

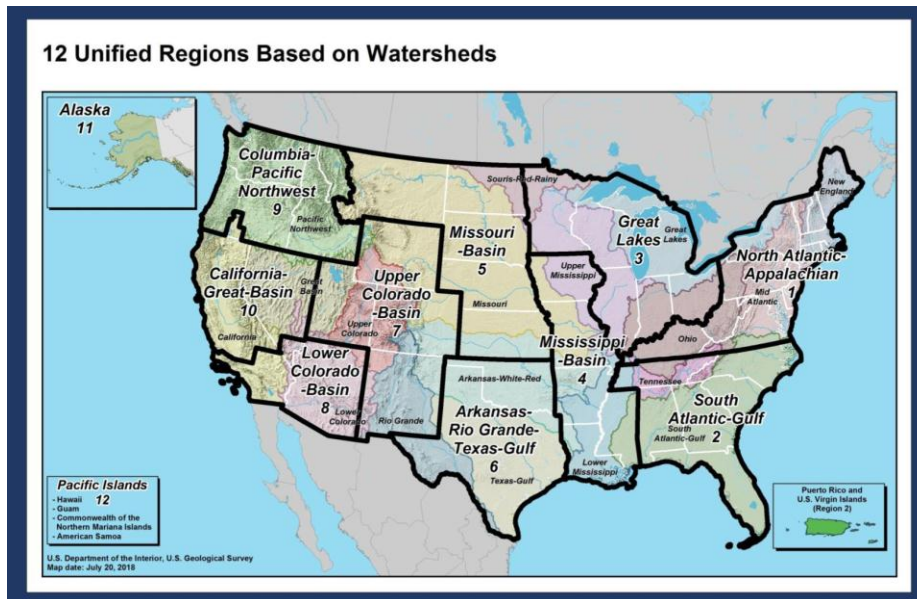


***2020 Section 3 EO 13287 Summary***

**Cover:** 2017 Historic Preservation workshop for Wage Grade employees at the Jab's Farm unit of Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge.

# Foreword

Since our 2017 update reporting for Preserve America, the US Fish and Wildlife Service has made strides in many areas of its historic preservation program. Our staff, though the smallest among Interior's land managers, continues to be steady and busy with respect to historic resource management.



## Regions of the US Fish and Wildlife Service

The 2020 update is divided into three main sections:

***Identifying Historic Properties***—describes our successes around the Service, describing projects from our Regions that have helped develop the historic preservation program among our staff and partners. *This section will address PA Guidance questions: 1-3*

### *Priority Heritage Assets*

The FWS Cultural Resources Program has long been wrestling with a better way to address the management and historic preservation needs of its historic building portfolio. DOI recently announced that  $\frac{2}{3}$  of all DOI assets are at least 50 years of age or older—a trigger for the agency to increase consideration of the historic significance of its facilities. To that end, between 2016 and 2018, the FWS FPO, and a working group of Regional Archaeologists from throughout the Service, developed a protocol that establishes a process for elevating certain historic assets to **Priority Heritage Assets—historically important facilities that also offer tangible return on investment to their field stations.**

In 2019, the Service continued these efforts securing \$50,000 for the first year (of a 4 year program) of an agency-wide National Register Listing evaluation project (the first of its kind for FWS). Determining a National Register listing is a primary step in final disposition of whether an asset is a ranking system that can be used to better fund and use agency historic resources.

As of May 2020, **1542** assets have been reviewed under this Eligibility Study (n=3300); **425** have been determined eligible; **637** have been determined not eligible, and **480** have been determined potentially eligible to the National Register. Once complete, the program will look more closely at the potentially eligible assets to complete their final determinations. Eligible sites can move to the next level and be considered for PHA standing.

An offshoot of the PHA project was the addition of a historic preservation module to the systems used in the field by Service facility management staff. This form will record basic information pertaining to historic buildings and will instantly transmit that information to field station managers and cultural resources staff; the goal being to begin a conversation about the management needs of those historic resources.

The ultimate aim of this project is to better position the FWS to effectively manage a portfolio that couples historic significance and use as a primary driver for resource management.

***Protecting Historic Properties***—Historic Structures Identification and Reporting—describes our program statistics and policies and procedures that we have in place for ensuring the sustainability of Service historic assets. It also contains information on outreach via avenues such as monitoring of historic structures, use of historic structures, and training for staff and partners aimed at supporting the historic preservation program. *This section will address PA Guidance questions: 4-6*

#### **Program History**

Cultural resources (also known as historic properties or heritage assets) include: archaeological sites (both prehistoric and historic and their associated documentation), buildings and structures, landscapes, objects, and historic documents. As an agency of the Federal government, the Service is responsible for, and committed to, protecting and managing these irreplaceable resources in a spirit of stewardship for future generations to understand and enjoy. A Cultural Resources Management (CRM) program was established in the 1970s to manage the rich array of cultural resources under its jurisdiction. Its primary goals are to:

