

**South Dakota (SD) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)  
Standard Treatment for Railway Line Segments That Have No Other  
Ancillary Features (i.e., tunnels, bridges, associated buildings, crossings,  
telegraph lines, etc.) Pursuant to State Level Agreement (SLA) Stipulation X  
B.**

**INTRODUCTION:**

The SD State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) has determined that railway line segments in SD 50 years or older may be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under criteria A and/or C, for their broad contribution to the transportation history of the state.

The NRCS occasionally crosses railway line segments during the implementation of conservation practices on private and occasionally, public lands. These types of projects most commonly affect railway line segments that have no other ancillary features. In these cases, due to the nature of the resource (when only eligible under criterion A) and the undertaking (“no adverse effect,”) the NRCS will implement a standard treatment under the SLA Stipulation X B to streamline the Section 106 compliance process while considering the effects of their undertaking on historic properties.

**HISTORIC CONTEXT:**

The Revised 2007 “South Dakota’s Railroads: An Historic Context,” prepared for the South Dakota SHPO, defines railway line segments as “intact segments of railway trackage (and the ancillary features associated with it), as well as, segments of abandoned railroad grade” (2007: 53). This context goes further and states the following:

...most of South Dakota’s former railroad right-of-way has been abandoned. Many such lines have had tracks removed and in some instances ownership has reverted to the adjoining landowners. In the case of the former Burlington line from Edgemont to Lead a recreational trail is being constructed along the right-of-way. Significant stretches of both operating abandoned right-of-way remain, however, and the lineal character of these resources provides a strong visual reminder of the railroads industry’s reason for being. (2007: 54-55)

The context notes that, “In general, railway-related structural features in South Dakota may be significant for their association with the history of the region (Criterion ‘A’) or as representation of the transportation technology or engineering of a period (Criterion ‘C’)” (2007: 57).

The following determinations or treatments will apply when an NRCS project will have a direct impact on where a historic railroad grade was located, whether extant or removed.

**NO HISTORIC PROPERTIES AFFECTED:**

**1. Railroad no longer in use, no berm or evidence of alignment remains.**

→ Feature has loss integrity and is not considered eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

No standard treatment required.

**NO ADVERSE EFFECT SITUATIONS:**

**2. Railroad still retains a berm, ballast, ties or track.**

→ Feature may contain integrity and be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Where railroad berm/ballast still present (no tracks or ties):

The proposed conservation practice will directly affect a portion of an extant berm, bisecting the structure with no more than a 10-foot wide area of potential effects (APE width of machinery) or where a directional bore under the railroad will be used. When a trench is made through the berm/ballast, the berm should be re-contoured when the trench is backfilled.

This type of project will have no adverse effect to the railway line segments when there are extant adjacent physical remnants of the resource within the area that physically represent this surviving representation of the railroad's activities in this area and the state.

Where railroad tracks & ties still present:

Only where a directional bore under the railroad will be used. This type of project will have no adverse effect to the railway line segments when there are extant adjacent physical remnants of the resource within the area that physically represent this surviving representation of the railroad's activities in this area and the state.

For both of the above examples, the NRCS field office personnel will document the portion of the railroad berm to be impacted through digital photography and Global Positioning System mapping. Photographs will depict the proposed affected area and views along the remaining railway berm. These photographs will be sent to the area NRCS cultural resource specialist (CRS) for review. If the CRS does not note any unusual features to the railway segment that would require a level III survey of the area, the CRS will fill out an archeological site form and submit the site form and photographs to the SHPO along with a *brief* letter report with a no adverse effect determination. This letter report will just discuss the project's effect on the railroad segment as the related form SD-SSC-1, Cultural Resource Inventory, will be approved by the NRCS CRS and filed in the area CRS's files.

Approval:

  
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JAY D. VOGT  
SOUTH DAKOTA STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER

02-02-2010  
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DATE

  
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JANET L. OERTLY  
SOUTH DAKOTA NRCS STATE CONSERVATIONIST

02-24-2010  
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DATE