

Cultural Assessment Methodology Summary

Background:

Growth and development not only threaten lands of high value for water quality and habitat, but also cultural lands that directly connect many citizens in the Bay watershed to the land. Important in preserving heritage and traditional values, cultural lands often define sense of place. The objective of the cultural assessment is to identify lands that provide cultural assets and further inform preservation efforts with spatial information about cultural lands. This spatial information about cultural resources can provide an added value to land preservation because cultural lands provide a historic perspective for interpreting land and people's relationship with it. Additionally, the value of an historic or cultural site is often intrinsically tied to the landscape context in which it is located.

Data Layers:

National Historic Landmarks (received highest priority rank)

National Historic Districts (received moderate priority rank)

National Historic Register Sites (received moderate rank)

State Inventoried Sites (cultural resources maintained in state databases – received lowest priority rank)

Archaeological Sites – (received lowest priority rank and are mapped in terms of site densities rather than individual sites)

Methodology:

Cultural lands were inventoried for the entire Chesapeake Bay watershed. The inventory consists of National Historic Landmarks, National Historic Districts, National Historic Register Sites, state inventoried sites and archaeological sites. The following layers needed to be excluded from the assessment because of insufficient data: Native American lands, cultural landscapes, and cultural properties important to traditional patterns of lifestyle. Additionally, the archeological site coverage is not comprehensive, but represents areas where surveys have been conducted, generally prior to development activities.

GIS was used to integrate the selected data sets, map the coincident areas important for cultural resources and highlight sites that are a priority for preservation with weighted rankings. This assessment layer can also be overlaid with vulnerability assessment to show, which sites are the most vulnerable to land use change or with other assessments to demonstrate where cultural resources are coincident of lands that are a priority for conservation.

Future Assessment and Analysis

- Spatial delineation of traditional Native American lands
- Spatial delineation of landscapes associated with historic features or events and characteristic landscapes that define an area's unique sense of place
- Probability for the occurrence of archaeological sites (spatial)