ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF THE NEWTON GROVE 230 kV TAP LINE IN SAMPSON COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

by

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MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

During October, 1989, The Research Laboratories of Anthropology at the University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill surveyed and documented archaeological sites within the proposed right-of-way of the Newton Grove 230 kV Tap Line (Clearinghouse Number ER89-7130). The proposed project is located in northern Sampson County just southwest of Newton Grove. The project was initiated at the request of Carolina Power and Light Company and resulted in the recording of two new prehistoric archaeological sites. Both sites appear to date to the Archaic period (8,000-2,000 BC) and represent only limited cultural activity. Given the low frequency of artifacts at these sites and evidence of site deflation due to soil erosion, archaeological research potential is considered to be minimal. Both of these sites lie outside the proposed transmission line corridor and will not be adversely affected by the project.

INTRODUCTION

At the request of Carolina Power and Light company, H. Trawick Ward and R.P. Stephen Davis, Jr. of the Research Laboratories of Anthropology at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill spent three person-days during October surveying approximately 2.1 mi of the proposed Newton Grove 230 kV transmission line corridor (Clearinghouse Number ER89-7130). The corridor route extends from a substation site just north of N.C. 50/55 (west of Newton Grove) southwestward to U.S 13, crossing Coharie Creek and three unnamed tributaries (Figure 1). The entire 100 ft-wide corridor, broken down into 21 segments in the field, was subjected to intensive survey. Except for steep slopes and swampy areas paralleling the streams, conditions of ground surface visibility were excellent. Most corridor segments crossed plowed fields or soy beans plots ready for harvest. As a consequence, survey was accomplished by surface inspection.

The objectives of the survey were to locate and evaluate the research potential of as many archaeological sites as possible within the corridor. A "site," as defined here, refers to at least two spatially related artifacts or features that are indicative of prehistoric or historic activities. This somewhat broad definition only excludes the isolated "spot-find" which could result from an almost infinite variety of idiosyncratic or fortuitous events.

The evaluation of a site's potential or significance was guided by criteria of the National Resister of Historic Places which state that archaeological resources are considered significant or potentially eligible for inclusion in the National Register if they have "yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important to prehistory or history" (36 CFR Part 800.1). Although this guideline is vague, it seems that, minimally, a site should have spatial or depositional context sufficiently preserved to allow some level of behavioral inference beyond simple chronological placement.

As a result of the survey, two new archaeological sites were recorded. Both consist of small scatters of prehistoric lithic artifacts indicating brief encampments during the Archaic period. Diagnostic specimens from one site (31Sp252) point to a Middle Archaic (ca. 4500 BC) occupation. The likelihood of either site containing intact deposits is extremely remote; therefore, the construction of the transmission line will have no adverse affect on these archaeological resources.

PREHISTORIC AND HISTORIC BACKGROUND

Archaeologists usually divide the cultures of North Carolina into four periods: Paleoindian, Archaic, Woodland, and Historic. The Paleoindian period marks the beginning of man's occupation of North Carolina, ca. 10,000 B.C. The Archaic period dates between 8000 and 1000 B.C. and is further broken down into three subperiods--Early, Middle, and Late--which are based on the forms and methods of manufacturing chipped-stone tools, particularly projectile points. The Woodland period which began with the introduction of pottery ca. 500 B.C. is divided into several phases. Along the northern Fall Line, the Vincent, Clements, Dan River, and Gaston phases have been defined (Coe 1964). These are related to the Deep Creek, Mt. Pleasant, and Cashie phases of the northeast Coastal Plain (Phelps 1983). In the central and southern Piedmont, the Badin, Yadkin, Uwharrie, Dan river and Pee Dee phases have been identified (Coe 1952, 1964). The Historic period is represented in the northern Piedmont by the Early, Middle, and Late Saratown phases while in the central Piedmont, the Hillsboro, Mitchum, and Fredricks phases describe the archaeological remains of the late prehistoric and historic Siouan tribes (Davis and Ward 1988).

Numerous archaeological sites had been located in Sampson County prior to the current survey. Most were recorded either in 1981 as part of a county-wide survey (Hackbarth and Fournier-Hackbarth 1981) or in 1979 as a result of surveys conducted prior to the commencement of the Interstate 40 construction (Coastal Zone Resources, Inc. 1979). Some 13 sites have been found in the immediate vicinity



Figure 1. Map Locating the Newton Grove 230 kV Tap Line.

of the transmission line corridor. The two sites located closest to the corridor are 31Sp23 and 31Sp38; both are situated approximately 500 ft west of the corridor's edge. Most of these sites represent the remains of small, short-term occupations during the Archaic period. Where diagnostic artifacts were present, the Middle and Late Archaic were usually represented (Coastal Zone Resources, Inc. 1979; Hackbarth and Fournier-Hackbarth 1981).

