



## **FY17 SECDEF Environmental Awards Cultural Resource Management, Large Installation Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, Oak Harbor, WA**

### **Introduction**

Naval Air Station (NAS) Whidbey Island was commissioned on September 21, 1942, and is the sole naval aviation support in the Pacific Northwest, NAS Whidbey Island provides facility and operational support to over 70 aviation related tenant commands and is home to five aircraft platforms (EA-18G, P-3, P-8A, C-40 and MH-60) comprised of 19 active operational squadrons, 3 reserve squadrons and a search and rescue detachment. In addition to supporting the operational and training requirements of Commander, Electronic Attack Wing, Pacific Fleet and Commander, Patrol and Reconnaissance Wing TEN, NAS Whidbey Island hosts the following Naval Ocean Processing Facility Whidbey Island and Navy Information Operations Command as well as other associated supporting commands. NAS Whidbey Island is comprised of facilities at Ault Field and Sea Plane Base, Oak Harbor, Washington; Outlying Field, Coupeville, Washington; Lake Hancock, Washington; Coos Head, Oregon; and Naval Weapons Systems Training Facility (NWSTF), Boardman, Oregon. NAS Whidbey Island consists of 813 Buildings, over 55,000 acres and over 10,000 military, civilians and contractor personnel with over 12,960 family members.

On Whidbey Island, Ault Field is the airfield for all assigned aircraft, while Seaplane Base provides family housing and support services. The Outlying Landing Field (OLF) in Coupeville and the Lake Hancock Target Range adjacent to Greenbank are also located on Whidbey Island. NWSTF Boardman, Oregon is the largest component of NAS Whidbey Island's total acreage with 47,232 acres. NWSTF has air-to-ground ranges, terrestrial impact areas, and special use airspace. Approximately 10 miles of the Oregon Trail, a historic cemetery, a 90 acre public interpretation area, and two Traditional Cultural Properties are managed at NWSTF Boardman. On the Oregon Coast, the Coos Head Naval Facility comprises a historic district on 2.43 acres surrounded by tribally owned property.

To date, NAS Whidbey Island manages 78 archaeological sites with 45% of the area of responsibility surveyed to professional standards. The installation manages nearly 2,000 buildings and structures with 28 structures eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Properties (NRHP) and three districts.

### **Background**

Cultural resources on NAS Whidbey Island and its affiliated properties consist of historical buildings and structures, archaeological resources, tribal affiliated cultural resources and treaty rights. NAS Whidbey Island and NWSTF Boardman operate under two separate Integrated Cultural Resources Management Plans (ICRMP). Ault Field, OLF Coupeville, Lake Hancock and Seaplane Base are included in the NAS Whidbey Island ICRMP, signed in FY2016. The Coos Head Naval Facility is included in the NWSTF Boardman ICRMP, signed in FY2015.

Both ICRMPs are due for revision in FY2020. There are 13 federally recognized tribes with interests, affiliation and/or treaty rights at the facilities managed by NAS Whidbey Island and over 56 with interests in Navy activities.



Map of NAS Whidbey Island Seaplane Base Historic District



Naval Air Station Whidbey Island. Kendall Campbell, Cultural Resources Manager. Standing in front of historic farmhouse at Ault Field. (Photo by Melanie Bengtson. 171201-N- KQ701-001)

The installation has one Cultural Resources Manager (CRM), Ms. Kendall Campbell. Ms. Campbell is an archaeologist who has worked in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Arizona, Texas, Florida, and Peru. Prior to coming to the Navy, Ms. Campbell taught anthropology at several universities. She received her Juris Doctor in 2012. The CRM executes a high level of engagement and consultation with State Historical Preservation Officers (SHPO), federally recognized tribes, and interested and consulting parties in Washington and Oregon. Over Fiscal Year (FY) 16 and 17, the CRM has continued to build strong relationships with SHPOs and Tribes while serving as archaeologist, historic preservation specialist, and tribal liaison for the Commanding Officer (CO) of NAS Whidbey Island.

