

WSDOT GUIDANCE ON CULTURAL RESOURCES FOR WETLAND-RELATED FIELDWORK

WSDOT Updated September 2012

A. GUIDANCE

All wetland delineations and other wetland-related fieldwork performed by or for WSDOT must comply with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (36 CFR 800) and other federal and state cultural resources laws and regulations.

Excavating soil pits for wetland delineation is exempt from Section 106 review under the [Statewide Section 106 Programmatic Agreement \(PA\) with FHWA](#) (Exhibit B), as amended. Usually, all parcels to be used for wetland mitigation or wetland areas that will be affected by project construction have been reviewed by a [Cultural Resources Specialist](#) (pdf 39 kb) (CRS), however it is possible that cultural resources may still be present.

Wetland Delineations: There is potential for unanticipated discovery of historical, cultural, and archaeological resources by excavating soil pits needed to perform wetland determinations. If potential cultural resources material is discovered during wetland delineation or other wetland-related fieldwork, refer to the Wetland Unanticipated Discovery Plan (UDP) at the end of this document.

Wetland Mitigation Site Construction: All potential wetland mitigation sites need to follow the procedure set forth below before ground-disturbing investigations or construction of the site.

1. Check with a CRS to find out if a project area or mitigation site has been surveyed and includes any recorded cultural resource sites. The CRS can access this information online through the Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation WISAARD application and the WSDOT GIS Environmental Workbench.
2. Provide a project or mitigation site description, including a map showing study area boundaries, parcel number(s) for the areas in question, a mile post number, and any available plan sheets to the CRS and include a summary of planned ground disturbance (number and type of pits or probes, excavation, etc). The CRS will use that information to assess probability of encountering cultural resources in the project area or mitigation site, and can decide if a cultural resources investigation is necessary prior to or at the time of wetland field work.

3. If a potential wetland area or mitigation site has a recorded cultural resource site(s), work with the CRS to determine appropriate actions needed to protect the resource(s).

The WSDOT Cultural Resources Program provides an annual training and specialized courses tailored to help wetlands staff and consultants recognize cultural resources in the field. This does not preclude the need to check for recorded cultural resource sites, but will improve our ability to identify and protect historical, cultural, and archaeological resources.

The WSDOT [Cultural Resources](#) page provides contacts and additional information.

B. WETLAND UNTACIPATED DISCOVERY PLAN

Procedures for Reporting the Discovery of Cultural Resources or Human Remains During Wetland-related Fieldwork

1. INTRODUCTION

The following Unanticipated Discovery Plan (UDP) outlines procedures to follow, in accordance with state and federal laws, if archaeological materials or human remains are discovered during wetland delineation or other wetland-related fieldwork.

2. RECOGNIZING CULTURAL RESOURCES

A cultural resource discovery could be prehistoric or historic. Examples include:

- An accumulation of shell, burned rocks, or other food related materials (particularly near coastal areas),
- Bones or small pieces of bone,
- Cluster of bottles, tin cans, ceramics or other domestic debris that may be greater than 50 years of age (not typical highway / shoulder debris),
- Stone tools or waste flakes (e.g., an arrowhead, or stone chips),
- Logging or agricultural equipment that appears to be older than 50 years,
- Orchard, fruit trees, or non-native ornamentals out of place on the landscape,
- Buried railroad tracks, decking, or other industrial materials,
- If there is an old house or building nearby, or an old roadway, be aware that there could be archaeological material in the area (fruit trees and ornamentals may still be there if the structure is gone).

When in doubt, assume the material is a cultural resource. If human remains are encountered, treat them with dignity and respect at all times. Cover the remains with a tarp or other materials (not soil or rocks) for temporary protection in place

and to shield them from being photographed. Contact the local Law Enforcement or Coroner's Office, do not speak with the media. (See Section 4).

3. ON-SITE RESPONSIBILITIES

STEP 1: STOP WORK. If any WSDOT employee, consultant or intern believes she or he has uncovered a cultural resource during wetland fieldwork, all work adjacent to the discovery must stop. The discovery location should be protected at all times.

STEP 2: NOTIFY THE CULTURAL RESOURCE (CR) PROGRAM. Contact Scott Williams, Cultural Resource Program Manager or Erin Littauer, Cultural Resources Specialist to notify them of the discovery. The Cultural Resources Program will notify the Tribes, DAHP and Federal agencies (if applicable). **If human remains are encountered**, refer to Section 4 below and contact the Cultural Resources Program.

CR Program Manager:

Scott Williams
360-570-6651
willias@wsdot.wa.gov

CR Specialist:

Erin Littauer
360-570-2448, cell 360-701-3885
littae@wsdot.wa.gov

4. SPECIAL PROCEDURES FOR THE DISCOVERY OF HUMAN SKELETAL MATERIAL

State law requires that any find of human remains be treated as a potential crime scene and be reported to local law enforcement. Any human skeletal remains, regardless of antiquity or ethnic origin, will be treated with dignity and respect at all times. If you find human remains:

- a. If possible, notify the local Law Enforcement Agency through their non-emergency number or the Coroner's Office;
- b. If you do not know the non-emergency number or the Coroner's number, call 911 and report finding human remains and request local law enforcement; you may need to explain to the dispatcher that it is not an emergency, but that you are required by state law to report human remains. The coroner (with assistance of law enforcement personnel) will determine if the remains are human, whether the discovery site constitutes a crime scene, and will notify DAHP and the State Physical Anthropologist.

Wetland monitoring, delineation or other wetland-related field activities outside the discovery location may continue while documentation and assessment of the cultural resources proceed. Wetland field activities may continue at the

discovery location only after the process outlined in this plan is followed and WSDOT determines compliance with state and federal laws is complete.