- identify, evaluate, and encourage preservation of cultural resources
- manage museum property collections
- consult with a broad array of interested parties
- promote heritage education
- provide expertise to programs, some of whom include, Federal Assistance, Partners for Fish and Wildlife, Realty, Endangered Species, Refuges, Law Enforcement, Fire, and Planning with respect to Cultural Resource needs

Since its inception, the program has expanded as cultural resource laws, requirements, and public concerns, continue to increase. The Federal Preservation Officer, located in Falls Church, Virginia, coordinates the Service CRM program with many responsibilities delegated to regional staff. These include professional archaeologists, architectural historians, and museum specialists. Each cultural resource professional in the Service meets the [Secretary of the Interior's professional qualification standards for historic preservation](#) qualifying them to conduct this type of work and serve as experts for this resource type.

Each Region employs at least one cultural resources specialist. These Regional Historic Preservation officers (RHPOs) provide expertise and management advice to Senior Regional leadership and to the field with respect to cultural resources.

The primary responsibilities of the Cultural Resource program and the RHPO is to facilitate Service compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and comply with other authorities pertinent to cultural resources. Program staff also comments on cultural resource related policy and guidance and offer opportunities for training

and education to both Service staff, our partners, and the general public. The idea of only 1 individual assessing projects across a wide variety of programs is **arcane** and **inefficient**. Many Regions are realizing that even as they grapple with the best response.

### **Staff and Budget**

Funding for NHPA compliance comes from individual program dollars with the majority of these activities being conducted on Refuges and Hatcheries. This funding is used to support **21** cultural resource FTE (**the smallest cultural resources staff in DOI**), but does not include costs of cultural resource related contract work (e.g., survey, excavations, etc...that are not completed in house).

### **Internal Policies, Guidance, and Reporting for Cultural Resources**

[614 FW chapters 1-6](#) provides policy for compliance with the NHPA as well as other cultural resource laws. This 2016 update replaces our previous policy that was issued in 1992.

[126 FW chapters 1-2](#) provides policy for the Service museum property program. It outlines responsibilities under federal statute as well as DOI standards. A 2017 update replaced the previous policy issued in 1997.

### **Performance**

Because of Cultural resources are included in the Service Strategic Plan, several reporting requirements specifically for performance are also the purview of the RHPO. The Refuge Annual Performance Plan (RAPP) and Operations Plan (Ops) plan measures specific to cultural resources are:

- Number of archaeological sites in good condition
- Number of historic buildings in good condition
- Number of museum collections in good condition
- Number of paleontological sites in good condition

Data for the RAPP and the Service Division of Finance Required Stewardship Information (RSI) report are embedded within other data categories noted under Compliance with the NHPA and other sections of this report.

### **Compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act**

NHPA, specifically, Section 106, requires federal agencies to consider potential effects of their mission related activities on cultural resources. These activities can range from the construction of a cell tower to creation of impoundments for duck habitat. In many instances, the RHPO is able to provide information on the potential of these projects to impact cultural resources very quickly. In other examples, further research and consultation is required.

The Service RHPOs and, where applicable, their staff are the primary points of contact in each Region for cultural resource or historical/heritage asset related activities for both Service staff and external partners. They are the subject matter experts for their Regional Directors, who retain final decision authority as per Service cultural resource policy (98% of RHPO time is spent assisting the Regions of the Service to comply with Section 106 of NHPA).

Service RHPOs also assist non-Refuge programs engaged in activities that trigger Section 106. Some of the programs support the RHPO but many do not. Capacity to assist these programs varies from Region to Region.

A large part of their compliance-related work focuses on consultation with Native American tribes. In many cases, cultural resource projects form the single largest consultation need for a Region. Consultation for Section 106 can sometimes be very complex, especially for non-Refuge programs that do not adequately understand their role with respect to Government to Government consultation.



### Monitoring and Use of Cultural Resources

Many historic resources, for instance the Assateague lighthouse at Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge, are interpreted for visitors and their history incorporated into visitor opportunities. Many of these interpreted sites include exhibits in their visitor centers and/or interpretive programs offered by Service staff to visitors. Interpretation has always been a focus of Service.

### National Register Information

RHPOs also maintain National Register data for their Region. As their time permits, they focus on addressing the backlog of sites that are listed as **eligible** to the National Register. These properties must be reviewed and a determination made as part of compliance with the NHPA.

### National Register Designation Data

National Designation Data	IR9&12	IR 6&8	IR 3	IR2&4	IR1	IR 5&7	IR 10	IR11	Totals
Total number of NRHP eligible sites*	6	20	32	80	193	305	0	3800	4428
Total number of NRHP sites actually listed	14	15	13	30	11	17	10	8	118
Total number of national monuments	5	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	7
Total number of national historic landmarks	1	2	0	1	1	0	2	4	11

\*Update in progress using 2019/20 Eligibility study data.

