



# Illinois Department of Natural Resources

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## Illinois State Historic Preservation Office Guidelines for Archaeological Reconnaissance Surveys and Reports

### Introduction

In recent years public concern over the increasingly rapid loss of our country's prehistoric and historic heritage led to the enactment of Federal legislation designed to assist in protecting such resources. As a result of these laws, all construction projects that receive federal assistance, permits, or licenses must be reviewed for their potential impact on cultural resources. The responsibility for performing this review belongs to the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) within the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. This document has been prepared both to inform and assist those firms and agencies who must employ archaeological contractors and to serve as minimum guidelines for such contractors.

### Archaeological Contractors

There are several private archaeological consulting firms operating in the state, and most state universities' Departments of Anthropology have contract archaeologists on staff. The SHPO maintains a list of IAS-certified archaeological contractors that is available upon request. You may employ any archaeologist who meets the [Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards](#) for Archaeology, as authorized by [36 CFR 61.1\(c\)](#):

The minimum professional qualifications in archeology are a graduate degree in archeology, anthropology, or closely related field plus:

1. At least one year of full-time professional experience or equivalent specialized training in archeological research, administration, or management;
2. At least four months of supervised field and analytic experience in general North American archeology, and
3. Demonstrated ability to carry research to completion.

In addition to these minimum qualifications, a professional in prehistoric archeology shall have at least one year of full-time professional experience at a supervisory level in the study of archeological resources of the prehistoric period. A professional in historic archeology shall have at least one year of full-time professional experience at a supervisory level in the study of archeological resources of the historic period.

### Survey (Phase I)

The initial archaeological reconnaissance survey involves both literature search and the actual field examination of the project area to determine if there is any evidence of prehistoric or historic occupations or activities. This survey need only cover those areas which were specified in the survey request from the SHPO, but 100 percent of these areas must be examined. If possible, in the case of small areas, the survey should include any minor testing which is necessary to evaluate the site for National Register eligibility.

Such work should be carried out in accordance with the Secretary of Interior's Standard Guidelines (1983) for identification. Archaeological surveys can be time consuming, and you should try to build several months of lead time into your planning schedules. Surveys are best done in the spring or fall when vegetation cover is reduced.

### Survey Procedures

The purpose of such surveys is to determine if cultural remains are present. Since such remains are often buried beneath the present ground surface archaeologists have developed three main techniques to assist in their detection. These techniques involve pedestrian survey in association with plowing and disking, systematic shovel testing, and deep coring or backhoe trenching for deeply buried sites.

- A. Pedestrian survey of plows and disked areas. Where feasible, the plowing, disking, and subsequent pedestrian survey of project areas is the most archaeologically thorough and cost-effective technique currently available. To maximize this method's usefulness, multiple controlled surface collections are necessary; therefore, this process does require sufficient lead-time to be implemented. However, this technique can only be utilized in areas that have been previously plowed. Pedestrian survey can also be employed in areas with good surface visibility that have not been recently plowed. Visibility must equal 25 percent or greater of the ground surface area to use pedestrian survey techniques. The suggested interval is 5 meters.
- B. Systematic shovel testing. Systematic shovel testing on a maximum 15-meter-grid interval is less thorough than plowing but often must be resorted to in areas that have not been previously disturbed, or where forested conditions, topographic features, or structures prohibit plowing. Such shovel testing involves the excavation of holes about 40 x 40 cm across down to archaeologically sterile soil (usually the B horizon). The fill from each shovel unit should be screened. Where cultural materials are encountered, the grid interval should reduce to 5 meters to delineate more accurately site boundaries.
- C. Deep testing. When dealing with areas that potentially contain deeply buried cultural remains, it will be necessary to utilize techniques that can investigate deep strata. Usually, such techniques include hand or mechanical systematic deep coring, or deep trenches or block excavations, dug either by hand or using heavy equipment (typically a backhoe). Examples of geomorphic features requiring such testing are floodplains, alluvial fans, and occasionally some uplands and terraces where post-Pleistocene loess deposition has occurred.
- D. Other testing procedures. Variations of survey/testing procedures should be thoroughly explained and justified in the report. If there is a question concerning the appropriateness of such survey/testing methods, the contracting archaeologist should check with the SHPO.

### Survey Report

At the completion of the field survey a report of the archaeological findings and recommendations must be sent to the SHPO Archaeology Section for evaluation. This report will be in keeping with the [Secretary of the Interior Standards and Guidelines \(1983\) for archaeological documentation](#). To assist in this evaluation and to avoid delays in processing. The report should contain a discussion of the following minimal topics:

- A. Background Information
  1. Full description of project.

