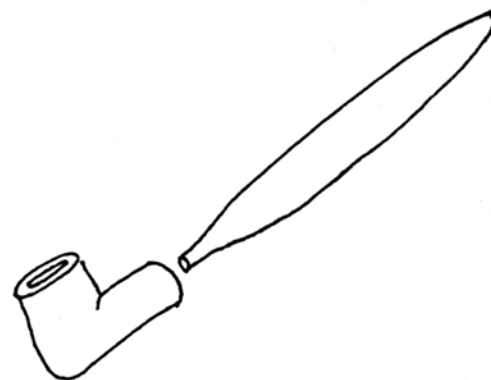
Figure 3



Be careful when doing this to avoid burning yourself! Sometimes it helps to warm up the stone head before applying the hot wax. As it cools, continue to polish with a clean cloth until it is nicely finished.

Your pipe is finished unless there is some carving or decorating that will be needed to finish it according to special instructions you have. In the Great Lakes area that is not usually done.

We encourage you to become informed about use of your pipe from knowledgeable sources in your area or relatives, even when these are used as personal pipes.



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