

Creosote Removal and Cultural Resources

The Washington State Department of Natural Resources' policy is to identify and protect significant historic and archaeological sites, and to actively communicate and promote collaboration with Tribes and interested stakeholders to address culturally significant areas. In addition, the Governor's Executive Order 05-05 requires a cultural resource process for capital construction projects. This includes consultation with affected tribes and review with the Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP). It also may include working with them both on archaeological survey and mitigation strategies and taking reasonable action to avoid, minimize or mitigate adverse effects to the resources.

In general, there are three phases in cultural resource management: Identification, Evaluation, and Protection.

Identification

Creosoted structures more than 50 years old are recorded with the Department of Archeology and Historic Preservation:

- Those structures retaining structural integrity are recorded as historic structures.
- Those structures without structural integrity are recorded as archaeological sites.

Evaluation

Recorded sites are evaluated using the criteria established for the National Register of Historic Places or the Washington Heritage Register.

National Register of Historic Places Criteria for Evaluation

Properties must possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- A. To be associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history;
- B. To be associated with the lives of significant persons in the present or past;
- C. To embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction;
- D. To have yielded or may be likely to yield, information that is important in history or prehistory.

Washington Heritage Register Criteria for Evaluation

The resource should have a high to medium level of integrity, that is, it should retain important character-defining features from its historic period of construction.

The resource should have been documented at the local, state, or federal level as having historical significance.

Protection

Prehistoric and historic archaeological sites are accorded some level of protection under state law (RCW 27.53). There is no protection under Washington State law for non-archaeological historic structures. Usually only those properties eligible to the National Register of Historic Places or the Washington Heritage Register are considered significant and protected.

Protection does not necessarily mean conservation. The structures may still be removed.

Data recovery is considered a form of protection (recording with DAHP, photographs, engineering drawings, or archaeological excavations, etc.) Educational signage can be considered a type of protection.