



Glossary

Historic properties:

The National Register of Historic Places includes historically important properties, that can be buildings, sites, districts, structures, or objects. The following are definitions for these classifications.

Building

A building, such as a house, barn, church, hotel or similar construction, is made to shelter any form of human activity. Examples of buildings include: administration building, house, dormitory garage, library, office building, social hall, student union, classroom building, bookstore, etc.

Site

A site is the location of an important event, a prehistoric or historic occupation or activity, or a building or structure, whether standing, ruined or vanished, where the location itself possesses historic, cultural, or archaeological value regardless of the value of any existing structure. Examples of sites include: designed landscape, natural feature having cultural significance, ruins of a building or structure, trail, village or habitation site

District

A district possesses a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites, buildings, structures or objects united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development. A district derives its importance from being a unified entity, even though it is often comprised of a wide variety of resources. The identity of a district results from the interrelationship of its resources, which can convey a visual sense of the overall historic environment or be an arrangement of historically or functionally related properties.

Structure

The term “structure” is used to distinguish from buildings those functional constructions made usually for purposes other than creating human shelter. Examples of structures include: bridge, canal, fence, street, tunnel, etc.





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Object

The term “object” is used to distinguish from buildings and structures those constructions that are primarily artistic in nature or are relatively small in scale and simply constructed. Although it may be, by nature or design, movable, an object is associated with a specific setting or environment. Examples of objects include: boundary marker, fountain, milepost, monument, sculpture, statuary.

Cultural Resource Categories (from [nps.gov/history/](https://www.nps.gov/history/)):

Cultural landscapes

Cultural landscapes are settings we have created in the natural world. They reveal the connection between people and the land based on our need to grow food, give form to our settlements, for recreation, and find suitable places to bury our dead. Landscapes combine natural and constructed: plants and fences, waterways and buildings. They range from formal gardens to cattle ranches, from cemeteries and pilgrimage routes to village squares. They are special places showing how people changed and used the land.

Historic Landscapes

Historic designed landscapes are places made with a plan and in a specific style, such as the twelve-acre Meridian Hill Park in Washington, D.C., with its French and Italian Renaissance garden features. Designed landscapes include those associated with important persons, trends, or events in the history of landscape architecture, such as Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site and the Blue Ridge Parkway.

Historic vernacular landscapes show peoples’ values and attitudes toward the land and how it was settled, used, and developed over time. Farming areas, fishing villages, mining districts, and homesteads are examples. The 17,400-acre rural landscape of Ebey’s Landing National Historical Reserve represents a continuum of land use spanning more than a century. It has been continually reshaped by its inhabitants, yet the historic mix of farm, forest, village, and shoreline remains.

Historic site

Historic sites are important for their associations with important events, activities, and persons. Battlefields and presidential homes are examples. At these areas people learn what happened there at certain times in the past.

Ethnographic Resources





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Ethnographic resources

Ethnographic resources are basic expressions of human culture and the basis for continuity of cultural systems. A cultural system encompasses both the tangible and the intangible. It includes traditional arts and native languages, religious beliefs and subsistence activities. Some of these traditions are supported by ethnographic resources: special places in the natural world, structures with historic associations, and natural materials. An ethnographic resource might be a riverbank used as a Pueblo ceremonial site or a schoolhouse associated with Hispanic education, sea grass needed to make baskets in an African-American tradition or a 19th-century sample of carved ivory from Alaska. Management of ethnographic resources acknowledges that culturally diverse groups have their own ways of viewing the world and a right to maintain their traditions.

Ethnographic landscape

Ethnographic landscapes are associated with contemporary groups and typically are used or valued in traditional ways. In Alaska parks, Native Alaskans hunt, fish, trap, and gather and give features spiritual meanings. Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve shows the relationship between the natural system of the Delta region and several cultural groups through many generations. Numerous cultural centers maintain ties to distinctive, long-established groups with ethnic identities.

Structures

Structures are things people have made to do things they otherwise couldn't do. Without those things we could only live where it's warm, only travel the distances we can walk, and the loads we can carry. With them we can live where we choose, cross the continent in hours, and hurl a spacecraft at the moon. Structures are buildings that keep us warm in winter's worst blizzard and bridges that keep us safe over raging rivers; they are locomotives that carry us over vast prairies and monuments to extend our memories.

Archeological resources

Archeological resources are the remains of past human activity and records documenting the scientific analysis of these remains. Archeological resources include stratified layers of household debris and the weathered pages of a field notebook, laboratory records of pollen analysis and museum cases of polychrome pottery. Archeological features are typically buried but may extend above ground; they are commonly associated with prehistoric peoples but may be products of more contemporary society. What matters most about an archeological resource is its potential to describe and explain human behavior. Archeological resources have shed light on family organization and dietary patterns, they have helped us understand the spread of ideas over time and the development of settlements from place to place.





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Museum objects

Museum objects are manifestations and records of behavior and ideas that span the breadth of human experience and depth of natural history. They are evidence of technical development and scientific observation, of personal expression and curiosity about the past, of common enterprise and daily habits. Museum objects range from a butterfly collection to the woven fragments of a prehistoric sandal. They include the walking cane of an American president, a blacksmith's tools, and the field notes of a marine biologist. They encompass fossilized dinosaur bones and business journals, household furnishings and love letters bound with a faded ribbon. They are invaluable—samples and fragments of the world through time and the multitude of life therein.

