

3.5 Cultural Resources

Cultural resources are the physical evidence of or places of past human activity. Several federal laws and regulations govern the identification and management of cultural resources. The term “cultural resource” applies broadly to a variety of resources subject to consideration under the National Historic Preservation Act and other similar laws. Included are historic properties, which are defined under the National Historic Preservation Act as a district, site, building, structure, or object that is eligible for or listed on the National Register of Historic Places. These also include National Historic Landmarks and traditional cultural places. Under NEPA, the consideration of cultural resources also includes other resources that are not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, but are important to the community, such as shrines and memorials. In order to qualify for the National Register of Historic Places, a property must exhibit a quality of significance in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture in addition to retaining integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Significance is based on the following associations:

1. Criterion A: Properties that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad pattern of our history; or
2. Criterion B: Properties that are associated with the lives of persons significant in the past; or
3. Criterion C: Properties that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, represent the work of a master, possess high artistic value or represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
4. Criterion D: Properties that have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act requires federal agencies to consider the effects of their actions on historic properties before undertaking a project, and to afford the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation with a reasonable opportunity to comment. Federal regulation 36 C.F.R. Part 800, “Protection of Historic Properties,” defines specific procedures for federal agencies to follow in complying with Section 106. Additionally, Section 110(f) of the National Historic Preservation Act gives special consideration to National Historic Landmarks by requiring federal agencies, to the maximum extent possible, to undertake such planning and actions as may be necessary to minimize harm to any National Historic Landmark that may be directly and adversely affected by an undertaking. The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation may, as part of the Section 106 process specific to National Historic Landmarks, request a report from the Secretary of the Interior pursuant to National Historic Preservation Act Section 213 detailing the significance of the affected National Historic Landmark, effects of the proposed undertaking, and recommendations to avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse effects.

The NEPA analysis for the Proposed Action covers the National Historic Preservation Act’s Section 106 area of potential effects, defined for this undertaking as the Military Lease Area, improvement areas north of TNI, the Port of Tinian, roads from the Port of Tinian to the Military Lease Area, and the former USAGM property on Saipan (Figure 3.5-1).

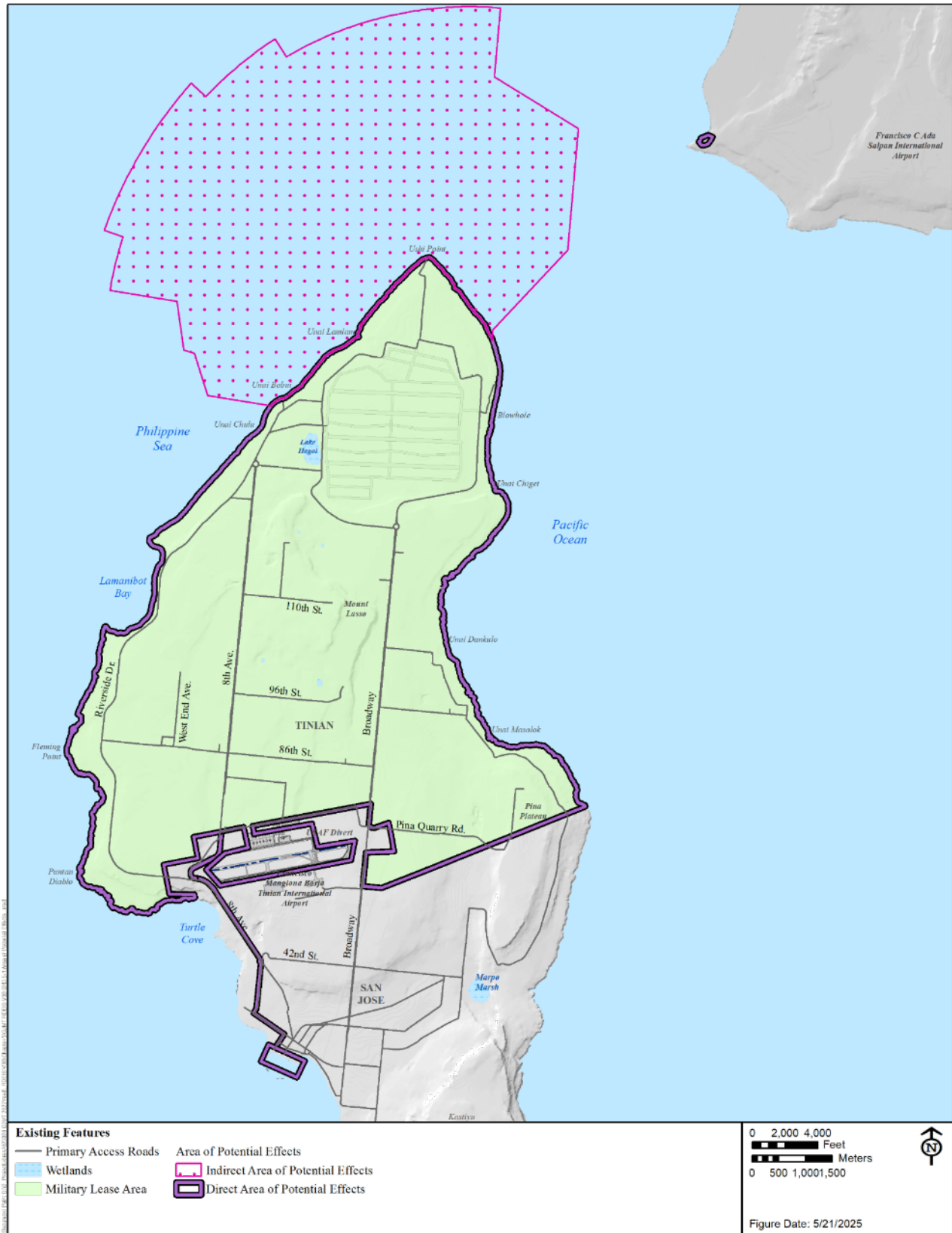


Figure 3.5-1 Area of Potential Effect

Section 106 regulations define the area of potential effects as “the geographic area or areas within which an undertaking may directly or indirectly cause changes in the character or use of historic properties, if any such properties exist” (36 C.F.R. section 800.16(d)). An indirect area of potential effect encompasses the surface danger zone in the waters northwest of Tinian. The former USAGM property on Saipan has been included in the area of potential effect, but as no new uses or construction is planned for this area, there are no activities that have the potential to cause effects on cultural resources and therefore no further impacts analysis is warranted for this portion of the area of potential effects.

Surveys conducted within and near the Military Lease Area account for approximately 98 percent survey coverage within the area of potential effects (Figure 3.5-2). These include archaeological assessments, Phase I surveys, Phase II testing, Phase III data recovery excavations, architectural surveys, underwater surveys, traditional cultural places studies, and a cultural landscape study. Nine investigations included testing and/or intensive excavation, and research of archives in the U.S., Japan, and Micronesia, including collections of historical maps and photographs and oral histories. Areas not surveyed in the Military Lease Area primarily are limited to small swaths of lands around the former USAGM property. In addition to the Military Lease Area, all of the area north of the TNI runways to the Military Lease Area boundary has been surveyed, and there have been 17 studies at the Port of Tinian and adjacent areas. The latter includes a 2008 architectural survey and archival study for all structures along the port’s wharf and quay (Thursby 2010 pp. 3-10). A list of cultural resources studies is presented in Appendix H. Surveys within the area of potential effect identified Pre-contact sites with *latte* stones and petroglyphs; Japanese Administration sites such as shrines, defensive caves, farmsteads, and internment camps; and other World War II-era sites. Cultural resources on Tinian consist of four types of resources: archaeological resources, architectural resources, traditional cultural places, and resources of cultural importance.

