

FORT RUCKER

Environmental Document

ENV-CR001: Cultural Resources Identification (30 AUGUST 2025)

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1.0 PURPOSE

This procedure describes methods for identification of Cultural Resources. This procedure is a summary of information contained within the Fort Rucker Integrated Cultural Resources Management Plan (ICRMP), which includes additional details regarding their management.

Control of environmental procedures is addressed in procedure ENV-P002: Document Control.

2.0 SCOPE

This procedure applies to all installation organizations and personnel conducting construction, demolition, renovation, or maintenance activities on the installation.

3.0 DEFINITIONS

Term	Definition
Archaeological Site	The physical remains of past human occupations or use of an area.
ARPA	Archaeological Resources Protection Act. The federal law enacted in 1979 that provides legal protection to archaeological resources located on public and Indian lands.
Building	A man-made edifice intended to act as a shelter. Examples include homes, office buildings, barns, and churches.
DPW-ENRD	Directorate of Public Works, Environmental and Natural Resources Division, located in Building 1121; Phone: 334-255-2080
Cultural Resources	The general term for archaeological sites, structures, buildings, cemeteries, districts, and objects that result from human activities.
Historic District	A collection of Cultural Resources within close geographic proximity that have a common and significant cultural connection, which together makes them a Historic Property.
Historic Properties	Cultural Resources that have been determined to be of significant importance and are protected / require management under the NHPA
NAGPRA	Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990. The federal law enacted to identify proper ownership

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Term	Definition
	and to ensure the rightful disposition and Native American human remains and specific cultural items.
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act 1969. The federal law that requires federal agencies to consider environmental effects of proposed undertakings. This also includes consideration of impacts on cultural resources by proposed undertakings.
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act. The federal law enacted in 1966 that provides legal protection to Historic Properties. It includes Sections 106 and 110, which mandate that federal agencies or funded projects identify and evaluate whether the activity will adversely affect Historic Properties.
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places. The official list of the Nation's historic places worthy of preservation. Authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.
Objects	Cultural Resources associated with, or document, a specific cultural event or person. Examples include monuments, prehistoric rock art or statues.
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office. The state agency that is mandated under the NHPA to consult with federal agencies in the management of Historic Properties. Alabama's SHPO is the Alabama Historical Commission.
Structure	Cultural Resources that involve any man-made edifice constructed for a use other than a shelter. Examples include bridges, warehouses, grain silos, pipelines and oil tanks.

4.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

Role	Responsibility
Cultural Resource Management Team (On-Site or Contractor)	- Implement the ICRMP on an as-needed basis for the installation - Review scopes of work for potential effects to Cultural Resources - Conduct required surveys for Cultural Resources and evaluate significance. - Provide management options for Historic Properties protected under the NHPA
Supervisors	Ensure personnel under their supervision receive appropriate training as specified in the ICRMP based on job duties, including information regarding identification of Cultural Resources

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Role	Responsibility
Installation Personnel	• Follow procedures in this work instruction for identification of potential Cultural Resources during the conduct of normal duties • Stop work if Cultural Resources are suspected and will be disturbed during the course of any work

5.0 PROCEDURE

5.1 Identifying Archaeological Sites

Archaeological sites are the most difficult type of Cultural Resource to identify. They generally consist of very small fragments of ceramic, stone, bone, shell, metal and soil stains that are not visible under current ground surface cover. They can be located beneath already-developed areas or be present within undeveloped lands. They will often be located on well-draining and level ground or on the tops of elevated ridges, terraces or hills.

They can be identified by the presence of artifacts eroding out of an exposed bank, or a travelled area such as a dirt road or trail. Artifacts are the physical remains of human activity. The primary types that can be encountered are:

- 5.1.1 Stone tool artifacts. These were created by Native American tribes that inhabited the area in the prehistoric period (which lasted from roughly 12,000 to 400 years ago). They can be very difficult to distinguish from normal stone without close examination. They will generally be made from very fine grained rocks and will have sharp, angular appearance. The best known type of stone tool is the projectile point, which includes both spear and arrow heads. Presence of these or other obvious tools is certain evidence that an archaeological site is present. However, these formed tools are quite rare in comparison to the number of other stone tool remains, which are less obvious.

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- 5.1.2 Ceramic artifacts. There are two general types of ceramic: those produced by Native American people during the prehistoric period and historic ceramics created during the historic period. They were used to make jars, cooking pots, etc. Like stone tool remains, those created by Native American tribes can be difficult to distinguish from natural clay or stone. They will be earth colored (light brown to red and black), dull (not shiny) and will often be very fragmented. They can be decorated with lines, swirls and geometric shapes but many times will be plain.



Historic ceramics are more easily identified as being of human manufacture. They will often be brightly colored and shiny and reflect commonly known items such as cups, plates, etc.



