

II. NRCS STAFF CULTURAL RESOURCES TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

Trained NRCS personnel are involved with cultural resources compliance activities at the Field Office level. The national and state contexts for this involvement, as well as training requirements, are identified in this section. While most state programs have ASK Level IV – Module 8 training requirements for Field Office Personnel (FOP), the South Dakota program also has additional training requirements for Field Cultural Resource Coordinators (FCRC).

A. Field Office Personnel (FOP) - MODULE 8 – ASK Level IV

1. NRCS NATIONAL PROGRAM

General Manual Requirements

GM 420, Part 401 - Policy (a) (1)

- Cultural resources training will consist of checking information and field indicators by personnel trained according to the SCS National Cultural Resources Training Program.

GM 420, Part 401, Subpart C – 401.21 (c), (d) (1)

- Identification of cultural resources will be conducted by qualified Cultural Resource Specialists (CRS) or trained NRCS personnel in consultation with knowledgeable individuals to the appropriate procedures and standards detailed in the NRCS Cultural Resources Handbook and state agreements.
- When the conservation planning authority is at the Field Office level, NRCS personnel certified in the National Cultural Resources Training Program may be responsible for completing compliance requirements for Cultural Resource Reviews and Field Inspection.

GM 420, Part 401, Subpart C – 401.24

- NRCS will provide training and informational materials to field personnel and other interested parties for the consideration of cultural resources. All NRCS employees responsible for planning or implementing NRCS programs will complete the training to the level designated in the Leader's Guide for the NRCS National Cultural Resources Training Program. Additional training may be required to ensure maximum consideration of historic properties in the performance of official duties. Further guidance on standards for employee training and certification are listed in the Cultural Resources Handbook.

National Cultural Resources Training Series (Modules 1-8)

- This training program is for every NRCS employee who is involved in project planning, conservation planning, or conservation application. ASK Level 3 is reached upon successful completion of Modules 1-8. To be certified at ASK Level IV, employees must complete and submit three case files or conservation plans meeting the training objectives.

2. STATE LEVEL AGREEMENT (SLA)

Field Office Personnel (FOP) Definition – NRCS or local conservation district personnel that are certified at the ASK Level IV (32 hour training course) as having completed the requirements of the National Module 8 Cultural Resources Training Program.

Field Office Personnel (FOP) Training Requirements - NRCS will ensure that all personnel involved with the practice implementation will receive the NRCS National Modules 1-8 cultural resource training (32 hours minimum) and will submit three case files or conservation plans to achieve an ASK Level IV certification. Update training sessions will be provided at least every two years for field personnel, generally through FCRC or CRS led on-the-job training. Field office personnel are required to attend formal update training every three years, or more frequently if specified by the SCRS based on planning assistance review reports. If a FOP has not received update training within a two-year period, or formal update training in a three-year period, they will not maintain their ASK Level IV certification and conduct data base searches or inventories on lower priority projects as listed in the State Level Agreement (SLA).

3. SOUTH DAKOTA FIELD OFFICE PERSONNEL (FOP) TRAINING

Training Delivery - Based upon the NRCS National Modules 1-8 cultural resources training program, the State Cultural Resource Specialist (SCRS) will design and deliver training to relevant Field Office Personnel (FOP) to obtain or maintain their ASK Level IV certification as required in the NRCS General Manual and the State Level Agreement (11/2001). The Huron State Office will maintain a statewide database to track FOP ASK Level IV certification.

Notification of Certification – Upon successful completion of new or updated ASK Level IV certification, the State Office will notify the Assistant State Conservationists for Field Operations and the South Dakota Historic Preservation Officer.

Access to State Archaeological Research Center (SARC) Archaeological Data Base – Field Office Personnel (FOP) holding current ASK Level IV certification are authorized to access the SARC ARMS database utilizing a password provided by SARC.

