



2023 Secretary of Defense

Environmental Awards

Cultural Resources Management, Team
Cultural Resources Office Team, Eglin Air Force Base

Introduction

Situated along the Emerald Coast and extending into the heart of Florida's panhandle, Eglin Air Force Base (AFB) is home to the 96th Test Wing (96 TW), which is comprised of 3,211 military personnel, 2,967 civilians, and 1,916 contractors. Eglin is the largest AFB encompassing 465,284 acres of land ranges and 123,000 square miles of water ranges, and is responsible for the development, acquisition, testing, deployment, and sustainment of all air-delivered conventional weapons. The 96 TW hosts eight wing/wing equivalents and 34 associate units. Eglin AFB's total economic impact to the local area exceeds \$2.75B annually.

Background

The Eglin AFB Cultural Resources Office (CRO) Team supports the warfighter by meeting present compliance responsibilities, planning future activities to minimize cultural resources impacts, and managing those resources responsibly. The 12 environmental professionals who comprise the CRO Team are committed to proactive and responsive environmental management to ensure continued access to Eglin AFB's vast air, land, and water ranges.

The CRO Team consists of: Cultural Resource Managers (CRMs) Alexander DeCaro, Catherine Nolan and Jessica Higley; Support Staff Archaeologists Brandon Dominguez, Brady Swilley, and Joseph Meyer; Assistant Archaeological Collections Manager Jane

Pope; Historic Architect Jean Paul Pentecouteau; Environmental Specialist Patricia Williams; Geographic Information System (GIS) Specialist Tony Cross; Installation Tribal Liaison Officer/Base Historic Preservation Officer/Environmental Management Branch Chief Maria D. Rodriguez; and Environmental Assets Section Chief Melinda Rogers.



Eglin AFB Cultural Resources Office Team

The Cultural Resources Office Team consists of a diverse team of professionals responsible for administering and managing the Cultural Resources Program at Eglin AFB. *Back row:* Joseph Meyer, Tony Cross, Brandon Dominguez, Alexander DeCaro, Jane Pope, Jean Paul Pentecouteau, and Jessica H. Higley. *Front row:* Patricia Williams Catherine Nolan, Melinda Rogers; Maria D. Rodriguez, and Brady Swilley.

The CRO Team serves as a diverse team of professionals in the Environmental Management Branch, with responsibilities for developing, administering, and managing the Cultural Resources program at Eglin AFB. Goals of the Cultural Resources program are outlined in the Integrated Cultural Resources Management Plan (ICRMP) and affirms Eglin AFB will remain in compliance with applicable cultural resources laws and regulations, provide both internal and external cultural resources educational opportunities to the community, and improve tribal relationships. Eglin AFB strives to achieve these goals by increasing effectiveness of

Tribal consultation, optimizing the Cultural Resources Management processes, and maintaining compliance with Section 106 and Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and Curation compliance per 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 79.

The vast cultural resources are managed efficiently by dividing them into manageable categories. Terrestrial and maritime archaeological projects are co-managed by two CRMs, historic facilities are managed primarily by one CRM, and Curation and Public Outreach are managed by one CRM. All the CRMs take part in reviewing federal undertakings, a practice which is integrated with Eglin AFB's Environmental Impact Analysis Process.

Accomplishments

Pirate Ships to F-35s – Protecting the Gulf, Preserving the Past

Eglin AFB has the unique challenge of managing the Eglin Gulf Test and Training Range (EGTTR) which is comprised of nearly 123,000 square miles of airspace over the Gulf of Mexico, an area with a rich maritime history, and known for submerged archaeological sites and historic shipwrecks. The EGTTR provides the Department of the Air Force (DAF) with an exceptional opportunity to safely execute research, test, and evaluate missions like no other range. The CRO Team at Eglin AFB recognizes the necessity for missions within the EGTTR to increase in both quantity and importance to develop fifth generation defense. To best improve EGTTR mission readiness, the CRO Team has proactively established partnerships, consultation parameters, and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to assess effects on cultural resources and ensure NHPA compliance.

Partnerships occurring throughout this development included the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, National Oceanic and

Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the State of Florida. Each organization contributes unique cultural resources data to a comprehensive cultural database covering the entire EGTR that is housed and maintained by Eglin AFB. A coordinated effort involving the Florida State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and six federally recognized Native American Tribes associated with Eglin AFB lands identified parameters to consider for undertakings at the EGTR that will promote protection of both historic and prehistoric submerged resources.

