

**REEVALUATION FOR
COALFIELDS EXPRESSWAY, SECTION I: POUND BYPASS
FROM U. S. ROUTE 23 TO VIRGINIA ROUTE 83
WISE COUNTY, VIRGINIA
State Project No. 0121-013-772, PE-101; UPC 85126
VDHR FILE # 1997-0950**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY

**PREPARED FOR:
THE VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA
and
PARSONS TRANSPORTATION GROUP INC. OF VIRGINIA
FAIRFAX, VIRGINIA**

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ABSTRACT

Coastal Carolina Research, Inc. (CCR), conducted an archaeological survey to reevaluate the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) findings for the Pound Bypass section of the Coalfields Expressway (CFX, U.S. Route 121), a proposed four-lane, controlled-access, primary highway. The FEIS was completed in 2001. Since that time, under provisions of the Virginia Public-Private Transportation Act (PPTA), the PPTA private partners (Pioneer Group, Inc., and Alpha Natural Resources, LLC) have proposed a different alignment than that presented in the 2001 FEIS. This section of the CFX extends from U.S. Route 23 west of Pound to Virginia Route 83 east of Pound, in Wise County, Virginia. It includes 1.8 miles of mainline roadway and a 0.7-mile connector to Route 83 at the eastern end of the corridor. The reevaluation was done to assess the changes in environmental impacts resulting from the alignment changes and to examine the potential for changes in the environment since the Record of Decision was issued.

The survey was undertaken in compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966; and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's regulations for compliance with Section 106, codified as 36 CFR Part 800. The scope of the investigations was consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards and Guidelines for Archaeology and Historic Preservation*, and the report was prepared in accordance with the "Guidelines for Preparing Identification and Evaluation Reports for Submission Pursuant to Sections 106 and 110, National Historic Preservation Act, Environmental Impact Reports of State Agencies, Virginia Appropriation Act, 1992 Session Amendments" (VDHR 2001).

CCR conducted the survey for Parsons Transportation Group Inc., the firm retained by the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) to prepare the transportation study for this project. The purpose of the survey was to identify archaeological resources within the Area of Potential Effects (APE) and assess the potential eligibility of those resources for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The APE for archaeology was the proposed right of way of the corridor extending from U.S. Route 23 west of Pound to Virginia Route 83 east of Pound. The entire APE encompasses approximately 109-acres (44.2-ha), with approximately 21.16 acres (8.56 ha) within the corridor previously surveyed by CCR (Bamann et al. 2001). Background research indicated that no previously recorded archaeological sites were located within the current APE. No archaeological sites, artifact locations, caves, rockshelters, or cemeteries were recorded during the current survey.

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INTRODUCTION

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) commissioned a cultural resources study to reevaluate the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) findings for the Pound Bypass section of the Coalfields Expressway (CFX, U.S. Route 121). The FEIS was completed in 2001. Since that time, under provisions of the Virginia Public-Private Transportation Act (PPTA), the PPTA private partners (Pioneer Group, Inc. and Alpha Natural Resources, LLC) have proposed a different alignment than that presented in the 2001 FEIS. In order to determine if archaeological resources are included in the new alignment, Coastal Carolina Research, Inc. (CCR) conducted an archaeological survey of the study area. The survey was conducted for Parsons Transportation Group Inc., the firm retained by VDOT to prepare the transportation study for this project.

This report details the results of the archaeological survey of the Area of Potential Effects (APE) for the proposed Pound Bypass section of the CFX, a proposed four-lane, controlled-access, primary highway (Figure 1). This section of the CFX extends from U.S. Route 23 west of Pound to Virginia Route 83 east of Pound, in Wise County, Virginia. It includes 1.8 miles of mainline roadway and a 0.7-mile connector to Route 83 at the eastern end of the corridor. The archaeological APE is defined as the proposed right of way of the corridor, spanning a total of 2.5 miles (Figure 2). The entire APE encompasses a 109-acre (44.2-ha) area, with approximately 21.16 acres (8.56 ha) previously surveyed by CCR (Bamann et al. 2001). The reevaluation was done to assess the changes in environmental impacts resulting from the alignment changes and the potential for changes in the environment since the Record of Decision was issued.

