

# **Section 1 – Cultural Resource Information**

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## Section 1 – Cultural Resource Information

### Introduction

Cultural Resources are all the past activities and accomplishments of people. They include buildings, objects, locations, and structures that have scientific, historic, and cultural value. The cultural resources that NRCS deals with most often are known as historic properties.

Historic properties are considered to be prehistoric or historic districts, sites, buildings, structures, features, or objects. NRCS field personnel most often encounter historic property in the form of non-structural archaeological sites, which often extends below the soil surface.

Because of the unique value of the resources, Congress has passed many laws protecting Cultural Resources from unnecessary destruction. One of the most important is the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NI-IPA) and its amendments that establish a national policy for protecting our important cultural resources. The NHPA established the Advisory Council, a body of the Executive Branch, serving as overseer of historic preservation. Section 106 of the NI-IPA requires all Federal agencies to consider and protect cultural resources before conducting an "undertaking". An undertaking for the purposes of the NHPA is defined as: Any NRCS practices that extend below the plow zone or remove the ground surface by excavation or grading.

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### Background

The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, amended in 1980, established a process that all Federal agencies are to follow in considering Cultural Resources. The NHPA created the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, an independent national body set up to review and insure compliance with the Act, and a State Historic Preservation Office (SI-IPO) for each state which serves as the liaison between the Advisory Council and the Federal and State agencies within each state.

The process for considering Cultural Resources is detailed in Federal code 36 CFR 800, while NRCS policy can be found in the General Manual 420 Part 401. These regulations and policies basically stipulate that any time Federal assistance is offered, Cultural Resources must be considered. Federal assistance includes Federal land, Federal money, Federal permits, Federal (technical) assistance, etc. offered to any client.

This section provides an overview on the process of considering Cultural Resources in conservation planning. Each state has designated an individual to serve as the State Cultural Resource Coordinator. The Cultural Resource Coordinator for Georgia is responsible for serving as the contact for Georgia

NRCS personnel who may have questions regarding the process of considering Cultural Resources, staying up to date on Federal regulations governing Cultural Resources, and serving as liaison between NRCS and the SI-IPO.

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### Procedures

The process for considering cultural resources is a five step process. Any time NRCS prepares to conduct an "undertaking", cultural resources must be considered. An undertaking is any earth disturbing activity that has the potential to adversely affect cultural resources. A list of NRCS practices meeting this definition can be found in the GM 420 part 401. The five steps to consider cultural resources are as follows:

1. Determine the nature of assistance. Any time NRCS plans to conduct an undertaking, cultural resources must be considered. Special attention is required for NRCS practices that extend below the plow zone. These practices can have adverse effects on cultural resources by disturbing their placement and/or destroying them resulting in lost information.
2. Identify Cultural Resources. If a practice is an undertaking, it is necessary to find out if any cultural resources exist in the planning area. This is accomplished by conducting a Cultural Resources Review. A Cultural Resources Review is the process of examining current information to identify cultural resources that are, or may be, in an area to be impacted by assistance activity. The following steps make up a Cultural Resources Review
  - a) Review the National Register of Historic Places (filed in this section) for the county in which you are working to identify

possible sites in the planning area.

- b) Review other sources of information to identify possible sites in the planning area. Other sources of information may include, but are not limited to: State Historic Preservation Office, Publications on local county history, Environmental Impact Statements from watershed projects, Local historical/archaeological societies, Old documents, Old photographs, etc

A cultural resource file should be developed and maintained in each field office for this purpose.

- c) A Cultural Resources Survey is required for each undertaking regardless of Cultural Resources Review results. A Cultural Resources Survey is the systematic examination of the ground surface to be affected by a conservation project or practice. A Cultural Resources Survey is carried out by walking systematically across the planning area in a patterned way to ensure that all of the ground surface in the area of work is visually examined. The purpose of this visual examination is to identify if cultural resources are present in the planning area.

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3. **Avoid Cultural Resources.** Cultural Resources found during the Cultural Resource Survey must be reported to the State Cultural Resources Coordinator. This report will be made by filling out a Georgia Archaeological Site Form. If cultural resources are present, the recommended action is to design the practice or project to avoid by working around the cultural resource(s).
4. **Determine the level of significance.** If cultural resources cannot be avoided, or the practice or project be redesigned, it is necessary to determine the level of significance of the cultural resource. Contact the State Cultural Resources Coordinator so steps can be taken to secure the services of a professional Archaeologist to make this determination.
5. **Mitigate.** If the professional finds the cultural resource to be significant **and** the practice will have an adverse affect on the resource, then mitigation measures or protection alternatives must be developed. AU decisions about the treatment of the cultural resource must be made in consultation with your Supervisor and NRCS State Cultural Resource Coordinator. Technical assistance may proceed only after the landowner, NRCS, and the SHPO agree on the mitigation plan developed.

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### Category and Site Examples

Category	Example
Domestic	Homestead, cave, camp, village, tipi ring, farmstead.
Commerce/Trade	Store, trading post, storage pit, site or evidence of trade.
Social	Grange, meeting, or union hall.
Government	Town hall post office, courthouse, public works
Education	Schoolhouse, library, related building.
Religion	Church, temple mound, sweathouse, petroglyphs, astronomical site.
Funerary	Burial site, cemetery, burial mount, funeral home, ossuary
Recreation and Culture	Bandstand, campground, monument, hiking trail marker, rock art
Agriculture and/or Subsistence	Gathering site, stone fences, alignments, corral kill site, fishing site, irrigation system, barn, storage facility, orchard.
Industry, Processing, Extraction	Mill kiln, mine, quarry, dam, reservoir, windmill processing planar shell processing, telegraph station, toolmaking site.
Health Care	Hospital, doctors' office, rest home, resort facility.
Defense	Military post, fortified village, military camp, battlefield.
Landscape	Park, square, green, plaza, public common, fence, wall natural historic landscape, designed landscape.
Transportation	Railroad, train depot, airport, wharf, ship or boat wreck, bridge, highway, trail.
Work in Progress	Function being determined.
Unknown	Evaluated but unknown function
Vacant/Not in use	Storage facility not related to domestic or commercial use

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### References

Information under this heading is to be included and filed in the Numerical List of References. It is to be cross-referenced to a Subject List or other grouping.

Ref.  
No

Title

1. Dickens, Roy S. and James L. McKinely. 1979. *Frontiers in the Soil - The Archaeology of Georgia*. Frontiers Publishing. LaGrange, Georgia
2. Simpkins, Dan. 1991. *Surface Collecting in Georgia: A Guide for the Avocational Archaeologist*. West Georgia College, Department of Sociology and Anthropology. Carrollton, Georgia
3. *Cultural Resources Training Series - Modules I through 6 Study Guide*. United States Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service. National Employee Development Staff. Fort Worth, Texas