This partnership and stakeholder collaboration was essential in creating an SOP for EGTR undertakings to enable faster mission readiness and ensure compliance. The SOP proved effective and avoided an estimated \$40M expenditure during an EGTR fiber optic cable project.

Consulting Early through Base-wide Programmatic Agreements maximizes Partnering Power

Eglin AFB manages more than 465,000 acres of Florida land in Gulf, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa, and Walton Counties and 4,034 of buildings, for the purpose of sustaining the national security defense through weapons testing, flight training, ground and shoreline combat exercises, and other activities. These mission activities involve maintenance, repair, replacement, alterations, new construction, demolition, and ground disturbing activities on federal land and assets, which are considered federal undertakings and trigger review under Section 106 of the NHPA. To best meet its management responsibilities in a manner that balances regulatory obligations and the need for operational flexibility, the CRO Team worked with stakeholders in 2021 to establish a new *Programmatic Agreement Among Eglin AFB, The Florida State Historic Preservation Officer, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation Regarding the Management of Historic Properties at Eglin AFB, Florida*. This extremely

comprehensive programmatic agreement (PA) significantly improves and streamlines Eglin AFB's ability to assess cultural resources impacts more effectively and ensure NHPA compliance.



Cultural Resources Artifacts

Jane Pope handles artifacts including Alligator Bayou Stamped, Swift Creek Complicated Stamped and Crystal River Negative Painted pottery at the Eglin Curation Facility. The Curation Facility maintains collections for four Florida Air Force Bases: Eglin AFB, Hurlburt Field AFB, Tyndall AFB, and MacDill AFB.

In addition to consultations with the Florida SHPO and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, six federally recognized Native American Tribes were consulted regarding the historic properties of religious and cultural significance: the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida, the Seminole Tribe of Florida, the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma, the Poarch Band of Creek Indians, the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, and the Thlopthlocco Tribal Town. For the first time, three of those Tribes are invited signatories to the PA: the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, the Seminole Nation of

Oklahoma, and the Thlopthlocco Tribal Town. After years of open communication and collaboration, the new base-wide PA was signed in October 2021, strengthening the relationship between Eglin AFB and the Tribes.

Evaluations and consultations for federal undertakings at Eglin AFB have been streamlined via the PA's stipulations, guidelines, and standard treatment measures: 2,380 undertakings have been cleared with the new base-wide PA since its execution.

Sharing Our History with the Community

Eglin AFB hosts a robust public education and outreach program by creating respect for, and awareness of, cultural resources. Section 10(c) of the Archaeological Resources Protection Act, its implementing rule (32 CFR §229.20), and Section 10 of the Curation of Federally Owned or Administered Archeological Collections (36 CFR § 79.10) all emphasize how critical public outreach is for the protection of our cultural resources.

Eglin AFB hosts an annual Eglin Archaeology Day in March during Florida Archaeology Month. The event is held off-base at the Eglin AFB Natural Resources Section's historic Jackson Guard facility and includes local partners, such as museums, to educate people about the rich history of Eglin AFB and the local area. The off-base site allows for greater public accessibility and the event typically draws over 150 people. In 2022, Eglin AFB held the 9th Archaeology Day event with displays featuring historic markers on and around base, maritime resources, and early settlement of the Eglin area. The CRO Team has worked with the Natural Resources Section to create an ethnobotanical garden with signs on the grounds, an accompanying brochure, and a GIS StoryMap describing 22 native plants and their use throughout history. The CRO Team maintains an interpretive display in the lobby of the Jackson Guard facility, which is visited by over 7,000 people annually purchasing recreation permits. The

display, featuring the atlatl this year, is changed out annually. Additionally, the CRO Team and Natural Resources Section collaborate digitally on the Eglin iSportsman website, reaching nearly 800,000 visitors. This platform expands public outreach virtually as Eglin AFB posts documents about history and cultural resources, a three-dimensional scan of one of the historic structures, and GIS StoryMaps for a historical markers tour and the ethnobotanical garden. Eglin AFB supports other outreach efforts, such as the 96 TW Commander's spring social at historic Camp Pinchot, which has been home to 28 base commanders over 72 years. The CRO Team prepared interpretive displays on Camp Pinchot historic context, archaeology, and structures.



