



NATIONAL REGISTER BULLETIN

GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATING AND DOCUMENTING RURAL HISTORIC LANDSCAPES

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U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service

EVALUATION

Evaluation entails three major activities: defining significance, assessing historic integrity, and selecting boundaries. Information gathered through historic research and field survey is related to the study area's historic contexts to determine the extent to which identified properties possess the characteristics of important rural property types. Significance, integrity, and boundaries depend upon the presence of tangible landscape features and the evidence of the processes, cultural and natural, that have shaped the landscape.

Historical facts and survey data should verify the presence of significant historic landscape characteristics and the condition of the properties that made up a community or region historically. For example, the historic patterns of an agricultural community subject to increasing suburbanization may be evident in eight farms having at least 75 percent of their historic acreage, a substantial number of historic buildings, and compatible agricultural use.

Patterns of change, within a regional or local context, may affect significance. For example, in a six-county region of a midwestern State, typical farmsteads contain similarly arranged clusters of corncribs, sugar houses, wellhouses, and poultry pens; fruit orchards of a standard size; maple-lined roadways; and fenced pastures. As changing agricultural methods and new land uses destroy more and more of these characteristics, isolated communities and individual farmsteads retaining the historic configuration may become eligible for National Register listing.

Properties relating to the same historic contexts may be compared to identify those eligible for listing in the National Register and to determine the relative level--local, State, or national--at which the property is significant. For example, several communities in Nebraska may have local significance for their association with Russian settlement; when they are compared, only those with a high degree of integrity--exhibited in intact field patterns, boundary demarcations, roadways, clusters of vernacular structures and buildings, and continuing traditional activities--have statewide importance.

Defining Significance

An understanding of significance is paramount. It is necessary, first, to determine whether a rural property meets the National Register criteria, and,

second, to guide decisions about integrity and boundaries. Historical facts are examined to define those periods of time and aspects of development in which a specific property contributed to the broad themes, or historic contexts, important to its community, State, or the nation.

1. Apply the National Register Criteria

A property must possess significance in at least one of the four aspects of cultural heritage specified by the National Register criteria. Because of their complex evolution and the layering of subsequent land uses without destroying previous ones, many rural landscapes have significance under several criteria.



Integrity of feeling is a composite of several factors -- association, location, design, materials, and settings. Reflecting many years of local use, a country road in Goose Creek Historic District in Loudoun County, Virginia, retains its historic location, narrow width, unpaved surface, incidental vegetation, pastoral setting, and rural feeling. (Virginia Department of Historic Resources)

The criteria can be applied to the study area as a whole and to smaller properties within it. Judgments of significance are made by relating facts about the history and existing landscape characteristics of the study area to the themes and property types recognized as important by the area's historic contexts.

CRITERION A

Criterion A applies to properties associated with events that have made significant contributions to the broad patterns of history. Some events may have been brief, such as a battle or treaty signing. Others may be activities that spanned long periods of time and underwent substantial change, such as dairy farming or silver mining.

Criterion A recognizes the significant contributions that rural properties have made through diverse events and activities, including exploration, settlement, ethnic traditions, farming, animal husbandry, ranching, irrigation, logging, horticulture, fishing, fish culturing, mining, transportation, and recreation. Village and farm clusters, fields and other land use areas, roadways, natural features, vegetation, and boundary demarcations may together illustrate important events and activities that led to a community's development.

Although significant events are often closely related to land uses, historic significance should not be equated with general land uses or the functions of specific buildings or structures. A rural agricultural community may be more important for the role its founders played in settlement and ethnic heritage, than for the logging, farming, or fishing activities that sustained its economy. A canal system may have significance for its impact on the settlement and agricultural development of a region but have little importance in the history of transportation routes.

Many rural properties contain landscape characteristics related to agricultural land uses and practices. Eligibility for significance in agriculture on a local level depends on several factors. First, the characteristics must have served or resulted from an important event, activity, or theme in agricultural development as recognized by the historic contexts for the area. Second, the property must have had a direct involvement in the significant events or

activities by contributing to the area's economy, productivity, or identity as an agricultural community. Third, through historic landscape characteristics, the property must cogently reflect the period of time in which the important events took place.

CRITERION B

Criterion B applies to properties associated with the lives of persons significant in our past. Such persons may have, by their success, talent, or ingenuity, contributed to the historic development or economic prosperity of their community, for example, a prominent rancher who successfully employed newly-available irrigation for citrus-growing in the Southwest.

Significance under criterion B is often unrelated to historic uses. This is particularly true of farms that were the home of political leaders, writers, poets, artists, or industrialists. For example, Connemara, in Flat Rock, North Carolina, is significant as the home where poet Carl Sandburg spent the last 22 years of his life and wrote much of his poetry. Historic landscape characteristics are important in establishing the historic association and setting of these properties.

Properties, such as centennial farms, are recognized in many States for the ownership or contributions of one family over a long period of time. These properties qualify for National Register listing, under criterion B, if the accomplishments of one or more family members stand out. (The cumulative accomplishments of several individuals or the continuing operation of the farm over several generations may meet criterion A).