**B. Field Cultural Resources Coordinator (FCRS) - MODULE 8 – ASK Level IV
– Field Office Personnel (FOP) *PLUS* Additional Training**

1. *NRCS NATIONAL PROGRAM*

General Manual Requirements

- GM 420, Part 401 - Policy (a) (1)
- Cultural resources training will consist of checking information and field indicators by personnel trained according to the SCS National Cultural Resources Training Program.
- GM 420, Part 401, Subpart C – 401.21 (c), (d) (1)
- Identification of cultural resources will be conducted by qualified Cultural Resource Specialists (CRS) or trained NRCS personnel in consultation with knowledgeable individuals to the appropriate procedures and standards detailed in the NRCS Cultural Resources Handbook and *state agreements [FCRC]*.
- When the conservation planning authority is at the Field Office level, NRCS personnel certified in the National Cultural Resources Training Program may be responsible for completing compliance requirements for Cultural Resource Reviews and Field Inspection.
- GM 420, Part 401, Subpart C – 401.24
- NRCS will provide training and informational materials to field personnel and other interested parties for the consideration of cultural resources. All NRCS employees responsible for planning or implementing NRCS programs will complete the training to the level designated in the Leader’s Guide for the NRCS National Cultural Resources Training Program. *Additional training may be required to ensure maximum consideration of historic properties in the performance of official duties [FCRC]*. Further guidance on standards for employee training and certification are listed in the Cultural Resources Handbook.

National Cultural Resources Training Series (Modules 1-8)

- This training program is for every NRCS employee who is involved in project planning, conservation planning, or conservation application.

2. *STATE LEVEL AGREEMENT (SLA)*

Field Cultural Resources Coordinator (FCRC) Definition– NRCS personnel that have completed 80 hours of training in cultural resources beyond the National Module 8 Cultural Resources Training Program.

NRCS Field Cultural Resource Coordinators (FCRC) Training - FCRCs shall successfully complete 80 hours of training (40-hours classroom and 40-hours in the field) provided by NRCS beyond ASK Level IV training. To maintain FCRC status, FCRCs will receive update training every year. The amount of training will be based on their experience, and quality and quantity of work completed.

The NRCS SCRS will identify the amount of training needed and approve yearly training for each FCRC. This training may include such activities as:

- a. Participation in an archaeological excavation or field school.
- b. Participation in preservation workshops such as 106 compliance.
- c. Direct field supervision by professional archeologists.
- d. Assisting the NRCS CRS in conducting cultural resource training.
- e. Assistance to field office personnel during cultural resources work.
- f. Participation in professional or avocational meetings such as the annual meeting of the Plains Anthropological Society, the Society for American Archaeology, or the Island in the Plains Conference.
- g. Other activities approved by the SCRS.

**3. *SOUTH DAKOTA FIELD CULTURAL RESOURCES
COORDINATOR (FCRC) TRAINING***

Training Delivery - The State Cultural Resource Specialist (SCRS), in consultation with the State Conservationist, Cultural Resources Coordinator, and the State Historic Preservation Officer, will design and deliver training to relevant Field Cultural Resource Coordinators (FCRC) to obtain or maintain their status as required in the State Level Agreement (11/2001). The Huron State Office will maintain a statewide database to track FCRC status.

Notification of Certification – Upon successful completion of new or updated Field Cultural Resource Coordinators (FCRC) training, the State Office will notify the Assistant State Conservationists for Field Operations, the South Dakota Historic Preservation Officer, and the State Archaeological Research Center.

Access to State Archaeological Research Center (SARC) Archaeological Data Base – Field Cultural Resource Coordinators (FCRC) are authorized to access the SARC database utilizing a password provided by SARC.

Access to State Archaeological Research Center for Archaeological Records Search – FCRCs are authorized to conduct or request (on behalf of the applicable field office) record searches at the State Archaeological Research Center (SARC). The State Office will supply SARC with a list of current FCRCs each fiscal year and upon successful completion of new or update training. Record searches are mandatory for all cultural resource survey reports.