Slide 1

Historic Resources Surveys and GNAHRGIS

Slide 2

What is a Survey?

Historic resources surveys collect and record information about extant historic buildings, structures, sites, landscapes, and objects on a county-wide or community-wide basis. City or county governments generally undertake surveys for their communities as a first step in documenting historic resources for planning purposes or as part of mitigation for adverse effects of a project. Survey information typically includes an architectural description of the resource, photographs, and field notes on its age, history, setting, and geographical location.

Slide 3

Surveys Tell a Story

Surveys tell a story of the community – which can serve many purposes. Surveys help identify buildings and districts for possible listing in the Georgia/National Register of Historic Places; assist preservation efforts of Georgia's Certified Local Governments; support local designations of buildings and districts; expedite environmental review by governmental agencies; aid preservation and land-use planning; promote research of the state's history and architecture; and increase awareness of, and interest in, a community's historic buildings. (These photos tell the story of rural Meriwether County resources)
HPD typically requests that surveyors document and enter into GNAHGIS any resource 40 years or older regardless of condition and integrity. However, individual survey needs vary based on the goals of the survey. For the specifics needs of your survey, you’ll need to reference the appropriate contract, MOA, or your environmental reviewer at HPD.

Another thing you’ll want to check is the necessity for paper survey forms. In the past, HPD collected hard copies of all survey forms completed during fieldwork and kept those on file our office. While our survey program no longer collects these forms, some survey contracts may still require them. Instead of paper forms, we ask that data is entered directly into GNAHGIS, which we’ll discuss in detail later.

You might be wondering, how do I keep track of the info gathered in the field if there are no survey forms?!?!… Well, we do have a document you can use in the field for organizing info to later transfer into GNAHGIS. The 29 entry blanks on the form correlate to the data fields in GNAHGIS. If an item is bold on the survey form, that means it has multiple answer options in GNAHGIS…and you can refer to the survey form addendum for these options. If you ever need a copy of this form and/or the addendum, it can be found on our website.
After fieldwork, you’ll be entering all this data into GNAHRGIS – Georgia’s Natural, Archaeological, and Historic Resources GIS website.

To keep track of your survey work, you’ll need to have survey maps. While HPD no longer requires hardcopies of survey forms, we do still request a survey map for any survey work done. Often surveyors mark quad maps in the field… but if project areas are smaller, we suggest getting a parcel map typically from the local planning department (with all street addresses and hopefully building footprints) and tracking survey work that way. These maps should note the survey boundary area and all resources surveyed.

HPD also requests a survey report for all survey work done. Each survey report should include, at a minimum: an executive summary, project description, summary of previous preparation projects, developmental history, survey methodology and results, architectural analysis, and an appendix that lists GNAHRGIS ID numbers with associated addresses. Again, based on the goals of the survey project, the report might require additional material and different deliverables.
So, there are three products of a typical historic resources survey: GNAHRGIS data, maps, and a survey report. HPD keeps the maps and reports on file at our offices for researchers to access, and these are valuable tools used daily by our staff, consultants, and the public. Now let’s discuss the basics of GNHARGIS data entry…

Currently, there are two versions of GNAHRGIS – the GNAHRGIS Public site, which we see here… This version of GNAHRGIS has most of the same information as the older GNAHRGIS flex site… but it functions a bit differently and doesn’t have attached supporting documentation that’s available on the older site…

Which we see here…. The older GNAHRGIS site (also known as the flex map), is the site you will be using to input survey data. You can access GNAHRGIS data as a public user here, but you will generally be logging in with your account. Every time you enter the site, you must agree to the disclaimer. You’ll notice in the welcome box - there is some training information available on the site and if you follow the link, there are two recorded webinars - one for GNAHRGIS basics and one for editing entries in GNAHRGIS.
This is the main page for GNAHRGIS. You can search for resources using the panel on the left, using a GNAHRGIS ID number, address, or resources. You can locate a resource by using the blue cube toolbox under the GNAHRGIS map panel and entering either the street address or the resource’s latitude and longitude. Or you can see all the points in an area using the Historic Resources panel.

Using three National Register-listed districts in Augusta as an example – here, you can see the general areas encompassed by the Bethlehem, Laney Walker, and Pinched Gut historic districts. We’ll be using these districts as examples for entering data into GNAHRGIS.