Homestead in the 1890s, the 40-acre Hanka Farm on the Keweenaw Peninsula, Michigan, retains its early organization. Significant features include a curvilinear driveway, abandoned apple orchard and fields, and numerous log buildings. Within one of the earliest and largest Finnish rural communities in the United States, the farm reflects cultural traditions and building types, such as the savusauna, or smoke sauna, that were transferred from northern Europe and adapted to the climatic, physical, and social conditions of the western Great Lakes region. (Alan C. Pape)



Silver-mining spurred development along Clear Creek between Georgetown and Silver Plume, Colorado, in the 1870s and 1880s. By 1900, mine entrances, the ore-processing mill, and an extensive underground network of tunnels and shafts lay abandoned. The Georgetown Loop Railroad, constructed in 1877 to transport silver ore and characterized by dramatic cuts in grade, however, continued to operate as a popular tourist attraction. (William H. Jackson, State Museum of Colorado)

CRITERION C

Criterion C applies to properties embodying the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction; possessing high artistic values; or representing a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.

Significant physical qualities may be present in a number of ways. The organization of space, visible in the arrangement of fields or siting of farmsteads, may illustrate a pattern of

land use significant for its representation of traditional practices unique to a community. Buildings and outbuildings, whether high-style or vernacular, may be distinctive in design, style, or method of construction, and be representative of historic local or regional trends. Similarly, an irrigation or transportation system may reflect an important innovation in engineering that fostered a community's prosperity. Rural landscapes may also contain smaller, designed landscapes that have importance. These may include a formal garden having high artistic value or a farmyard laid out according to a professionally-designed plan such as those published in agricultural journals and State extension service bulletins.

Significance may be based on vernacular patterns of land use and division, architecture, circulation, and social order. These patterns may indicate regional trends or unique aspects of a community's development. An important pattern may be represented by a single farm, or be repeated by adjoining farms within a township or county. The recognition of important patterns may require in-depth primary research, multidisciplinary study, the judgment of experts, and comparisons with survey data from other areas. Landscape characteristics may be used to define these patterns and to establish a measure of integrity, as a guide for identifying eligible properties that illustrate these patterns.

CRITERION D

Criterion D applies to properties that have yielded or are likely to yield, information important to prehistory or history. Surface or subsurface remains may provide information about agricultural or industrial land uses, settlement patterns, or ceremonial traditions. For example, the Hohokam-Pima Irrigation Canals in Arizona have provided information about the agricultural practices and engineering capabilities of the Hohokam culture from 1000-1450 A.D., and about the Pima Indians' reuse of the canals to irrigate crops in the 17th century.



Although reforested, the abandoned fields and roads of Harrisville, New Hampshire, provide evidence of historic land division, agricultural practices, and social customs associated with the community's settlement and pre-industrial history. Stone walls, changes in vegetation, patterns of erosion and deposition, soil content, and remnant foundations are of primary interest to landscape archeologists who are examining patterns of land use or occupation for which there is little written documentation. (Duffy Monahan)

Vegetation and landscape features may themselves provide archeological evidence. Pollen and soil studies, remote-sensing, and an examination of vegetation may provide valuable information about past uses or activities. The abandoned roadways, reforested fields, remnant stone walls, and farmstead clusters in Harrisville, New Hampshire, for example, indicate significant patterns of 18th and early 19th century land division and diversified agriculture. For additional guidance on historic archeological sites, see [National Register Bulletin: Guidelines for Evaluating and Registering Historical Archeological Sites and Districts](#).

LANDSCAPE ARCHEOLOGY

It is relatively simple to determine when a building or structure has lost its structural integrity and any potential significance lies in its value as an archeological site. More difficult, however, is deciding when to treat a landscape as an archeological site. Abandoned land, when undisturbed by later development or construction, may retain surface or subsurface features that can provide information important to an understanding

of historic or prehistoric activities. When land historically cleared and cultivated is reforested, visual qualities of the historic period are lost, yet landscape characteristics such as walls, ditches, roadways, streams, and canals may still be in place and capable of indicating important patterns of land use or organization.

Landscape archeology may involve the examination of characteristics such as walls, road remnants, trail ruts, foundations, and refuse sites. It may also draw information from observable patterns of erosion and vegetation. A number of techniques may be used: analysis of soil stratigraphy; analysis of pollens and other sediments through flotation and core sampling to determine planting patterns; surficial surveys to identify remnant vegetation, boundary demarcations, and evidence of land use; analyses of existing vegetation or plant succession; remote sensing to detect buried walls, foundations, and roadways; and excavation to uncover buried irrigation systems, canals, or planting beds.

Assessments of significance are based on a well-formulated research design that considers the historic contexts for the study area. The research design needs to indicate the landscape characteristics that are represented in the site and the information the site is likely to provide about the landscape characteristics that shaped an area in history or prehistory. It must explain how the information will add to an understanding of the property. The lack of other sources of information, such as written records or intact properties, generally increases the importance of an archeological site.

CRITERIA CONSIDERATIONS

National Register criteria considerations require some rural properties to meet additional standards. These include properties owned by religious organizations, cemeteries, commemorative properties, reconstructed farms, ceremonial sites, grounds associated with birthplaces or graves, and areas predominated by landscape characteristics less than fifty years of age.

