

NAVAL BASE VENTURA COUNTY

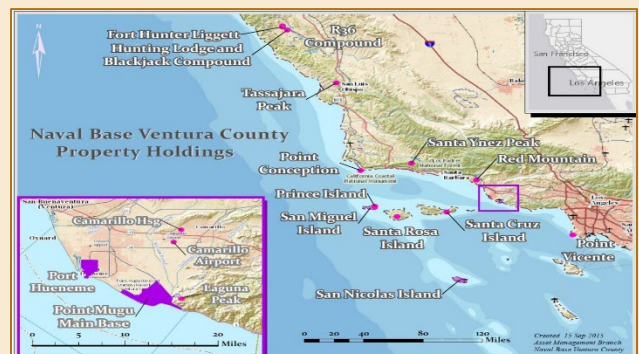


2026 Secretary of the Navy Environmental Award: Cultural Resources Management - Large Installation

INTRODUCTION

Naval Base Ventura County (NBVC) is comprised of three major operating facilities: Point Mugu (4,500 acres), Port Hueneme (1,600 acres), and San Nicolas Island (13,370 acres). NBVC also maintains operations at remote sites including San Miguel Island (9,370 acres), Santa Cruz Island, Fort Hunter Liggett, and Laguna Peak. Point Mugu and Port Hueneme are both located along the Pacific coastline in southwestern Ventura County, California, adjacent to the cities of Oxnard and Camarillo. The islands and other outlying sites are remote from NBVC. San Nicolas Island (SNI) and San Miguel Island (SMI) are offshore, 60 miles southwest and 65 miles west of Point Mugu, respectively. Fort Hunter Liggett (FHL) is 200 miles to the northwest. At slightly less than 30,000 acres in total size, NBVC includes some of the highest quality habitat in California including the largest

remaining coastal salt marsh estuary in Southern California and the most densely populated seal and sea lion rookeries in North America. The regulatory community and the public have recognized NBVC as a leader in conservation, managing and sustaining more than 2,200 acres of wetlands, 57.5 miles of coastline, 3,400 acres of dunes, 1500+ prehistoric archaeological sites, and 12 federally endangered species. The NBVC Cultural Resources Management (CRM) Program maintains legal compliance for installation operations and works closely with NBVC leadership and tenant commands to support the Navy warfighting mission.





NBVC provides airfield, seaport, and base support services to fleet operating forces and shore activities. Over 100 tenant commands and departments located at NBVC employ more than 20,060 military and civilian personnel, supporting the diverse missions of the Department of War. These tenant commands support both Fleet and Fighter, including three warfare centers: Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division (NAWCWD), Naval Surface Warfare Center Port Hueneme Division, and Naval Facilities Engineering and Expeditionary Warfare Center (EXWC). NBVC is also home to the Pacific Seabees and the West Coast E-2C Hawkeyes. Combat and weapon systems testing takes place on the 36,000-square-mile Point Mugu Sea Range. MQ-8B/C (Fire Scout) and MQ-4C (Triton) unmanned platform operations occur at Point Mugu, Littoral Combat Ship missions are supported at Port Hueneme, and Naval Construction Group One (NCG1) battalion level exercises are performed at FHL.

BACKGROUND

Naval Base Ventura County was formed in 2000 with the merging of Naval Air Weapons Station Point Mugu and Construction Battalion Center Port Hueneme. The CRM Program at NBVC includes over a thousand historical, cultural, and archaeological sites that require appropriate levels of monitoring and oversight. NBVC historic properties include prehistoric and historic archaeological sites, cultural landscapes, buildings, structures, and objects meeting or potentially meeting the Criteria of Eligibility for listing in the National Register (36 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] Part 60).

Cultural resources stewardship is a top priority at NBVC as a critical component of legal



QM-163 Coyote Launch from SNI

compliance. NBVC CRM provides guidance to installation command to ensure execution of the Navy mission while adhering to federal, state, local, and Navy cultural resources requirements. NBVC strives to preserve important aspects of national heritage and incorporate cultural resources considerations into its project planning and execution process, while focusing on the support of tenant command capabilities and the Navy's warfighting mission.

