

HAMMER shares award for cultural-protection training

The prestigious Washington State Historic Preservation Officer's Award for Outstanding Achievement in Education was presented to Hanford's Volpentest HAMMER Training and Education Center and the Cultural Resource Protection Program of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation. The two organizations are partners in delivering education about managing and protecting cultural resources on government land. The award was presented May 15 in ceremonies at the Washington Trust for Historic Preservation's Stimson-Green Mansion in Seattle.

"I am so proud of the leadership and dedication our tribal program manager, Det Wegener of Fluor Hanford, has shown in working with Jeff Van Pelt and Julie Longenecker of the CTUIR to bring such highly credible training and education programs to HAMMER," said Karen McGinnis, Fluor Hanford's director of Hanford Training/HAMMER. "These programs are a cornerstone of positive relationships with Hanford-area tribes and an important factor in ensuring the Hanford Site is compliant with federal laws requiring management and protection of cultural resources on government land."

In 1997, HAMMER and the tribes began developing a cultural test bed on the northwest corner of the 80-acre HAMMER campus. The test bed, used for hands-on portions of cultural-resource courses, contains 15 simulated above-ground cultural sites — pit houses, stone scatters and historic dumps. About 30 other simulated cultural features are located below the ground.

Among regular HAMMER classes incorporating cultural-test-bed activities are the Archaeological Resource Protection Act criminal-investigation courses that have trained more than 200 individuals to identify looted sites and effectively preserve evidence to be used in court; the Bonneville Power Administration sessions on the significance of cultural sites and the need to preserve them; skill-building for tribal members on global-positioning-system mapping, surveying and ground-penetrating radar surveillance; and University of Denver ground-penetrating radar research-and-development activities. ■



At the cultural test bed near the Volpentest HAMMER Training and Education Center, Melvin Lucei of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation participates in the hands-on, role-playing portion of a class on cultural-resource protection. Applying criminal-investigation techniques (note the gloves) after finding a looter's tool (foreground), Lucei assesses the degree of damage to help determine whether a felony has been committed.



In a class exercise on cultural-resource protection, a looter's vehicle is found containing artifacts, maps, books and tools. Class members gather evidence to link the vehicle to a plundered site on federal land. The program, recently honored by the state, was developed by HAMMER and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation.