



Cultural Resources

What Are Cultural Resources?

Glacier National Park is mandated by Federal Laws to preserve and protect the natural and cultural resources of this place. Most of us can picture what natural resources are - the plants, animals, soils, waters, etc... but what about cultural resources?

The National Park Service was established by the 1916 Organic Act; “...to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects ...as will leave them unimpaired for future generations.”

What are Cultural Resources?

Cultural resources are grouped into five main categories: archeological resources, cultural landscapes, historic structures, museum and archive collections, and ethnographic resources. In Glacier National Park, these resources include six National Historic Landmarks and over 350 structures listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Specifically, a cultural resource is an aspect of a cultural system that is valued by or significantly representative of a culture, or that contains significant information about a culture. A cultural resource can be a tangible entity or a cultural practice. Think about they types of clothes you wear, the style of house you live in, or the model of car you drive. Will they be the same 50 years from now? What does it tell people about your lifestyle, family background and available



Lake McDonald Lodge

materials or resources? Although the primary function of cultural resources management is to preserve, protect, and conserve the material aspects of cultural resources, the primary value of those resources is to enliven, enrich and inform ourselves about our heritage.

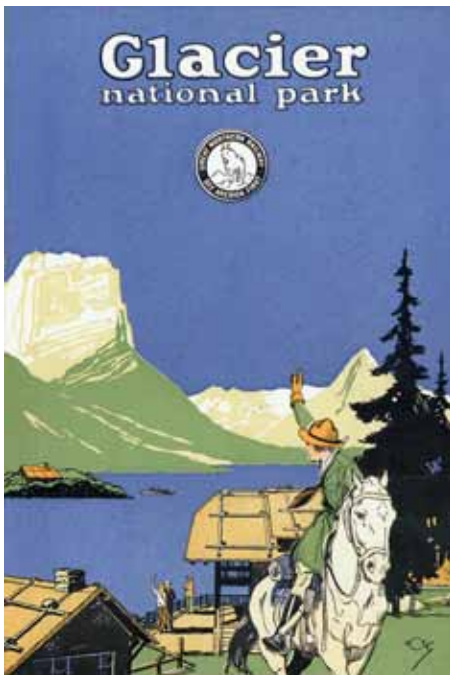
The physical attributes of cultural resources are, with few exceptions, nonrenewable. Once the historic fabric of a building is gone, nothing can bring back its authenticity; once the artifacts in an archeological site are disturbed, nothing can recover the information that might have been gained through analysis of their spatial relationships. A primary concern of cultural resource management then, is to minimize the loss or degradation of culturally significant material. Closely

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related issues include compatibility between cultural resources and new developments, maintenance of historic structures, and maintaining accurate records to document the history of the park.

Archeological Resources

Examples of archeological resources in Glacier’s front and back country include prehistoric campsites, remnants of historic mining claims, and homesteads and the objects found at these sites. Archeological resources are the physical evidences of past human activity. They are comonly associated with prehistoric peoples but are also products of more recent society. What makes archeological resources significant are their identity, age, location, and context in conjunction with their capacity to reveal information through investigative research. Like a crime scene, archeological sites are examined for the clues at the scene of how things are related. In Glacier, archeologists are conducting



Park Guide 1920



Historic debris exposed by fire.

In addition to the Organic Act, other legislation and executive orders mandate cultural resource management, including:

- 1906 Antiquities Act
- Historic Sites Act of 1935
- National Historic Preservation Act of 1966
- Archeological Resources Protection Act of 1979
- 1990 Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act.

ongoing surveys and studies in areas throughout the park.

Structures

Historic structures in the park include everything from administrative and concession buildings to early homestead houses and recreational camps. The park protects its historic properties through a program of identification and evaluation of historic building. Historic structures are material assemblies that extend the limits of human capability and demonstrate our productive ability and artistic sensitivity. The preservation of historic structures involves two basic concerns: slowing the rate at which historic material is lost and maintaining historic character. In Glacier, maintenance is ongoing in order to preserve historic structures within the park. A review process assures that proposed work or development has minimum impacts on historic properties. These efforts are in compliance with Sections 106 and 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.

Cultural Landscapes

In Glacier cultural landscapes range from the Going-to-the-Sun-Road, to Chief Mountain, and to the Headquarters Historic District. Cultural landscapes are settings we have created in the natural world. They reveal fundamental ties between people and the land- ties based on our need to grow food, give form to our settlements, meet requirements for recreation, and find suitable places to bury our dead. Landscapes are intertwined patterns of things both natural and constructed, such as plants and fences and buildings.

Ethnographic Resources

Ethnographic resources associated with Glacier include sites associated with creation stories, prayer and fasting sites, and certain plants valued by tribal peoples. Ethnographic resources are basic expressions of human culture and the basis for continuity of cultural systems. Cultural systems include 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 association, and use of natural materials. The park contains certain ethnographic resources that make consultation with local Native American Tribes necessary when work is proposed that may affect those resources. The Tribes are also consulted in planning processes, and in research projects in which we share common interests. Management of

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ethnographic resources acknowledges that culturally diverse groups have their own ways of viewing the world and a right to maintain their traditions.

Museum Objects

Museum objects include historic objects, scientific specimens, works of art, and archival and manuscript collections. They are manifestations and records of behavior and ideas that span the breadth of human experience and depth of natural history. For instance, what can the ranger log book from 1910 tell us about the life of a park ranger and the issues facing the park at that time? Should it be protected? Museum and archive collections are important park resources in their own right as well as being valuable for the information they provide about processes, events and interactions among people and the environment. Written records provide insight into the park's continuing history including early development and settlement as well as National Park Service policies and procedures. The park's natural and cultural resources and their associated records provide baseline data, serving as scientific and historical documentation of the park's resources.