2. Previous archaeological research based on site files and contact with archaeologists working in area. Thorough examination of historical documents to ascertain presence and extent of historical occupation/land use of project area. This should include, at a minimum, copies of relevant plat maps and atlases that document historic habitation with a discussion of length of occupation and use.
3. Delineation of important regional research questions based on cultural history and past investigations.
4. Thorough discussion and description of present and past environment and their implications for interpreting the local archaeological record. This should include such topics as climate, vegetational patterns, fauna, geology, topography, and soils.

B. Survey Information

1. Complete description of project area including acreage, ground cover, topography, and any other factors that are important to interpreting the survey results.
2. Survey techniques thoroughly described and variations justified.
3. Maps that, at a minimum, indicate position of project area in state/county, within township, location on topography, and a detailed map of actual project.

C. Site Information (if present)

1. A full description of the site location, material recovered, and a preliminary interpretation of its place in the local culture history.
2. A completed site form and map must be submitted to the SHPO for each site. Although each contractor may use their own site forms the information included must include at a minimum that requested on the Illinois Archaeological survey's site form. These site forms are not to be included with the general report (report should include a statement on the confidentiality of this information).
3. Testing procedures used to determine whether the site is significant should be carefully defined, and the eligibility of the site for the National Register of Historic Places should be addressed.

D. Recommendations

This section must include the archaeologists' recommendations for further testing, possible mitigation impact, or clearance, as the case may be. Any suggestions concerning site disposition should be stated in terms of their relationships to relevant regional research questions and the State Archaeological Preservation Plan.

E. Archaeological Survey Short Report (ASSR)

If the project is fairly small and few archaeological resources are encountered, the contractor may choose to use the [SHPO ASSR form](#) to submit their report.

F. Archaeological Contractor's Vita

All contract archaeologists working in Illinois must either have a current vita on file with the SHPO or submit one with each report.

G. Project Correspondence

Project correspondence must be included as an appendix and should include the initial SHPO survey request, project letters between the contractor and archaeologist, the SHPO review of the draft, and the final SHPO sign-off letter. Please do not include budget information.

Report Submission

At the completion of the archaeological reconnaissance survey a report of the archaeological contractor's findings and recommendations will be prepared. This report must be submitted to the State Historic Preservation Officer for evaluation and approval. The actual submission is the responsibility of the agencies' or firms' project managers.

Address

Illinois Department of Natural Resources  
State Historic Preservation Office  
Chief Archaeologist  
One Old State Capitol Plaza  
Springfield, IL 62701

Information Contact

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## Guidelines for Archaeological Reconnaissance Surveys/Reports Addendum

The following is an addendum to the Phase I guidelines. Number 8 deals with Phase II (National Register Eligibility and Significance Testing) guidelines.

1. Limit the site location data revealed in maps and reports to the specific project boundaries. Site location data is exempt from requests for disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, this FOIA exemption exists in both state and federal law. In discussing nearby sites in the previous work section of the ASSR form or other report, refer to approximate locations, do not give specific location data for sites outside the project area. You may NOT provide information about sites outside of project areas by written description or by map to anyone.
2. For field work conducted after January 1, 1997, any report showing pedestrian survey conducted at intervals greater than 5 meters will be rejected due to inadequate field work. The reject letter will be sent to the hiring agency of firm and copied to the archaeologist. In areas of less than 25% surface visibility, you must supplement your pedestrian survey with screened shovel probing in low-visibility areas. When surface visibility is less than 40%, you must switch to screened shovel probing on not greater than 15-meter-grid intervals.
3. At Phase I, a sketch map (base map) of each site is required in New Site Form or Revisit Form. Show local landmarks.
4. Two copies of all final reports are required to be submitted to the SHPO. One copy will be kept on file at the SHPO while the other will be transferred the ISM Collection center after documents and log numbers have been assigned. The ISM uses the second copy and our review letter to update the review status of survey areas and sites in the GIS site file.
5. A CD containing a .pdf copy of the report must be submitted with the two final report copies.
6. Please note that converting the reports into an electronic format may change the scales of the maps. Please measure the hard copies of the topographic maps to ensure that the scale is at 1:24,000 scale.
7. You are required to report as a site any prehistoric or historic cemetery or burial area containing burials over 100 years old that are not registered with the Illinois State Comptroller under the Cemetery Care Act. You should always state in your reports' recommendation sections that vandalism to, disturbance to, or excavation of these cemeteries and/or burials is prohibited by the [Human Remains Protection Act \(20 ILCS 3440\)](#) and [its administrative rules](#).
8. You must include historic maps as part of your ASSR and other reports, including, as appropriate, county plats and atlases, city fire insurance maps, GLO maps (especially in the northern 1/3 of the state), etc. In general, we want to see the oldest map for the project area that shows structures (or other early historic period sites or early land-claim boundaries), and then newer maps, as appropriate, to show continued presence of, disturbance to, or abandonment of potential sites.
9. Geomorphology. As a supplement to the Survey and Report Guidelines, you must check for buried deposits on floodplains of ALL major rivers where floodplains are over 1/2 mile wide. You do not have to do this in disturbed areas or in naturally low areas, such as sloughs, abandoned channels, and