NBVC CRM administers all aspects of the CRM Program to ensure that all actions enhance mission readiness while meeting environmental regulations. This monumental task is achieved by working closely with NBVC leadership, Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command Southwest (NAVFAC SW), tenant commands, Tribal stakeholders, and the regulatory community while aspiring to attain consensus from all parties. The CRM program's methodology for continued success is to identify efficiencies in all contractual, administrative, and logistical elements of the program.

NBVC has two Integrated Cultural Resources Management Plans (ICRMPs) that outline the methods and protocols for resource management across NBVC operating installations. One ICRMP is applicable to Port Hueneme, Point



Mugu, and outlying areas, which was last updated in November 2018. The other ICRMP is applicable to SNI and was last updated in January 2019. Both ICRMPs are currently undergoing update and revision. The primary objective of the ICRMPs is to provide readily accessible support for effective management of cultural resources and proactive conformance with requirements and compliance mandates, while supporting the Navy mission. NBVC's ICRMPs integrate the installation's CRM Program requirements with established management components of the installation. Procedures included in the ICRMPs support early identification of potential conflicts between the mission and cultural resources, and define avoidance, mitigation, and compliance actions to be taken when certain relevant challenges or issues may arise.

NBVC's cultural resources responsibility stems from various federal statutes, including the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA), and the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA). Section 106 of the NHPA is the most frequent regulatory driver at NBVC. Section 106 requires the installation to account for the potential effects of all undertakings on historic properties, and when legally required, consult with regulators and interested parties. Primary entities consulted include the California State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and seven federally recognized Native American Indian Tribes (Tribes) culturally affiliated with NBVC. The federally recognized Tribes include the La Jolla Band of Luiseño Indians, the Pala Band of Mission Indians, the Pauma Band of Luiseño Indians, the Pechanga Band of Indians, the Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians, the Santa Ynez Band of

Chumash Indians, and the Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians.

Cultural Resources Compliance Process: In order to sustain military readiness, NBVC has three goals when reviewing proposed projects via its Project Review Board (PRB):

- (1) Ensure projects comply with all environmental regulatory requirements;
- (2) Ensure projects comply with health and safety regulations, security policies, and all other regulatory and environmental planning requirements; and
- (3) Ensure stewardship of natural and cultural resources on NBVC.

The PRB is the established environmental review process for obtaining approval of new construction, relocating or modifying structures, and for requesting repairs, maintenance, or improvements to existing buildings. Because the PRB is intended to comply with the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) and Section 106 compliance, the approval process is initiated as early as possible to ensure that there is sufficient time for required documentation and consultation. Projects are approved via this process prior to their execution or the award of associated contracts in order to ensure that adverse effects are eliminated or minimized. PRB review is required for all projects whether they are executed by contract, self-help, public works, or other Navy personnel. Projects submitted to the PRB for review under NEPA are reviewed to assess the status of cultural resources for the location and if there are any potential impacts to NRHP-eligible historic properties. If the project qualifies for a CATEX under NEPA, the project documentation includes evidence that cultural resources issues were reviewed and satisfactorily addressed. Some projects require



more detailed review of their potential effects to cultural resources, such as during preparation of an EA or EIS. In these cases, elements of the project documentation prepared for the EA can be utilized to support cultural resources review and consultation.

The Section 106 process is initiated for projects deemed to have a potential effect on historic properties. At NBVC, this process is streamlined by a Programmatic Agreement (PA) with SHPO, signed in 2015 and renewed through 2026 while a regional PA is developed. The NBVC PA agreement document enables the installation to internally review and legally approve undertakings at NBVC mainland facilities that are determined to have no adverse effect on historic properties. These decisions are reviewed by SHPO through an annual report submitted by NBVC. Undertakings determined to have an adverse effect on historic properties are subject to the normal Section 106 process. NBVC also employs a limited Public Private Venture (PPV) PA that was signed in 2007 and extends for the life of the lease (2057).