The purpose of the current survey is to identify archaeological resources within the APE and assess the potential eligibility of those resources for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The survey was undertaken in compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's regulations for compliance with Section 106, codified as 36 CFR Part 800. The scope of the investigations was consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards and Guidelines for Archaeology and Historic Preservation*, and the report was prepared in accordance with the "Guidelines for Preparing Identification and Evaluation Reports for Submission Pursuant to Sections 106 and 110, National Historic Preservation Act, Environmental Impact Reports of State Agencies, Virginia Appropriation Act, 1992 Session Amendments" (VDHR 2001).

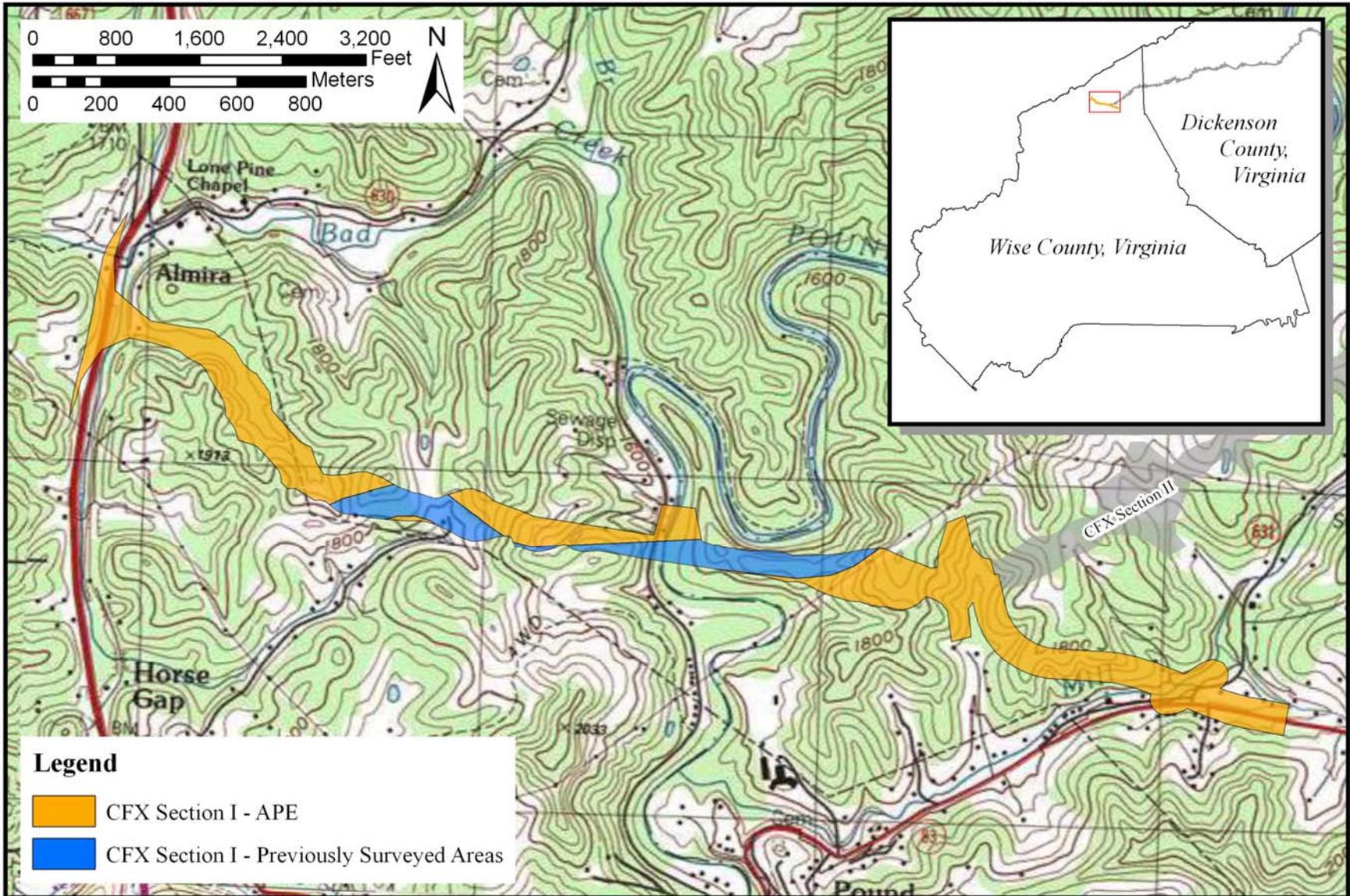


Figure 2: Map Showing CFX Section I APE and Areas Previously Surveyed.

A majority of the background research for the area was compiled during the previous CFX survey conducted by CCR (Bamann et al. 2001). Additional background research was conducted in May 2008 to identify any recent surveys which had taken place in the vicinity of the project area or sites which had been identified in or near the project area. Research was conducted at VDHR and the Library of Virginia in Richmond, and at the library of CCR in Tarboro. Background research indicated that no previously recorded archaeological sites were located within the current APE.

The archaeological survey was conducted from May 19-23, 2008. Loretta Lautzenheiser, RPA, served as the project manager, and Dawn Bradley, RPA, served as the principal investigator. Robert Patterson was crew chief, and Kevin McKinney, Lindsay Flood, and Blake Wiggs were the field technicians. Background research was conducted by Bill Hall. Neil Mayberry, Lindsay Flood, and Kevin McKinney prepared the graphics.

NATURAL SETTING

Physiography

