

# SECRETARY OF THE ARMY ENVIRONMENTAL AWARDS 2021

## OREGON ARMY NATIONAL GUARD CULTURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT, SMALL INSTALLATION

The Oregon Army National Guard's (ORARNG) Camp Umatilla is a small installation with a long history. In the early 2000s, Camp Umatilla began the transfer process to the ORARNG out of the Army Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) program. While the original Army installation established in the 1940s spanned around 20,000 acres, the current training site has a footprint of roughly 7500 acres. The transfer to the ORARNG was completed in 2016.

It is Camp Umatilla's history, however, that made this process anything but straightforward. The original installation included a roughly 30-acre cantonment area, but the rest was devoted to munitions storage, maintenance, and operations to include testing, demolition, and disposal. As a consequence, a thousand concrete munitions storage igloos had been built prior to WWII up until the installation was identified for BRAC disposition in the 1990s. The ORARNG's Camp Umatilla today contains the original cantonment area, as well as some older structures and munitions igloos.

The transfer of the training site represented only the first step in revitalizing the post for the modern ORARNG mission. At issue were the older structures still standing, roughly 400 such buildings that had to be treated as potentially eligible for



Building 1, the Headquarters Building, within the administrative section of the Camp Umatilla Oregon Historic District. Note the manicured lawn and trees which providing a park like setting in this portion of the Historic District.

listing on the National Register of Historic Places due to their age. The ORARNG Environmental Office and Cultural Resources Management (CRM) program in particular, were charged with finding a way forward that would preserve the historic value of the training site while still allowing training and operations to proceed. The training site is an essential component for the ORARNG's readiness, supporting the state's Regional Training Institute (RTI) and infantry school as well as ongoing exercises for weekend and annual training events for the ORARNG and other military and law enforcement organizations.

-  Program Management
-  Technical Merit
-  Orientation to Mission
-  Transferability
-  Stakeholder Interaction
-  Program Impact
- 



The most game-changing accomplishment for the CRM program has been enacting a Programmatic Agreement (PA) with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) along with the completion of an Environmental Assessment of Camp Umatilla as part of the NEPA process. The "grand bargain" the CRM program achieved with the SHPO has resulted in the establishment of an historic district on post and identification of several historic structures for



preservation on an 8-acre and a 15.5-acre parcel, rather than preservation of 400-plus structures installation-wide. Signed in 2018 and implemented over the past two years, this agreement allowed the ORARNG to proceed with demolition of older, non-contributing structures to pave the way for a cantonment that meets the needs of classrooms, barracks, and other facilities as well as the establishment of new small arms ranges and maneuver areas. Other milestones for Camp Umatilla include the creation of a Historic District Management Manual (HDMM) to streamline the maintenance of those remaining historic structures, establishment of tribal outreach to ensure access to cultural/religious sites, completion of archaeological surveys over 4,200 acres, and documentation of an 1874 wagon road.



Camp Umatilla’s CRM program is overseen by the ORARNG’s Environmental Program Manager and Cultural Resources Manager, with onsite support from a dedicated environmental employee to assist in all aspects of CRM fieldwork and compliance. Environmental management activities are further bolstered by the ORARNG’s GIS staff and coordinated fully with facilities and maintenance personnel, range control, and installation leadership. The training site’s overall management strategy is captured in its Integrated Cultural Resources Management Plan (ICRMP), which is currently being updated to incorporate the new PA and the historic district manual.



The process of writing and implementing the PA has created a uniquely positive relationship between Camp Umatilla and the SHPO. The ORARNG has long established trust and credibility with that agency in its operations throughout the state, but Camp Umatilla provided the opportunity to



cooperatively design solutions that would meet the priorities of both the ORARNG and the SHPO. As a result, the CRM program has been able to implement a management strategy that not only preserves historic resources, but also conserves financial resources today and into the future. The PA and HDMM have specified the maintenance and preservation requirements for the remaining historic structures, which allows the ORARNG to automate processes to a great extent. Rather than devoting time and money to Section 106 processes, those resources can be directed into reshaping Camp Umatilla for its modern mission by preserving the 18 presentative structures of the historic district instead of preserving the 563 buildings and structures that were identified as historically significant. In terms of cost avoidance, this achievement represents hundreds of thousands of dollars, but even more importantly, it allows plans for training capabilities and construction to proceed without impediment.



Building 4 (frame right), the Machine Shop, and Building 5 (frame left), the Garage, in the Camp Umatilla Oregon Historic District are emblematic of the industrial section of the District.