Powwow Children's Day

Rick Kelly of the Nottoway Indian Tribe addresses the children at the Thunderbird Intertribal Powwow held during National American Indian Heritage Month. During the Powwow, Eglin CRO provides an educational display for Children's Day reaching over 300 students.

Eglin also has an active participation in National American Indian Heritage Month (NAIHM) of November. NAIHM awareness displays, and outreach materials are produced and distributed around base and announced on the base entry marquis. The CRO Team supports the Thunderbird Intertribal Powwow

held during NAIHM, at which the 96 TW Commander reads the NAIHM Proclamation (U.S. Public Law 101-343) during the opening ceremonies. During the Powwow, Eglin AFB furnishes an interactive educational display and activity for Children's Day, reaching over 300 students. The 96 TW Vice Commander recognized the Project Officer with a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility award for leadership and dedication supporting NAIHM 2021.

Enhancing the Strong Professional Relationship with Florida SHPO

Through continuous communication and the *Programmatic Agreement Among Eglin AFB, The Florida State Historic Preservation Officer, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation Regarding the Management of Historic Properties at Eglin AFB, Florida*, signed October 2021, Eglin AFB has fostered a strong professional relationship with the Florida SHPO.

This created an atmosphere of trust and transparency between both agencies leading into a collaborative effort in establishing processes for review of undertakings within the EGTRR and subsequently in the development of the EGTRR SOP. The SOP was incorporated into an EGTRR Environmental Assessment (EA) as new water ranges were proposed for Department of Defense use. Successful implementation of the EGTRR SOP has been crucial in avoiding unnecessary time and cost and thus a key means in promoting mission readiness and execution.

Recently, Eglin AFB required the modernization and upgrade (approximately \$13M) of Building 110, a 57,000-square foot WWII historic aircraft hangar, to ensure continued and efficient use by DAF. The undertaking proposed by Eglin AFB constituted an adverse effect to the historic building, and the CRO Team proposed to SHPO that documentation of a thorough recording and a written report of the hangar's

history and current conditions would mitigate the adverse effects. Through close consultation with the SHPO, the CRO Team cleared the project, thereby ensuring the continuance of the mission.



Historic Aircraft Hangar 110

Jean Paul Pentecouteau prepares a thorough recording and written report of Building 110's history and current conditions to mitigate adverse effects of a \$13M renovation and upgrade of the 57,000-square foot WWII historic aircraft hangar.

Battling Shoreline Erosion through Living Shoreline Restoration

Archaeological site protection from weathering and erosion along the many shorelines within the installation boundary is a major concern for the Eglin CRO Team. A joint effort with Eglin AFB's Natural Resources Section sees the employment of a Living Shoreline, a natural alternative for shoreline stabilization and buffering from waves and storms as the preferred strategy for battling coastal erosion. This natural alternative improves water quality, provides fisheries habitat, and increase biodiversity. Numerous living shoreline projects have been contracted and or funded during the last two fiscal years covering nearly 14,000 linear feet and 11 archaeological sites. These projects are aimed at both an immediate halt of coastal erosion as well as further developing a long-term solution for this issue as Eglin AFB conducts extended monitoring of the living shoreline mechanism to ensure their effectiveness.



Living Shoreline

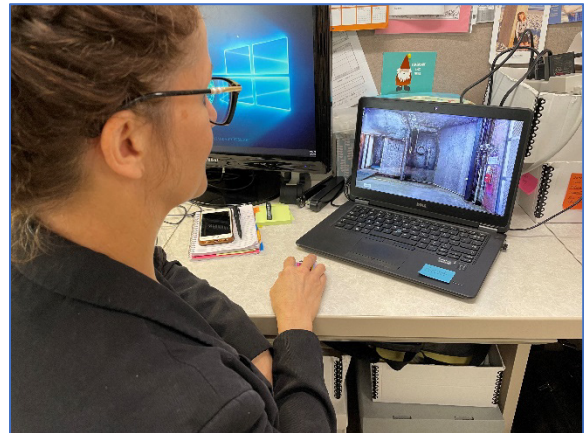
Special Agent Brayden D’Aurora, 823rd Red Horse Squadron, places a rock to create a "living shoreline" along the Eglin Air Force Base coastline. The goal of the project to build an artificial reef along 1,400 linear feet of Eglin AFB shoreline is to protect against erosion.

