

3.14 Heritage Resources

3.14.1 Summary

Under Alternative 1 (No Action), there would be no changes from the current conditions, because no changes in the existing travel management rules would occur. None of the action alternatives (2, 3 or 4) would result in direct adverse effects on heritage resources because Project implementation includes standard measures of protection pursuant to the 2004 Forest Plan. Indirect effects associated with action alternatives 2, 3 or 4 may include increased access to heritage sites adjacent to heavily used travel corridors. Implementation of mitigation measures such as monitoring and maintenance of confidentiality with respect to heritage resource locations will effectively reduce these impacts, thus Heritage resources will experience minimal indirect effects under Alternatives 2, 3 and 4.

Direct (adverse) affects to heritage resources are limited to those actionable alternatives where ground disturbing activities are proposed. These potential affects would include new trail construction, ground disturbing activities associated with road decommissioning (i.e. placement of berms), issuance of special use permits, and possibly improving winter trails for all season use. Projects which have the potential to adversely affect heritage resources will be reviewed by heritage staff prior to project implementation and/or the issuance of special use permits. It is important to note that the Travel Management Project focuses on policy changes for *existing* travel corridors, and only a small amount of new trail construction is proposed.

3.14.2 Introduction

Historic properties are discrete locations on the landscape which display evidence of past human activities. Traditional Cultural Properties (TCPs) are districts, sites, buildings, structures or objects that are valued by a living community for the role they play in sustaining the community's cultural integrity (King 2004:362). An example of a historic property would be an early 20th century logging camp and its associated artifacts and building remains. An example of a Traditional Cultural Property would be a wild rice stand which has been annually harvested by a distinct, living community for the past 100 years. For the purposes of this analysis, the term heritage resources, or heritage resource site, will refer to both of these aforementioned property types.

Heritage resources are fragile and can be adversely affected by a variety of factors, including erosion, fire, and numerous human activities. Heritage resources are especially vulnerable to surface disturbances.

Over the last thirty years, the Forest has conducted archaeological field surveys throughout the lands administered by the Superior National Forest within the Travel Management Project Area. The Forest Service fully intends to avoid impacts to all heritage resources which are currently unevaluated, or eligible to the National Register of Historic Places. Mitigation measures include delineating heritage site boundaries within or adjacent to areas where ground disturbing activities are proposed. Field personnel and/or contractors will be instructed to avoid delineated areas during project activities. Post treatment monitoring will ensure compliance with, and effectiveness of, these mitigation measures.

3.14.3 Analysis Methods

The effects analysis for heritage resources considers potential impacts of known historic properties and those areas that have a high potential for previously unknown historic properties to occur.

3.14.4 Analysis Area

The analysis area consists of the lands managed by the Superior National Forest within the Travel Management Project Area. Not included in this project is the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness where motorized use is restricted by legislation. Although no decisions will be made for lands within the BWCAW, the effects to the wilderness will be considered as part of this analysis. The duration of direct effects is the interval required for project implementation.

The time scale used for the analysis of direct and indirect effects is 10 years. This time scale is chosen because it is reasonable to assume that all proposed projects would be implemented by this time and expected effects have occurred. The time scale for cumulative effects is 15 years, looking back 10 years into the past, and 5 years forward. This is also an appropriate time scale for cumulative effects because it allows for the most realistic prediction of reasonably foreseeable future projects.

3.14.5 Affected Environment

The affected environment for heritage resources are the specific locations subjected to ground disturbing activities under the action alternatives. Over the past 30 years, field surveys for timber sales, prescribed fire, land exchanges, and various ground disturbing projects have resulted in the identification and recording of heritage resource sites across the Forest. Approximately 40 percent of the heritage sites are prehistoric Native American sites dating between 300 and 10,000 years in age. The remaining 60 percent of recorded sites are classified as historic sites (50 years or older). These historic properties are an important record of human land-use history in northeastern Minnesota and they represent diverse cultural themes such as prehistoric settlement, the fur trade, logging, mining, and homesteading.

The Superior National Forest commonly conducts heritage resource surveys only when site-specific projects are planned with un-surveyed or minimally surveyed areas within the project boundary.

Environmental Consequences

3.14.6 Direct and Indirect Effects

Alternative 1 (No Action)

Under this alternative, there would be no effects to historic properties.

Direct and Indirect Effects Common to All Action Alternatives (Alternatives 2, 3, and 4)

The proposed undertakings included in the Superior National Forest Travel Management Project Alternatives 2, 3, and 4 will have no effect on historic properties extant within the project area. The Superior National Forest direction to avoid all eligible and unevaluated historic properties during the implementation of any project is designed to remove direct or indirect effects, (See the Superior National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, Standards and Guidelines for Heritage Resources S-HR-1 through S-HR-11, p. 2-39).

In accordance with these policies all known historic properties would be avoided during the implementation of project work under any of the action alternatives. Any previously unrecorded historic properties inadvertently discovered during project implementation would be avoided and recorded. A reasonable and good faith effort will be made to identify previously unknown historic properties within the project area. All areas in project boundaries subject to project specific “undertakings” will be inventoried according to the methodology guidelines developed for conducting inventory surveys by the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office and the Superior National Forest heritage program.

3.14.7 Cumulative Effects

Implementation of Forest direction to avoid project impact on all known eligible and unevaluated historic properties within project areas would result in no cumulative effects.

3.14.8 Conclusion – Direct, Indirect, and Cumulative Effects

Adherence to the direction and guidance provided in the SNF Land and Resource Management Plan on the treatment of historic properties during the implementation of Forest undertakings or projects would result in no direct, indirect or cumulative effects to known historic properties extant within the SNF Travel Management Project Area.