

# MINNESOTA ARMY NATIONAL GUARD



## CULTURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT , LARGE INSTALLATION

### INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Camp Ripley, the Minnesota Army National Guard's (MNARNG) premier training site, has always emphasized the essential connection between conservation and training sustainability. The training site's Cultural Resources Management (CRM) program is an exemplar of this commitment, integrating landscape-level management techniques with programmatic innovations to bring preservation of the past into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Camp Ripley, sited in central Minnesota along 18 miles of pristine Mississippi River shoreline, encompasses 53,000 acres that have been traversed and settled for literally thousands of years, endowing the installation with a rich history connecting prehistoric peoples, Native Americans, early American settlers and the military. The installation garrison contains over 300 historic and prehistoric sites ranging from archaic sites along the Mississippi to the remains of Fort Ripley, a frontier cavalry fort listed on the National Register. It is also home to several WPA-era

buildings, a 1.5-mile long dry-laid stone wall, and the "Valhalla" Governor's lodge. As one of the largest and most active training sites in the region, Camp Ripley also supports over 450,000 man days of military training every year, necessitating a careful balance of the military mission with the preservation of MNARNG's cultural treasures. The CRM program achieves this balance through innovation, communication and outreach, ensuring that MNARNG achieves excellence in its Triple Bottom Line: Environment, Mission and Community.

Among the most important CRM milestones over the past 2 years is the completion of an installation-wide Phase I archaeological survey wrapping up this fall. A multi-year initiative, this effort concludes assessment of 54,000 acres; no further investigations are anticipated to be necessary. From the standpoint of both preservation and training, this is a critical achievement: the CRM

program has accomplished a methodologically consistent, comprehensive record of all archaeological sites, allowing Camp Ripley to proceed with virtually all needed operations without further survey requirements. All survey data has been incorporated into the installation's digitized CRM data library, which renders all material accessible via a GIS interface. The ease with which the CRM program can provide accurate data for every location on post has dramatically streamlined Section 106 processes to the point of virtual automation. Another milestone is the implementation of a new, dedicated CRM internship with St. Cloud State University (SCSU), a longstanding partner in the installation's environmental endeavors. The installation completed a rehabilitation of the historic Governor's Lodge as well, working with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to restore the exterior aesthetics to the original 1934 appearance while also modernizing all the interior HVAC and electrical systems. While Camp Ripley is already established as a leader in the Sentinel Landscape program, its CRM program is pushing for greater innovation within that initiative as well, developing criteria for inclusion of CRM goals into Sentinel Landscape property prioritization formulas.

Camp Ripley's Cultural Resources Manager is fully supported by the broader Environmental Office for MNARNG along with the Facilities Maintenance Office (FMO) and the NEPA and GIS staff. CRM activities are integrated into MNARNG's operations from the ground-level, so that planning and decision-making protocols require CRM program input and coordination. This integration ensures compliance from the outset of any project. To achieve even greater organizational accountability, the CRM program has been diligent in expanding cultural resource awareness and response education to all MNARNG soldiers and staff, particularly those who may encounter cultural resources in the course of training or construction work. The CRM program works closely with the training area coordinator and range control teams as well to plan training events and to clarify every

MNARNG member's responsibilities with regard to resource protection and preservation.

Externally, the CRM program consults with the SHPO, the Minnesota State Archaeologist, 11 Federally recognized Tribes and several interested party Tribes,



Camp Ripley's main entrance including portions of shared responsibility with the MN DOT. The wall has been restored in past years with input, funding and manpower from both agencies.

Minnesota Department of Transportation (DOT) and local history clubs and historical societies. The DOT is a particularly important partner as joint-owner of the historic Camp Ripley Wall, a cherished symbol for MNARNG and Camp Ripley constructed in the 1930s by the CCC. Today, an image of the wall is incorporated into the training site's logo. Management and protection of this resource, however, requires regular interagency coordination according to an established maintenance development plan. These outreach efforts not only ensure that Camp Ripley remains fully compliant with all CRM laws, but also that the program takes full advantage of the resources, expertise and support of the greater preservation community. Activities on Camp Ripley are guided by the statewide Integrated Cultural Resources Management Plan (ICRMP), which encompasses compliance, planning, and best practices, serving as a living document that reflects MNARNG's evolving role in the state, its training goals and expanding knowledge about the post's cultural wealth. The ICRMP will begin its update in the coming year using

the new ARNG template, allowing for much greater customization and streamlining.

A commitment to in-house resource management characterizes the Camp Ripley CRM program, with the effect of enhancing MNARNG's expertise while saving resources and funding. The ICRMP revision, for example, is being completed in-house at significant cost savings over contracting. The new internship program with SCSU provides Camp Ripley with graduate student talent and labor at no cost while the student earns required credits and experience. One of the greatest program cost savings this year involved the funding of the survey of three new maneuver areas. Through forward planning and internal coordination, the CRM program was able to embed survey efforts within maneuver area construction on several thousand acres. Rather than proceed incrementally over 3 years with surveys of this area, MNARNG proposed a comprehensive project with a 1-year timeline, thereby avoiding several hundred thousands of dollars in piecemeal survey costs. This approach is representative of MNARNG's strategy. All construction and training events are developed on a long-range timelines to address potential environmental conflicts before ground is ever broken. The installation Project Board involves the CRM program at the outset of any proposed action so that shovel-ready status can be achieved before the installation even applies for STEP funding.