The project area falls within the Appalachian Plateau physiographic region, locally referred to as the Cumberland Plateau (Dietrich 1970). The bedrock of this region is comprised of relatively flat-lying sedimentary rocks which have not been subjected to the intense deformation processes observed in the neighboring Ridge and Valley or Blue Ridge province (Dietrich 1970; Thornbury 1965). However, the plateau is highly dissected, giving the area the appearance of mountains, with the overall drainage pattern characterized as highly irregular with a tendency toward dendritic patterns (Dietrich 1970). Resources such as coal, natural gas, and petroleum are often found in the plateau province.

The Middlesboro syncline is the major structural feature of the current project area. Pine Mountain forms the northwest side of this syncline and “is such a formidable barrier that for a distance of nearly 90 miles no stream flows through it” (Thornbury 1965:142). Cumberland Mountain, south of the current project area, forms the southeast side of the syncline. The area between these ridges is a maturely dissected plateau where streams are often separated by steep-sided, irregular ridges with many side spurs (Hinds 1918, Giles 1921, Thornbury 1965). Consequently, tracts of level land are very rare in Wise County.

The average elevation of the project area rarely reaches 3,000 ft. Elevation in Wise County varies from 1,400 ft above mean sea level (amsl) in the valleys to more than 4,000 ft amsl at the top of Stone Mountain located 22 miles southwest of the APE (Sulfridge 1929).

Geology and Soils

The majority of the project area falls on the Norton Formation, with smaller portions of the project area falling on the Wise Formation (Virginia Division of Mineral Resources 1993). Both formations are generally defined as being comprised of siltstone, shale, sandstone, conglomerate, limestone, and coal (Gaithright et al. 1993). Specifically, two rock units of the Norton Formation are noted within the project area: a unit of interbedded sandstone, siltstone, and shale, and a unit described as an unnamed sandstone. Both coal and volcanic tuff are noted as occurring in the upper Norton Formation, with two specific coal beds (Norton and Splash Dam) noted as occurring within the project area (Diffenbach 1988). Only one unit of the Wise Formation occurs within the project area: a unit of interbedded sandstone, siltstone, and shale (Diffenbach 1988).

At this time, a published soil survey for Wise County is unavailable and soil information for the area is not available through the online Web Soil Survey (USDA/NRCS 2007).