Properties, such as farms or estates owned by religious institutions, and rural areas that were the site of religious activities, such as ceremonies or camp meetings, are eligible if they derive their primary significance from the physical characteristics of the land or from the historical events that took place there. The birthplace or grave of an historical figure of outstanding importance, with any associated land, may be eligible if there is no other appropriate site or building directly associated with the individual's productive life. Cemeteries in rural areas may be eligible if their primary significance is derived from the graves of persons of transcendental importance, or from age, distinctive design, or association with historic events, such as a cemetery that is the only tangible remains of a community's pioneering period. A commemorative property may be eligible if design, age, tradition, or symbolic value has invested it with historical importance, for example, a State forest named for an important public figure may be important for its recreational or economic uses.

Farm museums that are reconstructions of farms or artificial assemblages of moved buildings are not eligible. Historically important farms or agricultural communities used as museums, may be eligible if their historic integrity has not been destroyed by new construction, moved buildings, or adaptive uses. Farm museums at least fifty years of age, whether reconstructions, assemblages, or original farms, may be eligible based on their significance as museums.

Continuity of land uses and cultural associations is a common concern in evaluating rural

landscapes. Properties less than fifty years of age may be listed only if they are exceptionally important. The passage of time is necessary to recognize historic importance. This requirement applies to rural properties where a large proportion of buildings and structures were built or moved within the past 50 years, or where the predominant patterns of land use and division developed within the past 50 years. For guidance on evaluating exceptional importance, see [National Register Bulletin: *Guidelines for Evaluating and Nominating Properties That Have Achieved Significance Within the Past Fifty Years*](#).

2. Select Areas of Significance

Area of significance is that aspect of history in which a rural property, through use, occupation, physical character, or association, influenced the development or identity of its community or region. Although agriculture is most common, a number of other areas of significance may also apply, including industry in the case of mining or lumbering areas, conservation and recreation for parks and natural reserves, and transportation for migration trails. The area of significance is not necessarily the same as the general land use; for example, a farming community may be important in ethnic heritage but not in agriculture.

Several areas of significance apply to the physical qualities of a rural landscape. Community development and planning applies to areas reflecting important patterns of physical development, land division, or land use. Landscape architecture applies to properties based on established design principles or a conscious design. Architecture is used when significant qualities are embodied in the design, style, or method of construction of buildings and structures such as houses, churches, community buildings, barns, and outbuildings. Engineering applies to properties having significant systems of irrigation, drainage, transportation, or water power, as well as significant structures such as dams, bridges, tunnels, mining shafts, and fencing.

3. Define Period of Significance

Period of significance is the span of time when a property was associated with important events, activities, persons, cultural groups, and land uses, or when it attained important physical qualities or characteristics. Although it may be short, more often it extends many years, covering a series of events, continuum of activities, or evolution of physical characteristics. Properties may have more than one period of significance.

The period of significance begins with the date of the earliest land use or activity that has importance and is reflected by historic characteristics tangible today. The period closes with the date when the events, activities, and construction having historic importance ended. Properties that have evolved and achieved importance during separate periods, some spanning several hundred years, should be given several periods of significance. All landscape characteristics should be considered, since buildings and structures may date to one era, while roads, field patterns, and archeological sites may date to earlier ones.

Continuous land use, association, or function does not by itself justify continuing the period of significance. The length of time should be based on the years when the property historically made important contributions in the areas of significance. Fifty years ago may be used as the closing date for the period of significance if a more specific date cannot be identified.

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE FOR RURAL LANDSCAPES

The following areas of significance commonly apply to rural landscapes:

Agriculture, where the land has been used for cultivating crops, raising livestock, and other activities that have contributed to the growth, development, and economy of a community during particular periods of its history.

Architecture, where a collection of high-style or vernacular buildings and outbuildings are integrally related to large areas of landscape by historical association, function, design, spatial arrangement, or setting; and are indicative of the physical development, materials, or land uses of a State, region, or community, or the building practices or traditions of the people who occupied it.

Archeology, where patterns visible upon the land or evident in subsurface remains can provide important information about land use and occupation of prehistoric or historic peoples.

Community Planning and Development, where the spatial organization and character of the landscape are the result of either a consciously designed plan or vernacular patterns of land use or land division.

Conservation, where the landscape has been the subject of an important stage, event, or development in the conservation of natural or cultural resources.

Engineering, where the landscape and its uses reflect the practical application of scientific principles to serve human needs, such as reclamation, irrigation, and water power.

Exploration/Settlement, where the landscape continues to reflect the exploration, establishment, or early development of a community or region.

Industry, where the landscape has been shaped or manipulated to provide goods or services, through activities such as lumbering, mining, milling and quarrying, that have contributed to the development of a community or society in general.

Landscape Architecture, where the landscape contains sites--including gardens, farmyards, and parks--that have been based on established design principles or conscious designs, or are the work of a master, having importance within the context of landscape design.

Science, where the landscape has been the subject of research related to the advancement or understanding of agriculture, horticulture, silviculture, animal husbandry, or other scientific disciplines.

Assessing Historic Integrity

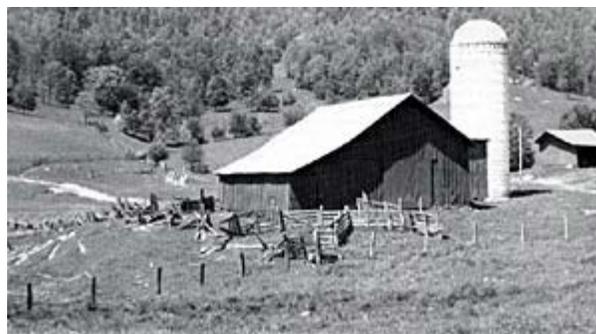
Historic integrity is the composite effect of seven qualities: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Decisions about historic integrity require professional judgments about whether a property today reflects the spatial organization, physical components, and historic associations that it attained during the periods of significance. A property's periods of significance become the benchmark for measuring whether subsequent changes contribute to its historic evolution or alter its historic integrity.