- **Archaeological Resources:** Those areas or locations (sites) where human activity measurably altered the earth or left deposits of physical remains, such as *latte* sites or pottery that are eligible for or listed in the National Register of Historic Places because of their association with an important historic context while retaining the integrity of features necessary to convey their significance.
- **Architectural or Built Properties:** Those standing buildings, dams, canals, bridges, and other structures which have historic, engineering, or aesthetic significance that are eligible for or listed on the National Register of Historic Places because of their association with an important historic context while retaining the integrity of features necessary to convey their significance.
- **Traditional Cultural Places:** A building, structure, object, site, or district that may be listed in (or determined eligible for listing in) the National Register of Historic Places for its significance to a living community rooted in the community’s history and that are important in maintaining the community’s cultural identity (National Park Service 2024).
- **Resources of Cultural Importance:** Include other resources that are important to the community such as shrines and memorials, even if they are not eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

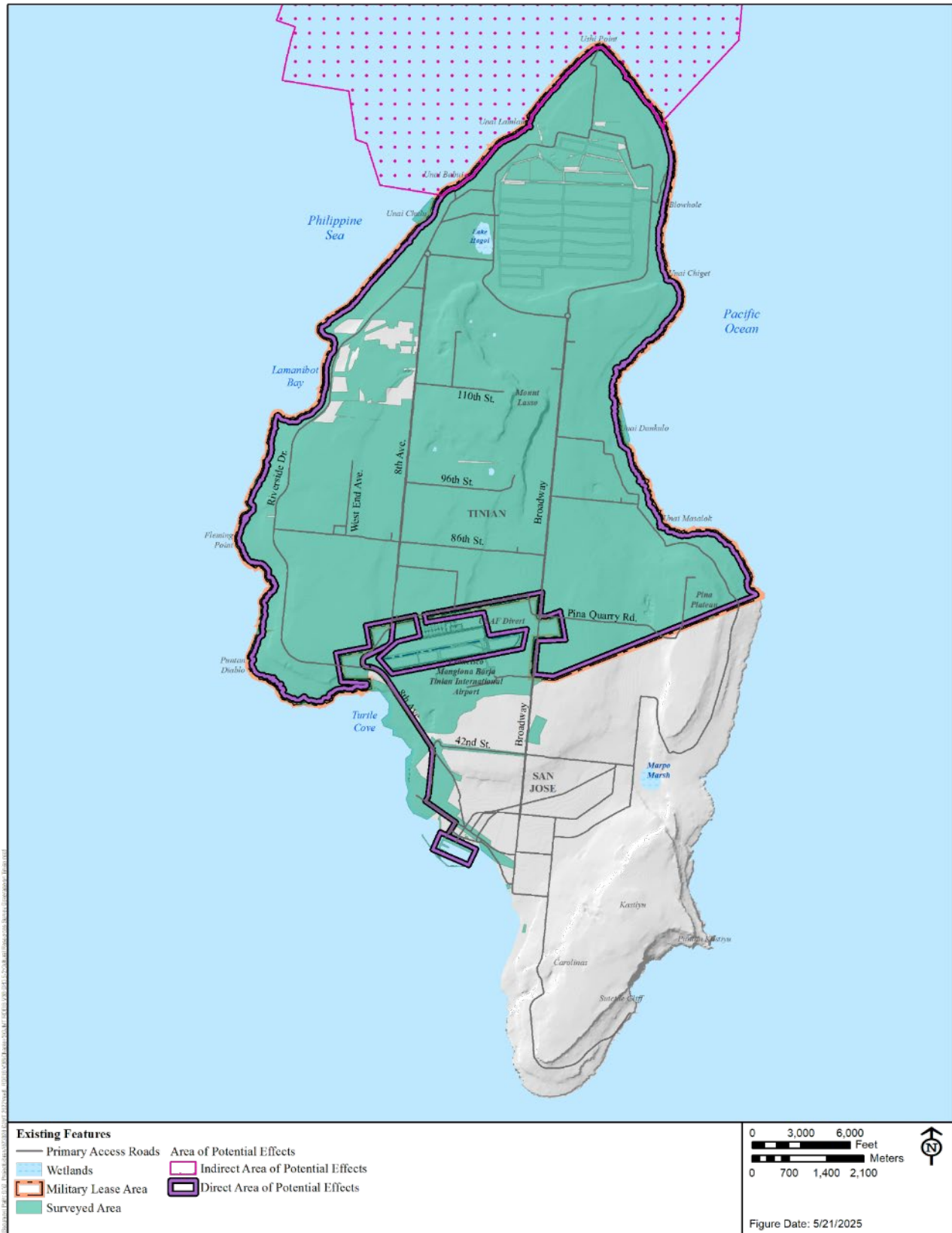


Figure 3.5-2 Cultural Resources Survey Coverage on Tinian

3.5.1 Historical Overview

The island of Tinian shows evidence of overlapping layers of historical periods. Appendix H and the *Tinian Integrated Cultural Resources Management Plan* (Joint Region Marianas 2015) provide an in-depth historical description of the island.