Hydrology and Vegetation

The current project area is drained by the Pound River and several first and second order streams, such as Bad Creek, flowing into the Pound River. The Pound River flows northeast into the John W. Flannagan Reservoir, where it joins with the Russell Fork River. The Russell Fork River then cuts through the mountains to join with the Levisa Fork, which in turn flows into the Big Sandy River. The Big Sandy River meanders generally northward, emptying into the Ohio River.

The project area is located in what Braun (1950) has termed the Mixed Mesophytic Forest and the Oak-Chestnut forest. The chestnut blight has eliminated the native chestnut and the Oak-Chestnut forest no longer occurs in its original condition. Chestnut had been used extensively in tanning processes and had been clear-cut for pulpwood and charcoal over great areas of the forest. The forest type seems related to slopes, rarely occupying flat areas.

PREVIOUS ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH

Early Research in Southwestern Virginia

As late as the 1950s, virtually no archaeological research had been conducted in southwestern Virginia. In fact, Howard MacCord felt compelled to publish an article in the *Quarterly Bulletin of the Archaeological Society of Virginia* in 1948 extolling the virtues of the archaeological resources of the area. MacCord, in an effort to entice his readers to at least visit what he referred to as a “blind” area, referred to southwestern Virginia as an “archaeologist’s Eden” (MacCord 1948). In 1951, the editor of the *Quarterly Bulletin* resorted to publishing an article that had been written in 1948 for the members of the National Speleological Society. In this article, Joseph Caldwell (1951) describes investigations of the Higginbotham Cave, a limestone cave along the Clinch River containing approximately 30 human skeletons. Although this research generated a fair amount of local and national press, it did not seem to inspire further archaeological studies.

In 1955, Clifford Evans published a study of Virginia ceramics, placing the region encompassing the current project area in the Southern Division of the Allegheny Ceramic Area. Noting that Virginia sites to the west of the Alleghenies displayed “some degree of ceramic homogeneity of limestone and shell-tempered pottery which are totally distinct from the rest of Virginia,” Evans stated that within this region, “the trends . . . are some of the most clear cut in Virginia” (Evans 1955:103, 104). The Southern Division of the Allegheny Ceramic Area is characterized by sites containing pottery of the New River and Radford series.

With the minor exception of a report on the source of lithic materials recovered from two sites in Wythe County (Michael 1963), the majority of archaeological work done in southwestern Virginia for the next decade or two was conducted by amateurs. It was 1970 before any kind of synthesis was published documenting the archaeological resources of southwestern Virginia. At this time, C.G. Holland (1970) conducted a survey of the region and provided a description of all known sites as well as a study of the ceramics and lithic artifacts recovered from them.

One of the most extensively investigated areas noted in Holland’s survey is currently referred to as the Crab Orchard Site Complex. This complex is comprised of three palisaded village sites (44TZ1, 44TZ2, and 44TZ25), one small cave site (44TZ3), one vertical shaft burial cave (44TZ5), and a group of hamlet sites (44TZ19), located partially beneath 44TZ1 (Jones and MacCord 1990). Site 44TZ1, commonly called the Crab Orchard site, is the major component of the complex and represents one of the most intensively studied sites in southwestern Virginia (MacCord and Buchanan 1980). During three separate excavation episodes, evidence of concentric palisades, hearths, storage pits, and human and dog burials was revealed (Jones and MacCord 1990). Both lithic and Native American ceramic (primarily limestone tempered) artifacts were recovered, as well as marine shell beads used as grave accompaniments. The Crab

Orchard site is one of the few sites in southwestern Virginia to be studied extensively and appears to be fairly representative of Late Woodland period sites throughout the region (MacCord and Buchanan 1980).

Previously Recorded Sites

No previously recorded sites are located within the current project area. However, two archaeological surveys conducted in the area have recorded several sites in the general vicinity. In 1995, personnel from Garrow and Associates conducted an assessment of archaeological sites in Wise County and recorded three sites north and east of the current project area (Cassedy 1995). The Garfield site (44WS141) and the Currier site (44WS143) both date to the nineteenth century. The Garfield site is a Civil War camp occupied by Confederate soldiers prior to the battle at Pound Gap. The site includes the remains of a camp, a battlefield, and two trenches running parallel to a nineteenth-century roadbed. The Currier site is the remnants of a narrow gauge railroad bed built and operated by the Currier Lumber Company between 1900 and 1915. The Goff site (44WS144) is an Early to Middle Archaic period hunting camp containing several side-notched and stemmed projectile points. Cassedy (1995) does not provide specific recommendations for these three sites.