SUMMARY OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Overall Cultural Resources Management: NBVC CRM was efficient and productive in support of the Navy mission during fiscal year 2024 (FY24) and fiscal year 2025 (FY25), with a level of stakeholder engagement unparalleled in the past 15 years. Outstanding achievements in FY24 and FY25 include:

- Review of 722 project actions for CRM compliance as part of NBVC's environmental planning and NEPA review;
- Fifteen (15) NHPA Section 106 consultations with SHPO and federally recognized Tribes;

- Thirty-three (33) Navy-Tribal government-to-government consultation meetings;
- Nine (9) Navy-Tribal Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) meetings;
- Oversight of archaeological and Tribal monitors for 44 fieldwork rotations;
- Seven (7) Cooperative Agreements for Tribal access to ancestral lands;
- A Comprehensive Agreement for island-wide management of NAGPRA finds at SNI;
- Renewal of the NBVC Programmatic Agreement with California SHPO;
- Submission of Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) documentation to National Park Service (NPS) for NRHP-eligible Quarters D Farrell House and Barn;
- Two (2) airlift transfers of NAGPRA items to SNI in coordination with NAVFAC SW, federally recognized Tribes, and other Department of War installations; and
- A two-day visit to NBVC from Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Environment and Mission Readiness (DASN E&MR), White House Council on Native American Affairs, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), and seven (7) federally recognized Tribes to NBVC.

Naval Base Ventura County has properties that are either listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), or eligible for listing, including three historic districts, 15 individual eligible buildings and structures, 12 contributing elements, over 1500 archaeological sites, and a Native American Traditional Cultural Place (TCP). The following pages provide examples of historic properties under NBVC management



and details of NBVC CRM accomplishments from the past two years.

Historic Buildings and Structures: Under federal law, historic-period resources (e.g., structures or archaeological sites greater than 50 years in age) found eligible or those yet to be evaluated are treated as if they are listed on the National Register.



Thomas Bard Mansion at Port Hueneme

The Thomas R. Bard Mansion is an example of an NRHP-listed historic property under management by NBVC CRM. The Bard Mansion is the main contributing element of the Berylwood National Historic District, located at NBVC Port Hueneme. Thomas Bard was a businessman who constructed the original wharf at Hueneme, which in turn attracted the Southern Pacific Railroad, making the town the second-largest shipping port on the west coast. Bard was elected to the US Senate in 1899, serving with distinction from 1900 to 1905.

Archaeological Resources: SNI and SMI have been occupied by humans for more than 8000 and 19,000 years, respectively. The remains of prehistoric human activity are present across both islands. There are over 900 recorded archaeological sites on SNI, and many of them are considered individually eligible for listing on

the NRHP. All SNI archaeological sites are considered contributing elements to a potential Archaeological District and an NRHP-eligible island-wide TCP (archaeological district and TCP are currently under evaluation as historic properties). SMI has over 600 recorded archeological sites. Prior to U.S. government use, both islands were used for sea otter hunting, abalone harvesting, and ranching.

Project Reviews and Consultations: NBVC CRM reviewed 722 project actions totaling more than \$250 million in direct support of the Navy warfighting mission for FY24 and FY25. Project reviews resulted in completion of 15 Section 106 consultations with SHPO and federally recognized Tribes. NBVC CRM utilized the NBVC-SHPO PA document to streamline Section 106 consultation for 707 undertakings, with two additional SHPO and Tribal consultations due to extraordinary circumstances outside the Section 106 process. Project approvals were achieved through above-and-beyond engagement with tenant commands and project proponents that identified paths of least resistance in planning and project execution. In all interactions, NBVC CRM staff exemplified efficiency, urgency, and professionalism befitting the Navy mission.

Legal Documents and Agreements: NBVC CRM compliance efforts focus on the creation of legally sound documents consistent with cultural resources laws and implementing regulations. During FY24 and FY25, NBVC CRM attained multiple successes through completion of documents and agreements with regulators and consulting Tribes. In August 2025, NBVC CRM achieved renewal of the PA with SHPO concurrence and signature. The NBVC-SHPO PA has streamlined Section 106 compliance for thousands of undertakings at NBVC mainland



operating installations since initial agreement execution in 2015. The recent PA renewal will keep the NBVC-SHPO PA active through the end of calendar year 2026, while a Regional PA is established for all Navy Region Southwest installations.

