

HISTORIC PRESERVATION SERIES



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Cultural Resource Investigation Reports: Outline

The Alaska Office of History and Archaeology (OHA) and the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) have prepared these reporting standards and guidelines for cultural resource survey reports to facilitate review responsibilities for investigations done in conjunction with the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and the Alaska Historic Preservation Act (AHPA). These guidelines also apply to investigations done for other purposes, such as academic research.

Written reports are required for the various levels and types of investigations. These documents need to contain specific kinds of information to be in line with best practices. Complete and thorough reports will allow OHA staff, the agency sponsoring an undertaking, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation to make informed decisions regarding the identification and treatment of significant sites. For compliance projects, it is necessary to submit complete reports for review, not management summaries.

See the suggested report outline on page 4 of this document. Reports need to be concise, clearly written, scientific, and technical. The report must identify the name and credentials of the principal investigator and the individual leading the fieldwork. The principal investigator must meet the professional qualification standards of [11 AAC 16.040](#) for work on state lands, and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines, [48 FR 44738-44739](#) for projects undertaken in response to the National Historic Preservation Act. In addition, the standards established in [43 CFR 7.8](#) apply to federally managed lands.

Cultural Resource Investigation Reports: Checklist

The goal of the OHA Report Checklist (pages 6-7) is to remind authors of the types of information that should generally be in every technical report. The OHA does not expect the report checklist to be submitted with every report. Rather, the checklist is a tool for authors to check their reports for completeness. Reports with significant deficiencies will not be accepted without necessary revisions.

The OHA recognizes that not every item in the checklist is applicable to every project; it was not designed to impose a format for all reports, nor to exclude information that may be unique to a specific project. In some cases, stating in the report why a checklist item is not present will help answer anticipated questions from readers and reviewers.

Cultural Resource Investigation Reports: How to Submit

Print:	Office of History and Archaeology C/O (Intended Recipient) 550 West 7 th Avenue, Suite 1310 Anchorage, AK 99501	
Email:	Section 106 Review and Compliance Section:	oha.revcomp@alaska.gov
	Alaska Heritage Resource Survey:	oha.ibs@alaska.gov
	State Cultural Resource Investigation Permits:	oha.permits@alaska.gov

Documents submitted to SHPO should be submitted as digital PDFs to oha.revcomp@alaska.gov and should be printed and mailed to OHA. Draft reports for comments should be submitted as Word documents. Appendices should be submitted as separate documents.

Final reports submitted in fulfillment of State Cultural Resource Investigation Permits (SCRIPs) must be submitted to oha.permits@alaska.gov as a digital PDF and must also be printed and mailed to OHA.

Monitoring and other Section 106 reports may need to be submitted to both oha.revcomp@alaska.gov and oha.permits@alaska.gov.

Cultural Resource Investigation Reports: Submission Format

For many projects, photographs, and maps may represent the only documentation for a particular cultural resource. These images must therefore be clear enough to communicate relevant information referenced in the final report and be free of copyright restrictions. For large reports with many photos and maps, these may be separated into volumes or appendices, retaining only the most important items (such as project overview/location maps) within the main body of the report.

File size should be kept manageable, which relies on map and photo efficiency. Maps and photos should effectively and efficiently communicate important information directly relevant to the report. Maps and photos can greatly increase file size, but file compression for the final report must not significantly compromise their clarity. For small projects with a limited number of maps, saving maps as PNG files at 300 dpi should provide sufficient quality, as long as those images are not later compressed. For larger projects where the Final report will be compressed or optimized as a reduced-size PDF, OHA recommends saving maps as PDFs rather than as image files (JPG, PNG) to avoid map clarity from being too compromised by file compression. In general, individual maps should be at most a few megabytes in size.

