



2024 Secretary of Defense Environmental Awards Cultural Resources Management, Large Installation Award

Each year since 1962, the Secretary of Defense has honored installations, teams, and individuals for outstanding achievements in Department of Defense (DoD) environmental programs. These accomplishments include outstanding conservation activities, innovative environmental practices, and partnerships that improve quality of life and promote efficiencies without compromising DoD's mission success. The 2024 Secretary of Defense Environmental Awards cycle encompasses an achievement period from October 1, 2021, through September 30, 2023 (Fiscal Years [FY] 2022-2023). A diverse panel of 48 judges with relevant expertise representing Federal and state agencies, academia, and the private sector evaluated all nominees to select 1 winner for each of the 9 categories. These nine categories cover six subject areas including natural resources conservation, environmental quality, sustainability, environmental restoration, cultural resources management, and environmental excellence in weapon systems acquisition.

About the Cultural Resources Management, Large Installation Award

The Cultural Resources Management, Large Installation award recognizes efforts to promote effective cultural resources management through proactive stewardship of DoD's extensive and rich heritage assets, including archaeological sites, cultural items, the historic built environment, and cultural landscapes. Through dynamic cultural resources management programs that partner with installation stakeholders, such as master planning, public works, and range management, DoD identifies and evaluates cultural resources that impact training, testing, and operational capabilities. Awards also showcase successful partnerships with American Indian and Alaska Native Tribes, Native Hawaiian Organizations, states, and other historic preservation stakeholders to protect cultural resources in a manner that sustains mission readiness while operating as responsible stewards of our collective heritage. Large installations have more than 10,000 acres and can include leased, military-owned, or administered ranges, or training practice areas. The 2024 winner of the Cultural Resources Management, Large Installation award is *Hill Air Force Base, Utah*.

About Hill Air Force Base, Utah

Nestled in Utah's scenic landscape, Hill Air Force Base (AFB) combines military prowess with environmental and cultural splendor. Utah's unique charm, marked by vast plains and towering mountains, shapes the character of Hill AFB and the properties it manages. Hill AFB reflects military strength and a rich tapestry woven with the threads of local culture and community resilience. The population comprises approximately 30,587 military personnel and civilians. The installation oversees approximately 1 million acres, including the Utah Test and Training Range (UTTR), an active bombing range, and multiple geographically separated units. The Hill AFB Cultural Resources Management (CRM) Program is pivotal in managing the rich cultural heritage on the land it oversees, including 280 historic buildings, 822 archaeological sites, 5 historic districts, and cultural landscapes.



Hill AFB F-35 parked on the runway in front of historic buildings with the Wasatch Mountains in the background.

Major Accomplishments in FY 2022-2023

- Hill AFB accommodates Tribal requests and extends invitations for Tribal leadership and youth visits to the Trackway Site, an archaeological site that contains over 130 footprints that are over 12,000 years old. Visiting this site and its resources offers Tribal members unique opportunities to explore their heritage. Tribal leadership shares perspectives on managing, protecting, and sharing this singular archaeological site and other sites to build stronger relationships and promote future cooperative efforts.
- Hill AFB employs leading-edge imaging technology, including ground-penetrating radar, drones, and LiDAR, to support archaeological survey and inventory methods. These capabilities ensures compliance with legal requirements, maximizes resources, and optimizes time and manpower. The information generated from these technologies provides data for predictive modeling, promotes greater mission planning accuracy, and minimizes impacts on valuable archaeological resources while proactively supporting preservation and sustainability efforts.
- Hill AFB partnered with 22 Native American Tribes and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to complete an ethnobotanical study on the UTTR. The study incorporated essential tribal ecological knowledge, informs proactive management of native species, provides an opportunity for co-management through native techniques, allows native gathering by tribal members to meet fundamental federal tribal obligations, and helps maintain key relationships with the tribes.
- Hill AFB established a Site Steward Program to regularly monitor archaeological sites on the UTTR in partnership with the Utah State Historic Preservation Office Site Stewardship Program. It increased Hill AFB's site management capability and productivity by over 800 percent. The program also meets statutory requirements to monitor and record archaeological sites while supporting mission readiness through effective and efficient management methods.
- Hill AFB used groundbreaking technology to recount narratives from the past. The Cultural Resources Management Program is partnering with the Hill Aerospace Museum and Native American Tribes on three virtual reality exhibits that depict expeditions through time and space. The partnership increases access to unique sites for over 1 million people and more than 22 consulting Native American Tribes.
- Hill AFB cultivates a positive relationship with 22 tribes with ancestral ties and cultural bonds to the lands. The CRM Program and Installation Tribal Liaison Officer exceed expectations beyond the minimum requirements by providing tribes with ongoing access to information and direct involvement in resource management. Hill AFB strives to develop meaningful consultation before there is a problem, not because there is a problem.



Human footprints over 12,000 years old at the Trackway Site on the UTTR.



Snoopy Rockshelter is one of the sites that will be available for virtual reality exploration. It is a site with anthropomorphs (human-like figures) on the UTTR that is still not fully understood.