

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Cultural resources on the state forests and forest recreation areas serve as a window to the past, and as a means to help us understand man's relationship with the environment. They are an important part of our resource base.

Cultural resources can be divided into two distinct groups, historical and prehistoric. Historic resources are often more obvious than prehistoric resources.

Historic cultural resources are generally those from the time of initial European settlement of Indiana to the present. Any human made item more than 50 years old is considered an historic resource and requires clearance from the Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology before being disturbed, regardless of its presumed significance. They include a variety of items that can tell us much about what occurred on land that is now state forest or forest recreation area. These include old homesteads, farm sites, school sites, cemeteries, and old survey monuments. In most cases, the buildings are no longer there. The former's presence can be discerned by foundations, foundation stones, wells, yard trees, perennial flowers, fencing and trash piles. These often tell much about the past attempts to clear and farm the land. The network of wire fencing attests to the vast amount of livestock grazing.

Other cultural resources came about after the creation of the state forests. The most common and important of these are the many buildings and structures built by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). While most of the original camp structures were razed when the program was discontinued, many structures from that era are still in use today as service and administrative buildings on the state forests and forest recreation areas.

Prehistoric cultural resources are those resources resulting from inhabitants prior to European settlement. These resources are not as readily apparent as historic resources. They are often below the visible surface of the soil. They usually consist of camp sites, village sites, work sites, and burial sites. These are discerned by the presence of bones, tools, weapons, debris, charred wood, and other artifacts.

Clearance

Prehistoric and many dilapidated historic resources are not readily visible. Prehistoric resources are often located only through systematic probing.

To protect cultural resources, archeological clearance must be obtained for many soil disturbing activities. As a rule of thumb, all soil disturbing construction activities involving ground excavation over twelve inches deep or twelve inches wide will require clearance from the Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology (DHPA). A form is available that is to be completed to request clearance. This is submitted to the Division Archaeologist for review. All timber harvests will be sent to the Division Archaeologist for review. Minor soil disturbing

activities do not require clearance. Examples of these are post or gate installation, or digging to repair a broken waterline (site was already disturbed during waterline installation).

Clearance is required before any state forest or forest recreation land is disposed of through sale or exchange. Because the disposal process is done through Central Office, Central Office will be responsible for requesting clearance.

Most historic resource sites are discernible with careful examination. When disturbance of these sites is likely, clearance must be obtained. Common situations where disturbance is likely are when hazardous conditions such as open wells or dilapidated structures are to be filled or razed. The request for clearance is submitted to the Division Archaeologist.

Many historic structures are located in service and recreation areas. These include buildings, stairways, picnic tables and cookers. These often require regular maintenance and occasional major rehabilitation. Any work on these structures that is beyond cosmetic maintenance and involves structural changes must receive clearance from DHPA. Requests for clearance will be submitted to the Division Archaeologist.

If there are questions whether clearance is required, contact the Division Archaeologist, Property Program Director or the Property Specialist.

Inventory

A long-term goal is to have full cultural inventories on all state forests and forest recreation areas. Meanwhile, properties will complete a cultural resource inventory form for every known historic and prehistoric resource identified. As cultural resources are newly identified during property management activities, these will be added to the database.

Protection

Cultural resources are subject to damage or destruction through a variety of activities. Properties will take actions to help ensure the stability of cultural resources. A field reconnaissance will be performed in the activity area to try to locate previously unidentified resources, when necessary. All known cultural resources in activity areas will be visibly marked. Unless a management activity directly involves the resource, all activity operations, especially with equipment, will avoid the immediate area of the cultural resource.

Cemeteries and burial sites are generally a unique problem in terms of responsibility and even ownership. Ownership of cemeteries may be unclear at times. Generally if there is not a clear exception in the State's deed, or there is no separate title chain for the cemetery parcel, the State should be considered the owner if it owns the surrounding land.

Maintenance responsibility for cemeteries is very unclear and varied. Some cemeteries are very well maintained, while others receive no maintenance. The parties maintaining cemeteries include the state properties, cemetery associations, families, township trustees, or volunteers. Much of the variability in maintenance depends on accessibility, past history, and currentness of use.

Cemeteries on state forest and forest recreation area lands will be documented as cultural resources. All cemeteries on the properties should be evaluated periodically. Cemeteries with reasonable access should receive some periodic, basic maintenance to prevent loss of features. Generally this maintenance involves control of trees and shrubs that could damage the features. Properties wishing to undertake work that involves repairing or resetting stones and markers will coordinate with the Division Archaeologist and obtain appropriate clearance. It may be desirable to regularly mow some cemeteries because of their visibility and visitation. This should be evaluated by the properties based on available access and available property resources. Whenever possible, the properties will coordinate with township trustees, cemetery associations, families, or volunteers to provide cemetery maintenance assistance. Cemeteries with no access obviously cannot be considered for maintenance. Questions about cemetery maintenance or condition should be directed to the Division Archaeologist, Property Program Director or Property Specialist.

Section Bullet Summary

- Archaeological clearance is needed for all except the most minor ground disturbing activities. Any major work on historic structures also requires clearance.
- Properties will develop and maintain an inventory of cultural resources.
- When possible, management activities will avoid cultural resource areas.
- Properties may provide some basic maintenance to cemeteries on the properties.