3.5.2 Previously Recorded Resources

3.5.2.1 Historic Properties

The area of potential effects contains 344 historic properties as well as a National Historic Landmark and three Traditional Cultural Places as detailed further below. Of the 344 historic properties, 343 have been recommended or determined to be National Register of Historic Places-eligible and one remains unevaluated but managed as National Register of Historic Places eligible. A table listing these properties is located in Appendix H, Table H-2. The majority of these properties are associated with pre-World War II Japanese farmsteads and World War II military activity. A lesser number of Pre-contact traditional Chamorro sites are also present.

Historic properties on Tinian span five historic contexts periods: Pre-contact, Spanish Administration, German Administration, Japanese Administration, and the American Administration. Pre-contact period historic properties include *latte* structures and ceramic scatters; Spanish Administration period sites contain evidence from this time-period while co-located with Pre-contact period sites; Pre-World War II Japanese Administrative period sites include farmsteads, shrines, cisterns, and other resources used by occupants of the island that predate the war; and World War II American Administrative period historic properties consist predominately of the remains of Japanese and later U.S. military development related to combat and post-invasion development of the island. There are no German Administration sites within the area of potential effects.

Previous surveys have assigned an archaeological site number to all historic properties regardless of type. The result has been that historic structures are listed generally as “archaeological” sites instead of differentiated as archeological or architectural property types. In addition, the archaeological methods used to identify sites have resulted in large site boundaries that vastly exceed the location of individually identified contributing features in the survey record.

The area of potential effects also contains the North Field National Historic Landmark, which is significant for its association with the American military capture of Tinian and use of the island as a crucial airbase that contributed to the end of World War II during the period 1944-1945. North Field was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1985 and includes the following contributing features (Figure 3.5-3):

- Landing Beaches Unai Babui and Unai Chulu
- Japanese Pillbox at Unai Chulu
- Japanese Ushi Point Field: service apron, air administration building, air operations building, and two air raid shelters
- American North Field: four B-29 runways, taxiways, and two service aprons

