



2016 Secretary of Defense Environmental Awards Cultural Resources Management, Large Installation Award

Each year since 1962, the Department of Defense (DoD) has honored individuals, teams, and installations for their outstanding achievements and innovative work protecting the environment while sustaining mission readiness. The 2016 Secretary of Defense Environmental Awards recognize accomplishments from October 1, 2013 to September 30, 2015. A diverse panel of judges with relevant expertise representing Federal and state agencies, academia, and the private sector evaluated all nominees to select one winner for each of the nine categories that cover six subject areas: natural resources conservation; environmental quality; sustainability; environmental restoration; cultural resources management; and environmental excellence in weapon system acquisition.

About the Cultural Resources Management, Large Installation Award

The Cultural Resources Management, Large Installation award recognizes efforts to promote cultural resources stewardship in DoD through effective examples of cultural resources management. The award is designed to showcase DoD's stewardship of its extensive cultural resources, including archaeological sites, the historic built environment, and cultural landscapes. Desired initiatives include partnering with external stakeholders such as Native Americans, State Historic Preservation Officers, local communities, and those working with internal, installation stakeholders such as master planning, public works, and range management. Through cultural resources management programs, DoD identifies areas likely to contain cultural resources and works to protect these assets for future generations. The 2016 winner of the Cultural Resources Management, Large Installation award is *White Sands Missile Range, New Mexico*.

About White Sands Missile Range

White Sands Missile Range (WSMR) was established in 1945 and is the birthplace of America's missile program. WSMR encompasses over 3,200 square miles, making it the largest overland test facility in the United States. The installation supports the U.S. Army's Test and Evaluation Command in addition to the Navy, Air Force, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and the Defense Threat Reduction Agency. WSMR houses two national historic landmarks (NHL). One of these NHLs is Trinity Site - the location of the first atomic explosion. Another NHL is the V-2 Launch Complex, which is the site of the first generation of rocket testing in the U.S. WSMR also encompasses 8,300 other resources, including prehistoric archaeological sites dating from Paleo-Indian to historic, historic military landscapes, historic ranches, mines, and several Cold War-era sites.



Trinity NHL is the site of the first atomic explosion. The obelisk is the official marker of the site. The roofed structure covers a portion of preserved trinitite, a green solidified sand.

Major Accomplishments in FY 2014-2015

- WSMR completed survey and site evaluations of 92,000 acres, which supported the Network Integration Evaluation test events. These events involve more than 5,000 troops and rely on access to large areas for maneuver and operational testing.
- The Cultural Resources Management (CRM) Team digitized 40 years (1950-1990) of the historic *Wind and Sand* base newspaper. The project created a public website where issues are available both for download and as a realistic “flip view” newspaper. All issues are searchable by publication date/keyword.
- The team coordinated the first WSMR archaeological field school in FY 2014. The field school was coordinated through New Mexico State University (NMSU) and performed at the Cottonwood Spring Pueblo site. The field school produced a wealth of data that can be used to address questions about climate and environmental changes and demonstrates how these changes may affect the Pueblo community.
- The team provided facilities reduction support by developing a memorandum of agreement with the city of Green River to mitigate the potential adverse effects of demolishing the Green River Test Site. The Test site was once an active WSMR annex in Utah and was evaluated and determined to be eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places as a military landscape. This Cold War facility is slated for demolition in FY 2016. Mitigation measures include an interactive e-book for educational use, restoration of a scale model Athena missile in a local park, and development of interpretive signage to accompany the model Athena missile.
- The CRM team used Past Perfect archiving software to create a searchable platform for informational resources like historic drawings, photographs, newspaper articles, videos, and State Historic Preservation Officers’ consultations. They partnered with NMSU’s Public History Program to populate a database with 2,552 separate entries, providing a streamlined and cost-effective evaluation process.
- Partnering with the Mescalero Apache tribe, the team executed a project to teach Mescalero youth about traditional use of plants at WSMR in Apache culture. The project resulted in the publication of an informational field brochure about traditional plant use.



Athena missile launch complex at Green River Test Site. Climate control shelters are rolled back to expose launcher.



Mescalero Apache tribal members removing an agave plant. The CRM program partnered with the Mescalero to identify and gather plants of traditional importance to the tribe at WSMR.