



## Regional Analysis of Historic Farmstead Archeological Site Characteristics on DoD Installations

Project # 12-508

### Background:

Military acquisition of vast amounts of land for new installations naturally included inhabited lands. Most of this habitation was in the form of individual farmsteads. As a result, installations across the country contain numerous historical archeological sites that are the remains of these farmsteads. The occupants of all these sites once belonged to communities connected by kinship and social institutions, and they were displaced by the founding of multiple military installations. The impact of these farmsteads on the landscape remains visible on installation rangelands and buffer zones, although the occupants are long gone. Installation land managers must now determine how best to manage their former homesteads consistent with federal legal requirements, particularly the evaluation of sites more than 50 years old for eligibility to the NRHP. The lack of guidance for evaluation methods and the sheer numbers of these farmstead sites makes the evaluation process laborious and very expensive.



Machine-cut nail embedded in fence post (ERDC-CERL 2013).

### Objective:

A methodology for a standardized approach to NRHP eligibility of historic farmstead archaeological sites on military installations was developed by ERDC-CERL in 2005 for Fort Leonard Wood. The current Legacy project provides the next step through the application of the methodology on a regional scale in a different part of the United States. This project investigated the potential of collecting these farmsteads in a large, regional, cultural landscape group by determining spatial and physical similarities and differences between the farmstead sites.

### Summary of Approach:

The 2005 methodology was applied to a three-state region in the Southeast. A historic context was developed to determine a “typical” farmstead. A weighted Eligibility Prescreening Form was modified to reflect archeological patterns of the Southeast and then applied to test sites at Fort Bragg to determine which sites were likely typical, and therefore not likely to provide additional information. The results were then compared to previously completed Phase II evaluations of the Fort Bragg sites to measure the methodology’s effectiveness.

### Benefit:

A method for grouping similar historic farmstead archeological sites in regional associations and creating a standardized approach for making determinations of eligibility can greatly reduce the cost of evaluating them individually. This effort provides the DoD with a valid and supportable methodology for rapidly identifying the many sites not requiring a full-scale investigation, thus saving time and money in cultural resources stewardship. This approach also provides a comprehensive landscape perspective for evaluating new discoveries and making timely mitigation decisions for undertakings involving an installation’s historic archaeological resources.

### Accomplishments:

Sufficient regional similarities were encountered to suggest that the demonstrated method is viable and can be extended to other regions. Farmstead activities, regardless of time or place, are closely tied to agricultural function and as a result, will have similarities with other farmstead sites. The kinds of secondary structures on the site and basic site patterning were also remarkably consistent. A relatively long settlement time horizon in the Southeast region resulted in marked temporal variation in farmstead components. Ideally, farmsteads should be evaluated against other sites of similar occupation period, and artifacts should be considered as a major identifier for specificity of time period.

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