

Heritage

Inventory, Interpretation and Protection

Heritage sites within designated project areas are inventoried primarily to satisfy the requirements of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (as amended). These sites are monitored after the initial surveys to determine if recommended Forest Plan standards and guidelines were implemented and to document their effectiveness in protecting the heritage resource.

Monitoring Questions

Heritage resource monitoring addresses the monitoring questions listed in Chapter 4 of the Forest Plan:

Are avoidance or standards and guidelines effective and being followed in project designs?

Are heritage resources being damaged or threatened in non project areas?

The questions are driven by O-HR-1. Identify, evaluate, protect, monitor and preserve heritage resources ([Forest Plan direction](#)).

These monitoring questions were developed to determine if heritage guidelines are followed during implementation of projects and to assess how effective those guidelines are in protecting the heritage resource.

There are two units of measure for heritage resource monitoring. The first one is the acres inventoried for heritage resources and the second one is the number of eligible sites evaluated and monitored. These units were chosen because heritage sites have been monitored over a 30 year period, are consistently protected in general forest areas based on heritage recommendations and continue to consistently deteriorate on campsites as a direct result of user impact.

Units of comparison are not applicable to heritage resources since inventoried, monitored and evaluated sites are driven by other resource management activities.

Monitoring Method(s)

Inventory

Approximately 13,381 acres were subject to heritage inventory with 33 new sites documented. The inventory included prescribed burn units within and outside the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW) along with campsite and portage areas. The inventory also included proposed treatment units on the Whyte, Clara, Toohey, Devil Trout, Maple Hill, Tracks, Border and Glacier large vegetation management projects along with other smaller

proposed project areas. The heritage inventory as documented in the Superior National Forest Heritage Resources Annual Report (2009) consists of:

- 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 other agencies and organizations as needed
- Field inventory, if needed
- Post field reporting
- Artifact processing

During the current monitoring cycle, 111 previously inventoried heritage sites were monitored, mostly opportunistically, in conjunction with planned inventory projects.

Interpretation and Protection

A subset (total of 111 sites) of evaluated and eligible sites (15 of 26 sites) was monitored during 2009 to determine whether their public nature made them more subject to vandalism. Eight of the 12 recorded burial sites were monitored to insure no impacts were occurring through SNF projects or visitor use in the adjacent areas. Three “Passport in Time” projects were also implemented and the field portion of site evaluation was completed for nine heritage sites on the Forest.

Results

The inventory monitoring revealed some artifacts. Figure 15-1 displays an example of an artifact found during the 2009 field heritage monitoring season.

Ongoing monitoring indicates 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 adversely affect heritage sites.

However, inventory monitoring, over the last 30 years, of heritage sites located in project areas, not associated with recreational camping, has shown that the recommended mitigation methods (such as painting a site out of a sale) have been successful.

Figure 15-1. Knife Lake siltstone quarry surveys (prescribed fire monitoring) on the SNF (2009).



Implications

As a result of these observations (deterioration on campsites), site evaluations were completed on a sample of high use areas during the 2009 field season and another similar set of site evaluations is scheduled for the 2010 field season. This will facilitate development of more refined and effective mitigation recommendations.