

Heritage Resources

Introduction

The Heritage Resources Program strives to maintain professional standards regarding site management, artifact curation, and response to requests from other Forest programs in a timely and efficient manner. In addition, the Heritage Resources Program seeks to provide heritage education opportunities for the public.

The Heritage Resources Program also strives to maintain an active, open relationship with professional archaeological associations, scholarly institutions, local history groups, interested individuals, and regional interest groups that emphasize heritage resources. We provide information and support to these groups and individuals in as timely and efficient manner as possible. The Forest Archaeologist participates on the boards of various community public history groups, including the Council for West Virginia Archaeology, Rich Mountain Battlefield Foundation, and the Appalachian Forest Heritage Area (AFHA) Group. Heritage Resources personnel also participate in the semi-annual meetings of the Council for West Virginia Archaeology and the West Virginia Archaeological Society.

2010 Program Accomplishments

The Heritage Resources Program completed 89 projects in FY 2010 that resulted in a file letter or report. Nine projects requiring field work were completed, involving survey of a total of 18 acres. A single new site was identified.

Monitoring and Evaluation

FOREST PLAN MONITORING FOR HERITAGE RESOURCES

The 2006 Forest Plan has two monitoring questions for heritage resources, found on page IV-8. They have been reworded somewhat due to recommendations made in the FY 2007 Annual Monitoring Report and a subsequent Forest Plan administrative correction.

Monitoring Question 18. Are project-specific mitigation measures being followed as recommended in project designs? If so, are they providing effective protection for heritage resources?

Monitoring Question 19. Are heritage resources being affected in non-project areas (e.g. from looting, OHV use, erosion, etc.)?

These monitoring questions respond to the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as well as part b) of Goal HR01 from the 2006 Forest Plan (p. II-38): *Preserve, protect, stabilize, monitor, interpret and, when appropriate, mitigate for loss of, or adverse effects to, historic properties.*

In 2010, the Heritage Resources Program inventoried one new site to the heritage site files. I monitored the current condition of archaeological sites as part of our larger field schedule. In FY 2010 a total of 20 sites were monitored. Sites that were monitored include National Register listed sites, National Register eligible sites, and sites located in or near current projects. I monitored these sites in order to assess changes in the site conditions and to identify natural or human causes of these changes. As a matter of efficiency, sites monitored were largely those located in or near current project areas.

Monitoring Questions 18 and 19. Evaluation, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Of the 20 sites that were monitored, all were found to be in good or undamaged condition (site forms are on file at the Forest Supervisor's Office). However, monitoring in previous years has revealed that occasionally sites are adversely affected by Forest Service management activities. Forest Service activities are generally planned to avoid adverse effects to NRHP-listed, eligible, or unevaluated heritage sites. Previous incidents involving adverse effects were likely caused by, or exacerbated by, internal communication failures.

We have not been as effective as we could be regarding monitoring the effects of projects to cultural resources in the near term; specifically, the effectiveness of project-specific mitigation measures (Item 18 above) has not been addressed for any recently implemented projects.

Recommendations: Identify ways to better provide Heritage Resource input prior to and during project implementation with both Forest staff and contractors.

Continue to seek additional funding and personnel for increased monitoring efforts. There are 2,417 heritage sites recorded on the Monongahela National Forest. Only 465 sites have been monitored in the past two decades. Given that a previous monitoring effort in 2004 revealed that sites have been inadvertently destroyed during project implementation, attempts should continue to be made to work more closely other Forest staff and contractors to ensure site avoidance, and to monitor known sites for success or failure in these efforts.