



## Cultural Resources

### ***What is a cultural resource?***

Cultural resource is a broad term used to describe the remains of sites where various societies have lived, worked, worshiped and played. Some cultural resources can be things that are easily recognizable such as an old house or barn, a chipped stone arrowhead, or piece of ancient pottery. Other cultural resources may not be so easily recognizable, such as an area of land on which Native peoples performed sacred dances or collected herbs or plants for medicinal or other purposes.

All of these cultural resources are important to understanding the origins of our diverse American culture. These resources are considered so important that laws and regulations at the Federal, Tribal, and State levels have been established to protect them.

### ***What is a cultural resource survey?***

A cultural resource survey is a systematic way of identifying and gathering information to determine if any cultural resources are present on the area proposed for your project activity. It usually consists of walking across bare or plowed ground looking for artifacts on the surface. It can also involve digging small holes (about 1 ft x 1 ft) and

screening the soil to look for hidden artifacts. Once screened, the holes are backfilled so little evidence remains of the survey and the land is restored to its pre-excavated state.

### ***Why is a cultural resource survey needed?***

A survey is required when an examination of maps and locations of previously-discovered cultural resources archived at your State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) suggest that a cultural resource may be within the project area of the proposed activity or on your property.

The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 16 U.S.C. 470 et seq., was established to protect our nation's important cultural resources. It requires federal agencies to conduct a survey before they supply planning or financial assistance for a project to ensure their assistance will not impact any cultural resources.

### ***Who conducts and pays for the survey?***

The survey must be conducted by a qualified cultural resources specialist, usually a trained professional archaeologist. If your project is a Farm Program project (like CRP or ECP) then the

Commodity Credit Corporation will pay for the survey. However, if it is a Farm Loan Program project (like a guaranteed loan) then you are responsible for hiring a cultural resources specialist from the private sector and paying for the survey. Your local county FSA cultural resource contact can assist you if you need to hire a cultural resource specialist.

### ***What happens to artifacts that are found during a survey?***

If a cultural resource is found on your property, it does not mean that you will not be able to conduct your proposed project activity. It means that appropriate action must be taken to protect, record and recover the cultural resources before the project can begin.

Any artifacts or objects found (except for those objects found of human remains or relating to religious significance) belong to you as the landowner. These objects could hold a very important significance to descendants of the people who made them. With this in mind, FSA encourages you to care for the cultural resources on your property for the value they possess about your local history and prehistory and to donate any objects found on your land to either a State-recognized curation facility or to the descendants of the people

who originally used the land. Your county FSA office cultural resource contact can help you in determining the proper entity for donation of your artifacts.

***What if I have other questions or want to learn more about cultural resource?***

Refer to the following internet resources for cultural resources and contacts or questions:

- State SHPO Web site
- Web sites of any Federally-recognized tribes
- FSA Policy: [www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=home&subject=ecrc&topic=cur](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=home&subject=ecrc&topic=cur)
- Federal guidelines and policy: [www.achp.gov](http://www.achp.gov)

For more information on cultural resources, contact the National FSA Federal Preservation Officer or your State Environmental Coordinator.

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