

HISTORIC RESOURCE SURVEY

INTRODUCTION

A Historic Resources Survey is the principal tool for identifying historic properties and placing them in the local, state and/or national historic context. It is how resources are documented and evaluated for their significance.

- Identify and protect historic resources that are at risk of being lost. This includes cultural landscapes such as farms and battlefields.
- Inform planning and land development decisions by keeping up to date records on historic resources and their locations.
- Provide information for Determination of Eligibility for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.
- Assist in educating and raising public awareness about historic places.
- Promote economic development by attracting tourists and businesses to historic areas by sharing information about the community history.
- Increase community pride and sense of place.
- Serve as a basis for requesting grant funding for historic places.

Disaster Planning can also be included in surveys to identify historic resources at risk of natural disasters. Incorporating this information into historic resource surveys better informs the means of hazard mitigation to historic properties and can help speed up damage assessments during disaster response.



APPLICABILITY

The identification of historic resources is an ongoing process. Municipalities can review existing surveys and PA-SHARE for already documented resources. These can then be updated to include additional older and historic resources. Added resources may include places with more inclusive stories and histories or sites that have recently reached the 50-year age threshold. Surveys should be reviewed and updated every 10-20 years. Not every update needs to be comprehensive, but by regularly reviewing the historic resources in a locality, a municipality can better inform their planning process and documents.

IMPLEMENTATION

There are two ways to perform surveys: Identification and Evaluation.

Identification Level, often simply called a windshield survey, involves:

- Identifying previously surveyed resources
- Performing limited background research on the resources
- Completing fieldwork to document the physical characteristics of a site and take photographs (at least one current color photograph is needed to meet the PA SHPO requirements)
- Preparing the forms and entering information into the PA-SHARE online database for submission

Evaluation Level Surveys require a more in-depth and comprehensive review of all the historic resources in a given locality. These surveys should provide enough information for the PA SHPO to evaluate their eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.



SUCCESSFUL CASE STUDIES

Chester County Municipalities participated in the countywide Historic Resource Survey in 1979-1982. Since 2004, 45 municipalities have participated in the Chester County Historic Resource Mapping Atlas Update which serves as an update to the 1979-1982 Survey.

Municipalities in the Brandywine Battlefield completed inventories of battle-related resources prior to a more comprehensive 2010 Battle of Brandywine Historic Resource Survey.

In Delaware County, 31 of 49 municipalities have completed historic resource surveys.



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