### Archaeological Resources Protection Act (APRA)

The RHPO assists Service and Refuges Law Enforcement in cases that include an archaeological component or that violate the ARPA of 1979. ARPA data is noted by the RHPOs but is also reported up through Service Law Enforcement channels.

### Paleontological Resources Preservation Act (PRPA)

In 2009, the Paleontological Resources Preservation Act (PRPA) was passed directing Federal agencies to protect these resources on their lands. Paleontological resources are located in specific areas because the remains of Dinosaurs are limited to certain specific formations across the country. PRPA data is recorded by the RHPO.

### Native American Graves Protection Repatriation Act

In addition to its responsibilities under NHPA, the Service also complies with [NAGPRA](#) and its regulations ([43 CFR Part 10](#)). NAGPRA addresses the rights of lineal descendants, Indian tribes, and Native Hawaiian organizations (parties with standing) to Native American human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects and objects of cultural patrimony. The statute requires Federal agencies and museums to provide information about Native American cultural items to parties with standing and, upon presentation of a valid claim, ensure the item(s) undergo disposition or repatriation. RHPOs serve as the primary point of contact for NAGPRA activities in FWS.

### Training, Education, Youth and the Visitor Experience

In addition to responding to active NHPA undertakings and maintaining National Register designation data, the RHPO is also responsible for maintaining, when possible, opportunities for training and volunteering related to cultural resources.

The Service continued offering its online Section 106 and Museum Property Introduction course. It also launched its *Digging Deeper* webinar series and has offered two episodes for staff.

The Service Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) offers law enforcement training programs government wide for compliance with the Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA). Several offerings of this course are made during the year. They are attended primarily by archaeologists and federal law enforcement

officers. FLETC works with the Service cultural resources program to update this course and to market it to Federal cultural resource staff.

***Using Historic Properties (Successes, Opportunities, and Challenges)***—describes our successes and challenges in the long-term preservation and use of historic properties as assets and, if possible, as contributions to local economies and communities. *This section will address PA Guidance questions: 7-10*

### **Opportunities**

#### **Preservation Skills Workshop**

Beginning in 2009, a partnership between the NPS Historic Preservation Training Center and the FWS resulted in development of a training program for FWS Wage Grade staff. This has been an immensely rewarding program and one that has helped improve management by allowing for field station staff to better understand both compliance and how to execute practical restoration and repair of historic buildings. This training class (along with the Priority Heritage Assets project described above) is the FWS attempt to De-Mystify historic buildings and structures in the hope of making them more relevant to the mission of the Refuges (and communities) on which they reside.

Our most recent workshop (Fall 2017) was at the Jab's Farm Unit of Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge (see images). This project focused on masonry and roofing and greatly assisted the Refuge in stabilizing structures that are used for storage and as visitor contact stations.



#### **FWS Historic Preservation Award**

The Historic Preservation Award was launched in 2016 to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the National Historic Preservation Act and to highlight achievements in the care and stewardship of cultural resources through innovative use of funds, development of partnerships, and use of the resource to educate local communities.

**2016**--The first Refuge System Historic Preservation Award went to Lee Metcalf Refuge for their nomination of the historic Whaley Homestead. The homestead is a 19th century landmark and has been an integral part of the Refuge's message since it became part of the Refuge in the 1960s. Visitors and descendants of the Whaley family continue to visit the property and to advance the conservation mission of the Refuge system.

**2017**--Restoration work of the lighthouse structures at Maine Coastal Islands National Wildlife Refuge

**2018**--A partnership between FWS and the St. Marks Refuge Association, Inc., restored the St. Marks Lighthouse at St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge, a National Register-listed property transferred to the Service from the U.S. Coast Guard in 2013. The lighthouse was formally re-opened to the public in May, 2018

**2019**--Little Pend Oreille National Wildlife Refuge was recognized for efforts to restore historic buildings like the Harnett-Sampson Barn and to interpret the history of the Refuge for surrounding communities.

### **Challenges**

As with many Cultural Resources programs, staff capacity prevents broader execution of the kinds of work that would most effectively improve overall management.

A workload study completed in FY11 for the program indicated that **16** additional FTE are required to *keep pace* with **current** workloads (applied today, an increase of 20 additional FTE would be more in keeping with 2020 work levels). As an example for FY2019, **245** NHPA reviews were left uncompleted. Most were not reviewed because of a lack of staff. The impact here is that roughly 245 projects were not able to advance or advanced **with risk** and/or **without complying** with NHPA. An investment in the additional FTE would alleviate these obstacles and would allow better service to the field to execute the projects required by field station and Regional priorities.

An additional forthcoming challenge is that the Preservation Skills Workshop for 2018 was delayed to 2019 and is now tentatively scheduled for 2021. *Unfortunately, this workshop series will be ending following the 2021 offering.*