

Heritage (Cultural) Resources

You must contact the DNR Division of Forestry's Archaeologist to request a search of the heritage Resource Database to determine whether heritage resources are known to occur on or near the property.

Heritage resources, often referred to as cultural resources, are physical evidence of past human activity. They reflect 10,000 years of human occupation in Minnesota. The major types of heritage resources are:

- historic building and other types of structures (dams, bridges, fire towers, etc.)
- archaeological sites (including artifacts below the ground as well as surface features such as building berms and cellar depressions)
- cemeteries (this term includes single or multiple graves in unplatted historic cemeteries as well as burial mounds and other kinds of ancient burials)
- traditional use areas, where plants and other natural resources have traditionally been gathered for food, medicine, or ceremonial uses.

Heritage resources are of concern in forest management because many of them occur in Minnesota's forestlands and they can be damaged by some management activities. A landowner should at least be aware that heritage resources may be present on the property. Ideally a landowner should plan management activities to avoid damaging any heritage resources that are present.

There are no legal requirements for protection of historic structures or archaeological sites on private lands, so as long as no public funds are involved in management activities. Traditional use areas are generally only of concern on public lands within reservation boundaries and within certain territories. Cemeteries are a special case: all human burials are protected by law, regardless of age or land ownership. Deliberate disturbance of graves or grave markers (including vegetation) is a violation of law.

The Office of the State Archaeologist (OSA) and the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) maintain statewide inventories of documented heritage resources. These inventories contain information about heritage resources that have been documented by researchers over the past 150+ years. The DNR Division of Forestry Archaeologist also has access to a statewide inventory that lists recorded heritage resources by legal description. Plan preparers can consult these sources to find out if there are known heritage resources on properties for which they are developing plans.

Be aware that heritage resource information is subject to some confidentiality restrictions. As an agent of the landowner, you can request the information, but you will be expected to provide it only to the landowner. The information you receive will be generalized unless there is a management need for more detailed data.

You can contact any of the agencies or individuals listed below, but the DNR Forestry Archaeologist is recommended as the first contact.

Mike Magner
DNR Forestry Archaeologist
Resource Assessment
413 SE 13th Street
Grand Rapids, MN 55744
Phone: (218) 327-4449 ext. 243
Fax: (218) 327-4517
E-mail: mike.magner@dnr.state.mn.us

Preferred methods of contact are (1) E-mail, (2) Fax, including your return fax number, and (3) regular mail.

Office of the State Archaeologist
Fort Snelling History Center
St. Paul, MN 55111
Phone: (612) 725-2411

State Historic Preservation Office
Minnesota History Center
345 Kellogg Boulevard West
St. Paul, MN 55102
Phone: (651) 296-5434

The minimum information necessary to check with inventory is:

- County
- Legal description to ¼ section
- Landowner name
- Acreage