For maps created in ArcGIS Pro and similar programs, the following options are strongly recommended for exporting maps of a minimal file size that retain clarity and integrity, even after later compression:

- File Type: PDF
- Output as image: NO
- Image Compression: Adaptive
- Quality: 75
- Compress Vector Graphics: YES
- Vector Resolution 300 DPI
- Raster Resample: Best
- Embed Fonts: YES
- Export Georeference information: NO
- Layers and attributes: NONE
- Simulate overprint: NO

For projects that will require a substantial number of maps to adequately cover a lengthy but narrow linear feature, like a pipeline or road project, consider ways to include multiple close-up maps on a single page. Alternatively, these may be ideally suited to separation into a separate file as a map volume or appendix.

Files over 20MB in size should be submitted via [Alaska ZendTo](#). If you encounter problems using ZendTo, contact OHA. If the final report is a reduced-size PDF, ensure that an unreduced copy of the report itself (including significant maps and images) is also submitted.

Suggested Outline

1. Title page

- Report title; project's official name, nature of the investigation, specific geographic location within a defined subregion of Alaska; author(s) and mailing address; name and mailing address of lead agency/sponsor; and date of the report.
 - * Lead federal agency

2. Abstract (not to exceed one page) or Management Summary (not to exceed two pages)

- A summary of the purpose of the work, the nature of the project, and a concise statement of findings, recommendations, and conclusions.

3. Table of contents, list of tables, and list of figures (prefer all figures and plates in the same list).

4. Introduction

- A brief statement on the purpose of the work; identification of the lead government agency (or project sponsor); specific laws and authorities; project location maps; dates of research and fieldwork; area examined or surveyed (including acreage); number and titles of personnel; description of the organization of the report.
 - * Description of the proposed undertaking; map(s) showing the area of potential effects (APE).

5. Research design

- A clear, detailed statement of objectives, goals, research questions, and priorities. If a formal scope of work or proposal was prepared, it can be referenced or appended to avoid lengthy repetition.

6. Results of archival and background research

- The report background section should be concise. Discuss aspects of literature review relevant to project findings, for the consideration of archaeological and historic property potential, integrity, and significance.

7. Results of field and laboratory investigations

- Description and analysis of materials found. Present interpretations that refer to historic contexts, research questions, and site integrity. Ensure that newly identified cultural resources receive AHRS numbers and ensure that the discussion of all previously reported cultural resources includes their AHRS numbers.
 - *As necessary incorporate National Register eligibility. Opinions concerning the National Register eligibility of all identified properties should be clearly stated.

8. Summary and recommendations

- Summary of results and evaluation of methods and techniques employed; need for additional investigations or site treatment.
 - * Assessment of the effect of the undertaking on identified historic properties.

9. Illustrations, figures, maps, tables

- Preferably integrated into the text rather than at the end.
- Include all relevant figures and illustrations:
 - a) photographs of all newly identified and previously reported cultural resources encountered during an investigation;
 - b) photographs and/or drawings of stratigraphy;
 - c) site maps for all documented sites that include locations of sub-surface tests and notable features/structures/buildings;
 - d) map(s) that clearly delineate survey locations, newly identified and previously reported cultural resources, and test locations.
- Maps, drawings, photographs, etc., called figures and numbered in a single running series should have:
 - e) Informative title (including location and orientation of camera)
 - f) Scale, or indication that it lacks a scale
 - g) North arrow
 - h) Key / Legend
 - i) Clarity
 - j) Utility (useful information)

10. References

- List all references using the latest American Antiquity format for archaeology reports and the Chicago Manual of Style for historical reports.

12. Appendices

- Examples include relevant project correspondence; scope of work or proposal; relevant permit(s); copies of ancillary studies [e.g., faunal or soil analyses, geomorphology]; artifact inventory; conservation report; completed AHRs site forms; and qualifications of principal investigator(s).
- For large projects requiring many large maps, these may be better suited to their own, separate Appendix.