In addition to routine consultations under the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and the Navy’s Environmental Readiness Program Manual, OPNAVINST 5090.1D, the NAS Whidbey Island CRM supports installation leadership in tribal government-to-government consultations

for installation and Fleet training activities to ensure consistent communication and maintain strong relationships. The installation CRM has negotiated Inadvertent Discovery Plans for both NAS Whidbey Island and NWSTF Boardman with the affiliated Tribes. Consultations with tribal governments follow the Navy Region Northwest government-to-government protocol.

The CRM has initiated consultation on development of a Programmatic Agreement under Section 106 of NHPA to address effects of routine maintenance and repetitive projects on historic properties at NAS Whidbey Island. ACHP program comments for dependent housing and military barracks also help streamline Section 106 consultation.

### **Summary of Accomplishments**

The CRM has established an efficient and effective program that enables the Navy to execute its mission while fulfilling all cultural resource obligations. This is accomplished through the establishment of consultation relationships and processes with SHPOs, Tribes and other interested and consulting parties. During FY 2016 and 2017, notable accomplishments of the Cultural Resources program include:

- Successful consultation and completion of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for alternatives to the proposed demolition of eight historic farmhouses, allowing descendants and the community the opportunity to relocate the homes off Navy property. The homes were featured in a March 2017 Whidbey News Times newspaper article.
- Initiation and consultation on the development of a Programmatic Agreement under Section 106 of NHPA to address effects of routine maintenance and repetitive projects on historic properties at NAS Whidbey Island.
- Completion of a diverse range of cultural resources studies include:
  - Early Euro-American Settlement Study and Context Report at NAS Whidbey Island;
  - Cooperative Agreement with the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) for tribal ethnographic study and hosted tribal elder tour for tribal perspective on the Management Plan for the Oregon Trail at NWSTF Boardman;
  - Pilot project to establish successful methodology for archaeological site monitoring, evaluation, and reporting;
  - Preservation Plan for the WWII Era Skywarrior Theater, one of two remaining WWII era buildings at Ault Field eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP); and,
  - Maintenance Plan for WWII Era Seaplane Base Tower (Building 27).
- Participation in Tribal conferences, including the Coast Salish Tribal Gathering and State of Washington Tribal CR Summit. This strengthened trust with Tribes, reduced consultation time and improved efficiency in planning and project execution.
- Tribal Outreach: Participated in the Suquamish CR Protection Summit as a panelist in discussions on Traditional Cultural Property/Traditional Cultural Landscape (TCP/TCL) methodologies and case studies.
- Public Outreach: Gave a presentation to American Society of Civil Engineers on prehistory of human occupation in tectonically active areas.

- Completed consultation with the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community to bring a Navy archaeological collection into compliance with standards stipulated in 36 CFR, Part 79: Curation of Federally Owned and Administered Archaeological Collections.
- Coordinated participation of NAS Whidbey Island leadership and Seabees in the Ebey's Landing National Historic Reserve's Annual Preservation Field School (near OLF).
- Successfully negotiated with Washington's SHPO on reclamation of historic timbers from WWII era aircraft hangar for Washington State Heritage Barns program.

## Archaeological Resources

The NAS Whidbey Island CR program achieved a number of management goals contributing to understanding of archaeological resources, even though FY 2016 and 2017 did not include any approved funding for archaeological surveys under Section 110 of NHPA. Three innovative projects incorporated tribal ethnography and archaeological resources into the context of the cultures and traditions beyond the facility fence lines; they also completed archaeological site re-evaluation to improve integration of the CR program in support of mission sustainment.

In FY 2016 and in support of an Oregon Trail Management plan for NWSTF Boardman, the CR program entered into a Cooperative Agreement (CA) with the CTUIR to provide the tribal perspective on management of the Oregon Trail. Like many stretches of the Oregon Trail, the 10-mile segment managed at NWSTF Boardman followed a pre-existing Native American trail. Under the CA, the CTUIR arranged for tribal elders to visit NWSTF Boardman focusing on segments of the Oregon Trail and associated archaeological sites, including a late-Pleistocene/early-Holocene site. The oral histories taken during these site visits contributed to a report on the tribal history and significance of the Oregon Trail from an indigenous perspective. The Tribe suggested management approaches for parts of the Trail that have significance to them, which will be incorporated into the Management Plan as well as the ICRMP, facilitating more expedient and efficient planning for future projects and changes to training requirements.