In 2004, the US Forest Service conducted an archaeological assessment of Wise County and recorded 13 sites located west of the project area (Barber et al. 2004). Seven of these sites were identified as Native American sites. The Laurel Fork Rockshelter #1 (44WS179) is located along a sandstone cliffline on the Laurel Fork. Five lithic tools and seven pieces of lithic debitage were recovered, including a brown stemmed hafted scraper, a Brewerton-like projectile point, a secondary flake graver, and a crude biface. Laurel Fork Rockshelter #2 (44WS180) is located directly across from site 44WS179 on a sandstone cliffline. The site was extensively looted but showed evidence of both prehistoric and historic components. Limestone-tempered pottery and chert lithics date the prehistoric component to the Late Woodland period. The presence of an oak barrel stave is evidence of a historic occupation. The Pine Mountain Border Rockshelter (44WS181) is located on a sandstone cliffline along an unnamed drainage. No artifacts were recovered, and the site was not recommended for further work (Barber et al. 2004). Deer Cave Rockshelter (44WS182) is also located on a sandstone cliffline, with the closest water source being the Hopkins Branch 1,500 ft below. Artifacts include 883 pieces of lithic debitage, 66 stone tools, four temporally diagnostic projectile point fragments dating to the Early Archaic to Late Prehistoric periods, and five Native American ceramic sherds. This site was recommended for nomination to the NRHP (Barber et al. 2004). The Stacey Branch Rockshelter (44WS183) is located on the southern slope of Pine Mountain along a sandstone cliffline. Lithic debitage was recovered from a looters' backfill pile. A Phase II evaluation was recommended for this site. Indian Grave Gap Mound Site (44WS184) is located in a high gap on the spine of Pine Mountain between the Pound River and the North Fork Kentucky River. The mound was 28 ft in diameter, and no artifacts were found. It is similar to, and can be associated with, burial mound complexes to the north (Barber et al. 2004). This site was nominated for the NRHP.

Seven historic sites were also identified during the 2004 US Forest Service survey. The Laurel Fork Historic Enclosure #1 (44WS185) is a historic animal enclosure found on a colluvial fan on level terrain. No artifacts were mentioned but a Phase II investigation was recommended if the site were ever threatened (Barber et al. 2004). The Laurel Fork Site #5 (44WS189) includes a barn foundation and an associated field clearing. The site, 100 x 80 ft in size, is drained by the Laurel Fork. It was recommended for the NRHP due to its association with a nearby rural historic district (Barber et al. 2004). The Well Head 4556 Prospect Site (44WS199) consisted of two closely spaced prospect tests associated with the iron industry at the turn of the twentieth century. This site yielded no artifacts and was deemed to have very little research potential (Barber et al. 2004). Sites 44WS201, 44WS202, and 44WS203 are all described as whiskey still sites. Sites 44WS201 and 44WS202 are characterized mainly by large 55-gallon metal barrels. Site 44WS203, located within a rockshelter, is recorded as a semi-circular stone cooker, with numerous barrel bands strewn about, and a metal pipe fragment adjacent to a nearby stream. Upon inspection and shovel testing, this site was found to not be conducive to Native American occupation (Barber et al. 2004). All three still sites were recommended to the NRHP based on their association with local agrarian developments of the late nineteenth to mid-twentieth century. The final historic site recorded was the 616 Homestead site (44WS204). This site consists of two distinct drip lines. The original stone foundation was looted by campers for fire rim construction. Shovel tests were negative for cultural materials, but the site was recommended for a further evaluation should it be threatened (Barber et al. 2004).

