



**HEALTHY  
ECOSYSTEMS**



**HEALTHY  
COMMUNITIES**

**HEHC NATURAL RESOURCE ASSESSMENT**

# Historic/Cultural

## History and Cultural Events Influence Community Health

You may be asking yourself, what does community history and culture have to do with evaluating natural assets? This is a very good question. Your community's culture, history, and natural environment are actually very closely related.

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Communities develop where they do for any number of reasons. It is likely the location had easy access to water. Oftentimes, communities sprouted up as railroad whistle stops or at the intersection of two main roads. For others, the location was of military or political interest or was otherwise defensible.

Perhaps a certain natural resource gave rise to industry in the area, or the farmland was fertile, or the scenery was picturesque.

Natural features shape the histories and cultures of any community, influencing who decides to live there, the bonds and traditions of those people, the or-

ganizations they create, and the values they collectively embrace. In turn, these cultural values greatly influence how the community interacts with and makes use of its natural assets.

Understanding your community's history, values, goals, and aspirations provides an important starting point for planning the best use of your community's natural resources and assets. Consequently, this assessment will help you accomplish three main goals:

- to explore your community's history and culture in an effort to identify those things the community feels are most important,
- to evaluate how the community's natural assets both shape and reflect the community's values, and
- to lay groundwork for developing a future economic vision that is true to the community's cultural and historical values and natural assets.

As you answer these questions, your role will be both that of expert and observer. Your answers will present your view of community history and culture, coloring the assessment with your valuable knowledge. However, in this process, you should also strive to represent larger community views and perspectives.

The information gathered in these assessments will provide a ready-made “cache” of details about your community to use for grants and other projects that will need community-specific information and facts.

### Recommendations for Completing the Assessment

- You are encouraged to do some detective work. Explore your community’s civic groups and institutions, visit its historic sites, and talk to the history keepers in your community. You might even use a voice recorder to capture interviews with long-standing citizens.
- Consider taking pictures or video of the various historical and cultural assets of your community to include with this assessment. This can serve as a sort of documentary portfolio of your community’s heritage. You might even consider creating a PowerPoint presentation of your findings.
- Keep in mind how your community’s environment and natural resources have shaped your community’s identity, values, and culture.
- You may notice some overlap in your answers within this assessment. This is unavoidable since some aspects of your community’s history and culture are important for a variety of reasons and, as a result, fall within a variety of categories. It is not necessary to “re-invent the wheel” on every question or elaborate on the same asset multiple times. If an answer to a previous question or if an explanation of a previously discussed asset will also answer the current question, list the previous, i.e. “see question #3.”

## Historic and Cultural Assessment

Name of community: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe the boundaries your community has established for your HEHC assessments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### Instructions

1. Boundaries should be consistent for all assessments.
2. Some of the questions are “walk about” in nature--meaning that they can be answered by observation of what is easily identified in your community. Other questions may require some exploration. Internet resources and agency information are provided for questions when available. Your assessment team may want to invite agency representatives to conduct presentations, evaluations, or field trips in your community to expand the learning experience for students and adults not participating in your HEHC program. Some questions may benefit from the historic perspective of long-time residents or can be answered by a local hobbyist who has extensive knowledge in this resource area.
3. Attachments, supporting materials, and other information should be included with your assessment--remember--this report is for your community so include information you think is important.
4. Your answers can be hand-written into this form, or typed into an electronic file for the final planning document.
5. If assessment team members are using separate forms, their answers or input should be consolidated on one final report in order to capture all of the information the team has gathered.

NOTE: Completed assessments will be given to the HEHC coordinator to prepare the final planning document for your community’s HEHC program work.

Some information (such as local land uses) may have been prepared especially for your community’s assessment. Contact information for the organizations which prepared this information are referenced in case you have further questions.

Space is provided for additional questions you think are important to know about this resource. In addition, space is provided for your ideas or suggestions to preserve, protect, or restore special resources, and for ideas which would create sustainable educational, recreational, and/or economic opportunities for this resource in your community.

## Let's begin . . .

Where appropriate, one or more information resources are given which may help answer each question. Additional resources are provided in the appendices at the end of the assessment.

### 1. Identify important cultural or historic sites in your community.

Site Name and Description: (Example: old Smith Place, farmstead 1 mile out on CR #44)

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Historic or Cultural Significance: (Example: home of first settler)

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Economic Importance or Potential: (Example: possible bed and breakfast)

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Potential Threats: (Example: new development wants to remove)

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Is this site listed with the Kansas State Historical Society (<http://www.kshs.org/preserve/index.htm>) or with other state or national historic groups?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes                      \_\_\_\_\_ No

NOTE: Please copy this page as needed to identify additional important historic resources in your community.

2. Identify nature sites, environmental features, or natural resources, and discuss how they have contributed to your community's history, culture, identity, and economic well-being.

Site Name and Description: (Example: Alcove Springs, north of town, accessible by gravel road, parking nearby)

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Historic or Cultural Significance: (Example: provided water for Oregon Trail frontiers)

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Economic Importance or Potential: (Ex:ample: stop over site for yearly Oregon Trail ride--set up local vendors and information booth for our community)

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Potential Threats: (Ex:ample: over-use collapsing sides of spring)

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Is this site listed with the Kansas State Historical Society (<http://www.kshs.org/preserve/index.htm>) or with other state or national historic groups?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes                      \_\_\_\_\_ No

NOTE: Please copy this page as needed to identify additional important natural resources in your community.

