

## EVALUATION PROCESS FOR LISTING FARMS IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

### OVERVIEW

The National Register of Historic Places is the nation's official list of properties worthy of preservation. Buildings, structures, sites, objects, and historic districts can all be listed in the National Register. This guidance document focuses on the information required to evaluate farms for their potential National Register eligibility. Individual properties and historic districts are assessed through separate Information Packets and guidance documents.

To be listed in the National Register, a farm (or other property type) must have:

- **Significance:** Farms must be significant for their history, design, association with a significant person, and/or for their ability to yield data.
- **Integrity:** Farms must retain enough of its physical features to communicate its historical significance. If a farm has changed too much and lost important historical features, it would not be eligible for listing.
- **50 years of age or older:** Though there do exist some exceptions to this rule, the overwhelming majority of properties must be at least fifty-years old to be listed in the National Register.

More information on the requirements for significance and integrity can be found in [\*National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation\*](#).

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR EVALUATING A FARM

Unlike an individual property that may only feature a main building with a couple support structures, a farm is a collection of natural and built resources that work together to create an agricultural landscape. As such, identifying these resources and exploring the relationship between the built and natural environment is critical for evaluating the National Register eligibility of a farm

A farm evaluation must consider individual resources and how each one relates to the other. Considerations should include identifying outbuildings on the property and their historic purpose, the spatial relationship between the outbuildings and other natural and built resources, field use patterns, and how land use has evolved over time.

In short, the evaluation must capture the farm as the farmer sees it, as one complex composed of multiple resources that, together, create something larger and more significant than the sum of its parts.

## REQUIREMENTS FOR EVALUATING ELIGIBILITY FOR FARMS

The following information should be gathered and sent to National Register staff at the Tennessee Historical Commission.

### **REQUIRED**

- A history of the farm from its establishment to the current day. Please include as much information as possible on what the farm produced during its history. Any information on the farm or farming family's significance to the larger community is also helpful.
- Explanation for why the farm is eligible for listing in the National Register.
- A completed Information Packet for the farmhouse. You can include the first two items on this checklist in the Information Packet if you wish. You may ignore the section on outbuildings: this is covered later in the checklist.
- Information on all outbuildings included on the farm. This includes their rough construction date (+/- 10 years), historical purpose, current purpose, and the rough year any changes occurred to the outbuilding. [*Examples of outbuildings include barns, sheds, corn cribs, smokehouses, dairy houses, wells and well houses, pole barns, equipment sheds, etc.*]
- Information on land use and other important natural resources. For example, were there always open fields, or were sections cleared of timber to make way for pasture? Were there any improvements made to the land, like the digging of a pond?
- A rough sketch of the farm with outbuildings and natural features noted. This can be hand drawn on a piece of a paper.
- Pictures of:
  - The interior and exterior of the farmhouse
  - All outbuildings
  - Important landscape and natural features

## SUBMISSION

Once you have compiled all the requested materials, you can submit them digitally to National Register staff at [National.Register@tn.gov](mailto:National.Register@tn.gov). Because the state email system only accepts attachments smaller than 25 mb, the applicant may be required to break the materials up over a few emails. Alternatively, staff can provide a SharePoint link that will allow an applicant to upload the materials to an online folder.

Please reach out to National Register staff for guidance or with any questions you may have about submittal. Likewise, please request confirmation of material receipt from National Register staff.

Upon receipt, staff will evaluate whether the farm meets National Register criteria. They may request additional information or a site visit. A written eligibility opinion will be provided. Farms that are found eligible are encouraged to proceed to the nomination phase.

**Accessibility Statement:** This document has been formatted to improve compliance with WCAG 2.1 AA guidelines, including proper heading structure and instructions for alt text and descriptive content. For assistance or alternative formats, contact [National.Register@tn.gov](mailto:National.Register@tn.gov).