Innovating the Real Property Process to Enhance Mission Sustainment

Through continually improving CRO management tools and collaboration protocols with the Real Property Office (RPO), major accomplishments demonstrate record-high accuracy in historical asset inventory and historic status code reconciliations. The CRO Team identified and resolved over 2,360 disconnects between the ICRMP building inventory and RPO facilities on record within the NexGenIT technology, attaining over 95% positive reconciliation on historic resources, status codes, and historical ages of facilities. The CRO Team researched disconnects from the entire information system and provided key supporting documentation such as Florida SHPO consultations, the new PA, and official memoranda for record to enable appropriate record updates. With RPO authorizations, direct record updates were processed by the CRO Team into the NexGenIT information system with hard-copy documentation provided to RPO for permanent files, further reducing manpower demands on RPO and the DAF mission.

Process improvements made by the CRO Team in ICRMP reporting minimizes duplicating the resolution process during each annual reconciliation with the RPO

NexGen IT inventory as well as all future reconciliations. Additionally, the CRO Team completed an audit of GIS data to ensure all historical resources available in the historic buildings layer are captured in ICRMP, further increasing the accuracy of inventory data for the RPO.



Building 408

Catherine Nolan reviews the Building 408 high-definition three-dimensional imagery taken before the building was demolished. The imagery is publicly available on the iSportsman website as an outreach initiative.

Research during both annual reconciliations revealed multiple opportunities to reduce costly compliance for facility evaluations. Real Property inventory, regardless of age, was identified in accordance with Air Force Manual 32-7003, *Environmental Conservation*, to enter historical status code of “Not Assessed Routinely” based upon facility code, eliminating almost 1,000 facilities from time-consuming reviews and concern by the RPO and CRO Team. The impacts of these record updates are permanent, substantially reducing the number of disconnects in future audits and ensuring progressively better reconciliation accuracy for all years to come.

Improving Government-to-Government Relations with Tribes

Every federal agency has a responsibility to maintain and improve the government-to-government relationships with federally recognized Tribes, and Eglin AFB regularly consults with six Tribes. Eglin AFB has gone

above and beyond to strengthen the existing relations with the Tribes through regular meetings and consultations, updating information, and participating in outreach.

Meetings are held with Tribal leaders and contacts every year, switching yearly between formal and informal meetings. Most recently, the first virtual formal government-to-government meeting was held between Tribal and Eglin AFB leaders, utilizing Adobe Connect which required special permissions and close teamwork with the Information Technology section. This was done to maintain both the healthy relationship between the Tribes and the DAF, and the physical well-being of the attendees. Demonstrating an agile response and overcoming the challenges from COVID-19, Eglin AFB has successfully maintained contact with the Tribes through these virtual means as well as through email, telephone, and hard-copy mail, bolstering relations with the Tribes.

CRO Team also improved the Installation Tribal Relations Plan with better readability and organization, thereby assisting in the long-term relationships with the six Tribes and increasing consultation efficiency.

Protecting the Mission through Archaeological Fieldwork

The CRO Team has rendered cultural review of 3,824 civil engineering actions over fiscal

years 2021 and 2022. Most of these actions were ratified under PAs, which accelerated critical paths for projects by 60 days each, having an exponential impact to mission support. When and where actions were unable to be cleared via PAs, the need for archaeological survey was assessed. To aid this assessment, Eglin AFB utilizes their uniquely developed and thoroughly tested predictive model, which covers the entire Eglin reservation. The predictive model, which has been reviewed and approved by the SHPO and several affiliated Tribes, allows Eglin AFB to focus archaeological survey effort on Section 106 undertakings that truly warrant it, further assisting mission readiness.

Over the two-year period, Eglin AFB conducted 328 acres of in-house archaeological survey, bypassing approximately \$5M and 18 months in costs and contracting efforts. Eglin AFB's timely, in-house cultural resources surveys were vital in preventing mission delays.

Besides traditional archaeological survey, Eglin AFB's CRO Team marked 5,000 trees surrounding 32 sensitive archaeology sites to reinforce site protection measures. Eglin inspected and prepared 50 archaeological sites for a 47,000-acre prescribed Fire Program. Other in-house cultural work included the protection of cultural sites in aid of a 10,000-acre timber sale within installation boundaries.