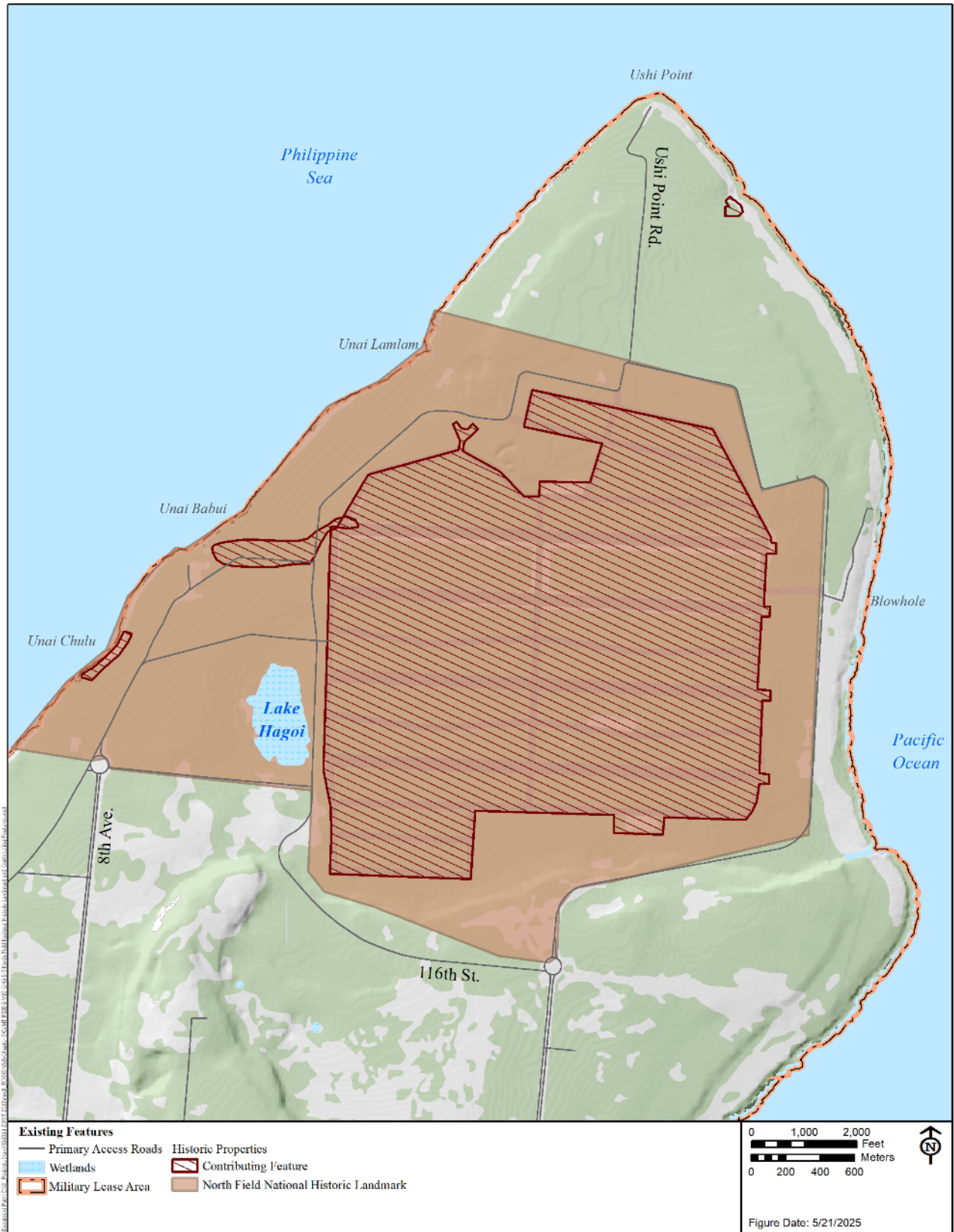


Figure 3.5-3 North Field National Historic Landmark and Contributing Features

In 2016, the National Park Service issued a Section 213 report on the previous iteration of the CJMT Proposed Action in which the agency recommended additional features as character-defining within the North Field National Historic Landmark, to include spatial organization and circulation patterns, construction materials, small scale features, landscape features and vegetation, topographic modifications, and viewsheds.

Three National Register of Historic Places-eligible traditional cultural places have been identified within the area of potential effect. These are Chamorro fishing areas within the Military Lease Area and include Unai Chulu, Unai Dankulo, and Puntan Masalok (also called Unai Masalok). These sites are considered significant for their association and contribution to the broad patterns of Chamorro history (Criterion A) – namely the historic and continued practices of *chenchulu* (Chamorro net fishing), *lulay* (hook-and-line pole fishing), and other traditional fishing techniques that are important to local subsistence, culturally important fiestas, and Chamorro cultural identity. Fishing in these areas is often a communal event involving all ages and is used to teach younger community members about traditions and values such as *respetu* (respect for elders and significant individuals and the environment and society where they live), and *inafa'maolek* (community cohesion).

Unai Chulu. Unai Chulu beach consists of a fringing reef accessible at low tide. This beach is an ideal location for the use of traditional fishing techniques because it is sheltered from prevailing trade winds, allowing for safe fishing of shallow lagoon fish and shellfish, and for communal gathering practices, such as the capture of seasonal rabbitfish prized for community fiestas. The back dune coconut grove provides shaded areas to clean and distribute the catch. The beach was specifically identified in oral history interviews as a location where traditional fishing has occurred since Chamorro people settled Tinian, and the beach is named for the Chamorro net fishing technique *chenchulu*. Archaeological evidence, such as nearby *latte* sets and the suitability of the beach for traditional fishing techniques, suggests that Chamorro have used the beach since before European contact.

