



United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

Special Environmental Resource Concerns

Clean Air Act
Criteria Pollutants

Clean Air Act
Regional Visibility Degradation

Clean Water Act

Coastal Zone Management Areas

Coral Reefs

Cultural Resources

Endangered and Threatened Species

Environmental Justice

Essential Fish Habitat

Floodplain Management

Invasive Species

Migratory Birds

Prime and Unique Farmlands

Riparian Areas

Wetlands

Wild and Scenic Rivers

Cultural Resources

Cultural Resources

In 1966, Congress passed the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and directed all Federal agencies to establish a historic preservation program. NRCS has established policy, procedural references and guidance to comply with NHPA and several related authorities, including the American Indian Religious Freedom Act (42 U.S.C. Section 1996); Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (25 U.S.C. Sections 3001-3013); Executive Order (EO) 13175, Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments (2000); EO 13007, Indian Sacred Sites (1996); and a range of Executive Orders, Presidential memoranda, and secretarial memoranda.

What is it?

The term “cultural resources” as used by NRCS is considered equivalent to “historic properties” as defined by the NHPA (16 U.S.C. Section 470 et seq.) and regulations for compliance with section 106 of the NHPA (36 CFR Part 800). They include any prehistoric or historic district, site, building, structure, or object listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) maintained by the Secretary of the Interior. They also include all records, artifacts, and physical remains associated with the NRHP-eligible historic properties. The term also includes properties of traditional cultural and religious importance to an Indian Tribe or Native Hawaiian organization that meet national register criteria. They may consist of the traces of the past activities and accomplishments of people.

Why is it important?

NRCS is required to consider the effects of our actions and undertakings on NRHP eligible cultural resources and historic properties in consultation with specific parties. Consultation with State historic preservation officers (SHPO), Tribal historic preservation officers (THPO) and Federally recognized Tribes, including Native Hawaiians, as appropriate, as well as other interested parties, is required when an agency action may alter the characteristics that qualify a historic property for inclusion in the NRHP. NRCS is also required to mitigate potential adverse impacts, for example through avoidance or minimization, as appropriate.

What can be done about it?

When protected cultural resources, such as contemporary cultural properties, traditional cultural values, landscapes, or features having religious importance, may be impacted, NRCS must consult with concerned parties to ensure that historic preservation issues and the views of the public are fully considered during project planning. The outcomes of consultation are documented according to the statutes and authorities under which the cultural resources are considered.

Cultural Resources at a Glance

Problems / Indicators - Potential impacts to cultural resources and/or historic properties (“Undertakings”)	
Causes	Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ground disturbing practices • Watershed/Area-Wide/Complex projects • Proposed land-use changes/conversions • Construction discoveries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete cultural resources investigation for site • Initiate early consultation with appropriate State/Tribal entity, as needed • Incorporate mitigation measures, as needed, in project design and specifications

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