When Camp Umatilla was transferred to the ORARNG in 2016, the challenges of converting it to a functioning training site were daunting; indeed, finding some way to address hundreds of historic structures on the rest of the original camp footprint remains an impediment to the disposition of the remaining acreage under BRAC oversight. Essentially, under BRAC, the entirety of all structures and munitions igloos on Camp Umatilla’s 7500 acres had been determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places based on their age and association to American WWII history. This meant that any maintenance activities on any structure, from painting to repair to systems upgrades, would require completion of the Section 106 process with the SHPO, resulting in tremendous legwork and long delays before work could be completed. Demolition of unneeded and deteriorating structures would also be hampered by compliance requirements. The ORARNG needed to find the balance between the needs to modernize for the contemporary mission while still preserving important historical resources. Though the BRAC process had made achieving this balance very challenging, the ORARNG succeeded in developing the technical solutions that kept Camp Umatilla’s training and operations from being dramatically curtailed by its historic structures.

The ORARNG Environmental Office, however, had built a strong relationship with the SHPO, and this foundation would be essential in achieving the management approach now in



Igloos 1348-1353 are part of the Camp Umatilla Historic District and are located in the F Block of Igloos at Camp Umatilla Oregon. Originally, 1001 igloos were constructed for storage of munitions and materiel. These six igloos are preserved for their design, location, feeling, and association to the original mission of the Umatilla Ordnance Depot during WWII.

place. As the Environmental staff embarked on the NEPA Environmental Assessment process, it was clear that many buildings would require significant rehabilitation, and many others needed to be demolished altogether if the depot would be transformed to a training site.

The PA for Camp Umatilla outlines the mitigations necessary to allow for these changes to proceed. The ORARNG agreed to manage a small number of historic buildings and igloos as representative structures, performing the full complement of preservation techniques, but the rest of the igloos and over 550 old structures were released from historic management requirements. Within the

cantonment, a historic district has now been established, spanning about 15 acres and encompassing 12 buildings that will be managed as historic—but all other structures are free to be used or demolished as Camp Umatilla requires. Within the new training areas, formerly munitions storage sites, six igloos will be maintained as historic, but others are now being demolished so that ranges and other resources can be constructed.

The historic district helps to capture Camp Umatilla’s WWII-era history, and the established landscaping associated with those historic structures helps to create a pleasant

environment in the cantonment area. The CRM program is in the final edits of the management manual for the district and is already implementing its guidance. This document clearly defines maintenance needs and consulting requirements for the historic buildings. Regular maintenance tasks are forecasted to avoid confusion and ensure that processes are as standardized and streamlined as possible.



Within the historic district, Camp Umatilla has incorporated signage and the original cantonment building numbering schemes for the historic buildings, in addition to the modern numbering, to create an aesthetic feature that will still be clear for modern users. A number of the buildings have unique architectural features from WWII or feature unique building materials, factors that led to them being chosen as representatives for preservation. In consultation with the SHPO and the Advisory Council Historic Preservation (ACHP), the management manual being finalized now provides the ORARNG with the necessary latitude to maintain those unique characteristics while limiting the ORARNG's obligations given the realistic limits of funding and daily operations. Rather than tasking Camp Umatilla with the preservation of structural time capsules, the plan will allow activities like installation of modern HVAC and windows with significant autonomy granted to the ORARNG in making those decisions.

In those portions of the training site that will be converted to ranges, the CRM program has completed surveys on over 4,200 acres over the past two years, with plans in place to complete a full survey of all 7500 acres over the next few years. Some historically interesting artifacts have been found thus far, including old bottles and cans from the 1940s era. Surveys follow the standard ORARNG practices for inadvertent discovery of cultural items or munitions. At this point, artifacts are left in the field, but the ORARNG does maintain a curation agreement with the University of Oregon's archaeological library in the event that more sensitive materials or artifacts of tribal significance are discovered.

One known feature of the post is a segment of an 1874 wagon road; though not clearly delineated as part of the official Oregon Trail, the wagon road could have been used as a connecting spur. The ORARNG conducted LiDAR flights over the road area to document it and took photographs of the site in context for SHPO mitigation. The training site also includes Coyote Coulee, a geographic feature that is a traditional religious and cultural property for the Confederated Tribes of Umatilla. Vehicles are barred from this area of post, but the ORARNG is free to conduct dismounted maneuvers in the area. No further construction or other development will be done inside



The Coyote Coulee, a portion of which is located on Camp Umatilla Oregon, is an important geographical and cultural feature to the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation. The Coyote Coulee is being treated as a Historic Property eligible to the National Register of Historic Places.

undisturbed areas of the Coulee, but the Environmental Office is consulting with tribal leadership to determine how best to approach fire protection and establishment of firebreaks within that site.

