

# Cultural Resources Training Series

## Overview

It is the policy of the Natural Resources Conservation Service that cultural resources training will be provided to all employees who carry out some or all of NRCS' cultural resources compliance responsibilities at the field and State Office levels. This policy was also identified as a condition in NRCS' nationwide Programmatic Agreement among the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service ratified in May 2002. The training program, which was developed to fulfill, in part, NRCS' responsibilities under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, is required training for all employees whose work assignments include consideration of cultural resources.

The purpose of this training is to establish and increase participant awareness and knowledge of NRCS' cultural resources stewardship responsibilities. It is designed for field office personnel, partners and others who work with the NRCS State Office Cultural Resources Specialist and Coordinators (CRSs and CRCs) and NRCS planners, including Technical Service Providers (TSPs).

Completion of this training may also be a requirement for certification under the NRCS Conservation Planning Certification training program. By procedures established in the National Planning Procedures Handbook (NPPH), cultural resources inventories are to be done during the planning process. This inventory work must be carried-out by NRCS professional cultural resources personnel (Cultural Resources Specialists) who meet the Secretary of Interior's Qualification Standards for Historic Preservation or by NRCS personnel who have satisfactorily completed all eight modules of this cultural resources training. Because Technical Service Providers (TSPs) who provide planning assistance that includes cultural resources inventory are to have skills equivalent to NRCS' Certified Planners, they are expected to meet these same training requirements. Completion of this cultural resources training should ensure that TSPs understand NRCS' cultural resources responsibilities. (NPPH 600.23-600.24).

The course consists of eight modules and is organized into three parts:

- **Modules 1-6** provide background, policy and contexts for cultural resources compliance and conservation planning activities. These modules are provided on the NRCS NEDC web page.
- **Module 7** is a classroom session developed by each NRCS State Office and provides a State-based review of
  - Modules 1-6, of the range of types of regional, state and local cultural resources and methods for identifying them;
  - State operating and documentation procedures;

- Individuals in NRCS responsible for each of the cultural resources activities;
- The NRCS State Level Agreement (SLA) with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and any consultation agreements or protocols with American Indian Tribes, printed and provided to each participant in the training session, as appropriate for their use;
- The NRCS National Cultural Resources Procedures Handbook available in the NRCS Online Directives System at <http://policy.nrcs.usda.gov/>, and printed and provided to each participant in the training session;
- NRCS' cultural resources policy available in the NRCS Online Directives System version of the General Manual (GM 420, Part 401) at <http://policy.nrcs.usda.gov/>
- Possible resource/reference materials and sources, including but not limited to:
  - Federal Planning and Historic Places by Thomas F. King;
  - Cultural Resources Laws and Practice by Thomas F. King, (both provided to every NRCS State Office);
  - Other reviews of national, tribal, regional, state and local cultural resources laws and regulations;
  - Guides, databases and references to state, tribal, regional and local cultural resources;
  - Telephone contact lists for state, tribal, regional and local cultural resources experts who may be called directly by the field staff (keeping in mind the constraints of state consultation agreements with Tribes and agreements with SHPOs);
  - Pertinent historic preservation materials from the National Park Service's Online Book on the "History of Park and Historic Preservation Laws" found at [www.cr.nps.gov/history/online\\_books/fhpl.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/fhpl.htm)

This session must provide at least one background video on state or regional cultural resources or on a review of North American archaeology such as the video, The Early Americans, provided to each NRCS State Office). Other audiovisual materials and short demonstrations (such as flint-knapping, pottery and basket making, stone tool use, and so on) selected by the NRCS state cultural resource specialist and/or recommended by State or Tribal Preservation Offices may also be used.

Each State Office should provide each participant with an outline of the course and a package of reference and guidance materials in a binder or folder for future use.

• **Module 8** is the hands-on field training session on identification, evaluation, and documentation of cultural resources and project/program impact areas. This session reinforces application of the identification, evaluation, protection and documentation methods and strategies covered in sessions 1-7. More information on the expectations for this portion of the training is provided below under Course Description/Methodology and Duration.

## **Program Objectives**

Upon completion of Modules 1-8 of the Cultural Resources Training Series, NRCS field employees and other participants who have responsibilities for some or all of NRCS cultural resources compliance will be able to:

- Define cultural resources.
- Explain why NRCS considers cultural resources.
- Describe NRCS policy and procedures for identifying and protecting cultural resources.
- Locate and receive assistance from NRCS cultural resources specialists and coordinators and other appropriate sources of cultural resources guidance during project and program planning and technical assistance activities.
- Appropriately incorporate cultural resources information into conservation plans.
- Identify cultural resources by conducting a review and survey.
- Develop, maintain and safeguard cultural resources information files.
- Document actions which can be taken to protect cultural resources during project and program planning and which can be described to producers who want to pursue such actions for lands not involved with NRCS undertakings.
- Describe steps to be taken when cultural resources are encountered during program/project implementation or construction.

