

**Forest Service Handbook  
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**Forest Service Handbook 2309.12 – Heritage Program Management Handbook  
Chapter 80 - Information Management and Report**

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**Responsible Staff:**

**Last Change:**

**Superseded Document(s):**

**Digest:** Following is an explanation of the changes throughout the directive by section.

**2309.12:** Establishes new handbook “FSH 2309.12, Heritage Program Management Handbook.”

**Zero code:** Establishes codes, captions, and sets forth new direction for the management of the Heritage Program.

**10:** Establishes codes, captions, and sets forth direction for the coordination and consultation requirements for the Heritage Program.

**20:** Establishes codes, captions, and sets forth direction for the planning requirements for the Heritage Program.

**30:** Establishes codes, captions, and sets forth direction for the identification, evaluation, and allocation for management use requirements for the Heritage Program.

**40:** Establishes codes, captions, and sets forth direction for protection and stewardship requirements for the Heritage Program.

**50:** Establishes codes, captions, and sets forth direction for public education and outreach requirements for the Heritage Program.

**Forest Service Handbook 2309.12 – Heritage Program Management Handbook**

**Chapter 80 - Information Management and Report**

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**60:** Establishes codes, captions, and sets forth direction for the management of heritage collections for the Heritage Program.

**70:** Establishes codes, captions, and sets forth direction for administering the permits, agreements, and contracts for the Heritage Program.

**80:** Establishes codes, captions, and sets forth direction on the uniform guidance and procedures for Heritage professionals to manage and report cultural resource information.

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This chapter provides uniform guidance and procedures for Heritage professionals managing and reporting cultural resource information.

### **80.3 – Policy**

In conjunction with FSM 2368 to:

1. Maintain and manage cultural resource information to all national database and reporting requirements.
2. Use and share cultural resource information for Agency and public benefit.

### **80.4 – Responsibility**

It is the responsibility of Heritage professionals to:

1. Obtain necessary training to enter and update Heritage information in the Natural Resource Manager (NRM), the Agency's corporate data system.
2. Document and enter cultural resource data into Heritage NRM's application and its components. Ensure that data are current and accurate.
3. Report required data elements in the Heritage NRM application to satisfy all upward program and Agency reports.
4. Use the Heritage NRM application to store and retrieve tabular and spatial data pertaining to Heritage program management.
5. All Heritage spatial data is located in the NRM SDE for Heritage program management.
6. Use the Heritage NRM application at fiscal year-end to determine Heritage program accomplishments, heritage assets for reporting purposes, including the Agency financial statement, and the Secretary of the Interior's Report to Congress on the Federal Archeology Program.
7. Stay informed of current required data for national reporting purposes, listed in the latest "Heritage Core Data for National Reporting" paper. Access this document through the National Heritage Information Management Initiative on the Forest Service Intranet, Recreation and Heritage Program web site or on its SharePoint site.

## **81 – National Heritage Information Management Initiative**

The Forest Service National Heritage Information Management Initiative (NHIMI) develops and implements a corporate information management environment that provides Heritage and other Resource Specialists, Managers, and partners with reliable and consistent Heritage information for analysis, reporting, and decision-making. The goal of the NHIMI is to design

and maintain a corporate strategy for heritage information management that meets Agency and Heritage Program business needs.

The purpose of the NHIMI is to:

1. Provide data collection tools for the collection of cultural resource data in the field in a reliable, consistent, and automated format.
2. Coordinate and communicate with local, State, and Tribal partners to make possible an electronic data transfer and production of standardized data sets.
3. Meet the Agency's cumulative national reporting needs.
4. Integrate with other corporate information management efforts to meet heritage business needs.
5. Establish relevance to all Regions and all staffing levels through active participation and solicitation of feedback throughout the development process.
6. Facilitate implementation of national Heritage spatial and tabular data standards.
7. Provide direction for the development of Internet/Intranet tools and web sites.
8. Facilitate Heritage tourism and interface with other aspects of recreation.
9. Facilitate standardization in the capturing of heritage data across all NRM applications.

## **82 – Heritage Program Records**

Use hard copy files and NRM (which includes GIS) to store and manage Heritage Program records and tabular and spatial data, including:

1. Information on the attributes and locations of cultural resources.
2. Documentation of Heritage Program work activities, including National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 as Amended (NHPA) (Public Law 89-665; 16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.) and the National Environmental Policy Act of 1979 (NEPA) (42 U.S.C. 4321-4347) compliance files, such as field notes, reports, maps of surveyed areas, and NHPA Section 106 correspondence with the SHPOs, THPOs, Indian Tribes, Advisory Council, Keeper of the National Register, and other interested parties.
3. Information about archived materials, collections, and objects (collectively referred to as “assemblages”). For related direction see chapter 60.