## Historic Buildings and Structures

 Camp Ripley's Governor's Lodge and the Camp Ripley Wall are the primary historic structures for the installation. Camp Ripley Wall presents a unique management challenge because it is jointly owned by the MNARNG and DOT. Ownership is literally split down the length of the wall, so any repairs or accidents (the wall parallels a stretch of road where vehicle accidents are not uncommon) must be jointly coordinated. While the post encompasses roughly 700 WWII-era tin hutments, these have been evaluated as

ineligible for NRHP listing; SHPO consultation has also determined the Cold War era structures are not eligible. Two facilities, however, the Camp Ripley chapel and the ammunition supply bunkers were assessed under different criteria. The bunkers were found to be eligible though addressed under an Advisory Council for Historic Preservation program comment, in which MNARNG's responsibilities for preservation have been completed. Due to its near original state of preservation and unique design features, it is recommended that the chapel will be eligible upon reaching the 50-year requirement for the National Register.



A photo of the Governor's lodge retrieved from the archives for use during its recent restoration. Using hints in the photo such as the cover of the magazine in the rack, we were able to determine the age of this photo to be from shortly after construction of the building, allowing us to restore it as accurately as possible.

The Governor's Lodge (Valhalla) and its associated garage are eligible for listing. This year, the CRM program completed a significant rehabilitation of the building, a log structure built by the CCC in 1934. This kind of structure is rare to find still standing; the logs tend to deteriorate over time. At Camp Ripley, however, Valhalla still serves as VIP quarters for visitors and command. It recently housed the visiting president of Croatia. The current renovation was not the first major rehabilitation on the building. In the 1970s, a lightning strike caused significant fire damage to the interior, though the exterior logs were largely unharmed. The log walls,

however, did require sandblasting to remove char, resulting in gaps between the logs. Working with the SHPO, the CRM program delineated the elements of the house that were still considered historic, designing a cost-effective plan to modernize structure while turning back the clock on its appearance. The windows being installed are a modern update of the original 1930s style. Though not as desirable from a maintenance perspective, the cedar shake roof was restored after installing new insulation. The deteriorating logs were stabilized and all envelope gaps repaired; a new HVAC system capitalizes on the energy efficiencies achieved with exterior restoration.

## Archaeological Resources

The CRM program protects around 70 eligible or potentially eligible archaeological sites. The full picture of Camp Ripley's archaeological landscape, however, has become truly clear over the past 2 years as the Section 110 inventory of the entire 54,000-acre installation was completed. The multi-year effort achieves a modernization and standardization of all survey data, minimizing need for any further future survey efforts. MNARNG now has full, data-driven confidence in its project siting and avoidance of impacts. This survey effort incorporated 300 acres set aside in 1986 for high probability of archaeological sites. Further evaluation required for this parcel has now been completed with majority cleared for training access.



A phase 2 test unit excavated by Heritage sites, a survey company owned by the Leech Lake Tribe. Heritage sites was instrumental in completing a large portion of the Camp Ripley survey inventory.

The CRM program contracted with the Leech Lake Band Heritage Sites (LLBHS) program to accomplish its aggressive inventory project for the training site. One benefit of this partnership is that the LLBHS integrates Tribal monitoring into the entire inventory process. Over FY16 and FY17, approximately 20,000 acres were surveyed using pedestrian shovel test methods that identified areas requiring appropriate Phase II investigation. Overall, the survey effort was organized to first clear those areas that are highest priority for training or construction projects according to the installation's present and projected needs. This proactive approach means that surveys required for clearance of this year's training activities were actually completed several years ago.

Surveying Camp Ripley is particularly important because the installation contains the largest stretch of undeveloped Mississippi river shoreline in the nation, all of which has now been surveyed. The river, of course, has been incredibly important in the human history of the region and the site of countless settlements over millennia. To that end, Camp Ripley maintains a strict no-dig, no-vehicle buffer within 500 feet of the shore. At this stage of the installation's inventory, patterns of resource presence are becoming visible, marking the evolution of prehistoric sites to farmsteads and ultimately to the development of Fort Ripley in the mid-1800s.

Curation of any artifacts that necessitate removal is provided through an agreement with the Minnesota State Historic Society per the survey contract. In general, Camp Ripley enacts in situ protection, at least until Phase II investigations are completed, but the curation agreement provides for preservation according to state and Federal standards when excavation occurs.

The Camp Ripley CRM program has successfully approached preservation and investigation with a priority on the MNARNG mission. As noted above, survey efforts were organized in keeping with upcoming training and construction requirements.



archeological sites and potentially add to the state and national record as information becomes available.

