

HISTORIC PRESERVATION SERIES



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Cultural Resources Investigations: Phase Organization

The Alaska Office of History and Archaeology (OHA) and the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) have prepared these guidelines for cultural resource survey investigations to facilitate review responsibilities for surveys done in conjunction with the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and the Alaska Historic Preservation Act (AHPA).

Following these guidelines will help standardize cultural resource investigation terminology and define the logical steps for conducting fieldwork. The use of standard terminology is expected to alleviate some of the organizational variability of investigative reports. The OHA recognizes three phases of cultural resource investigation to identify, evaluate, and treat historic properties.

The OHA recognizes that due to the logistical challenges involved when conducting fieldwork in Alaska, Phases I and II are often combined. It is critical to consider the full requirements of both Phase I and Phase II cultural resource investigations when combining the two into a single Phase I/II fieldwork expedition. Defining a project Phase using fractions and decimals is not appropriate: a Phase I/II survey would be appropriate, but a Phase 1.5 would not.

Phase I: Identification

The goal of a Phase I Identification project is to locate cultural resources within the project's area(s) of potential effect (APE). As part of developing a research design before entering the field, background research should be conducted to inform fieldwork methodology considering project objectives (See *HPS 12, Research Design*). Types of background research include literature reviews, archival research, evaluation of available aerial/topographic data, and review of the environmental and cultural history of the project area (See *HPS 17, Literature Review*). Phase I Identification efforts must constitute a "reasonable and good faith effort" to identify cultural resources, which requires a general understanding of local paleoenvironmental change through time and broader regional settlement and land-use patterns, paired with comprehensive research and field methods.

Research design implementation involves conducting fieldwork appropriate to project objectives, and commonly takes the form of reconnaissance, architecture/history surveys, archaeological surveys, and/or remote sensing (See *HPS 18, Field Survey Methods*). Report writing following fieldwork includes

artifact and data analysis, and should include a discussion of why areas were targeted for investigation, the reasoning for why subsurface tests were terminated, and why areas were not selected for subsurface testing (See *HPS 3 Cultural Investigation Reports*). Complete reports and AHRS Site Forms for any identified cultural resources within the area of potential effect are required and should reflect in detail the level of effort and results of the Phase I Identification efforts.

Phase II: Evaluation

Where Phase I investigations consider the entire area of potential effect, Phase II Evaluation efforts are generally resource-specific and involve additional investigative work on sites identified within the APE, including those identified during Phase I fieldwork. Generally, the purpose of Phase II Evaluation fieldwork is to collect additional information in order to refine site characteristics. Typical fieldwork tasks for architecture include more literature review research to collect more information on occupants or the importance of the building/structure in the community. For archaeological sites, it includes more subsurface testing to delineate site boundaries, more detailed mapping, a more thorough analysis of collected data (lithics, fauna, stratigraphic information, and dates, etc.) framed within larger patterns of Alaskan archaeology, and may include remote sensing (See *HPS 18 Field Survey Methods*). The overall goal is to collect enough supplemental information, in conjunction with what is already known about the resource, to confidently make a Determination of Eligibility (DOE) for the National Register of Historic Places (See *HPS 7, Determinations of Eligibility*).

Phase III: Treatment

Specific Phase III: Treatment actions are developed through consultation and agreement between interested parties, including the SHPO, and built upon the recommendations of the Phase I Identification and Phase II Evaluation of a cultural resource. The goal of Phase III Treatment is to avoid, minimize, or mitigate an undertaking's adverse effects on a historic property listed in or determined eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. Agencies should evaluate a project's effects on historic properties early in project planning when the widest range of project alternatives is open. Recovery can be accomplished through detailed archaeological excavation, recordation, background research, analyses, and reporting, performed in accordance with a well-defined and justified recovery plan. Specific Phase III Treatment actions are developed through consultation and agreement between interested parties. These actions are relative to the types of resources affected and how the project will affect these resources. Results and products produced are also part of the consultation process.

Note: OHA recognizes that no level of survey is likely to identify *all* cultural resources within a project area. Archaeological monitoring can occur in any phase, depending on the needs of the project. Monitoring requires the development and approval of a monitoring plan tailored to the project, see *HPS 15, Monitoring Guidelines*.