A 10-mile segment of the Oregon Trail runs through NWSTF Boardman. An Oregon Trail Management Plan is in development incorporating tribal input. Oregon Trail ruts located in the left foreground of trail marker. (Photo by Stephen Beckham, Lewis and Clark College. 120730-N-KQ701-001)



Seaplane Base, Naval Air Station Whidbey Island. Pilot program for archaeological site reevaluation (Section 110). Example of shell midden deposit. Midden deposits date up to 500 years ago. (Photo by Teresa Trost, Cascadia Archaeology. 131014-N-KQ701-001)



In further support of the Navy's Section 110 NHPA program obligations, in FY 2017 the installation's CRM developed a pilot project aimed to efficiently and economically re-evaluate archaeological sites at NAS Whidbey Island and establish a comprehensive monitoring program. The program consists of reevaluating the resources as opposed to a specific project area for recurring projects, allowing more flexibility. NAS Whidbey Island has numerous previously recorded archaeological sites covering large areas of the installation. Most of these sites were recorded over thirty years ago and contain burials and other sensitive cultural materials, but only a few have been formally determined eligible for listing in the NRHP. With a solid knowledge base of site location, content, and integrity of identified sites, the installation can more effectively integrate mission critical activities in these areas while giving the CR program the ability to better direct resources to manage National Register eligible properties.



Ault Field, Naval Air Station Whidbey Island. Early Euro-American Context Study. 1946 photo of historic farms visible around periphery of the airfield. Historic Hangar 1 in lower right foreground. (Photographer unknown, 460101-N- KQ701-001)

Finally, to facilitate planning and expedite review processes, the CR program managed a contract in 2016 to complete a Pre-WWII Euro-American Settlement Study and Context Report for NAS Whidbey Island. The installation was once the location of numerous homes and farms established by Euro-Americans who settled, logged, and farmed the island beginning in the 1850s. To gain insight and information on this early Euro-American Settlement, the contractor conducted research of primary and secondary source documents and prepared an appropriate historic context report. The report provides an early settlement historic context for NAS Whidbey Island (Ault Field and Seaplane Base)

and assists in the installation's Section 110 responsibilities through identification of potential historic landscapes and archaeological concerns for pre-military homestead and agricultural sites that may remain on the installation. The context study also strengthens the ICRMP context statement, facilitating determinations of eligibility and expediting Section 106 reviews in areas not yet surveyed on the installation.

### **Historic Buildings and Structures**

NAS Whidbey Island finalized a 2017 MOA between the Navy, Public-Private Venture (PPV) Housing program, Washington State, and family representatives of descendants of the first European settlers of NAS Whidbey Island to find and facilitate mitigation for the proposed demolition of eight historic farmhouses managed by the PPV Housing program. The farmhouses are the original homes of Dutch settlers who homesteaded and farmed the area that would eventually become NAS Whidbey Island. When the Navy received funding in 1941 for aviation expansion in the Pacific Northwest, it immediately began survey work on Whidbey Island and announced it would purchase the properties of the original farmers. Following the bombing of Pearl Harbor and the United States entry into WWII, the construction of the air station accelerated and buildings and personnel were needed to bring the new air station into operation in a very short period of time. The farmhouses built upon the properties acquired by the Navy

became critical assets and were converted to officers' quarters. With support of the PPV program, the MOA stipulates that the historic farmhouses will be offered to community members if they can successfully relocate the farmhouse to another property off the installation. The opportunity to relocate these historic farmhouses continues a long history of re-use and community support for historic preservation that has been in practice on the island for over a century.

After three years of negotiation, the final MOA represents an innovative and positive resolution to the adverse effect of demolition of these historic farmhouses. The stipulations provide a potential to benefit the community, avoid burdening the Navy with long-term mitigation costs, and have the potential to contribute to the historic landscape represented throughout the Whidbey Island community.