METHODS

Introduction

The purpose of the cultural resources survey was to determine if any resources listed on or potentially eligible for the NRHP were located within or adjacent to the project area. In compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, and 36 CFR Part 800, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's regulation for compliance with Section 106, identified resources if found would be assessed against the NRHP criteria of eligibility. These criteria require that the quality of significance in American history, architecture, culture, and archaeology should be present in buildings, structures, objects, and sites; that districts should possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association; and that buildings, structures, objects, sites, or districts:

- A. are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history;
- B. are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past;
- C. embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- D. have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history (Federal Register 1981).

In general, archaeological sites that lack sub-plow zone artifact-bearing deposits, have low-density artifact distributions, contain evidence of deep plowing, lack spatial integrity, lack artifact concentrations, or exhibit signs of earth-disturbing activities do not appear to be good candidates for inclusion in the NRHP. Sites that contain concentrations of artifacts, intact surface features, or intact subsurface remains may be recommended for additional evaluation to determine if they are eligible for inclusion in the NRHP.

Background Research

A majority of the background research for the area was compiled during the previous CFX survey conducted by CCR (Bamann et al. 2001). This research was conducted at:

- VDHR, Richmond, VA
- Virginia State Library, Richmond, VA
- Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, VA
- Wise County Library, Wise, VA
- Library at CCR, Tarboro, NC

Additional background research was conducted to identify any recent surveys which had taken place in the vicinity of the project area or any sites which had been identified in or near the project area. To eliminate stripped or other disturbed areas within the APE, a review of topographic and geologic maps and aerials was also conducted prior to fieldwork.

Archaeological Field Methods

The field methodology for the current survey was derived from previous area research conducted by CCR (Bamann et al. 2001, Holm et al. 1998, Holm and Lautzenheiser 1999). Due to the high prevalence of steep terrain within the APE, it was conjectured that the potential for archaeological sites is generally limited (Bamann et al. 2001). Also, a portion of the project area had been previously surveyed by CCR (Bamann et al. 2001) and was not reexamined during the current survey.

Areas with a slope of greater than 15 percent, areas with obvious surface evidence of disturbance due to roads, utilities, or recent construction, or wet areas were examined, but not intensely investigated. Areas of steep slope were inspected on foot for the presence of caves or rockshelters. In areas where shovel testing was conducted, the shovel tests were excavated at 75-foot (23-m) intervals. Shovel tests were approximately 30 x 30 cm (one foot) in diameter and were generally excavated into sterile subsoil. The excavated material was screened through 6.35-mm (0.25-inch) hardware cloth. Upon the event that the soil could not be screened, the soil was hand and trowel sorted. The shovel test locations were noted on the project map, and profiles were measured and recorded along with general notes on the terrain. Digital color photographs were used to document survey techniques and the general conditions within the project area.

Mapping Disclaimer

The mapped data contained within this report is to be used solely for locating the cultural resource component and cannot be substituted for data provided by registered land surveyors or any licensed architect or engineer.

RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The APE for the archaeological survey was the proposed right of way of the corridor extending from U.S. Route 23 west of Pound to Virginia Route 83 east of Pound, plus additional cut-and-fill areas (see Figure 2). The corridor includes 1.8 miles of mainline roadway and a 0.7-mile connector to Route 83 at the eastern end of the corridor. Although the entire APE encompassed a 109-acre area, approximately 21.16 acres within the corridor had been previously surveyed by CCR (Bamann et al. 2001) and did not require resurvey (see Figure 2). No previously recorded archaeological sites are located within or adjacent to the current APE.

A majority of the survey area consists of steep, wooded slopes leading to narrow, densely vegetated drainages (Figures 3 and 4). Smaller sections of the APE consist of narrow ridges or ridge toes, small ridge tops, or small bench formations (Figures 5 and 6). A portion of the APE along the western edge of Route 23 has been disturbed by earth moving processes (Figures 7 and 8). Also, several modern dwellings were encountered within the APE. The areas for these dwellings have been heavily graded and leveled. The ample disturbance from construction has removed all potential for intact archaeological sites.

