Introduction

Cultural resources are important components of the environment because they illustrate how humans have used and changed the natural world. They offer a window into a shared heritage that may not otherwise be visible. This fact sheet summarizes the potential impacts the proposed project would have on cultural resources.

Barn near Anacortes

What was studied?

This study examined the impacts from construction and operations of the proposed project to archaeological deposits and historic-era buildings, structures, and objects.

What was the study area?

- Proposed project site (see Figure 3.7-1 of the draft EIS)
- Proposed wetland mitigation site (see Figure 3.7-3 of the draft EIS)
- Construction spoils disposal sites
- An area within one half-mile of each of these sites

See the Proposed Project Fact Sheet for a map of the site.

How were impacts analyzed?

Shell conducted the cultural resource inventory for the proposed project and wetland mitigation sites in 2013 and 2015. The inventory work included background research and archaeological records and historic map review, as well as surface and subsurface surveys. The surveys included pedestrian transects and collecting soil samples to a depth of approximately 50 centimeters.

Example of archaeological study

What are the potential impacts?

Construction and Operation Impacts

The proposed project would disturb previously recorded historic-era archaeological sites located within the proposed project site boundaries. However, the sites have been determined not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP). No previously documented historic-era buildings, structures, or objects are located within the footprint of the proposed project site.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
The National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) is the official list of the nation's historic places worthy of preservation. The NHRP is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America's historic and archeological resources.

At the proposed wetland mitigation site, an archaeological site would likely be disturbed by project activities. However, this site has been determined not eligible for listing in the NRHP. Three previously documented historic-era buildings, structures, or objects are located within the proposed wetland mitigation site. However, these three resources have been determined not eligible for listing in the NRHP by the USACE and DAHP.

No archaeological sites, other cultural resources, or historic-era resources have been documented within the immediate vicinity of the potential spoils disposal sites. Because these locations are operating pits and no expansion is planned for this project, no environmental consequences are anticipated.

Since the March Point area is important for Native American land use, there is a possibility that archaeological sites exist within the proposed project site but were not observed during cultural resource inventory work. These sites may range from occupation locations to fishing or resource procurement and processing locations. Such resources would be an important discovery and would help to better illustrate Native American subsistence, land use, and settlement practices. If resources are made known during the course of project development, the impacts and mitigation would be reassessed.

An example of a cultural resource (Native American wood carving tool)

Cumulative Impacts

Within the study area, there has been significant agricultural, industrial, commercial, and residential development. With this development, there is the potential that NRHP-listed or eligible archaeological sites, historic-era buildings, or objects have been disturbed. However, impacts would have been mitigated. Therefore, no cumulative impacts are anticipated.

What mitigation measures are proposed?

Avoidance and Minimization

In the inventory work for both the proposed project and wetland mitigation sites, archaeological monitoring during construction was recommended. Archaeological monitoring would take place where subsurface inventory work does not reach the depth of proposed ground disturbance and where subsurface inventory work cannot be performed. Shell would develop a monitoring plan to be approved by DAHP and the tribes prior to initiation of ground disturbing activities.

Mitigation

No mitigation is necessary for the impacts that the project would have on the previously recorded archaeological sites or historic-era resources because those within the area of potential effects as defined by the USACE have been determined not eligible for listing in the NRHP by the USACE and DAHP. No NRHP-eligible historic resources were found within the wetland mitigation site; therefore, no mitigation measures are required.

Shell would develop and implement an Unanticipated Discovery Plan during construction when archaeological monitors are not present. If archaeological deposits were encountered during construction, the provisions of the Unanticipated Discovery Plan would be followed. Consultation with local law enforcement authorities, the DAHP, tribes, and other interested stakeholders would be initiated to determine proper treatment and/or mitigation. In such cases, Shell would provide for a site inspection and evaluation by a professional archaeologist to ensure that all possible valuable archaeological data are properly salvaged or mapped.

Are there unavoidable significant adverse impacts?

If no additional cultural resources are discovered and mitigation is implemented as proposed, there would be no unavoidable significant adverse impacts.

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THIS TOPIC?

Chapter 3.7 – Cultural Resources of the draft EIS

The information in this fact sheet summarizes content from the draft Environmental Impact Statement; please review the full document for more detailed and complete information.

LEARN MORE shellraileis.com

To request ADA accommodation or materials in a format for the visually impaired, call Ecology at (360) 407-7668, Relay Service 711, or TTY (877) 833-6341. Si necesita información en español sobre el proyecto, por favor comuníquese con Gretchen Newman, (360) 407-6097, preguntas@ecy.wa.gov.