wetland, but you should document these conditions by map or reference to geological report. Remember to check for loess fall buried sites, especially in the western counties.

10. Stopping Phase II field work after locating a single cultural feature is not acceptable. Your report will be rejected. Phase II should always determine the density and distribution of artifacts and the density and distribution of features across the ENTIRE site, as well as occupation, age(s), and probable function(s) of the site. A site with only a few features may not necessarily be eligible for the NRHP. You should always excavate a sample of several features at Phase II, but no feature that is likely to be a burial. Phase II report recommending NRHP eligibility MUST state what data the site is likely to yield.

Mechanical checking for features after gridded surface collection (not greater than 10-meter by 10-meter units) is almost always acceptable on plowed sites. We recommend stripping about 100 sq. meters in at least 4 spatially separated blocks for sites less than 2,000 sq. meters (1/2 acre) in size, 200 sq. meters in not less than 6 spatially separated blocks for sites less than 8,000 sq. meters (2 acres), and about 2% of site for larger sites. You should always place one block at either the highest density area or the location of diagnostics commonly associated with features. Short Testing forms are only acceptable when a site is recommended as not eligible. Sketch maps are not acceptable as site base maps Phase II or Phase III.

11. Photographs of buildings should be full frame and must be cross referenced to map data accompanying ASSR or other report. No photocopies of photos are permitted in original copies to the SHPO. Any building eligibility evaluations must be done by persons meeting the [Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards](#) for History or Architectural History, as authorized by [36 CFR 61.1\(c\)](#).
12. No final reports will be accepted without proper IAS Site Numbers assigned to each reported site. Site numbers can be obtained from the Illinois State Museum, Research and Collections Center, 1011 East Ash Street, Springfield, Illinois 62701, 217/524-0328.
13. Only one copy of each site form needs to be submitted with reports.
14. Two copies of the final report will be required to be submitted to the SHPO at the time of project completion. One copy will be kept on file at the SHPO, while the other will be transferred to a back-up reference library at the ISM Collection Center. Both the SHPO and the ISM document collections will be available to qualified researchers.
15. A CD containing a .pdf copy of the report must be submitted with the two final report copies.
16. Please note that converting the reports into an electronic format may change the scales of the maps. Please measure the hard copies of the topographic maps to ensure that the scale is at 1:24,000 scale.

## Information for Developers and Agencies about General Procedures for Phase II Archaeological Projects

Anyone notified of an archaeological site subject to Phase II testing in their project area has several options:

1. Preserve the site by planning your project to avoid the green space. A deed covenant may be necessary, depending on the land ownership and the law under which the project is being reviewed.
2. Hire an archaeological firm to conduct a Phase II project on the site.
3. Choose a different location for the project. This generally means starting review process over from scratch, but there will be rare occasion when this is the fastest and cheapest option. This is something you may wish to consider if there are burials or an extremely large or dense site in the project area.

Phase II archaeological projects consist of fieldwork, analysis, and report by the archaeological firm, and then review of the report by the SHPO and sometimes also by the funding or permitting agency, with additional work required part of the time depending on the significance of the site(s). However, if a project has no significant sites after a Phase II project has been completed and reviewed, then the archaeology is completed as soon as the SHPO accepts the report. If a project area has more than one site, each one is reviewed independently. In other words, one could be determined not significant while another one is determined significant or potentially significant.