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- 5.1.3 Shell remains. Freshwater mussels (shellfish) were an important food source of prehistoric Native American people. The Chattahoochee River and its tributaries carry these types of shellfish. Their presence at a site is identified by the large amount of shells that will be present, normally near a major river or creek, although changes to a river's course during the past 10,000 years can leave older concentrations (called middens) further inland than would be expected. These can be readily identified by the density of the shell that is present. They can be of natural origin, but the presence of other animal bone, stone, or ceramic artifacts can positively identify it as an archaeological site.



- 5.1.4 Soil stains. Archaeological sites that were used for any significant time will leave evidence of the remains of shelters and occupation. Most times, the surface evidence of these sites will have eroded away to nothing (in the case of wood shelters or buildings) or have been completely removed (in the case of historic sites such as sawmills). Often the presence of geometric surface stains (known as features) will remain that show the locations of these buildings, firepits and occupation areas. These generally can only be seen after the organic surface layer has been removed and the sterile subsoil is exposed. The types of stains that indicate a possible archaeological site include multiple small circular or square stains, often in association with larger stains that would be fire or storage pits. Any large geometric stain would also fall into this category. If multiple examples of larger oval or rectangular stains with defined edges are observed, particular care should be given as these could represent unmarked human graves.

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5.1.5 Other types of historic artifacts. Historic archaeological sites will generally be more evident to the observer because they are often associated with some above ground evidence (for example a collapsed building, abandoned concrete pad, or old industrial equipment). Concentrations of bricks beneath the surface or metal artifacts observed in an area that is not known to have been developed should be taken to be a possible archaeological site, especially if in association with other materials discussed above.

5.2 Archaeological Sites Surveyed

Fort Rucker has undergone extensive archaeological surveys with 315 sites identified. Six of these sites are considered eligible for inclusion on NRHP. Looting, vandalizing or any other intentional disturbance of these sites without a government issued permit is a violation of ARPA. First time offenders can be fined up to \$20,000 and imprisoned for up to one year. Second time felony offenders can be fined up to \$100,000 and imprisoned for up to 5 years.

5.3 Identifying Above-Ground Cultural Resources

Under the NHPA, cultural resources must be evaluated to see if they meet the standard of a Historic Property and are eligible for the NRHP. For above ground Cultural Resources that generally is restricted to buildings 50 years of age or older. An architectural survey was performed in December 2013 on all buildings 45 years old or older at Fort Rucker to determine if they are eligible for inclusion on the NRHP. Of the 137 properties surveyed, none were found to possess significance under the criteria of eligibility for the NRHP. In addition, the survey concluded that there were no historic

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districts or landscapes located at Fort Rucker. The SHPO has concurred with this finding. Building 109, Headquarters Chapel, was previously evaluated for eligibility in 1998 and is currently the only building that is eligible for inclusion on the NRHP.

5.4 Archaeological Resources Procedures

- 5.4.1 Prior to beginning any type of infrastructure development, construction, demolition, repair work, training or any other activity that will require ground disturbance, the scope of work, project/training location, work order/service order must be reviewed by DPW-ENRD to determine the potential for the activity to negatively impact known Cultural Resources in accordance with the ICRMP to include former church and cemetery locations. The review will be completed as part of the NEPA review process.
- 5.4.2 Every undertaking that disturbs the ground surface has the potential to uncover buried and previously unknown archaeological resources. During the course of any ground disturbing activities, if any of the items listed as suspect Cultural Resources described above are identified and may be disturbed as part of the activity, work/training will cease, the immediate vicinity of the site protected and the DPW-ENRD Cultural Resources Manager immediately notified for further guidance.
- 5.4.3 No Native American human remains or sacred/funerary objects as defined by NAGPRA are currently known to exist on or have been excavated from Fort Rucker. However, Non-Native American human remains in unmarked graves have been inadvertently discovered in the past during construction activities. If suspected human remains of any kind are discovered during the course of any undertaking, work must immediately stop in the vicinity of the human remains, the site protected and the Provost Marshall and DPW-ENRD Cultural Resources Manager must be notified immediately.
- 5.4.4 If any previously unknown abandoned structures, remains of structures, old abandoned equipment, mounds, grist mill stones or other abnormal surface features are discovered in remote areas the DPW-ENRD must be notified for documentation and possible evaluation.

5.5 Historic Buildings and Structures Procedures

- 5.5.1 Prior to beginning any type of repair, renovation or demolition of an existing building, the work order, scope of work and design/drawings must be reviewed by DPW-ENRD to determine any environmental impacts as well as impacts to cultural resources. The review will be completed as part of the NEPA review process.
- 5.5.2 Building 109, Headquarters Chapel (formerly Chapel of the Wings) is Fort Rucker's only NRHP eligible building. Any maintenance, repair or renovation to include service orders of this building must be reviewed by DPW-ENRD for

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possible consultation with the SHPO in accordance with the ICRMP. This includes most importantly any work to be performed on the original chancel furnishings and alter area.

6.0 FORMS AND RECORDS

None

7.0 REFERENCES

Fort Rucker Integrated Cultural Resources Management Plan (ICRMP)
ENV-P002: Document Control
ENV-NE001: National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Program