

INSTRUCTIONS FOR MAINE'S CULTURAL RESOURCES REVIEW WORKSHEET

November 20, 2001

This is to provide guidance for use of the Preliminary Cultural Resources Assessment Worksheet. The worksheet is used in conjunction with environmental evaluation (EE) procedures for all NRCS activities conducted by NRCS, directly or indirectly planning or implementing "undertakings", as defined in the General Manual and Cultural Resources policy (GM 420, part 401).

Architectural Resources: Architectural Resources are broadly defined as buildings, sites, objects and districts (see definition in Worksheet instructions. Are there architectural resources fifty (50) years or older within the area of potential effects that will be directly (modifications, repairs, etc) or indirectly (within visual impact area) affected by the undertaking?

If NO, then no further ARCHITECTURAL review is needed. If YES, complete and submit a Maine Historic Preservation Commission Historic Building/Structure Survey Form (Street Address Only) for each affected resource (Representative photograph(s) must be included), and a map depicting build/structure location and angle at which photograph was taken. Submit these forms and associated documentation to the NRCS CRC.

PRACTICES THAT ARE NOT UNDERTAKINGS

Almost all practices that manipulate the land or landscape have the potential to be "undertakings". General management type of practices which only change methods of operations such as "nutrient management" etc., are not considered undertakings. However clearing land, root and stump removal new cultivation and deeper tillage than previous plow depth are practices that are undertakings and will need further evaluation, using the worksheet.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SENSITIVITY ANALYSIS

A general analysis of an area larger than a specific practice or project should be requested and used as part of your resource inventory and planning tool, especially when numerous undertakings are being considered. A large area analysis may also be needed when group conservation plans are being developed or when doing resource inventories for individuals, groups or units of government. The services offered by the SHPO are a courtesy to NRCS, which would otherwise be done by an NRCS Cultural Resource Specialist or contractor.

The area may be a farm, tract, part of farm, small project area, RC&D project or a resource inventory. Smaller areas will have the analysis done by the State Historic Preservation Office, on a first come first served basis.

However, the NRCS Cultural Resource Coordinator (CRC) may discuss each area with the requesting DC or planner to establish priorities for submission to the SHPO, if a backlog develops.

The Maine SHPO's staff will do only two complete farm, or multiple undertaking or large area sensitivity analysis per week, in addition to other evaluations. The turn around time for these reviews may exceed 14 days. It is NRCS's responsibility to provide as much resource

information as possible, to help in the analysis. Resource information in question 5 should be the minimum provided. Please provide descriptive information as much as possible.

Larger areas, such as town inventories, multiple farms, etc., may have to be done by contracting with a specialist if the SHPO can not provide this service, and if funds are available.

QUESTION #1: Describe what is being planned for the undertaking and size of area affected. Be sure to include areas such as sources of fill, gravel, spoil disposal, equipment staging areas etc. The appropriate practice code(s) for the "undertaking" is (are) needed to help in the NRCS State report on cultural resource evaluations.

QUESTION #2: Conditions are important. If the undertaking will not affect anything except previously placed fill, or is eroded and undisturbed ground will not be affected, then it is assumed there is little potential for adverse impact on cultural resources, unless there are architectural resources, historic landscapes, etc.

Some undertakings have the potential for adverse impact even on fields that have been cultivated. For example, land smoothing or leveling, or any shallow excavation practices that remove or displace the plow zone have the potential for significant impact. Normal plowing or tillage may disturb the vertical distribution, but usually leaves evidence in close proximity to original site location, when disturbance does not disturb below the previous plow depth.

QUESTION #3: Location, geomorphological, and other considerations

a. Location of body of water is important, but is not the only factor. If water is or was present then the occupation site was generally close. Size of the water body is a factor, but significant sites can often be found near small streams and springs. Some marshes or bogs may have been shallow ponds, or remnants of other bodies of water. These may be indicated by accumulation of organic matter, peat, or other depression wetlands. Prehistoric river channels, flood plains, margins of terraces (old shorelines) streams, or lake shores are sensitive areas that may not have obvious water sources present.

COASTAL SUPPLEMENT

Undertakings near the ocean, bays or lower estuaries, that will disturb less than 150 feet landward from the top of bank, have a high potential to affect cultural resources. However, the presence of cultural resources on the eroded bank will usually be obvious if you know what the indicators are. Refer to the COASTAL SUPPLEMENT to the worksheet in the reference file (in offices with coastal shoreline only) for color photographs and more detailed instructions to determine presence of cultural resources. If you have any questions, please contact the NRCS CRC.

b. Soil is a very important factor. Sites may be found on any soil type which is close to water sources described in part 3a. However, better drained soils may be sites if located away from water sources. Extremely stony soils, very poorly drained soils, and steep slopes over 10% are unlikely to be area occupied by prehistoric people. There may be rare exceptions.

A description of conditions based on an onsite visit is a must, because soil maps do not always show small or narrow inclusions of suitable soil or slope conditions. Topographic maps with 20 foot contours may not show areas such as small terraces along streams. Polaroid or digital or

other photographs (not slides) of the area are very helpful. Please take a variety of photographs of the APE, and surrounding area and provide a description with each photo.

Soil Series symbol and name based on actual field conditions is important in helping assess and fine tune location models. This may differ from Soil Survey maps due to mapping intensity. Actual slope, not average slope, is important information. Texture and drainage class of actual soil is also helpful documentation.

3c. This is requested to help identify possible historic sites, occupied since first European contact with native Americans. Depressions may be graves, old foundations, out houses. Mounds could also be burials or indications of other structures. Stonewalls and other features in field may have significant to the trained archaeologist/historian.

3d. Landowner knowledge can be important, however evidence of cultural resources is often too obscure or subtle to be casually noticed or recognized by most landowners. However it is important to ask the questions anyway.

QUESTION #4. Date of first undertaking helps to set priorities for evaluations when necessary. Remember to plan CR evaluations early, before practices are finalized and commitments are made.

QUESTION #5. The better the information, the easier it is to evaluate the request. The more descriptive the information the better. Photographs are extremely helpful and may save NRCS valuable staff time and contracting costs. Describe all of the areas that may be affected by construction limits, where equipment will work.

The photocopy of the topo map should clearly show topographic details. Please avoid sending poor quality photocopies of soil maps if possible. Please be sure the photocopy of any aerial photos is as clear as possible. DO NOT use yellow or red pen or pencil since the colors do not photocopy well.

Please request a "rush" response only when absolutely needed. This should be when construction is imminent. It helps in the prioritizing process. However, cultural resource evaluations done early in the planning process often avoid the need for a rush request.

The CRC will review and process the information appropriate specialists may be contacted, or literature reviewed. The DC or other NRCS planner may be called to clarify or provide additional information documentation.

Appropriate dates will be recorded by the CRC for tracking purposes. DC or other NRCS planners will receive copy of transmittal if referred to SHPO for further review.