Phase II fieldwork generally consists of obtaining good artifact-type and location data from the site surface by such methods as grid collections, piece plotting, etc. A small-scale excavation follows this step. In some cases the fieldwork (commonly called test units) can be done with the assistance of machines, like backhoes or, occasionally, larger equipment, such as belly scrapers for plowed or partially disturbed sites. It is sometimes necessary to dig by hand (i.e., at mounds, unplowed sites, or inaccessible locations). The test units are excavated to the base of the plow zone or topsoil, and then the base of the unit is checked for the presence of archaeological features, such as foundations, pits, hearths, burials, and middens. If features are present, a small number (generally not more than 5 to 10) are excavated to provide information about the site's age, function, integrity, etc. Soil samples from each feature for botanical and zoological analysis are usually taken. On the floodplains of large rivers, several additional "deep" trenches are usually necessary to check for buried sites. The amount of time required for fieldwork is highly dependent on the size of a site, on whether machines can be used, on the density of features, as well as on the weather.

Analysis of Phase II consists of identifying and inventorying all artifacts recovered and preparing data recorded in the field for a report. The length of time needed is highly variable based on the factors listed above. The report describes the field and lab information, provides a preliminary interpretation of the site, and makes recommendations concerning the significance of the site.

The archaeology staff at the SHPO and sometimes the archaeologists at the lead funding or permitting agency review the report. Based on the report and their knowledge of regional archaeology, they determine (following criteria outlined in the appropriate law and regulations for each project) if the work done was acceptable and whether the site(s) are not significant and need no further investigation or are significant. If a site is significant (i.e., meets the eligibility criteria for the NRHP), the choices are mitigation (generally by complete excavation) or preservation.

# Illinois Inventory of Archaeological and Paleontological Sites

## Guidelines for Access and Dissemination of Data

The following guidelines shall govern access and dissemination of archaeological site data in the Illinois Inventory of Archaeological and Paleontological Sites (IIAPS). The IIAPS is maintained by the Illinois State Museum (ISM) and access and information dissemination is managed by the Illinois State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) under stipulations of the [Archaeological and Paleontological Resources Protection Act \(20 ILCS 3435/10\)](#) and [its administrative rules \(Ill. Admin. Code, Ch. 6, Part 4190\)](#) (APRPA). These guidelines concern only archaeological site information, relate information about access to archaeological site records, and address questions about information dissemination.

The intent of these guidelines is to provide archaeological site information to qualified persons or organizations for cultural resource management, scientific research, or educational purposes.

Pursuant to APRPA, the IIAPS may only be released in accordance with the following (Section 4190.303, Release of Site Information):

1. “Professional archaeologists or paleontologists may have access to site and location information for their respective fields as needed for their specific project by request to the Agency Archaeologist responsible for the Inventory.”

For the purposes of this policy a professional archaeologist must meet the requirements of State certified supervisory professional prehistoric or historic field archaeologist, as defined under Section 4190.404 and 405 of the rules for APRPA.

IIAPS data are available in read-only digital formats at the SHPO and the Illinois State Museum, and in a web-based format. Paper records are available by appointment at the Illinois State Museum Research and Collections Center.

With respect to the dissemination of archaeological site information, professional archaeologists may disseminate site information gathered under the auspice of historic preservation compliance to the organization underwriting the project if the information is limited to the area of potential effect.

Professional archaeologists may disseminate site information in the context of research and publication so long as doing so does not unnecessarily endanger the resource.

2. “Governmental bodies may have access to site information and location for sites within lands that they own or manage for the purposes of protecting, preserving and managing those archaeological and paleontological resources or as needed for specific planning or management needs by written request to the Agency Archaeologist responsible for the Inventory. These governmental bodies shall not release this information to any other person or organization without the authorization of the Agency,”
3. “Release of general information (not including site location and ownership) to the public about archaeological or paleontological resource sites listed in the Illinois Inventory of Archaeological and Paleontological Sites shall generally be available, but the Agency shall not release such information when it is believed that such a release may endanger the resource.”



4. “Site location information and site ownership (when it would help indicate site location) shall not be released. Information about the character of a site that would help indicate site location shall not be released.”
5. “Release of information under this Section shall be subject to an applicable fee for duplication and processing.”

The Illinois State Museum and the SHPO, with the assistance of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, have developed a web-based Illinois Inventory of Archaeological Sites (IIAS) to facilitate access to archaeological site information. Access to the web-based inventory, requires submitting a request to the SHPO for review and approval. If approved, the applicant will be given the web address and a password, which periodically must be updated to ensure inventory security.

Contacts:

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