

STANDARD

7

Protect Special Sites

Special sites are managed in ways that recognize their unique historical, archeological, cultural, geological, biological or ecological characteristics.

PERFORMANCE MEASURE 7.1

Forest management activities shall consider and maintain any **special sites** relevant on the property.

Indicator 7.1.1

Landowner shall make a reasonable effort to locate and protect **special sites** appropriate for the size of the forest and the **scale** and intensity of forest management activities.

GUIDANCE

Special sites are diverse and can be identified through consultation and consideration processes described below and during property reconnaissance prior to preparing the **management plan**.

Landowners or **designated representatives** should identify **special sites** on **management plan** maps and, where appropriate, on the ground. Some **landowners** may choose not to identify some **special sites** on a map or on the ground in an effort to protect these sites from vandalism or overuse.

Landowners or **designated representatives** should make efforts to protect any known **special sites** especially during forest management activities. These efforts may include creating a vegetation buffer, fencing the area or otherwise distinguishing it from surrounding areas. Because **special sites** are often in the ground, measures may be taken to control erosion and limit soil disturbance.

Landowners and **designated representatives** are advised to review their

special sites map and protection plan with **qualified natural resource professionals** and **qualified contractors** assisting in forest management activities. After harvests, **landowners** and **designated representatives** are encouraged to follow up to ensure adequate protection.

Sites of historical, archeological and cultural importance are identified on the National Register of Historic Places, a listing administered by the National Park Service or by State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs), state agencies that oversee the preservation efforts in their state. Listing of sites on the National Register (<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/database-research.htm>) reflect a determination of a site's significance to the history of a community, state or the nation. AFF recognizes this determination of significance and requires protections of such sites under certification, as directed by law.

Federal law does not require protections of sites listed on the National Historic Register so long as there are no federal monies attached to the property. However, there may be state or local preservation laws in place. Many SHPOs maintain web-based directories of their listings for reference by **landowners** and **designated representatives**. **Landowners** and **designated representatives** may wish to contact local historical societies and museums for additional information on sites of local significance and any preservation laws applying to them. It is important to note that history agencies vary widely in their staffing and capacities for consultation with **landowners** or **designated representatives**.

Many properties may include historical, cultural or archeological sites that are not listed in National Historic Register or SHPO listings. **Landowners** may



choose to designate sites not listed by relevant authorities as **special sites**. To do so, **landowners** and **designated representatives** should evaluate sites for congruence with all of the following criteria:

- **Significance:** Sites may be significant if (A.) associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or (B.) associated with the lives of significant persons of the past; or (C.) they embody distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction, or represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or (D.) they yielded or may be likely to yield information important in history or prehistory.
- **Age:** At least 50 years old.
- **Integrity:** The site must retain its historical physical integrity with its character-defining features still present. A building, structure or landscape feature must be relatively unchanged. An archaeological site must be relatively undisturbed, with its patterns and layers of artifacts and other

archaeological evidence relatively intact. A traditional cultural site must be recognizable to today's affiliated cultural group, evidenced through tradition and still used or revered in some way.

Special sites of biological and geological significance may be identified through consultation undertaken related to the identification of **FORIs** and **threatened or endangered** species and communities (Standard 5).

In addition to these criteria, **landowners** may designate sites of personal significance to them.

Qualified ATFS inspectors and **third-party assessors** may verify for conformance by interviewing the **landowner** or **qualified natural resource professional** for awareness, reviewing planning documents and associated operating records and/or by observing the property.

Additional information and guidance about **special sites** are available at the ATFS website at <https://www.treefarmssystem.org/special-sites>.