

Cultural Resources Fact Sheet

From: The U.S. Department of Agriculture
The Natural Resources Conservation Service

What are Cultural Resources?

Cultural Resources are evidence of past human activity. These may include pioneer homes, buildings or old roads; structures with unique architecture; prehistoric village sites; historic or prehistoric artifacts or objects; rock inscription; human burial sites; earthworks, such as battlefield entrenchments, prehistoric canals, or mounds. These nonrenewable resources often yield unique information about past societies and environments, and provide answers for modern day social and conservation problems. Although many have been discovered and protected, there are numerous forgotten, undiscovered, or unprotected cultural resources in rural America.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service's (NRCS) Role in Protecting Cultural Resources

NRCS considers cultural resources in its conservation planning for the same reason it protects the natural resources — the soil, water, air, plants and animals — on your property. Keeping natural resources in balance helps provide the basis for a healthy and profitable farm environment; keeping cultural resources provides the basis for understanding our human past. The stewardship of these nonrenewable resources is an important link in the conservation ethic that underlies the NRCS mission.

Several Federal, state, and local laws have been enacted to preserve cultural resources. The most important of these is the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. Under this and other legislation, Federal agencies, including the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service, are required to protect cultural resources.

Some Benefits of Cultural Resources

Cultural resources provide many useful benefits to people today. They —

- Expand our knowledge and understanding of history.
- Provide scientific data. Archeological sites for example, can provide information not available from historic records on droughts, floods, and erosion over thousand of years.
- Provide jobs during the renovation process. Preserving cultural resources may also stimulate other community improvements.
- Attract tourists, who bring money into the community.
- Provide information that will help solve conservation and natural resource problems. Some modern irrigation techniques, for example, are actually based on prehistoric methods.

Your Role

Every American has a stake in the protection of cultural resources. All of the protected and restored cultural resources that we enjoy today have one thing in common: some individual, group, or organization went to work to protect and preserve for future generations to come.

If you know of an undeveloped cultural resource, do your part to preserve our country's heritage. Contact a local historical society, museum, archeological society, university archeology (sociology, anthropology) department, or your local Natural Resources Conservation Service office.

For More Information (If you go on the site listed below – these are links)

- [Archaeologists of the Americas](#)
Home page of the Society for American Archaeology.
- [The Get Involved program](#)
Site lets you explore tours, see events, access internships, volunteer programs and opportunities. These programs are all a part of the National Park Service and Links into the Past.
- [National Archives and Records Administration](#)
The NARA Archival Information Locator that will conduct historical research in digitized documents and photos on the internet.
- [The National Association of State Archaeologists](#)
State archaeologists can answer questions regarding laws, procedures, current research, educational programs, and other aspects of archaeology for each state and possession.

“Cultural Resources Fact Sheet.” [The U.S. Department of Agriculture](#). N.D.

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<<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/ECS/culture/mission.html>>.