## **82.1 – Types of Heritage Program Records**

Retain the following types of records and information in Heritage program hard files and electronic databases:

1. Hardcopy inventory, cultural resource documentation, maps, collections, and compliance files held in secured storage.
2. Electronic inventory, collections, and compliance files held in an appropriate file container, including a folder with restricted access permissions on Agency file servers.
3. Inventory, collections, and compliance data stored in the Heritage NRM application, and other supporting documentation and files created as or converted to electronic format are stored in NRM's Attachments application.
4. Electronic geospatial data (GIS data), held in an appropriate file container, including a folder with restricted permissions on the NRM SDE.

Duplicate paper records in electronic format (either as a scanned image or default file format used by the software application) for all current projects, and where feasible for past projects, and include them in the corporate database as attachments to the Heritage NRM application for the activity, cultural resource, or assemblages component.

## **82.2 – The Heritage NRM Application**

Use the Heritage NRM application to manage and employ all Heritage Program information. NRM is the means by which all Forest Service Heritage Program data are correlated, manipulated, and used for management purposes. Using a simple numbering system, Heritage NRM can relate inventory, site documentation, collections, and compliance records. NRM Heritage is a search tool to identify and locate information.

The Heritage NRM application contains several components: Activities, Cultural Resources, and Assemblages, a spatial component, and a field data collection tool (mobile) to collect and upload all new and edited tabular and spatial data. The application contains a variety of tools, reports, and outputs that assist in resource management and required reporting.

Organize all cultural resource records in Heritage NRM using a Forest Service's Heritage number (ID) for the cultural resource (the Smithsonian or other locally used number can also be retained, in a separate field). Organize collections records into assemblages and repositories and provide them with an Assemblage identification number (ID) for each Repository.

Use the Forest Service's Heritage numbering convention (ID) for all Heritage Program activities (projects). Compliance records are organized into their constituent event records, related with sites and other activities in Heritage NRM, and then filed by Reporting Year and ID.

## **83 – Heritage Information Requirements**

Follow these steps to meet national Heritage Program information requirements:

1. Use the Heritage NRM application to track Heritage Program activities, accomplishments, and to maintain a record of heritage data to satisfy Agency compliance requirements and upward reporting.
2. Follow national data standards, requirements, and conventions, which are sent to the Forest Service Recreation Directors every spring in a 2300/2320 letter (see sec. 83.1). The NHIMI web site, SharePoint sites, and NRM support web site include guidance for meeting the reporting requirements. Manuals and NRM training are also available.
3. Maintain heritage asset records in the Heritage NRM application and related NRM applications (such as the Buildings, Dams, Trails, Attachments) incorporating all necessary and mandatory Agency tabular and narrative data (commonly referred to as the core data fields) for national, State, and local reporting requirements, resource management, and project planning. Link all multi-use heritage assets to the appropriate building, bridge, trail, or dam. Enter the most recent National Register status information for multi-use assets in the Heritage NRM application by August of each year.
4. Document Priority Heritage Asset (PHA) condition survey data in Heritage NRM by September 30 of each year. Link the PHA site to the condition survey event in the Heritage NRM application, and report observed maintenance needs or maintenance accomplishments on the Work Items screen in the module. Enter any other condition updates. The objective is to maintain current condition surveys that are no more than 5-years old for each PHA.
5. Document newly discovered or updated cultural resources electronically using the Heritage NRM application. Export electronic cultural resource data to standard Agency paper cultural resource forms unless a specific Regional or State business protocol states otherwise. Companion maps, field sketches, photograph and artifact logs, informant information, and related data should be clearly linked to the cultural resource record in Heritage NRM application and the printed paper documentation. Mark all paper cultural resource records with the Forest Service and Smithsonian numbers, and State, or other ID numbers as appropriate for easy retrieval and use.
6. Establish and maintain the necessary corporate tabular and geospatial data for national, State, and local reporting requirements, and for resource management and project planning.
7. Ensure historical and management status of all cultural resources is accurately portrayed in the Heritage NRM application, according to current standards as defined by the U. S. Department of Agriculture, the Forest Service, and pursuant to the NHPA.

8. Maintain documentation to support all additions and withdrawals of heritage assets during the fiscal year.
9. Maintain heritage assemblage assets that are subject to reporting requirements. Assemblage data are reported in the Heritage NRM application, the Assemblage component.