Historic integrity requires that the various characteristics that shaped the land during the historic period be present today in much the same way they were historically. No landscape will appear exactly as it did fifty or one hundred years ago. Vegetation grows, land use practices change, and structures deteriorate. The general character and feeling of the historic period, however, must be retained for eligibility. Historical vistas that have remained open often provide a general vantage point for evaluating change. Historic and contemporary views may be compared through old photographs, diary entries, and letters.

Depending on significance, the presence of some characteristics is more critical to integrity than others. Vegetation and land uses are important to an area historically significant for grazing and cropping, while landforms and circulation networks may be essential to a mining community. The integrity of a significant collection of vernacular stone construction may rely heavily on the condition of boundary walls, farmhouses, barns, outbuildings, bridges, and community buildings. Boundary demarcations, early roadways, clusters, and small-scale elements may be necessary to depict the significant patterns of settlement and field arrangements in an ethnic community.

1. Apply Qualities of Integrity

Because of the overriding presence of land, natural features, and vegetation, the seven qualities of integrity called for in the National Register criteria are applied to rural landscapes in special ways.



Setting is the physical environment within and surrounding a rural historic landscape. A fertile 40 square-mile basin atop 4,000-foot Garden Mountain, Burke's Garden Historic District, Tazewell County, Virginia, contains the material culture of occupations and agricultural activities from 8000 B.C. to the present. The district lies in the forested and sparsely settled highlands of the Southern Appalachians. (Virginia Department of Historic Resources)

The relationship of landscape characteristics and integrity is complex. Patterns of spatial organization, circulation networks, and clusters directly relate to design and strongly influence the cohesiveness of a landscape. Boundary demarcations, small-scale elements, vegetation, and the evidence of responses to the natural environment all add to location and setting as well as design. Continuing or compatible land uses and activities enhance integrity of feeling and association. Buildings and structures, vegetation, small-scale elements, and land uses all reflect materials, workmanship, and design. Archeological sites may strengthen integrity by providing physical evidence of activities no longer practiced.

Location is the place where the significant activities that shaped a property took place. Geographical factors, including proximity to natural resources, soil fertility, climate, and accessibility, frequently determined the location of rural settlements. In some places, these factors have continued to spur growth and development. In others, they have insulated communities from change, fostering the preservation of historic characteristics, practices, and traditions. A rural landscape whose characteristics retain their historic location has integrity of location.

Design is the composition of natural and cultural elements comprising the form, plan, and spatial organization of a property. Design results from conscious and unconscious decisions over time about where areas of land use, roadways, buildings and structures, and vegetation are located in relationship to natural features and to each other. Design also relates to the functional organization of vegetation, topography, and other characteristics, for example, upland pastures bounded by forested hillsides and windbreaks sheltering fields or orchards.

New vegetation or reforestation may affect the historic integrity of design. Changes in land use may not seriously alter integrity if historic boundary demarcations, circulation networks, and other components remain in place. Shifts in land use from wheatfield to pasture or the introduction of contour plowing may not seriously affect the overall design, whereas the extensive irrigation and planting of fruit trees on land historically used for cattle grazing would.

Setting is the physical environment within and surrounding a property. Large-scale features, such as bodies of water, mountains, rock formations, and woodlands, have a very strong impact on the integrity of setting. Small-scale elements such as individual plants and trees, gateposts, fences, milestones, springs, ponds, and equipment also cumulatively contribute to historic setting.

Materials within a rural property include the construction materials of buildings, outbuildings, roadways, fences, and other structures. The presence of native minerals, stone, and even soil can add substantially to a rural area's sense of time and place. These may be present in natural deposits or built construction.

Vegetation, as material, presents a complex problem. Plants do not remain static but change over time and have a predictable lifespan. While hardwoods and evergreens thrive for decades, most crops are seasonal and demand rotation. Plants and trees are subject to blights and disease and may be damaged by weather and climatic changes. Furthermore, the relationships among plant species vary over time due to differing growth patterns and lifespans, animal grazing behavior, and changes in soil conditions. Soil exhaustion, erosion, improper crop rotation, availability of water, and pollution may affect soil productivity and alter the succession of vegetation.

Original plant materials may enhance integrity, but their loss does not necessarily destroy it. Vegetation similar to historic species in scale, type, and visual effect will generally convey integrity of setting. Original or in-kind plantings, however, may be necessary for the eligibility of a property significant for specific cultivars, such as a farm noted for experiments in the grafting of fruit trees.

Workmanship is exhibited in the ways people have fashioned their environment for functional and decorative purposes. It is seen in the ways buildings and fences are constructed, fields are plowed, and crops harvested. The workmanship evident in the carved gravestones of a rural cemetery endures for a long time. Although the workmanship in raising crops is seasonal, it does contribute to a property's historic integrity if it reflects traditional or historic practices.

Feeling, although intangible, is evoked by the presence of physical characteristics that reflect the historic scene. The cumulative effect of setting, design, materials, and workmanship creates the sense of past time and place. Alterations dating from the historic period add to integrity of feeling while later ones do not.

