

Policy Criteria for Requiring Cultural Surveys

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Purpose

To clarify when a cultural survey prepared by an archeologist or historic preservation professional is required.

Discussion

Pierce County recognizes that archaeological, cultural, and historic resources are irreplaceable.

The Pierce County Comprehensive Plan identifies that such resources should be protected (Cultural Resources Goal CR-3), considered “..as part of initial project planning, review, and development” (Cultural Resources Goal CR-3.1), and directs the County to “Establish and maintain government-to-government relations with local Tribal Preservation Officers (TPO) for the preservation of archeological sites and traditional cultural properties.” (Cultural Resources Goal CR-8.4).

The Pierce County Shoreline Master Program identifies that such resources “....should be preserved, protected, and restored.” (PCC 18S.30.020). PCC 18S.30.020 does not provide specific guidance on when a field review is required versus an Inadvertent Discovery Plan.

To this end, as part of its development review responsibilities, Pierce County requires either:

1. A field review, completed by an archeologist or historic preservation professional, prior to development; or
2. An Inadvertent Discovery Plan if:
 - a. the project is located in an area mapped as “High Probability” within the WISAARD mapping system maintained by the Department of Archeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP); or
 - b. one is requested by a Tribal Government or the DAHP.
3. A cultural survey field review shall be required when:
 - a) The project site is within 500 feet of a site known to contain cultural or archeological resources.
 - b) The project site is situated on low bank/gradual incline shoreline (i.e. those areas where easy access from water to upland is present) within 500 feet of an estuary, lagoon, or perennial freshwater input and the project includes activities that disturb the soil, such as clearing and excavation.
 - c) When a field survey is requested by a Tribe or the Department of Archeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP) and neither 3a nor 3b are met, the County shall coordinate on a project by project basis with the requesting Tribe(s)/ DAHP, consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, to determine the value of a field survey.