Although the entire APE was considered, areas which were disturbed, sloped, or low and wet were not intensively surveyed. However, these areas were walked and visually inspected. No caves, rockshelters, or cemeteries were observed. There were no areas with adequate ground surface visibility for systematic pedestrian survey. Only a few areas were appropriate for shovel testing, including three ridgetops, seven ridge toes, and two small benches (Figure 9; see Figures 5 and 6). In areas where more than one shovel test could be excavated, shovel tests were placed at 75-foot (23-m) intervals. Select shovel test profiles can be viewed in Appendix A. These shovel tests were generally shallow, with subsoil reached at depths less than 30 cm (11.8 in) below surface. In some shovel tests, bedrock was observed at depths ranging from 5 to 30 cm below surface. No cultural materials were recovered and no archaeological sites were recorded during this survey.

No archaeological resources were recorded within the APE.



Figure 3: Example of the Steep Slopes Encountered During the Archaeological Survey, Facing North.



Figure 4: Example of the Densely Vegetated, Narrow Drainages Encountered During the Archaeological Survey, Facing Southeast.



Figure 5: General View of a Shovel Tested Ridge Toe, Facing Southeast.



Figure 6: General View of a Shovel Tested Ridge, Showing a Dirt Access Road, Facing East.



Figure 7: View of Disturbed Area Along U.S. Route 23, Facing Northwest.



Figure 8: View of Large Push Pile Disturbance Along U.S. Route 23, Facing West.