Association is the direct link between a property and the important events or persons that shaped it. Integrity of association requires a property to reflect this relationship. Continued use and occupation help maintain a property's historic integrity if traditional practices are carried on. Revived historic practices, traditional ceremonies or festivals, use of traditional methods in new construction, and continuing family ownership, although not historic, similarly reinforce a property's integrity by linking past and present. New technology, practices, and construction, however, often alter a property's ability to reflect historic associations.

2. Identify Changes and Threats to



Original plant materials, such as teahardwood trees, at Dorris Ranch in Lane County, Oregon, enhance the significance of a rural landscape. Their presence is especially important to the integrity of landscapes significant for the cultivation and productivity of plants having lengthy life spans. (Willamalane Park and Recreation District)

Integrity

Historic integrity is threatened by single major changes such as large scale farming practices that obliterate historic field patterns, flatten the contours of the land, and erase historic boundary markers, outbuildings, and fences. Integrity may also be lost due to the cumulative effect of relocated and lost historic buildings and structures, interruptions in the natural succession of vegetation, and the disappearance of small-scale features that defined historic land uses.

The following changes, when occurring after the periods of significance, may reduce the historic integrity of a rural landscape:

- abandonment and realignment of roadways and canals
- widening and resurfacing of historic roadways
- changes in land use and management that alter vegetation, change the size and shape of fields, erase boundary demarcations, and flatten the contours of land
- modern methods of mining that leave large open pits or massive tailings uncharacteristic of historically significant extraction methods
- introduction of nonhistoric land uses (quarries; tree farms; sanitary landfill; recreational areas; limited access highways and interchanges; power plants, wastewater treatment plants, and other public utilities; subdivision for residential, commercial, or industrial development)
- loss of vegetation related to significant land uses (blights, abandonment, new uses, reforestation, and introduction of new cultivars)
- deterioration, abandonment, and relocation of historic buildings and structures
- substantial alteration of buildings and structures (remodeling, siding, additions)
- replacement of structures such as dams, bridges, and barns
- construction of new buildings and structures
- disturbance of archeological sites (bulldozing, earth removal, highway construction, nonscientific excavation)
- loss of boundary demarcations and small-scale features (fences, walls, ponds, and paving stones)

3. Classify Contributing and Noncontributing Resources

Buildings, structures, objects, and sites are classified as contributing or noncontributing based on their historic integrity and association with a period and area of significance. Those not present during the historic period, not part of the property's documented significance, or no longer reflecting their historic character are noncontributing.

Criteria considerations may affect the classification of religious properties, moved structures, birthplaces and graves, cemeteries, reconstructions, commemorative properties, and properties less than fifty years of age. These may contribute as integral parts of districts, that is, resources that relate, by date and function, association, or character, to the historic significance of the overall property. Examples include: a church founded by an ethnic group that settled an area, a corncrib moved during the period of significance to serve a farm's ongoing evolution, a rural cemetery where generations of local families are buried, and a historic war memorial within a village green.

Reconstructed fields and orchards, as well as buildings and structures, may contribute if suitably located and accurately executed according to a restoration master plan.

Buildings and structures built or moved within the past fifty years generally do not contribute. They affect historic integrity by altering the historic relationships of buildings, structures, and land areas, and by disrupting historic patterns of land division and organization. Recent agricultural buildings--whether built by traditional methods or in modern forms and materials, such as Harvestor silos or corrugated metal hay barns--may be recognized as contributing when sufficient time has lapsed to consider them integral parts of the historic landscape.

4. Weigh Overall Integrity

The final decision about integrity is based on the condition of the overall property and its ability to convey significance. The strength of historic landscape characteristics and the nature, extent, and impact of changes since the periods of significance are important factors to consider.



Modern-day quarrying in Oley Township, Pennsylvania, bears little relationship to historic practices. The operations and the ever-growing pits and tailings they create threaten the district's historic integrity. Despite new quarries and residential subdivisions, Oley Township was listed in the National Register in its entirety, because 90 percent of the 15,000 acres retained the historic pastoral and agricultural character. (Oley Resource Conservation Project)

Integrity depends to a substantial degree on the area's historic contexts. This information indicates the extent of integrity that can be expected for a particular type of historic property given the unique aspects, cultural and natural, of the area and the condition of comparable properties. The survival of significant characteristics, such as field patterns and boundary demarcations, that in other areas have been lost can make a rural property significant despite the deterioration of its buildings and loss of outbuildings.

Loss or relocation of a few features usually does not affect a rural property's overall historic integrity. But the repeated loss of buildings, structures, roadways, and small-scale elements, as well as gradual changes to boundaries and land uses, may cumulatively destroy integrity.

New construction and incompatible land uses covering extensive acreage such as residential subdivisions, modern mining or quarrying operations, refuse dumps and land fill, limited access highways and their interchanges cause the greatest damage. Not only do they introduce major visual intrusions and interrupt the continuity of the historic scene, but they reshape the land, disturb subsurface remains, and introduce ahistorical characteristics.

