

Update to NEPA Brochure on Cultural and Historic Resources

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act requires federal agencies to consult with the State Historic Preservation Office and Tribes on all federal undertakings that have the potential to cause effects on cultural and/or historic resources (historic resources can be almost anything more than 50 years old). Steps for compliance:

1. Determine if there is a federal undertaking that has the potential to affect cultural and/or historic resources. Undertakings include any project, activity or program funded in whole or in part by a federal agency and any activity that requires a federal permit, license or approval. Almost every action has the potential to affect cultural and/or historic resources assuming they are present. BPA environmental staff can help you if you have questions.
2. Identify the Area of Potential Affect (APE) for the project, including access roads, staging areas, etc.
3. Initiate the Section 106 process by submitting a letter to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and the Tribes describing the APE and asking for their concurrence and also requesting any information they may have about the project area. **This letter must come from BPA.** The SHPO and Tribes have 30 days to respond. **Survey work should not normally be started until after at least verbal comments are received from the SHPO and Tribes.**
4. Determine what cultural and/or historic resources are present in the APE. **A qualified archaeologist must complete the survey.** BPA has a pool of contractors that can do this type of work; costs will be charged to your project budget. Surveys cannot be completed when there is snow on the ground. Upon completing a survey, a report should be developed and submitted to BPA for review. Note: For some activities BPA may be able to determine prior to a survey that there will be no effect on cultural and/or historic resources based on the nature of the activity or the site. An example may include a project that proposes to remove a culvert constructed in a man-made roadbed (< 50 years in age). In these instances, BPA must document its determination and submit it to the SHPO and Tribes for consideration (they have 30 days to review).
5. Based on the survey findings, BPA will make a determination of effect and submit that along with the survey report to the State and Tribes. They have 30 days to concur with BPA's determination (or not) or request additional information.