## **Course Delivery Methods and Description:**

• **Modules 1 through 6** are designed for delivery on the WEB and provide the participant with basic information on NRCS' policy, procedures, responsibilities, key players and strategies for identification, evaluation and protection of cultural resources during the course of project, program and conservation planning implementation. They also provide information on some technical tools that producers may be use on their lands not involved in NRCS projects or programs.

• **Modules 7 and 8** are designed and presented by the NRCS State Office.

- **Module 7** is classroom based and is designed to give the students a sound background in recognizing the full range of regional/state cultural

resources, understanding NRCS State operating procedures and documentation requirements (i.e. State Level Agreements with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), consultation agreements with Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (THPO) or Federally recognized American Indian Tribes). Presentations may include audiovisual materials (slides, video tapes, CDs), as appropriate. Local and regional experts, including THPOs, SHPO staff, State Archaeologist' staff, representatives from local or county historical societies, and NRCS cultural resources specialists from neighboring states, generally participate in these sessions. NRCS State Offices that currently do not have cultural resources specialists on their staff are encouraged to seek the participation of NRCS cultural resources specialists from neighboring states, when feasible.

- **Module 8** is a hands-on field workshop focused on resource identification and problem solving field exercises. Presentations are not only given by NRCS cultural resources specialists, but are also given by local experts, including THPOs, SHPO staff, State Archaeologist's staff, and representatives from the local or county historical societies. It is expected that the majority of the training will be given in the field to provide the students maximum familiarity with the cultural resources in field contexts in their State.

## Duration

- **Modules 1-6.** Approximately 4 hours of self-study are required for the completion of Modules 1 through 6. Successful completion of these modules will be documented by receiving no less than 80% on the final test. These modules may take longer than 4 hours if the participant investigates all the links and graphics.
- **Module 7.** Approximately 8 hours of classroom training. This module should be completed no more than 3 months after completion of Modules 1-6 has been documented and certified as completed successfully by the State Cultural Resources Specialist and the State Training Officer. One exception to this is if Modules 7 and 8 are given as a package by the NRCS State Office; then certification of both Modules 7 and 8 may occur on the same day. The 8 month time limit for Module 8 will apply under these circumstances (see below). However, the Cultural Resources Specialist leader and State Training Officer must both certify that both modules were completed successfully.
- **Module 8.** Approximately 8 to 16 hours, as determined appropriate by the State cultural resources specialist and coordinator and State training officer. This hands-on cultural resources field workshop module should be completed no later than 8 months after completion of Modules 1-7 has been documented and certified. One exception to this is if Modules 7 and 8 are given as a package by the NRCS State Office, then certification of both Modules 7 and 8 may occur on

the same day. However, the Cultural Resources Specialist leader and State Training Officer must both certify that both modules were completed successfully.

## **Distribution of Materials**

The National Employee Development Center in Fort Worth (NEDC) has made modules 1-6 available on the web. Training packets that, at a minimum, contain the course outline, the SLA, Tribal consultation protocols (as appropriate for NRCS employees only), and the National Cultural Resources Procedures Handbook (printed from NRCS' Online Directives), NRCS State cultural resources contact information, and NRCS State procedures, documentation and other procedures, shall be provided by the State cultural resources coordinator. Videos and other support materials are available through each State office.

## **Prerequisites**

1. Successful completion of Cultural Resources Training Modules 1 through 6 is a prerequisite for Module 7. Successful completion (as certified by the NRCS State cultural resources specialist and Training Officer) of Module 7 is a prerequisite for Module 8.
2. The participant must be able to demonstrate sound knowledge of NRCS's conservation planning policy, the NPPH and the Field Office Technical Guide (or electronic Field Office Technical Guide). Such demonstration may be provided in the form of certified completion of NRCS' Conservation Planning Course, modules 1-5, or certification of an NRCS supervisor.