With the Historic Resources panel, you can see points for resources entered into the system by expanding the panel and clicking the “load historical resources” button. Here, we can see all the points already entered for the Pinched Gut Historic District. It was surveyed in 2003 and data was entered into GNAHRGIS. Survey information for the Laney Walker and Bethlehem districts has not been entered into GNAHRGIS. So any survey work in those two areas would be new survey data, while Pinched Gut would be considered a resurvey. In a few minutes we’ll get into the particulars of what new survey vs. resurvey means as far as data entry. But first, let’s quickly look at how to view data attached to a point.
There are multiple ways select an area and see data attached to points within that area. You can draw lines, rectangles, polygons… whatever your preference… We will use the circle selection option and create a buffer of 200 feet. Select the circle, check the buffer distance box, and place your selection wherever you want it.

And you will see all the GNAHRGIS IDs and resource types for points within your shape/buffer zone. Hovering your mouse over a portion of the list will highlight the relevant point and give you the option to open the Report View. If you click on Report View, a pdf of all the attached data will open.

Once the report appears, you must scroll down through the report to see all the data groups/categories. If photos are available, they will be at the end of the report under Supporting Documentation. Older surveys often have the previous survey form scanned and attached in this location as well. You can see these categories align with the survey form document discussed earlier and found on the HPD website.
If you are completing survey work and entering data into GNAHRGIS, you need to first contact the survey staff at HPD. Staff will create a survey for you in GNAHRGIS and link that survey to your account so that you may enter data into the system. In order to create the account, HPD will need to know: the type of survey, survey name, contact info for the surveyor and survey sponsor, dates of the survey, a basic description of the project including an estimated number of resources surveyed, and the acreage covered by the survey.

To begin entering resources into GNAHRGIS, go to the drop down “menu” option in the left panel, choose “add resource.”

Choosing “add resource” will bring you to this page. Again you’ll notice that all categories from the survey form are represented here. Start every new resource with “resource location” by clicking the “locate resource.”
Adding new resources to GNAHRGIS

Which opens this window… you will enter the surveyed resource’s street address and then “click zoom to location and buffer.”

Adding new resources to GNAHRGIS

We’ll use Rose Hill, which was listed in the Georgia Register of Historic Places in April 2015, as our example for adding new resources to GNAHRGIS.

Adding new resources to GNAHRGIS

After putting Rose Hill’s address (1534 Irwinton Road, Milledgeville) into the system and zooming to the location and buffering, we see that GNAHRGIS is placing the point for this address in the middle of the road… but being familiar with the resource, we know Rose Hill is actually on the south side of the road… a bit east of its placement here. So, let’s move the point to the correct location.
Adding new resources to GNAHRGIS

Slide 23

Simply click on “Click point: Disable”…

Slide 24

Adding new resources to GNAHRGIS

This enables moving the point. Then click where the point should be located.

Slide 25

Adding new resources to GNAHRGIS

Once the point is in the correct location, click “continue” and the following box will pop up. Click “yes.” It is extremely important to accurately place points in GNAHRGIS, as this is the main record for that resource in the system. If a point is inaccurately placed it will be difficult for future researchers to locate and identify it… and build upon the information gathered in your survey.
When a point is successfully created, you will see the “success” pop-up box. You’ve created a point! Note that GNAHRGIS has assigned a specific Resource ID number to the point, which you may need to notate in a survey report or spreadsheet of entered data. Click okay and continue entering data for the resource.

When you click on any green plus sign, the data group will expand and give you a drop down menu to add data specific to each resource. These options will correlate with answer options on the survey form and addendum. Note that the data groups available for each resource vary based on the type of survey you’re doing and the resource type selected. For example, if you choose “building” as the resource type, then building types will be an available data group during data entry. However, if you choose “site” as the resource type, then site types will be an available data group.

The third data group – “select survey for resource” is very important because it links your survey data to the correct survey GNAHRGIS. Only the surveys linked to your account should appear in this list when you expand this category.
Continue entering data for as many of the 40 data groups/categories as possible. Again, you’ll need to check the requirements for your scope of work, but typically HPD requests that all categories be explored and documented. Many house styles and types used in GNAHRGIS are defined in Georgia’s Living Places. It is a great reference in the field! Surveyors may also want to access the style definitions guide available on HPD’s website for help determining the appropriate style for a building.

One of the last categories is “supporting documentation.” This is where you will add photos to the entry. HPD typically requests 2 photos per resource, but you’ll need to check your SOW to see what’s required for your project.

Since each category is saved individually before moving on, there is no final “save” or “continue” button.