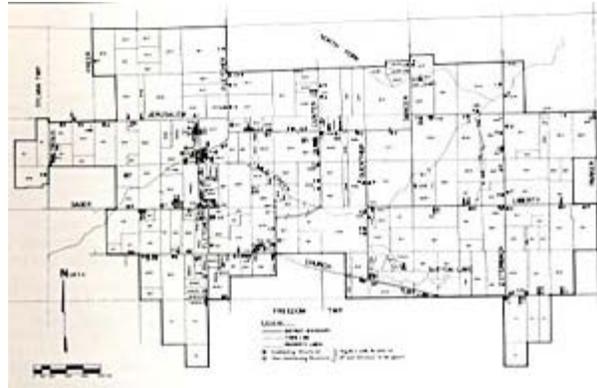
Large rural districts may be able to absorb new development and still maintain their overall historic integrity, provided large-scale intrusions are concentrated in a relatively few locations and cover a proportionately small percentage of the overall acreage. For example, the 15,000 acres of Oley Township Historic District, Pennsylvania, maintain a strong sense of the agricultural activities begun in the 18th and 19th centuries despite the presence of several sizable modern quarries, a large housing subdivision, and contemporary houses along roadways. While the new development is noncontributing it occurs in isolated pockets and covers only ten percent of a historic district otherwise characterized by cultivated fields and scattered farmsteads.

Selecting Boundaries

Boundaries for rural historic landscapes must encompass the area having historic significance, rather than just scenic values, and contain contributing resources that express the characteristics of the historic landscape. For this reason, all of the acreage making up a rural site or district should be reviewed through either an onsite survey or aerial photography.

1. Define the historic property

The historic property is the unit of land actively managed, occupied, settled, or manipulated during the historic period for purposes related to significance.



The boundaries of South Lima Township Rural District, Michigan, are based on property lines, most of which coincide with the historic rectangular grid of the Midwest. Peripheral farms were included or excluded on the basis of their historic integrity. (Lynda Koch)

In the development of historic contexts, the types of historic properties for an area were identified. This information helped determine the study area and focus research and survey activities on specific properties. As facts were associated with existing historic landscape characteristics, the existence of historic properties or portions of them were verified.

Historic properties may be evaluated at various geographical scales. A rural property, such as a farm, may have its own significance, but also be part of a significant collection of neighboring farms or an entire community with a village cluster, outlying farms, and interconnecting roads, that form larger historic districts. The initial step in selecting the boundaries of a rural historic landscape is to determine the extent to which properties at the smallest scale, such as a single farm, are intact and form larger properties that may be listed as large and cohesive historic districts.

If the study area was based on a historic property clearly defined by physical characteristics, historic ownership, or concentration of activity, National Register boundaries may vary little from those of the area studied. In cases, however, where a large area was studied, such as a township or county, with the purpose of identifying eligible properties, a number of properties of varying scales and boundaries may be defined, for example, a large village district and several outlying farms and mill sites.



On September 17, 1862, "Bloody Lane" witnessed some of the most intense fighting of the Civil War. Continuing agricultural land uses and the historic integrity of the sunken farm lane and adjoining fields evoke the historic scene in a photograph taken in August 1934. Monuments along the lane mark commemorative activities that occurred at Antietam National Battlefield in the late

2. Decide what to include

National Register boundaries must encompass a concentration or continuity of historic landscape characteristics. Many properties will not retain their historic property lines or possess significant characteristics throughout. The next step in selecting boundaries is deciding what land within the historic property today has both historic significance and integrity.

Information from survey and research-- including historic land uses, dates of

19th and early 20th centuries. (Allan Rinehart, National Park Service History Collection)

buildings and other components, and changes since the period of significance--

can indicate to what extent the historic property was actively used and today reflects that use. Consulting historic maps, land plats, aerial photographs, land grant records, property deeds, and oral history data can help determine the evolution of the historic property. The overlaying of transparent maps of the same scale to represent various stages of development, including the current condition, is useful for comparing changes over time and for arriving at boundaries. Geographic Information Systems (GIS) can also be used for this purpose.

Continuity is essential. Historic landscape characteristics should predominate and occur throughout. Peripheral areas having a concentration of nonhistoric features should be excluded, while the impact of centrally located ones on historic integrity should be considered. If, because of their density, distribution, and predominance, nonhistoric features seriously fragment the overall historic integrity of large-scale properties, smaller properties having integrity should be identified for listing. This applies, for example, to individual farmsteads in an agricultural community that is experiencing rapid and widespread suburbanization.

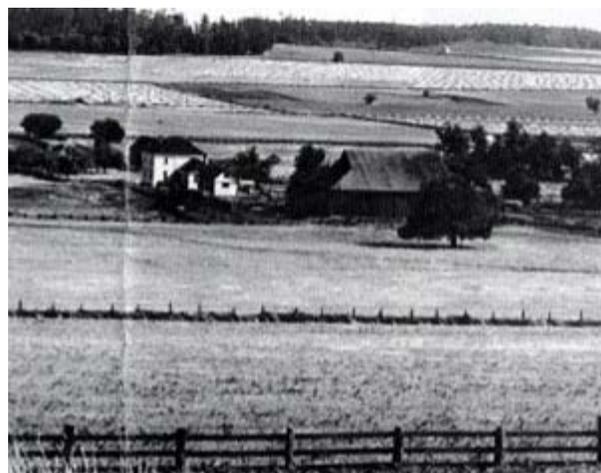
Buffer zones or acreage not related to historic use are excluded from National Register listings, but may be considered in planning and protection. These include natural features that fall within significant historic vistas but were not actively used, managed, or controlled by historic land use or ownership. Also excluded are nonhistoric areas of compatible or similar land use adjoining a historic area--for example, land recently cleared and placed into agricultural use.