3. List activities or events which bring your community together and/or attract visitors to the community and describe how these events influence your community?

Event name: (Example: The Longhorn Trail Drive)

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Aspect of culture, history, or identity the event celebrates: (Example: historic re-creation of trail driving)

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Description of community participation in planning and putting on event: (Example: civic groups, local FFA, and local ranchers; identify each by name.)

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Number of locals and out-of-towners who typically attend the event:

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Economic potential of event: (Example: bed and breakfast facilities, hotel, retail, and local restaurants or additional attractions to enhance this event. )

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NOTE: Please copy this page as needed to identify additional important natural resources in your community.

4. What are your community's "cultural assets"? These are defined as any unique features of the community widely recognized and is a source of community pride. (Example: favorite restaurant, bakery, local Co-op or farm store; or it may be the "local character" of a particular ethnic or cultural group, a unique land formation, natural scenery, yearly rodeo, concert, or other event, or it may be historical events, landmarks, architectural styles, buildings, or homes that set the community apart.

List cultural institutions by name and provide a brief description of each:  
(Example: a rustic store that sells western furniture)

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Describe the significance of each to your community: (Example: highlights ranching culture in community)

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Describe how each of these cultural assets contribute to the local economy:  
(Example: brings tourists into community to buy furniture and visit other retail and food establishments)

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Are there ways these assets or events could be used to create new or additional economic opportunities for your community?: (Example: add local restaurant BBQ booth and street dance at a yearly sale event.)

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NOTE: Please copy this page as needed to identify additional important natural resources in your community.

5. How would you characterize the level of citizen participation in community projects?

List projects or activities: (Example: community clean-up)

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Describe the level of involvement from your community's civic groups, local government, or other organizations in each of these events. (Example: PRIDE group always leads a Thanksgiving dinner for the needy, but the local churches, rotary club, and 4-H group participates in the collection and preparation of the food and serving.)

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6. For what or whom is your community named, and what is the historical and cultural importance or significance of the name?

Origin(s) of community name:

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Significance of community's name:

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7. What ethnic, religious, or cultural groups founded and/or have shaped your community? (Example: Lindsborg was settled by Swedish settlers and now the community uses this heritage to bring tourists to their community for the ethnic food, crafts, and events.)

List of ethnic, religious, or cultural groups in your community:

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Influence of each group on your community:

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What is the contribution of these groups for maintaining the community's identity or creating economic opportunities?

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Note: You may have listed some of these in previous sections. If so, simply list the resource and mention that it was discussed earlier.

8. What cultural or recreational "infrastructure" do you have in your community? Infrastructure can be considered any "built" community resources that make possible cultural or recreational activities. (Example: the public library, a community wellness or recreation center, a community daycare, parks and sports fields, museum, cultural café, or a walking path, etc.)

Cultural or recreational infrastructure:

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Functions or programs provided for the community:

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Contribution to community's appeal and growth potential

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9. Describe the role your local school or school district plays in your community, beyond educating children. (Example: adult education or college programs, or make its facilities available for community functions or activities.)

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10. Discuss your community's view of historic preservation. Do citizens use or value historic areas? What, if anything, does your community do to maintain and promote its historic sites, buildings, and community heritage?

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11. Describe any historic environmental events—for example, floods, drought, pest or plant invasion, etc.—that have had a serious impact on the community or its resources, and discuss how these events have shaped or altered the community and its culture.

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## Appendices for Historical/Cultural Assessment

### Appendix A: Web Information Resources

1. Kansas State Historic Society  
<http://www.kshs.org/>
2. Kansas History Resources  
<http://www.kansashistory.us/ksstateorg.html>
3. Kansas Humanities Council  
[http://www.kansashumanities.org/about\\_khc/index.html](http://www.kansashumanities.org/about_khc/index.html)
4. Genealogy Links Directory  
<http://www.lineages.co.uk/dwodp/index.php/Society/History/>
5. Washburn University, Center for Kansas Studies, Sources About Kansas History  
<http://www.washburn.edu/reference/cks/lists/sourcesaboutks.html>
6. Index of Resources for Historians, Department of History of the University of Kansas and the Lehrstuhl für Ältere deutsche Literaturwissenschaft der Universität Regensburg  
<http://www.gzg.fn.bw.schule.de/faecher/links/ressourc.htm>
7. Library of Congress, The American Folklife Center, Local Legacies, national listings of historical-based community events and celebrations  
<http://www.loc.gov/folklife/roots/>

### Appendix B: Agency Resources

1. Kansas State Historic Society  
<http://www.kshs.org/>
2. Kansas History Resources  
<http://www.kansashistory.us/ksstateorg.html>
3. Kansas Humanities Council  
[http://www.kansashumanities.org/about\\_khc/index.html](http://www.kansashumanities.org/about_khc/index.html)

### Appendix C: Funding Resources

1. Kansas Humanities Council  
[http://www.kansashumanities.org/about\\_khc/index.html](http://www.kansashumanities.org/about_khc/index.html) <http://www.kansashumanities.org/grants/heritage/recipients.html> (past grant projects)
2. Kansas State Historic Society  
<http://www.kshs.org/resource/otherfunding.htm>
3. National Trust for Historic Preservation  
<http://www.nationaltrust.org/>
4. Kansas Museums Association  
<http://www.ksmuseums.org/grants.html>