



U.S. Army Environmental Command

Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD 21010-5401

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Redstone preserves local history

Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md. At Redstone Arsenal, Ala., students of all kinds – young and old – can touch and see ancient Indian artifacts, or help recover the remains of a 19th century homestead. That's because, in addition to being the home of the Army's aviation, missile, and space commands and NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center, Redstone Arsenal is also the home of nearly one thousand archaeological sites, 418 of which are potentially eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

These archaeological sites were identified during a comprehensive survey effort that is part of Redstone Arsenal's award-winning cultural resources management program. Knowing where the precious artifacts were buried or located on the 38,000 acre arsenal was the first step in preserving them for posterity.

"Back in the day we would have surveyed a little bit of the area at a time prior to specific construction projects or other activities that would impact those areas," said Mr. Daniel J. Dunn, Redstone Department of Environmental Management's Cultural and Natural Resources Branch Chief. "But since the mid-1990's, we changed our strategy to surveying the entire installation. In so doing we have a more comprehensive picture of what we've got."

If having the big picture is the first step, the next step is figuring out how to preserve the sites that can still contain important new information – especially since Redstone Arsenal isn't a national park, it's a military installation. Dunn and his staff worked out an innovative programmatic agreement with the Alabama State Historic Preservation Office that allowed them to capture the cultural details of historic sites and preserve representative samples of the sites, without having to preserve each and every artifact in place. The result is a win-win situation for the community and the Army – the history of the Redstone Arsenal area is documented in detail for the community, and obstacles to mission support activities being conducted at the Redstone Technical Test Center and other tenant agencies are removed for the Army.

"Redstone Arsenal's work to develop a Programmatic Agreement and implement creative mitigation strategies through consultation is to be highly commended," said Kelly Yasaitis Fanizzo, a specialist with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

The Redstone Arsenal cultural resources staff has also worked on a Memorandum of Agreement that covers almost half of the arsenal's historic buildings. The agreement streamlines the process that determines how Redstone Arsenal can renovate or demolish certain classes of old buildings that qualify as historic places simply due to their age. At Redstone this class of buildings includes 383 World-War II-era ammunition storage igloos.

The human element in the cultural resources management program extends from state and federal agencies to the local community. The Redstone Cultural and Natural Resources Branch has organized a volunteer archaeological excavation for Alabama Archaeological Society members and civilian DoD employees and their families. The installation also established an Indian Education/Archaeological Resources Outdoor Classroom,

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the center piece of which is a full-size replica of a Late Mississippian Period wattle and daub house, constructed by Redstone staff and volunteers. The Outdoor Classroom and Redstone's yearly Earth Day celebrations give local schoolchildren and the surrounding community the opportunity to attend lectures and demonstrations that outline the history and importance of cultural resources.

For their efforts Redstone Arsenal will receive the Army's highest honor in environmental stewardship – the Secretary of the Army Environmental Award. The award was conferred on the installation at a ceremony on February 19.

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