## **Responsibilities of State Office Cultural Resources Training Leaders, Supervisor and the State Training Officer**

**Leaders/Cultural Resources Specialists and Coordinators, working with the State Training Officer will:**

1. Schedule employees for training (refer to State Cultural Resources Training Plan).
2. Encourage the participants to complete the web-based modules 1-6 in sequence within the shortest time frame possible. Module 7 should be completed no later than 3 months from the start of Module 1. One exception to this is if Modules 7 and 8 are given as a package by the NRCS State Office. Then certification of both Modules 7 and 8 may occur on the same day and may occur up to 8 months after completion of Modules 1-6 by each participant.. However, the Cultural Resources Specialist leader and State Training Officer must both certify that both modules were completed successfully.
3. Ensure that all required materials and equipment are available for Module 7:

- a. One per location
  - Audio visual equipment
  - Module 7 video tapes, slides, demonstrations and exhibits
  - Participants' training packets (see below)
  
- b. One per student
  - Printed copy of the NRCS Cultural Resources Procedures Handbook HB 190-601 (available on line)
  - Printed copy of NRCS' cultural resources policy in the General Manual GM 420, Part 401
  - Any State Level Agreement with the SHPO, any Tribal consultation agreements or protocols. In the absence of these, the nationwide Programmatic Agreement for Cultural Resources Compliance
  - Pencils/pens and paper
  
- c. One per training leader at the training session:
  - Printed copy of the NRCS Cultural Resources Procedures Handbook HB 190-601 (available on line)
  - Printed copy of NRCS' cultural resources policy in the General Manual GM 420, Part 401
  - Any State Level Agreement with the SHPO, any Tribal consultation agreements or protocols.
  - The nationwide Programmatic Agreement for Cultural Resources Compliance
  - Maps and resource guides/databases for the entire state or for the region of the state participating in the training.
  - Copy of the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Historic Preservation, including the professional qualification standards.
  
- d. Other materials that the leader/CRS must prepare and have available for each training session:
  - National, Tribal, Regional, State and local cultural resource readings
  - Regional and State cultural resource videos
  - Artifact indicator type kits
  - Case studies

This material, or sources for acquiring and assembling it, should be prepared in collaboration with SHPO staff, THPO and Tribal Historic Preservation Staff, State Archaeologist's Office staff, local colleges and universities. Material provided by local, State and Tribal sources must be reviewed and updated regularly to ensure it is current and incorporates the most current information.

4. The CRS will track successful completion of the modules by:
  - Modules 1-6**
  - Checking that the participant meets the learning objectives.

- Throughout each of the first six modules, the participant will answer review questions. If the correct answer is not received, the participant will be expected to return to the previous section of the training to find the correct answer.
- At the conclusion of all of the six modules, a comprehensive test will be given. A score of 80% or higher is required to be able to move on to the next two modules.

### **Module 7**

Working with each participant in

- Reviewing the first six modules briefly.
- Monitoring the progress of the trainee throughout the training and answering questions and discussing points as necessary.
- The State is encouraged to give this training in group sessions. This method provides a good experience for trainees by giving opportunities for open and informal discussion of the first six modules.
- The State is encouraged to include case studies or other group activities. A ratio of no more than twenty trainees to one leader is desirable
- Resource people such as local college historians and archeologists recognized cultural resources contractors, representatives from the State Historic Preservation Office, a Tribal Historic Preservation Officer's office or Tribal historic preservation office, and the State Archeologist's office will definitely enrich the training. If several group sessions are used across the state, the same types of exercises and resource people are used in each session to ensure consistency.
- Ensure that each participant meets the learning objectives before advancing to Module 8.

### **Module 8**

- Checking with each participant to ensure that they have retained their reference materials and fully understand their roles/ responsibilities in the cultural resources compliance and planning procedures. The leader/CRS will also work with the participant to ensure that they understand and fully recognize the full range of cultural resources for which NRCS is responsible—not just archaeological artifacts, but also sites, buildings, landscapes, objects and traditional cultural properties—and that they understand that they may call upon the CRS for their state to determine if such resources must be considered during planning and project and program implementation.
- Working with the State training officer and state cultural resources coordinator to schedule Module 8 – Cultural Resources Field Workshop. This session must take place no more than 8 months after web-based training for Modules 1-6 commenced. Generally, this will

allow for a sufficient numbers of trainees to be ready (numbers and frequency is indicated by the State's Cultural Resources Training Plan).

## **Guidance for Presentation of Modules 7 and 8**

For Modules 7 and 8, the leader/CRS/Training Officer will notify trainees at least 4 weeks in advance of the session. Trainees need to know:

- When the session will be held. (Give starting and closing dates and times.)
- Where the session will be held. (Include a map, if necessary.)
- Whether they will be staying overnight; if so, are arrangements made for them?
- What to bring/wear.
- Course objectives that the trainees are expected to be able to do after completing the training.
- Finally, the State shall certify completion of Modules 7 and 8 by whatever method is required in the State and ensure that it is recorded in the participants' training records.

For Modules 7 & 8, contact your State Office Cultural Resources Specialist or Coordinator, Training Officer, or other servicing administrative.