*Be sure to note the assigned GNAHRGIS numbers, as you are creating each entry. This is probably best done with a spreadsheet, identifying addresses surveyed and corresponding GNAHRGIS IDs. Such a spreadsheet is typically requested by HPD for surveys, and while it may not be specified for your project, it’s very helpful in keeping track of your work. You can do a search for your newly created entry in the panel on the left… and it can be edited from here as well, using the pencil icon.
Using our previous Augusta examples, we’ll now go over resurveying resources in GNAHRGIS, as opposed to entering new resources into GNAHRGIS. As mentioned earlier, Pinched Gut resources were entered into GNAHRGIS following its 2003 survey. The 2003 Pinched Gut survey documented 611 resources.

If this community was resurveyed, it’s likely that a surveyor would be resurveying existing GNAHRGIS points. Resurvey is a bit more complicated than the survey of new points because the surveyor must find the existing point and link the new data to it. Unfortunately there’s an added layer of difficulty with Pinched Gut because many of the points appear to be inaccurately located… Note all the points in the river! (This is why accurately locating points initially is so crucial!)

The “Tips for Using GNAHRGIS as part of a Georgia Historic Resources Survey,” which can be found on HPD’s website defines two methods of resurvey - one that’s similar to the new entry method we just covered and one that is more effective when previously entered points are inaccurately located. We’ll be going over the second method here.
When resurveying resources, surveyors will want to build on the same spreadsheet mentioned earlier, noting street addresses and GNAHRGIS IDs… although for the majority of resources in a resurvey, you won’t be creating new points, but rather noting the pre-existing GNAHRGIS IDs with corresponding street addresses.

To determine which resources have been previously surveyed, you can use a parcel map with addresses, to create a list of all addresses within your survey area boundary. Then do an address search using the search panel on the left. Make sure to use quotation marks around the address. By searching for each address, surveyors can determine if a point already exists in GNAHRGIS. Here are the results of a search for “105 Broad Street” and while there are three GNAHRGIS entries with that street address, only one is near Pinched Gut, as indicated by the red dot on the map.

By expanding each of the entries from the search results, you can see the names or brief descriptions and determine that GNAHRGIS ID #56140 is the correct resource for the resurvey. Next, select the pencil tool, which takes you into edit mode for the resource.
After entering the edit mode, you must first link this point to the current survey. (The resurveyed resource must be linked to the current survey to be edited.) To link the point to the current survey, select the third data category – “select survey for resource” and, in this example, choose “Pinched Gut.”

Once this resource is linked to the current survey, you can modify its location and add data obtained through the current survey. Next, check and/or correct the point’s location by clicking on the “Resource Location” data group.

When the Locate/Search Resources window appears, click on “Zoom to location and buffer.” It may be necessary to increase buffer distance to see the current point placement. This is where your survey map will come in handy. You can verify the correct location of an address on your map and correct the point in GNAHRGIS. The point’s location can be corrected following the same steps used while inputting new points – click on “click point: disable” to enable moving and then click in the correct location for the resource. You can zoom in and out, pan in any direction, or change the base layer to an aerial view on the small map if you can’t see the correct location… Once you have corrected the location, click “continue.”
Once you’re back on the data group entry page, you’ll want to make your current survey (the “Pinched Gut” survey in this example) your default survey. This way you won’t have to select it with each new data group as you’re inputting your new data. Simply click the asterisk, which turns gold, to make any survey your default.

You can also hide data from previous surveys, if you’d like. Simply click the pushpin on previous surveys to hide them.

As you’re adding new data to each data group, if nothing has changed since the previous survey, you can choose to “copy from prior survey” and the previous data will populate all the fields. This can save a lot of time and effort during a resurvey. Just as in the newly surveyed resources, you’ll go through all data groups and add photos to supporting documentation at the end.
Remember to check your scope of work for requirements of your specific contract (which may or may not align with typical survey requests of HPD), create a map with addresses and build dates to note what you’ve surveyed, use the survey form and addendum in the field, make a spreadsheet with addresses and corresponding GNAHRGIS IDs for both new GNAHRGIS entries and resurveyed GNAHRGIS points, and enter all data into GNAHRGIS.

Submit a survey report and survey maps to HPD. After your final draft is approved and HPD survey staff has spot-checked your GNAHRGIS entries, they will be made visible to the public.

Good luck!! Please call or email me if you need assistance as you’re completing survey work or entering data into GNAHRGIS.