

HERITAGE

Key Points

- Approximately 19,000 acres were inventoried for heritage resources resulting in the documentation of 21 new sites.
- Seventy-five previously inventoried heritage sites, 11 eligible sites, and eight burial sites were monitored. One Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW) campsite co-located with a cemetery was permanently closed to public use.
- Eight heritage sites were evaluated during the 2008 field season.

A. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Forest Plan Direction

The Forest Plan and the five year heritage work plan direct the Superior National Forest (SNF) to identify, evaluate, protect, monitor and interpret heritage resources on the Forest.

Monitoring Conducted

Inventory

Heritage sites within designated project areas are inventoried primarily to satisfy the requirements of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (as amended). Heritage sites identified within project areas are monitored after the initial surveys to determine whether recommended mitigation measures were implemented and to document whether they were effective in protecting the heritage resource.

Approximately 19,000 acres were subject to heritage inventory with 21 new sites documented. The inventory included prescribed burn units within and outside the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW), campsite and portage inventory, and proposed treatment units in the Whyte, Cascade, Maple Hill, Echo Trail, Mid-Temperance and other smaller proposed project areas. Heritage inventory consists of a pre-field archival search, consultation with the Minnesota State Historical Preservation Office (MN SHPO); the three Bands of Chippewa located adjacent to the Forest and others, field inventory if needed and post field reporting and artifact processing. Seventy-five previously inventoried heritage sites were monitored, mostly opportunistically, in conjunction with planned inventory projects.

12.2 Heritage

Interpretation and Protection

A subset of evaluated and eligible sites (11 of 24 sites) was monitored during 2008 to determine whether their public nature made them more subject to vandalism. Eight of 12 recorded burial sites were monitored in 2008 to insure no impacts were occurring through SNF projects or visitor use of the adjacent areas. Three Passport in Time projects were implemented during 2008 (Figure 12.1). The field portion of site evaluation was completed for six sites during the 2008 field season.

Evaluation and Conclusions

Inventory, Interpretation, and Protection

During 2008 we randomly monitored previously surveyed sites (primarily associated with timber activities) encompassing 100,000 acres. To date, the National Forest Service policy to “flag and avoid” for projects other than some recreation sites have proven to be effective mitigations.

Ongoing monitoring suggests the integrity of some heritage sites is deteriorating over time, especially on campsites subject to extremely heavy visitor use (in and out of the BWCAW). Campsite project work and campsite use by the visiting public precludes the “flag and avoid” policy. Continued heavy public use of these campsites is likely to further affect heritage sites. As a result of these observations, site evaluations were completed on a sample of high use areas during the 2008 field season and another similar set of site evaluations is scheduled for the 2009 field season. This will allow development of more refined and effective mitigation recommendations.

Figure 12.1. Sawbill Passport in Time rehabilitation project during the fall of 2008 on the Superior National Forest.