Report Checklist



GENERAL REPORT QUALITY	✓	✗
Report is well-written, well-organized, properly formatted, free of typos and grammatical errors.		
Maps, tables, and photographs are appropriate, clear, legible; adequately captioned and numbered.		
In-text and bibliographic references match, are complete and accurate.		
Report is free of factual errors.		



TITLE PAGE, ABSTRACT, TABLE OF CONTENTS		
Title page is present, has report title, author, company, address, lead agency, and date.		
Abstract is comprehensive (project summary, background, results, recommendations).		
Table of Contents, Lists of Figures, Tables, and Plates (photos) have correct page numbers.		
Photographs, plates and maps are clear, in focus, captioned, and relevant.		



INTRODUCTION, PROJECT AREA, & AREA(S) OF POTENTIAL EFFECT (APE)	✓	✗
Description of project purpose and circumstances, including project administration and constraints.		
Project Area is described and mapped clearly.		
* APE(s) are described/discussed and mapped clearly.		
* APE(s) addresses both direct and indirect effects.		
Figures showing land ownership provided.		
Dates of fieldwork included.		
Principle Investigator named, demonstrates qualifications.		
Field Supervisor named, demonstrates qualifications.		

BACKGROUND & HISTORIC CONTEXT	✓	✗
Relevant regional and local environmental context is discussed.		
A relevant regional historic context, including (if possible) land use history, historic maps, and photos.		
Relevant previous cultural resource investigations and/or previously recorded sites are discussed.		

RESEARCH DESIGN & METHODOLOGY	✓	✗
Research Design is comprehensive and coherent, includes transect width and testing protocol.		
Field methodology is explicitly defined, is appropriate to current environmental conditions, and is consistent with OHA Historic Preservation Series guidance.		
All field methodology meets professional standards and is consistent with Alaska State Regulations and current OHA SCRIP Stipulations, Stipulation Instructions.		
All analytical methodology/techniques are described and consistent with the project's purposes and goals.		

RESULTS		
Special conditions or biases that may affect investigation results are identified and discussed.		
Investigated areas are labeled, described in the text, mapped, with representative photos.		
Number of acres investigated is provided and survey tracks and/or survey area are mapped.		
Systematic sampling units (e.g., shovel tests) are clearly described, mapped, and profiled by area. This includes locations of all shovel tests (positive and negative) in maps and in table format.		
Site locations, addresses (buildings), boundaries, and distributions are described, mapped.		
Detailed site (sketch) maps and location photos for each reported site.		
* Cultural resources are described by resource type (e.g., site, building, structure, object, district).		
Cultural resource descriptions are clear and comprehensive.		
Construction / alteration dates are provided for buildings/structures (if known).		
Deposition of artifacts is clearly described/depicted on site (sketch) maps.		
Artifacts are inventoried, described, and analyzed according to appropriate categories and nomenclature.		
Diagnostic and unique artifacts are photographed or drawn. Appropriate classification references cited.		
Statistical and analytical techniques are correctly described and applied.		
Cultural resources discussed relative to appropriate historic context and in terms of human cultural behavior.		
Results are related to broader theoretical, methodological, and descriptive concerns in anthropology, archaeology, architectural history, and history, and/or concerns listed in established historic contexts context.		
AHRS numbers are assigned to cultural resources, referenced in text, figures, tables, and plates.		
AHRS Site Forms are complete, referenced & provided separately from the report, as appropriate.		

* ELIGIBILITY DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS		
* Addresses significance of each resource (area, period, dates, persons, affiliation, etc.,) within the project APE relative to appropriate historic context and applicable National Register Criteria/considerations.		
* Discusses aspects of integrity (location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, association) of each cultural resource within the APE.		
* For districts, associated resources are categorized as contributing/non-contributing and mapped accordingly.		
* Assesses the effect of the undertaking on historic properties, including direct, indirect, and cumulative effects.		

SUMMARY		
Comprehensive summary of the project, methods, results, and recommendations is provided.		
A recommended finding of effect is provided & justified.		