Internally, continuity of Camp Ripley's CRM program has been greatly enhanced by innovation in the links between GIS and CRM records. CRM records are available in a digitally searchable format. This approach to record-keeping and usage is one that could tremendously benefit any Guard installation and Camp Ripley's CRM staff have presented their results to National Guard Bureau toward that end. The connection between GIS and CRM data streamlines not only the recording process but also ensures that the wealth of CRM research can actually be applied at a strategic planning level. New contracts awarded for surveys or other investigations now include a digitization component to make uptake of data even easier. The accessibility of CRM materials through GIS has been an important element of the partnership between Camp Ripley's CRM program and SCSU, particularly for its research potential, as well as in enhancing relationships and efficiency between Camp Ripley and its SHPO and Tribal partners. NEPA processes also benefit throughout the installation from the new level of efficiency. The CRM staff also seeks out ways to exchange expertise with other conservation organizations; as a member of the Council for Minnesota Archaeology, the Cultural Resources Manager participates in workshops and training opportunities.

Camp Ripley prides itself on transparency, accessibility and partnership with its stakeholders and community. From Tribal consultation to educational outreach to community events, the CRM program is a key partner in achieving MNARNG's trademark level of public engagement.

The CRM program's consultation and coordination with Tribal partners is a critical element of outreach and stakeholder interaction.

Face-to-face Native American consultations are held annually between Camp Ripley and the 11 Federally recognized Tribes of Minnesota, as well as with Tribes that have an historical interest in properties now maintained by MNARNG. This year's consultation meeting was hosted on Camp Ripley and featured a tour for the six attending representatives; most of these participants were new to their representative positions, so the meeting was an excellent opportunity to familiarize them with Camp Ripley's sites and practices. The consulting tribes were also asked to contribute tribal flags to the installation. These are displayed in the Camp Ripley Town Hall, featuring prominently whenever public events are held. The Cultural Resources Manager was also recently invited to serve on a cultural advisory board with the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe to encourage more awareness of tribal priorities. School groups from the Leech Lake Reservation are regularly hosted on post to collect sage and other culturally significant plants, and the CRM program encourages all tribes to make use of the installation's resources. This open relationship helps to resolve potential conflicts over cultural sites. Recently, the CRM program received input from one tribe requesting formal NRHP nomination of a series of burial mounds on post—but another tribe had specifically requested that the mounds not be nominated to minimize the risk of disturbance. Bringing these concerns into conversation with the various stakeholders has resulted in the decision to pursue nomination to protect the sites in the event there was ever a change in military ownership. In fact, this will likely be a primary project for the CRM program's new 2017-18 intern.

In other cases, the CRM program offers informal advisory assistance. One example is a partnership with Friends of Crow Wing State Park, a group of local historians seeking to protect sites on Department of Natural Resources (DNR) lands adjacent to Camp Ripley. At stake is an archaeological site dating back to the fur trade era and featuring several burial

mounds. A public boat landing has created concerns about erosion, and the Camp Ripley CRM program has provided the group with suggestions on ways to minimize vehicle impacts. Another neighboring partner is the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), which is required to evaluate several sites located on Camp Ripley. Rather than continue to duplicate efforts on this site monitoring, the CRM program has offered to share its own routine inventories and site assessments and assist the FERC contractors with completing their compliance requirements.



A screenshot from Camp Ripley's Facebook page, highlighting COL St Sauver's visit to the Mille Lacs Pow Wow. The CRM program makes the most of social media to promote community education and engagement.

The CRM program continues the Camp Ripley tradition of community involvement through educational initiatives. Camp Ripley's environmental classroom is a perfect venue for the CRM program's presentations on cultural resources and regional history for visiting schoolchildren, with many schools in the area taking full advantage of this special resource.

Around 6000 people, many of them schoolchildren, visit the classroom each year. More casual visitors to Camp Ripley are also exposed to the installation's rich history. The CRM program recently installed interpretive signage at a popular camping ground located on a historic archaeological site. The signs explain the significance of the campground, which had actually been used by Native Americans for encampment for centuries and MNARNG's practices for preserving this sort of history.

The CRM program has hosted a biannual Archaeology Day since 2014. The program includes informational topics about Camp Ripley's history and pre-history, cultural resources and a hands-on flint knapping demonstration for Camp Ripley staff and soldiers. At the higher education level, the CRM program's partnership with SCSU has been an integral component, providing educational resources to students and faculty as well as high-quality, cutting-edge research for MNARNG. Last year, the CRM program sponsored its first intern, with another anticipated to sign on at the start of the coming school year. The first CRM intern created the National Register package that will be used to formally nominate the Governor's Lodge. For the CRM program, the internship program offers MNARNG excellent research and programmatic assistance at no cost; students receive tuition and stipends from their graduate program at SCSU. Most critically, of course, the students receive the hands-on experience that positions them for greater success in the field. The next phase of this program will be a field school focused on evaluating potentially eligible archaeological sites for possible submission to the National Register.