

Perspectives in Identification and Evaluation of Cultural Resources

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Disclaimer number 1

- “Cultural Resources” encompasses many kinds of places exhibiting a range of values, including historical associations and significance
- This paper focuses on the historical values of only two types of cultural resources: terrestrial archaeological sites and the built environment – buildings, structures, and districts

Disclaimer number 2

- “Cultural resource management” includes many things in addition to compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)
- Because the workshop is organized around the core concepts of Section 106 compliance, this paper will focus on Section 106 issues

Identifying Historic Places

Definitions

- Historic places = old stuff

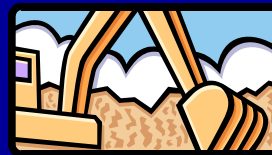


- Historic properties = old stuff that has been evaluated and found to be listed on or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places



Identification challenges

- Archaeology
 - locating buried sites

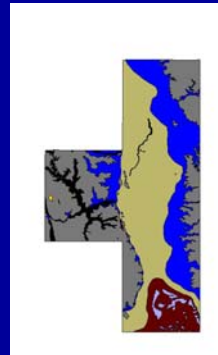


- Built environment – identifying recent properties with “exceptional significance”



Identification solutions: archaeology

- Develop, test, and update geomorphology-based sensitivity maps for buried sites
- Incorporate deep-testing protocols into identification efforts where geomorphic sensitivity AND the nature of the undertaking warrant



Broader applications

- Planning -
Where should we put things
in general?
- Evaluating NEPA impacts and alternatives –
What effect is it likely to have if we put this *here*?



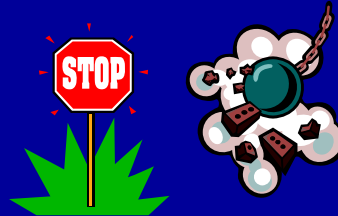
Identification solutions: buildings and structures

- Identify major recent events, patterns of events, and significant individuals associated with the installation's mission
- Assess the potential for important associations between installation facilities and those events or individuals on a general level



Broader applications

- Long-range facility management planning with no eleventh-hour surprises
- Immediately available data to identify significant NEPA impacts
- Awareness of history as an ongoing process



Evaluating Historic Properties

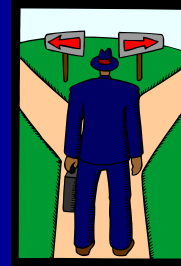
Evaluation challenges: the built environment

- How do we assess the significance of recent-past properties – especially those that are very common?
- How do we assess the significance of buildings or structures that have a long history but have been continually modified and upgraded?



Evaluation solutions: the built environment

- Problem 1 - large numbers of similar, modest, potentially redundant properties
 - ❖ Now would be a good time for shared information on inventory and a historic context with concrete recommendations



Evaluation solutions: the built environment

- Problem 2 – “This is George Washington’s axe. It has had 3 new handles and 2 new bits, but it’s still George Washington’s axe.”
- Technological facilities have to be upgraded to continue performing their historical function
 - ❖ Now would be a good time to be creative with periods of significance, qualities of integrity, and character-defining features



Broader applications

Cultural resource managers can prepare for the future flood of “recent-past” properties by

- adopting programmatic, context-defined approaches to evaluation of such properties
- building an ongoing history of the installation’s association with significant events and individuals to serve as baseline data for these evaluations



Evaluation challenges: the archaeological record

- To be eligible to the National Register, a site must contain “important” information as defined by *current* research interests and *current* technological capabilities
- As CRM is practiced now, sites that don’t fit current interests don’t stay in the library waiting until they are needed. Rather, they are lost. For good.



Evaluation solutions: the archaeological record

- Be realistic about how decisions about eligibility are actually made – they are based on site morphology and not historic contexts. Figure out how to do this same thing at a programmatic level.
- Focus on the broader concept of “significance” and take into consideration the importance of all information about the past, not just the information that we know how to access and use today.

Broader applications

A focus on significance enables us to address

- traditional values ascribed to archaeological sites
- the NEPA issue of “loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources”
- Section 110 obligations – preserve a representative sample of all archaeological information within the installation for future research needs