### **83.1 – National Annual Reporting Requirements**

Annual reports required by Forest Service Program Direction are accomplished through the Heritage NRM application with the “data pulls” run in August for Multi-Use assets and on October 1 of each year for all other heritage assets. The National System of Record for all heritage data is the Heritage NRM application.

The Washington Office issues an annual 2300/2320 data call notification letter to the Regional Recreation Directors every spring. When all of the core data fields are completed, the national reports are complete and accurate, and the Agency can then meet its national reporting requirements.

Enter all data in the Heritage NRM application by the close of business, September 30, of each year. The Heritage NRM application generates data for the following reports:

1. The Secretary of the Interior’s Report to Congress on the Federal Archeology Program.
2. Performance Accountability System (PAS) Target Accomplishment Report.
3. Deferred Maintenance Report.
4. Required Supplementary Information for Agency Stewardship Assets report.

### **84 – Standards and Guidelines**

For related direction see FSH 6509.11k – Service-Wide Finance and Accounting Handbook, chapter 50.

Follow Forest Service standards and guidelines for the recording and storage of all required Heritage Program information. All Forest Service units must adhere to the national data standards, requirements, and protocols in the NRM database system, which includes Heritage tabular and spatial data. These standards and additional guidance are available on the NHIMI web site and SharePoint site. Additionally, follow Regional, State, or National Forests and Grasslands protocols that govern data entry, as applicable.

Information management, including data input into Heritage NRM is part of the final stages of any Heritage project. Funding for information management follows guidance in Zero code, section 07.2 of this Handbook. If projects require Heritage support under the authority of NHPA Section 106, the program proposing or authorizing the undertaking



funds the data entry into the tabular and spatial dataset of the Heritage NRM application. If the data are the result of work completed under the authority of NHPA Section 110, the Heritage program funds the data entry.

### **84.1 – Cultural Resource Records**

Label all hardcopy cultural resource records with the standard Forest Service ID number and when available, the Smithsonian, State, or other ID number for easy retrieval and use.

Document new and updated information related to cultural resources including monitoring information, condition assessments, and other field data needs in Heritage NRM.

Retain hardcopy cultural resource records in a secure, fireproof storage unit with ample room for additional information. Until fireproof storage is available, store copies of all cultural records in offsite repositories, such as the SHPO or other appropriate or sanctioned repositories, to provide redundancy as a means to protect against loss from natural disasters. Restrict access to records to protect confidential information.

### **84.2 – Field Survey Records**

Enter all field survey data into Heritage NRM. . All hard copy field survey report forms and formats should follow national, Regional, or State standards and conventions. Survey records should describe the nature and intensity of the survey and describe project results (both positive and negative) with the pertinent cultural resource record forms, survey notes, project maps, and photographs attached.

### **84.3 – Atlas and Master Maps**

Record all cultural resources and cultural resource survey areas in one of the NRM SDE Cultural Feature classes for cultural resources or surveys, A cultural resource atlas is a compendium of USGS 7.5' (or suitably-scaled) topographic maps, also referred to as the National Forest's and/or Grassland's "master maps". The atlas-map set has been a traditional way to record geospatial information for Heritage program reporting, planning, and project purposes.

NRM SDE is the primary repository for cultural resource and survey spatial information. A paper atlas-map can serve as a backup to the database as storage for cultural resource and survey spatial information. If the paper atlas-map is being retained as a backup, ensure that it is updated on a regular basis and stored in a secure place. If maintaining two spatial tracking systems becomes time consuming, the paper atlas-map may be archived. Ensure that the archived copy is preserved according to direction in chapter 60, section 61.2 of this Handbook.

All Heritage spatial data is required to be stored in NRM SDE. When spatial information is stored electronically in the corporate geospatial system, document the metadata in accordance with Forest Service and Federal Geospatial Data Committee (FGDC) spatial data

requirements. Hardcopy maps showing cultural resource and project locations can be printed at any time or scale needed.

Regions have the option of selecting an appropriate projection for their area, but all spatial references should use the current Forest Service standard horizontal datum, North American Datum 1983 (NAD83) (see FSH 6609.15, ch.30). All spatial data must conform to Agency direction and standards and to the Cultural Properties data dictionary which can be found at the NRM GIS Data Dictionary web site and reached through the NRM home page.