Navy mission often necessitates the repurposing or reconfiguration of historic-period resources under NBVC management. In one example, NBVC operations required the demolition of an NRHP-eligible historic property known as the Farrell Home and Barn, or Quarters D. Quarters D is an early twentieth-century California farmhouse and associated structures in the California Bungalow style, a Craftsman style used throughout California in the 1910s and 1920s. The buildings comprising the Quarters D complex had fallen into extreme disrepair, and the estimated costs for renovation of the structures far exceeded the Navy budget. Throughout FY24 and FY25, NBVC CRM worked with contractors to complete HABS documentation, submit HABS documentation to NPS, consult with SHPO on mitigation in the form of documentation and interpretive signs, and approve the demolition of the buildings. This effort is evidence of NBVC CRM's focus on efficiency and cost-saving measures associated with resource management.

NBVC CRM is responsible for management of substantial archaeological and Tribal resources, such as archaeological sites and the NRHP-eligible TCP that is SNI. In FY25, NBVC CRM worked closely with NAVFAC SW to draft and execute Cooperative Agreements with seven federally recognized Tribes enabling access to their ancestral homeland and TCP of SNI. The execution of the agreements removed a contractual hurdle that often delayed the ability of NBVC CRM staff and Tribal representatives

to achieve the goals of Section 106 consultation and NAGPRA repatriation.

Additionally, a Comprehensive Agreement has been developed by NBVC CRM and is in review for concurrence by the Tribes. The comprehensive agreement will serve as an island-wide plan of action for the inadvertent discovery of NAGPRA items on SNI in the course of projects and day-to-day operations, thus eliminating the need for action-specific NAGPRA plans of action, expediting the review of ground disturbing projects by several months, and shortening project schedules.

In-Field Project Support: NBVC CRM staff perform numerous duties for in-field support across NBVC in the form of real-time project planning support, on-site construction support, inadvertent discovery response, contractor oversight, survey, and countless other daily tasks in support of NBVC Public Works and tenant commands.



Archaeologists and Tribal Monitors Conducting Survey at SNI

During FY24 and FY25, NBVC CRM staff directly oversaw no less than 44 multi-day field rotations for legally required construction monitoring and NHPA Section 110 surveys. A



construction success was completion of the P-586 High Explosive Magazine project at SNI, where post-review discovery of archaeological site components and the inadvertent discovery of sensitive archaeological features during construction necessitated complex Tribal consultations and a swift recalibration of cultural resources procedures, monitoring requirements, NAGPRA response, and ultimate artifact deposition. NBVC CRM supported the project with in-field support and legal compliance through completion.

NBVC CRM support contributed to the completion of archaeological survey of 4,258 acres in support of NHPA Section 110 responsibilities and future operations planning at SNI. NBVC CRM oversaw archaeologists and Tribal monitors for the documentation of 873 archaeological and Tribal resources on SNI. These results are already contributing to increased efficiency, cost-saving, and speed of PRB review and project approval.

NAGPRA Actions: NBVC CRM and NAVFAC SW are committed to repatriation responsibilities under NAGPRA. In FY24 and FY25, NBVC CRM completed nine in-person NAGPRA consultation meetings with the Tribes, 16 NAGPRA plans of action, four NAGPRA visits to universities, two transfers of NAGPRA items to SNI, and numerous calls and emails with academic institutions, museums, and Tribes. On 11 July 2024, NBVC CRM, in coordination with NAVFAC SW, NAWCWD, Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake (NAWSCL), VX-30, and VX-31, transported 530 boxes of NAGPRA ancestral remains and funerary objects from Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst and NAWSCL to SNI. This airlift represented a monumental effort toward fulfillment of legal responsibilities and the strengthening of long-term Navy-Tribal

relationships. A second airlift of 230 NAGPRA boxes of NAGPRA materials from NAWSCL to SNI was completed on 06 September 2024.



Tribal, NBVC, and VX-30 Personnel during NAGPRA Transfer to SNI

Tribal Engagement: During FY24 and FY25, NBVC CRM exemplified diligence and tact in fulfilling legal responsibilities of Tribal engagement under NHPA Section 106 and NAGPRA. NBVC CRM engaged Tribal leadership in 33 government-to-government consultation meetings, in addition to hundreds of project-specific communications, calls, emails, and document transfers. Tribal requests for increased attention resulted in NBVC CRM hosting a meeting on 29-30 May 2024 with the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Environment and Mission Readiness, White House Council on Native American Affairs, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, tenant command staff, and the Tribes. The meeting was a resounding success in government-to-government communication and support for the ongoing Navy mission at NBVC.