Natural features may be included if they are centrally located within the landscape, such as a hill or stream, or if they were actively used for purposes related to historic significance, for example, forests historically used for woodlots, and wetlands used for foraging wild berries.

Peripheral land that provides historic setting, such as forested hillsides or rock escarpments, may be included only if the historic record indicates that the land was historically an integral part of the property being nominated. Such an integral relationship can be established through common historic ownership, the role of the peripheral land in significant land uses or community development, or a passive function such as providing a barrier for defense or protection from wind and weather.

3. Select Appropriate Edges

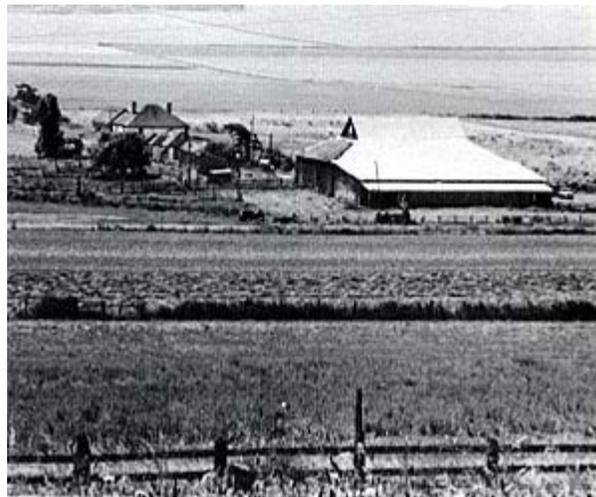
Edges may be defined in several ways. Legal boundaries, based on historic ownership, land use, or incorporation, should be used where a historic property remains intact and is significant in its entirety. Natural features such as bodies of water, ridgelines, and sharp rises in elevation often form edges that have historically separated areas having different land uses. In areas undergoing widespread change, edges, based on current ownership, may be drawn to exclude new land uses or incompatible development. When none of the



approaches listed in Defining the Edges of a Rural Landscape fit a situation, a certain degree of professional judgment will be needed to define an edge--for example, a line drawn between the end of a stone wall and a hedge row that, while somewhat arbitrary, can still be justified.

Edges should be appropriate to the location, historic significance, and integrity of the property. A natural stream and field demarcations may work well in the Piedmont region, while quarter sections of a USGS map are more logical in rural Minnesota where land was divided according to the national rectangular survey.

Several approaches may be combined. An agricultural district, for example, might be bounded by a natural river, the political boundaries of a national forest, the limits of a modern development, and, where intact, the legal boundaries of historic parcels. Whatever the approach, boundaries must be fixed in space and capable of accurate description by metes and bounds, legal descriptions, lines appearing on USGS topographical maps, or site plans drawn to scale.



Pictorial evidence is valuable for charting the evolution of a rural landscape and verifying its historic integrity. Comparative views of Ebey's Prairie, Washington, photographed about 1900 and 1983, indicate little change in the division of land, agricultural land uses, and arrangement of the farmyard cluster. (Pacific Northwest Regional Office, National Park Service)

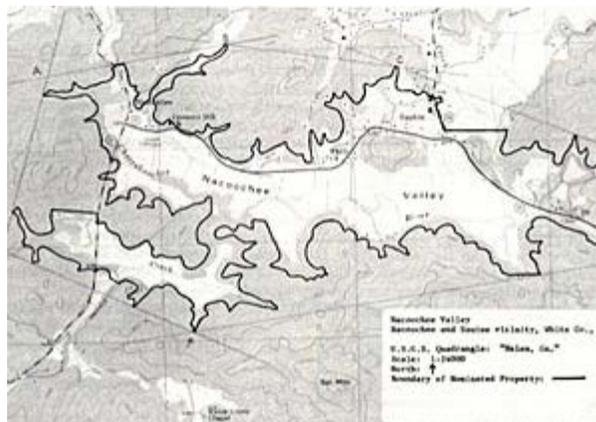
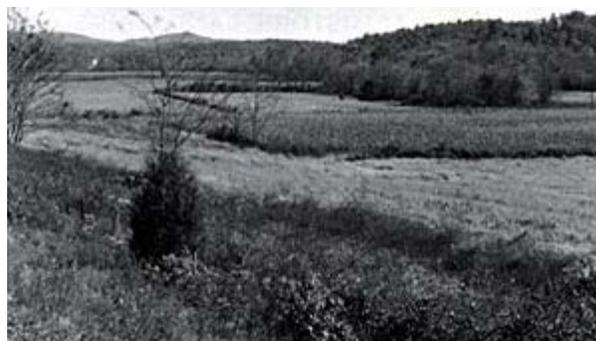
DEFINING THE EDGES OF A RURAL LANDSCAPE

The following are commonly used to define the edges of rural historic landscapes:

Historic legal boundaries of a single property, a group of properties, or an entire political jurisdiction when the historic property possesses continuity of historic landscape characteristics throughout, even though the ownership or division of land may have changed.

Boundary demarcations that are relatively permanent, such as stone fences, irrigation or drainage ditches, and mature hedge rows, when such barriers are based on historic land use or ownership and encompass the concentration of related historic landscape characteristics.