The establishment of Camp Umatilla as an effective training resource has a causal through-line to the CRM program. Without the implementation of the PA for historic structures and the development of HDMM, virtually no new development of ranges or structures at Camp Umatilla would have been possible, and the maintenance of old buildings would have cost the ORARNG tremendous time and money to achieve compliance. Indeed, the import of the CRM program's approach is evident in contrast to the remaining historic Umatilla acreage, still under BRAC, which has been stymied by its historic structure designations. Camp Umatilla today is free to demolish unneeded structures and build modern facilities, and the preservation of the remaining historic district has been dramatically streamlined with the SHPO's approval. In the absence of these accomplishments, Camp Umatilla simply would not be a functioning training site today. New MILCON and SRM construction is now underway in the cantonment area, allowing the transformation of the post to proceed, to include construction in support of the RTI and renovations and new construction of barracks, classrooms, and dining halls. As the archaeological surveys proceed on the undeveloped tracts, Camp Umatilla will be able to support even greater volume of the land navigation, mounted and dismounted maneuvers, and tracked and wheeled vehicle training currently supported on post. As a legacy cleanup action is completed, an additional 1,700 acres will also be opened for training access, including 400 acres for engineered dig training. The small arms ranges for pistol and rifle qualification could also be further expanded.

A key aspect of the CRM program for Camp Umatilla is its transferability, particularly in looking at properties coming out of the BRAC program and into state Guard control. It is not uncommon for blanket historic designations to be applied based on structural age, but engaging with the SHPO and the ACHP can be the path through such challenges. Importantly, the ORARNG's approach relies on using the available methods and techniques for historic preservation to ground the targeted strategy of selective conservation. Negotiating for a customized CRM approach is among the most effective tactics a state Guard can use in finding the balance between preservation of the past and the future needs of readiness. Combining this commitment to cooperation and the best practices in historic management allowed Camp Umatilla to open with no impacts on development or training activities.

As noted above, Camp Umatilla contains some traditional tribal cultural properties, so the CRM program has worked diligently to foster and grow established relationships with the Confederated Tribes of Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) to appropriately protect that site and provide access. Currently, access agreements are being drafted with tribal leadership. The ORARNG conducts quarterly meetings with the state's Legislative Commission on Indian Services; ORARNG will host the meeting at Camp Umatilla once COVID-19 restrictions for in person meetings have been lifted. Because the training site was previously an Army munitions depot, public access was not possible, so this meeting will be the first time that many local stakeholders are able to actually visit the property. In this context, providing tribal access is all the more notable. Plans are in progress to allow for seed gathering for the first time in autumn 2020. Also under consultation is the management of Coyote Coulee. Fire management will be important in preventing wildfire in the sensitive Camp Umatilla ecosystem, so the CRM program



and the Natural Resources Conservation staff are working with tribal representatives to determine appropriate firebreaks and any other necessary disturbance. The CTUIR will remain a key partner for conservation activities on post and beyond, as an adjoining parcel of the original Army installation will be transferred out of BRAC and into tribal ownership for use of a wildlife conservation area. The strong relationships between ORARNG and CTUIR are paving the way not only for continued government-to-government consultation, but also neighborly cooperation. Already, the tribe is a partner on conservation efforts for burrowing owls, providing the ORARNG Natural Resources staff access to their property for the monitoring of 60 owl burrows. The CTUIR also take part in the ORARNG's broader consultation outreach; an annual summit is held each year with the nine federally recognized tribes of Oregon throughout the state, with participation not only from environmental staff, but also the Adjutant General's office and the SHPO.

Camp Umatilla also represents a new opportunity for connection with and education of the local community. The training site is accessible to the public with clearance, and it is expected that as the training site is more established, further outreach will become possible. At present, the CRM program is considering developing interpretive panels for the historic district that will provide way-finding and historical context for the area. The Environmental Office also helps the training site with planning and hosting local football camps and cross country races for area students. Earth Day events and local school field trips and classroom outreach are also being planned for when the Covid-19 pandemic ends. Creating an installation that reflects the ORARNG's community commitments is a top goal for the CRM program at Camp Umatilla.