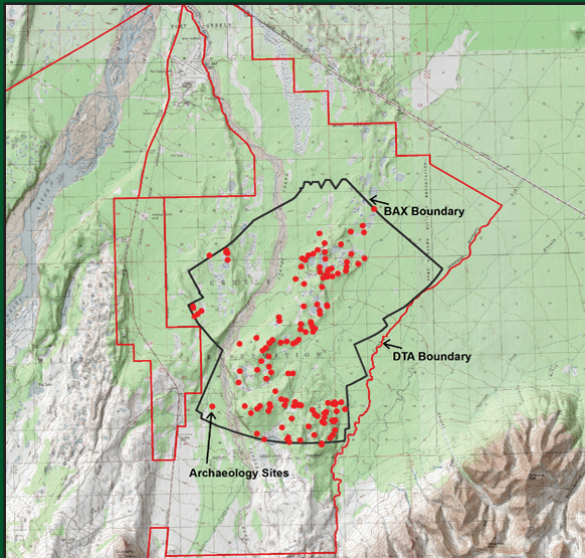


Protecting Archaeological Sites on Fort Wainwright

The Army employs a full-time cultural resources staff to ensure that archaeological sites and historic buildings on Fort Wainwright and its training lands are inventoried, evaluated, and protected from recreational activities, military training, construction, and maintenance.

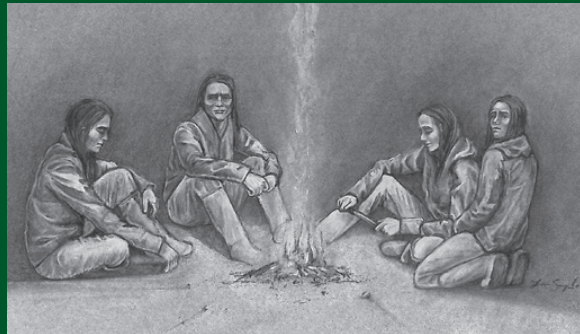
In addition to surveying land for sites, archaeologists evaluate sites for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places and monitor sites for damage. An example of this is in the Battle Area Complex (BAX) of the Donnelly Training Area (DTA). Sites in the vicinity of active training are visited several times a year to look for possible damage.



The portion of DTA known as BAX SDZ was a popular location for camping and hunting in prehistoric times because bison and waterfowl were abundant in this region. Over 100 archaeological sites have been identified within its 23,000 acres.



Investigations at the Banjo Lake archaeological site on DTA.



An ancient hearth at the Banjo Lake site contained charcoal, bone fragments, and stone tool fragments. The hearth charcoal was used to date the site to over 6,000 years ago.



Directorate of Public Works

ATTN: IMFW-PWE (Cultural Resources Manager)
1060 Gaffney Road, #4500
Fort Wainwright, AK 99703-4500

Phone: 907-361-3002
Fax: 907-361-9867

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES on Fort Wainwright



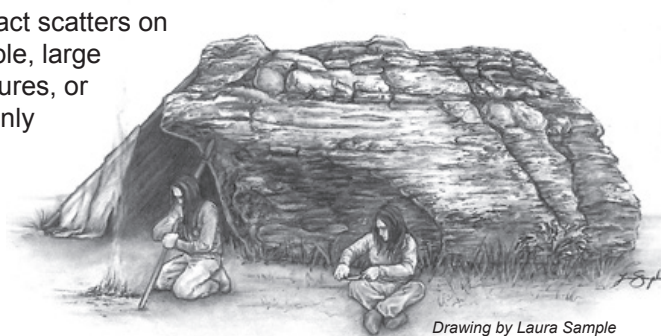
Copper arrowhead from a late prehistoric archaeological site on the Donnelly Training Area

U.S. Army Garrison Fort Wainwright
Directorate of Public Works
Environmental Division

What are archaeological resources?

Archaeological resources can include stone tools, artifact scatters on the ground surface, rock shelters used by ancient people, large campsites with evidence of collapsed residential structures, or even the remains of historic buildings. Artifacts commonly found at Alaskan archaeological sites include stone tools and debris associated with their manufacture, animal bone fragments, and building materials. Scientists analyze the location of each artifact in relation to soil horizons and each other to determine how old the site is and the kinds of activities that were taking place. Each site is a fragile, irreplaceable resource. When site vandalism, removal of artifacts, or destruction occurs, information is lost forever. The theft of artifacts harms the site's significance and is illegal on public lands.

Archaeological resources are essential to understanding Alaska's history and are important to scientific, educational, and Alaska Native tribal interests. Respectful study and protection of cultural resources shows regard for the past and for living cultures that hold the sites significant.



Drawing by Laura Sample

A rock outcrop in the Yukon Training Area was used as a temporary camp site or windbreak. Stone tools were found on the ground in front of the outcrop and buried among broken bedrock slabs.

Archaeological sites on army lands

Fort Wainwright and its training lands (Donnelly, Tanana Flats, and Yukon training areas) contain 636 known archaeological sites and 4 archaeological districts. Among these are 621 prehistoric sites and 15 homestead era sites.



This site in the Tanana Flats Training Area was used as a temporary camp site during two different time periods, 6,000 and 11,000 years ago. Stone tools were found in layers at 30 cm and 110 cm below the ground surface. Stone tool-making debris was discovered in both occupations, and large mammal remains such as the bison tooth in the upper right photo were found in the older component.



Hundreds of stone tool fragments were scattered across the ground surface at this site in Donnelly Training Area (above right: artifacts are marked with colored flags). The stone tools found here tell us that ancient people used the site as a short-term hunting camp where they manufactured and repaired projectile points and other items in their toolkits.

How are sites protected?

Archaeological resources are protected under the Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA) of 1979. ARPA enforces criminal penalties that may include jail time for any persons found intentionally damaging or removing archaeological material from federal lands and may provide a reward for information that leads to a conviction. Other state, federal, and local protections are in place for sites located on other public lands.

Several mandates also require federal agencies to inventory and preserve sites on their lands and to identify sites before ground-disturbing projects begin.

You too can protect archaeological sites. Always check the ground before you dig and be aware of your environment before you cut trees or remove vegetation.

What should I do if I find a site?

When you work, train, or recreate on Army lands, you may encounter archaeological resources. Many sites have been discovered and reported by volunteers interested in Alaska's past. To protect sites and preserve these important parts of our heritage, you should:

- Leave artifacts where you find them.
- Note the location or coordinates.
- Report suspicious activity such as digging or vandalism near known sites.
- Contact the Garrison Cultural Resources Manager at 907-361-3002 immediately.