#### **84.4 – Project and Historic Maps**

NRM SDE is the repository for all survey spatial information. Project maps created outside NRM SDE will need to meet Agency direction for long-term storage and meet Agency reporting requirements. Project maps created in NRM SDE are automatically preserved as an attachment to the NRM project record and immediately available to reporting and emergency response. When feasible, electronically scan historic maps and save them as a feature class in NRM SDE. Coordinate as needed with the Forest Service History National Program Leader to submit the original to the National Archives. For related direction see chapter 60, section 61.4 of this Handbook.

If it is necessary to maintain the original paper map locally, maintain a flat file and use protective sleeves, covers, and dividers as appropriate.

#### **84.5 – Photographs, Slides, and Negatives**

Catalogue all film and digital photographs and cross-reference to the pertinent cultural resource record or inventory form. Preserve digital photographs in file formats (for example TIFF) that will prevent loss of digital file information over time. Be sure to include citation and source information for copyrighted historic photographs. The Attachments application holds project related photographs (digital files and scans of film images) and is linked to the project or cultural resource record as appropriate. Historic Photographs may be saved as scanned attachments to the project, assemblage, or cultural resource record as appropriate.

#### **84.6 – Ethnographic, Traditional Cultural Properties, and Sacred Site Information**

Treat all data collected from Indian Tribes and other cultural groups concerning their traditions, histories, and lifeways, as confidential information. Secure such information in a locked file or storage area. See section 86 of this Handbook for information on confidentiality. Identify cultural resources that meet the definition of a Traditional Cultural Property or a Sacred Site in the Sites Module within the Management Use field.

Promptly transcribe oral histories recorded on tape into a manuscript to insure the survival of the interview. Attach electronic versions of the interview to the appropriate Site or Event in Heritage NRM.

## **84.7 – Electronic Data**

Catalogue all film and digital photographs and cross-reference to the pertinent cultural resource record or inventory form. Conservation of print materials should focus on proper handling, and maintaining an environment conducive for preserving the media's integrity. Regularly evaluate items based on media type and environmental conditions to determine if long-term curation is needed according to 36 CFR 79 standards. Before off-site curation, scan all film and or negatives and store in NRM Attachments via the Heritage NRM application to preserve the heritage security roles. Save the scanned attachments to the project, assemblage, or cultural resource record as appropriate.

Preserve digital media in file formats that will prevent loss of digital file information. Digital media pertinent to managing cultural resources should be stored on secure Agency servers.

Do not permanently store digital media on a computer hard drive without being backed up on a server or other secure digital media storage, such as an external hard drive. Detached hard drives and USB flash drives are appropriate as temporary computer backups but are not reliable archives.

Transfer digital media to NRM Attachments from within the Heritage NRM application to preserve the heritage secure access roles. Label, catalogue, and archive CDs and DVDs in a secure storage space with environmental controls.

## **85 – Tools, Training, and Support**

To help Heritage professionals meet the information management requirements and goals set out by Forest Service policy, the Forest Service has provided tools, training, and application support to ensure that this work can be completed in the most efficient and cost-effective way possible.

### **85.1 – Data Migration**

Where appropriate, Heritage information stored in Access, Oracle, Excel, and other electronic databases, software, and spreadsheets should be migrated into the Heritage NRM application. Use NRM data migration tools to facilitate the transfer of tabular and geospatial data into the new schemas and formats. Only these systems are maintained and supported by a national user help staff. The user guides for the data migration tools are in Heritage NRM Online help.

### **85.2 – Data Collection with Mobile Devices**

When possible, collect field data using mobile recording devices. Mobile units expedite data recording and uploading to Heritage NRM. Using mobile data recording equipment also helps to eliminate transcription errors between the field and office.

### **85.3 – Training Opportunities**

Acquire NRM training via the following sources:

1. AgLearn, via online or webcast training.
2. Regional classrooms or web-based training.
3. On-line tutorials and quick guides.

Regional Heritage Data Stewards are the point-of-contact for Heritage professionals seeking training. Training is provided in the use of all NRM applications, including NRM Basics, all Heritage NRM application components, Heritage Mobile, Heritage Geospatial, and Reporting and User views.

Acquire Basic GIS training via the following sources:

1. The Geospatial Awareness Training Center (GSTC): free or low-cost Forest Service classroom, webcast, and self-guided training.
2. The ESRI Virtual Campus: beginner and advanced training available to Forest Service employees accessed through the GSTC website.
3. Remote Sensing Applications Center.
4. Forest Service NRM Training and webcasts for the Geospatial Interface tool

### **85.4 – Getting Support When There is a Problem**

Obtain NRM support via the CHD Helpdesk, located on the main page of the NRM web site. The NRM Support page can provide answers to Frequently Asked Questions and provide assistance in troubleshooting an issue. A link to the CHD helpdesk is located on the NRM Support web page.