Rights-of-way, such as roads, established paths, and highways, when they separate areas of land that are historically



Settlement and agricultural development occurred within the fertile floodplain of the Nacoochee Valley, Georgia. To encompass the land area actively farmed during the historic period, district boundaries included approximately 2,500 acres and were drawn

significant from those that are either unrelated, insignificant, or not historic.

along the 1,400-foot contour line on the USGS topographical map. (photo: James R. Lockhart; map: Georgia Department of Natural Resources)

Natural features, such as rivers, lakeshores, ridges, plateaus, and contour elevations when such features limited the historic development of the land and continue to contain historic landscape characteristics.

Changes in nature of development or spatial organization, such as the departure of a community having vast tracts of communally owned farmland from the typical Midwestern grid of 160-acre farms, when differences are related to significance.

Edges of new development, such as modern housing, limited access highways, or industrial parks.

Current legal boundaries, when they coincide with the area retaining historic landscape characteristics today. Acreage may be the same or smaller than that within the historic boundaries.

Lines drawn along or between fixed points, such as stone walls, shorelines, or the intersection of two roads, when they contain the area retaining historic landscape features.

Long-standing vegetation that is visible at all seasons, such as a row of hardwoods, when it marks the edge of the area containing historic landscape characteristics.

CONSIDERATIONS IN EVALUATING RURAL HISTORIC LANDSCAPES

This section provides additional guidance for evaluating certain types of properties that either meet the definition of a rural historic landscape or possess historic landscape characteristics.

Properties Having Significant Patterns of Folklife

Historically established patterns of folklife may be perpetuated by the people living in rural properties today. These include traditional customs, crafts, or land use practices that have historic origins and have been passed from one generation to another.

Tangible characteristics may reflect traditional materials, craftsmanship, or functions, such as a cider-press, a community hall, or communally-owned fields. When these date to the historic period, they may contribute to areas of significance such as ethnic heritage, art, architecture, community planning and development, or social history.

Seasonal, short-lived, or recent expressions of folklife are seen in haystacking, using traditional techniques for new construction, and observing traditional customs. While these do not date to the historic period, they do enhance integrity of setting, feeling, and association.

Traditional Cultural Properties

Native Americans and other cultural groups have commonly used natural features or sites for religious, ceremonial, or hunting and gathering activities. Although landscape characteristics may be useful for describing the natural setting of these places, an in-depth study of characteristics is not necessary where traditional uses have not altered the land. For further guidance in evaluating landscapes possessing traditional values, see [National](#)

[Register Bulletin: *Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Traditional Cultural Properties.*](#)

Trails and Roads

Trails and roads require verification that the land nominated is the actual location of the trail. Eligibility requires integrity of setting and location. Boundaries commonly encompass the length and width of the byway and a margin of land, for example, 40 feet, on both sides. Boundaries may be widened to take in encampment sites, mountain passes, fords across streams, and sites marked by trail ruts, arroyos, and surface disturbances associated with historic activity. Boundaries may also include land that forms a historically important and intact setting, for example, the hillsides and rock formations rising from an important pass on a frontier trail. Where the continuity of a byway has been interrupted by nonhistoric development, segments retaining significance and integrity can be nominated together in a multiple property submission.

Battlefields and Encampments

Battlefields, encampments, and other areas where short-term historic events took place may possess important landscape characteristics. Although the significance of these properties does not directly relate to land use, their historic integrity depends upon landscape characteristics such as natural features, land uses, vegetation, and associated buildings and structures. Furthermore, their location may have been determined by natural features, proximity to railroads, land uses, circulation networks, and cultural traditions. When these properties have been preserved for many years, they may have additional significance for patterns of land use and division that have elsewhere disappeared.

Scenic and Recreational Parks

State, county, and national parks set aside for recreational and scenic purposes are designed landscapes to the extent that roads, trails, buildings, vegetation, and other features were developed according to a master plan. These landscapes, due to their location, extensive acreage, purpose, and management, also have the characteristics of a rural landscape. Park features, such as trails, bridges, campgrounds, native flora, cabins, and scenic overlooks, can be meaningfully examined using the system of landscape classification. Circulation networks, response to natural environment, land uses and activities, vegetation related to land use, clusters, and small scale features are particularly useful in documenting these properties.

Mining Properties

Mining properties may include not only the most prominent mining structures, but also the communities shaped as a result of the mining activity and the surrounding land covered by related mining claims and containing historic shafts, tunnels, pits, and tailings. Landscape characteristics can be used to describe and evaluate these properties.

Modern methods of extraction may alter integrity. While the historic presence of tailings may be viewed as part of the historic setting, modern tailings and excavation, with or without recent structures, threaten historic integrity. Open pit mining in an area historically mined through tunnels and shafts destroys historic characteristics, altering an area's historic integrity. However, an open pit mine that has operated since the historic period retains its integrity, if recent extraction methods have been similar to those practiced historically and if the character of the pit is similar, although greater in size, to that of the historic period.

Lumbering Communities

Historic lumbering communities may contain scattered remains of logging activities and forests in varying stages of reforestation. Current tree cover often varies in species and age from historic vegetation. Abandoned areas frequently reflect the natural plant succession that follows cutting, making it impossible to define the visual quality of historic setting. For these reasons, significance depends on an understanding of changing patterns of vegetation and the presence of other characteristics, such as roadways, logging equipment and structures, workers' camps, and transportation facilities.

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JPJ