

## Phase Ia Literature Review and Archaeological Assessment Guidance

A Phase Ia Assessment is a scoping study prepared before a reconnaissance or intensive archaeological survey field effort. When the SHPO recommends a Phase Ia and archaeological assessment, we are suggesting that an archaeologist do background research about a project location to make a recommendation on whether a field survey is needed for a given project. This research may involve a literature search that identifies previously documented historic resources within a project area as well as the potential (based on a review of historical maps, aerial imagery, soils data, and other factors) for resources that have not been previously documented. The assessment should include a review of information such as past land use, soil data, and geomorphology in consideration of the specific project to be developed including the horizontal and vertical extents of proposed ground disturbance. SHPO recommends that the assessment involves a field visit, however, the necessity of a field visit is based on the archaeologist's professional judgment. The goal of the Phase Ia is to provide sufficient information to justify whether a survey should be performed and if one is needed, the scope of the survey.

SHPO recommends a Phase Ia in cases when:

1. It is not clear from a cursory desktop review whether a project area has been previously disturbed,
2. There are indications that the project location may contain archaeological sites (either previously documented or unknown), or
3. Insufficient information is available the scope of the project and proposed ground disturbance from the project proponent (often we request more information from the project proponent instead of recommending a Phase Ia/survey at this stage).

The Phase Ia should involve a literature search and an assessment of the potential for a project location to contain significant archaeological resources (previously documented or unknown). If the results of the Phase Ia indicate that a field investigation is warranted, then the archaeologist may work with the project proponent to complete the survey, using the results of the background research to guide development of a research design and survey strategy. SHPO will review and comment on the results of the combined background research and field investigation along with the archaeologist's management recommendations and the federal agency findings for any sites identified.

Here is an outline of the Phase Ia process:

1. Project proponent submits a Project Review Request to SHPO for a proposed project.
2. SHPO finds that there is insufficient information regarding the presence of, or potential for, archaeological properties, and recommends a Phase Ia, followed by a survey if recommended by the archaeologist, to identify historic properties.

3. Archaeologist completes a Phase Ia (includes literature search and the results of field visit)
  - a. Recommends no survey → Project proponent sends new finding of effect to SHPO for review.
  - b. Recommends survey → Develop research design and survey strategy → Performs survey and makes management recommendations for any sites found. → Project proponent sends new finding of effect to SHPO for review.
    - i. Note: If the research design or survey strategy does not follow a standard format as described in the SHPO Manual for Archaeological Projects in Minnesota or the Principal Investigator has questions for SHPO about the proposed strategy, the archaeologist may submit it for review. SHPO archaeologists are happy to review and provide technical assistance on a research design and survey strategy.
4. SHPO provides comments on new finding.