



Laboratory preserves the past for future generations

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Preserving the past for future generations

Both prehistoric and historic sites on Laboratory property are managed under the National Historic Preservation Act, which empowers federal agencies to act as responsible stewards of the nation's cultural resources.

Some Laboratory properties received additional protection on December 19, 2014, when President Barak Obama signed legislation that created the Manhattan Project National Historical Park. The park is comprised of sites in Los Alamos, New Mexico; Oak Ridge, Tennessee; and Hanford, Washington. The proposed portion of the park in New Mexico contains buildings in downtown Los Alamos as well as 17 sites at the Laboratory, which are not currently accessible to the public. These sites include buildings used in development of the Gadget tested at Trinity Site; Little Boy, which was detonated over Hiroshima; and Fat Man, which was detonated above Nagasaki.

"Preserving the complex narrative of our country's history is important," says Laboratory historian Ellen McGehee. "Preserving the places of this history at Los Alamos allows for a more immediate personal connection to significant Manhattan Project and Cold War events, giving individual meaning to a scientific, cultural, and geopolitical legacy that continues to resonate today."

In addition to making sure Laboratory sites are officially protected, the Lab's Cultural Resources Team is also dedicated to documenting, assessing, and photographing historic sites, such as Nake'muu Pueblo, which dates back to the Ancestral Puebloan period (A.D. 600–1600). Area pueblos—including Santa Clara Pueblo, Pueblo de San Ildefonso, Pueblo de Cochiti, and Jemez Pueblo—are incorporated into this process and other cultural resource projects via regular meetings.

In 2016, five members of the Cultural Resources Team received Wildland Fire Red Card Training, which allows them to work with firefighters to protect archaeological sites and historic buildings during a fire event.

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