

PART 401 – CULTURAL RESOURCES
(ARCHEOLOGICAL AND HISTORIC PROPERTIES)
SUBPART C– Policy

NM401.29 Access to Cultural Resource Specialists

In order to assist NRCS with the cultural resource consultation process, the New Mexico Association of Conservation Districts (NMACD) has entered into working agreements with professional archaeologists to conduct archaeological surveys. The NMACD archaeologists are on call, under a blanket agreement, to provide assistance state wide. The following guidelines are provided in order to help clarify the process and responsibilities for the utilization of NMACD archaeologists.

The individual Field Offices shall review their cultural resource needs and separate the proposed project areas into either.

1. NRCS field staff clearances (para-archaeologists); where the area to be surveyed can be surveyed in a timely manner and the existing archaeological site densities are considered low.
2. NRCS State Office assisted clearances; these will generally be more complex projects that involve numerous previously recorded archaeological sites in the projects vicinity and/or pueblo/tribal related.
3. NMACD Archaeologist assists field office staff; these will generally be large project in size and/or involve numerous previously recorded archaeological sites in the projects vicinity.

For those cultural resource projects where the services of an NMACD archaeologist are requested, the field office will prioritize a list and forward it to the Area Conservationist.

Area Conservationist will prioritize field offices needs within each area with estimated time frames and submit to the State Cultural Resource Specialist. These requests will also include; projects size, location and local field office contact person. The State Cultural Resource Specialist will work with the NRCS contact person to develop project proposals and submit them to NMACD. NMACD will contact archaeologists, under state blanket agreement, to coordinate scheduling of cultural resource assistance with the appropriate field office. Once the archaeologists have been scheduled NMACD will inform the State Cultural Resource Specialist as to NMACD archaeologist scheduled assist.

NRCS Field Office responsibilities:

The District Conservationist or a designated representative will provide scheduling and logistics between the landowner/operator and the NMACD archaeologists. This will include introduction to the landowners, property access, field dates, meeting times, weather/field conditions and project locations.

Prior to the field survey the District Conservationist will also provide the NMACD archaeologist, NRCS and district employees an overview of the proposed project as well as project expectations and outcomes.

The District Conservationist will also provide any additional support needed by the lead archaeologist necessary to complete the survey in a timely, efficient and professional manner.

NMACD Archaeologists responsibilities:

Coordinate with the District Conservationist or designated representative in order to conduct the identified field survey.

The Archaeologist will be responsible for conducting the survey in accordance with federal and state laws and regulations. Reports and documentation will be in accordance with NRCS standards and specifications.

During the field investigation the NMACD Archaeologist is the lead Archaeologist and therefore responsible for providing guidance and supervision to survey crew members in conducting the field survey. The field crew includes trained federal and district employees participating in the field survey. The NMACD Archaeologist shall instruct the survey crew as to how the survey will be conducted in accordance with federal and state laws and regulations and NRCS standards and specifications.

NMACD archaeologist will notify the field office once the field survey and report has been completed and submit the report to the State Cultural Resource Specialist for review and approval. Once approved, the State Cultural Resource Specialist will be responsible for initiating, tracking and finalizing the consultation process with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) through normal NRCS consultation and coordination procedures.

The archaeologist will keep the State Archaeologist informed of ongoing surveys and closely coordinate any actions to be taken or issues that need to be resolved.