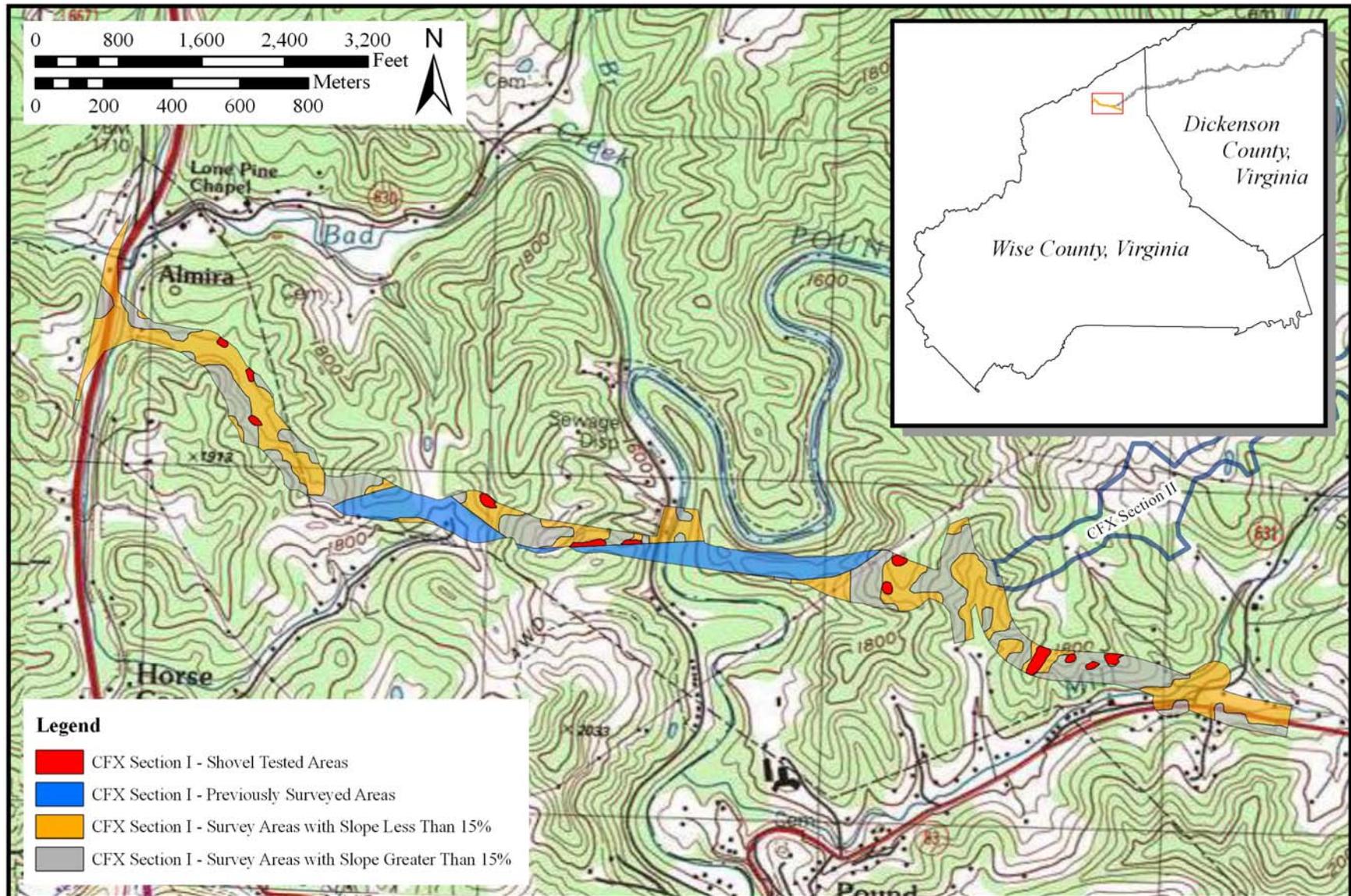


Figure 9: Map Showing CFX Section I APE, Areas Shovel Tested, Areas Previously Surveyed, and Percent of Slope. Slope Analysis Based on a Digital Elevation Model with 30-Meter Resolution.

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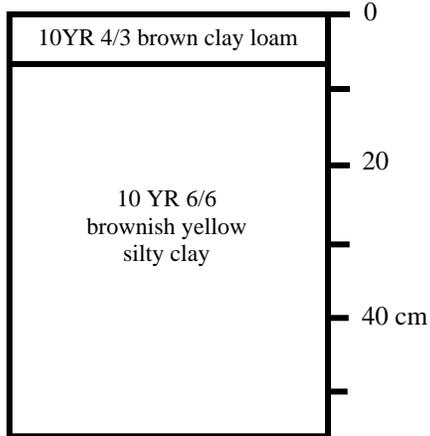
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Virginia Division of Mineral Resources

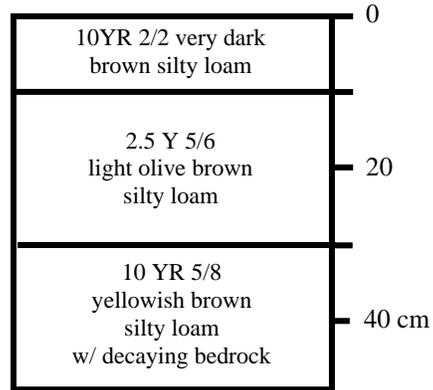
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APPENDIX A: SHOVEL TEST PROFILES

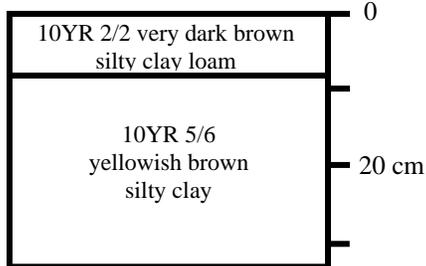
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Shovel Test 2**



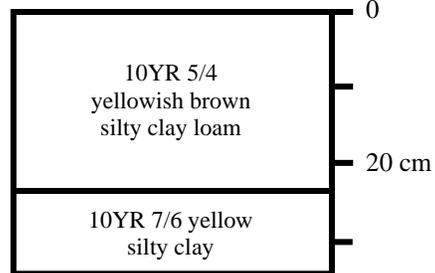
**08-13
Shovel Test 7**



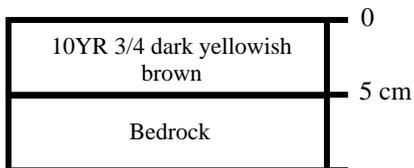
**08-13
Shovel Test 8**



**08-13
Shovel Test 10**



**08-13
Shovel Test 12**



**08-13
Shovel Test 14**