Unai Dankulo. Unai Dankulo is an easily accessed beach with a well-developed fringing reef, relatively protected lagoon, and a back dune coconut grove. The setting is exposed to prevailing trade winds that make *lulay* fishing the preferred method of catching reef species such as parrotfish.

Puntan Masalok. Puntan Masalok is a small, sandy beach located along the east coast of the island. This beach is a favored location to carry out *lulay* fishing. Oral histories recorded use of the beach by the Chamorro community that resettled on Tinian in 1946 (DON 2015) but that the beach has been used by the Chamorro community since before European contact. This is supported by archaeological evidence, such as nearby *latte* sets and the suitability of the beach to traditional fishing techniques.

3.5.2.2 Other Resources of Cultural Importance

Other resources of cultural importance are available and accessible to the community on Tinian, both within and outside of the Military Lease Area. Some are tied to specific locations, such as the shrine on Mount Lasso and the cross and memorial located at Puntan Taddong (also known as Ushi Point) on the northern tip of the island, while others are more dispersed. Other cultural resources may also include resources of cultural importance such as cemeteries, memorials, places for growing and/or gathering of medicinal plants, and similar resources that hold special traditional, religious, or cultural significance. These resources may be related to cultural traditions

based on procurement of a product from different parts of the island and association with traditional activities and practices.

Important traditional activities and practices discussed during oral history interviews (DON 2015 pp. 5-1 to 5-7) include hunting, gathering, farming, medicinal, and fishing practices. These activities vary in the degree to which they are still practiced and the extent to which they are tied to specific locations on Tinian. Each of the activities can be considered a cultural tradition because they result in the procurement of a product that can be used for *chenchule*, a Chamorro word that once referred to many acts of reciprocation but is now often used to refer to the gift or act itself and is most commonly experienced as gifts of food, labor, or other contribution during the celebration of life's milestones. *Chenchule* is still strongly rooted within the Chamorro culture and is a mechanism that preserves and strengthens networks within the community, leading to stronger community cohesion. A detailed description of subsistence food and food culture is discussed in Section 3.3, Socioeconomics. The gathering of wild plants such as *Donni Sali*, also known as Pika or boonie peppers, breadfruit, and yams are also important to Chamorro traditions. A detailed description of medicinal plants is discussed in Section 3.4, Biological Resources. Beaches are also resources of cultural importance. For instance, *firowrow*, a traditional cultural practice for the Carolinian community, requires the use of beaches when a family member passes away (CNMI Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality 2015 pp. 87).

Separately, 67 archaeological sites have been determined not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places and, therefore, are not considered historic properties under Section 106, as defined in the National Historic Preservation Act [54 U.S.C. section 300308]. Though these archeological sites have been determined not individually eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, they are still protected under other federal statutes including the Archeological Resources Protection Act, (16 U.S.C. section 470aa(b), Antiquities Act (54 U.S.C. sections 320301et seq), Embezzlement and Theft (18 U.S.C. 641), Destruction of Government Property (18 U.S.C. 1361) and Trespassing (18 U.S.C. 1382).

3.6 Visual Resources

Visual resources on Tinian include natural features typical to the Pacific Islands region and human-built elements that, when viewed together as a landscape, result in a sense of place characterized by scenic views of tropical beaches and jungle areas. Natural views from coastal areas on Tinian include shorelines, seascapes, and cliffs. Inland, dominant natural features include vegetation, from dense jungle to sparser areas of shorter grasses, shrubs, and trees. Notable human-built and maintained features that contribute to the visual environment include cultural features, agricultural areas, parks and landscaping, and suburban-to-rural development. In the southern part of the island, south of the Military Lease Area, views are dominated by residential and commercial development, such as single-family homes and low-profile commercial and civic buildings.

The USAGM site on Saipan is composed of disturbed lands with five existing antenna towers and low buildings. Immediately west of the site is the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation Agingan wastewater treatment plant and Agingan Point. The area is relatively flat and slopes away to the ocean.

The selection of viewpoints for analyzing impacts to visual resources was based upon the consideration of activities while viewing the landscape, the importance of the scenic quality to these activities, the potential number of viewers, and the frequency and duration of views. Based