### **86 – Confidentiality**

Refer to FSM 2361.4 for laws that provide for protection of sensitive information from public disclosure, including NHPA Section 304(a), ARPA Section 9, the Freedom of Information Act (5 USC 552 [b][3]), and the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008.

Archaeological documents, in project records and administrative records, have no one universal treatment in regards to FOIA. There are circumstances when it is difficult to ascertain whether a document must be protected in an administrative record. When in doubt, err on the side of confidentiality, or contact the Regional Heritage Program Leader who will then consult with Office of General Council (OGC) attorneys.

Regard all electronic Forest Service cultural resource data as confidential. It is part of a national corporate data management system with access and permissions protocols, and has firewall protection.

### **86.1– Statutory Protection of the Confidentiality of Archaeological Resource Information**

The Archaeological Resource Protection Act (ARPA) provides that “information concerning the nature and location of any archaeological resources” for which the excavation or removal requires an ARPA permit or permission under ARPA or any other provision of Federal law may not be made available to the public under FOIA or under any other provision of law. Such information may be disclosed if the Agency Official determines that disclosure would further the purposes of the Act and would not create a risk of harm to the resources or the site where they are located. See section 296.18 of Title 36, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 296 – Protection of Archaeological Resources: Uniform Regulations.

When the nature and location of the resources must be kept confidential, documents containing this information can be made public in the project records and administrative records after the nature and location are redacted. If the nature and locational information cannot be protected, then the document must be withheld in its entirety.

### **86.2 – Statutory Protection of the Confidentiality of Human Remains, resources or cultural items, uses or activities**

Under the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, Title VIII: Forestry, Subtitle B - Cultural and Heritage Cooperation Authority (25 U.S.C. 3056), protection of the confidentiality of human remains, resources or cultural items, uses or activities is established. This section provides that the Secretary of Agriculture will not release under FOIA information relating to human remains or cultural items reburied on National Forest System land pursuant to the authority granted in the statute. Also protected is the confidentiality of resources, cultural items, uses, or activities that have a traditional and cultural purpose and are provided to the government by an individual Native American or Indian Tribes under an express expectation of confidentiality.

However, the Secretary of Agriculture may disclose this protected information after consultation with the affected Tribe or lineal descendant and a determination that disclosure would both advance the purpose of the statute and is necessary to protect the remains or items from harm, theft, or destruction.

Maintain confidentiality by either redacting the nature and locational information, or by withholding documents in their entirety if redactions cannot effectively protect confidentiality.

### **86.3 – Statutory Provision Regarding Confidentiality of Historic Resources**

Section 304 of the National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. 470w-3) provides that the Agency Official, after consultation with the Secretary of Interior shall withhold from

disclosure to the public, information about the location, character, or ownership of a historic resource, if it is determined that disclosure may cause significant invasion of privacy, risk harm to the historic resource, or impede the use of a traditional religious site by practitioners. It further provides that if a determination is made to withhold information from the public, a determination of who may have access to such information should be made. Finally, when the information in question has been developed in the course of Section 106 compliance, the Secretary must also consult with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation to reach the required determinations under this section.

Historic resource information is not automatically protected from disclosure or required to be withheld from administrative records under FOIA unless requisite findings are made.

#### **86.4 – Confidentiality of Sacred Sites under Executive Order 13007 – Indian Sacred Sites**

Executive Order 13007 – Indian Sacred Sites provides that, “to the extent practicable, permitted by law, and not clearly inconsistent with essential agency functions... [w]here appropriate, agencies shall maintain the confidentiality of sacred sites. Sacred sites are defined as a discreet location on Federal land that is identified by a Tribe or a religious representative of a Tribe as sacred by virtue of its connection, significance to or use by an Indian religion. The Tribe or representative must have informed the agency about the site.

Information about sacred sites is not automatically protected from disclosure under FOIA. However, the Agency Official can take steps to attempt to maintain information about sacred sites confidential, where appropriate. The Forest Service has authority to maintain the confidentiality of some information provided by Native Americans through section 8106 of the 2008 Food, Conservation, and Energy Act. See section 01 of the Zero Code of this Handbook for further explanation of this authority.

Information about sacred sites is not required to be withheld from administrative records by law. However, the Agency Official can take steps to maintain such information confidentiality by agreement with parties in litigation or by requesting a protective order from the court, whenever such information is required to be disclosed. A protective order will prevent general public access to the information.