The CR program also successfully completed a Preservation Plan for the WWII era Skywarrior Theater on Ault Field, as well as a Maintenance Plan for the World War II Era Seaplane Base Tower. Since construction was completed in 1942, Skywarrior Theater has actively functioned as a movie theater and has hosted gatherings and assemblies, such as awards ceremonies, Christmas parties, live theater productions, and United Service Organizations shows; most famously the Jack Bennie show in 1944. Skywarrior Theater was determined eligible for inclusion in the NRHP in 2010, with both WWII and Cold War contexts. In 2016 NAS Whidbey Island's CRM oversaw a contract to prepare a Preservation Plan for the theater. This document provides guidance for preservation, rehabilitation, and restoration steps that encourage continued use of the theater in support of the mission at NAS Whidbey Island. This document ensures the Skywarrior Theater continues to function as an integral part of NAS Whidbey Island culture while retaining its historic integrity.



Ault Field, Naval Air Station Whidbey Island. Rixsen Family farmhouse and barn with airfield in background. One of the historic farmhouses addressed in the Public Private Venture Memorandum of Agreement. (Photographer unknown; circa 1968. 680101-N-KQ701-001)



Ault Field, Naval Air Station Whidbey Island. WWII era Skywarrior Theater built in 1942 and in use for the last 75 years. Managed under Skywarrior Theater Preservation and Maintenance Plans. (Photo by the Hardy-Heck-Moore Inc. team. 150921-N-KQ701-001)

The Seaplane Base Control Tower (Building 27) was designed in 1941 and constructed in 1942 by the Austin Company. Building 27 served as the air traffic control tower for the Seaplane Base until 1967, when the Navy permanently ended air operations at Seaplane Base. In 1982 the

building was converted to an electronic warfare simulator building and the observation tower was replaced by a radome. Despite this alteration, building 27 retains integrity and eligibility to the NRHP. The Maintenance Plan not only serves to assess re-use and preservation strategies, but also meets a MOA stipulation to fully consider the preservation values and reuse potential for this historic building.

### **Tribal Consultation and Outreach**

In 2016 NAS Whidbey Island CR successfully completed a curation project in partnership with the Swinomish and the Northwest Indian College to ensure the Maylor Point archaeological collection was brought to federal standards under 36 CFR 79. This archaeological collection was excavated from a highly sensitive, Native American burial site at NAS Whidbey Island's Seaplane Base by a local university professor in the mid-1980s. Repatriation mandated by the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act was completed on this collection, but the remainder of the materials collected remained unprocessed, uncatalogued, or inappropriately curated, in part due to the sensitive nature of the collection. The CRM's relationship with the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community facilitated successful consultations and a strategy to process the collection, catalogue the materials, and re-house to 36 CFR 79 standards while respecting the Tribe's connection and sensitivity to the collection. The Swinomish partnered with the Northwest Indian College to support credits for an internship and the CRM provided curation training and materials and supported the tribal intern who successfully catalogued and re-housed the entire collection. The collaboration contributed to enhanced trust with the tribal community, brought a sensitive collection to federal standards, and facilitated mission success through a positive tribal working relationship of support and mutual respect.

In addition to successful consultations and collaborations, the NAS Whidbey Island CRM also actively pursued opportunities to improve existing tribal relations and establish positive interactions with the regional tribal community. The CRM was able to attend and participate in Native American information summits and gatherings. In 2016, the CRM presented and participated as a panelist as part of a half day symposium at the Suquamish Tribe's Annual Cultural Resource Summit on TCP/TCL Methodologies and Case Studies. Participants in the panel included cultural resource professionals from other federal agencies, Tribes, and contracting companies.

### **Public Outreach**

NAS Whidbey Island's CR program continued to participate in the Ebey's National Historical Reserve Annual Preservation Field School in Coupeville, Washington. This was the fourth year of participation and the most robust to date, including the installation CO, Executive Officer, Command Master Chief and 16 Seabees. This annual event improves the installation's relations with the local community and the Reserve staff, as well as educates the leadership at NAS Whidbey Island about the history of the community in which they live and train through a hands-on preservation experience. This year the Field School focused on the preservation and reconstruction of a 1930s machine shed, slated for conversion into an education center and interpretive display on the Reserve.