Perhaps one of the most striking features of the archaeological landscape of Sampson and neighboring counties in the south-central North Carolina coastal plain are several low, sand-covered burial mounds. One large mound, the McLean Mound in Cumberland County, produced the skeletal remains of at least 268 individuals along with numerous shell and bone beads, and stone and clay platform pipes. A single radiocarbon date suggests the interments were made ca. AD 1000 (MaCord 1966).

A similar mound, the McFayden Mound, was excavated in Brunswick County by Stanley South in 1962. As was the case with the McLean Mound, all the burials were secondary interments, and some of the skeletal material was charred, indicating cremations. The McFayden Mound had been severely disturbed by relic collectors, making it impossible to determine the number of individuals originally buried (South 1962).

Salvage excavations also were carried out at a sand mound in Robeson County in 1971 by Bennie C. Keel. The mound apparently had been looted as early as 1882, as reported by J. A. Holmes, a geologist for the U.S. Bureau of Mines and an agent of Cyrus Thomas. Prior to Keel's arrival, the site had been subjected to further investigations by various individuals from St. Andrews College, Wake Forest University, Pembroke State University, the Archaeological Society of North Carolina, and a local Boy Scout troop. The 1971 work consisted primarily of shifting through the backfill from these previous excavations. As a consequence of the way the mound had been excavated in the past, very little information was obtained concerning its contents and structure (Keel 1973).

J. A. Holmes (mentioned above) described several other mounds in the survey area in 1883, including one located in Sampson County near Clinton. Holmes reported that this mound measured 40 ft in diameter and contained clusters of burials, all together representing 16 individuals. He also reported marginella beads associated with the burials as well as charcoal fragments (Sprunt 1916).

Little is known about the late prehistoric archaeology of Sampson County. Except for the surveys mentioned above and others on a smaller scale, little archaeological research has been carried out in the county. We assume that the Tuscarora Indians occupying the region at the time of first contact with Euroamericans are the descendants of the makers of the earlier burial mounds. However, the cultural sequence spanning the period between A.D. 1000 and the mid-17th century has yet to be worked out.

Today, large groups of Native Americans known as the Coharie Indians live in the county. These people are no doubt descendants of the Tuscarora, who were defeated in the Tuscarora War of 1711-1715. The Coharie also may be related to the neighboring Catawba and other Siouan speaking tribes that occupied the southern Piedmont.

Sampson County was formed in 1784 from Duplin County and today represents the largest county in North Carolina. The southern part of the county was settled first when, in 1745, Scotch and Irish immigrants cleared small subsistence farms along the South and Black rivers. These early settlers moved into Sampson County from the Charleston area of South Carolina. They were to be followed later by hordes of English and Dutch settlers who moved along the Great Wagon Road from Maryland and Pennsylvania. Throughout the county's history, farming has been the major economic activity. Today, Sampson County appears almost as one large fertile field interrupted by a thin web of streams and small patches of pocosins and bays. Soy beans, corn, and cotton complement truck crops of cucumbers, sweet potatoes, and watermelons (Jurney et al. 1928).

SURVEY METHODS, CONDITIONS, AND RESULTS

The entire 2.1 mile Newton Grove 230 kV Tap Line corridor was carefully examined by pedestrian survey to identify prehistoric and historic cultural resources. Twenty-one separate sections of the corridor were defined, based upon varying field conditions at the time of survey (Figure 2). However, three general kinds of field conditions were encountered. Most (65%) of the land crossed by the proposed corridor was under cultivation and afforded excellent survey conditions. In fact, many of the fields recently had been plowed or harvested. Soils generally were well-drained and ranged from sandy loams to loamy sands. Surface visibility within these cultivated fields was excellent. Two survey sections, comprising 7% of the corridor, had been extensively disturbed by either substation construction or Interstate 40 construction and consequently were not surface collected. Finally, four stream crossings (comprising 27% of the corridor) were examined but not intensively inspected because of generally poor topography. Each of these streams follow wet, marshy valleys and are flanked by relatively steep, heavily wooded valley slopes. The archaeological potential of each stream crossing is considered to be extremely low.

Field conditions and survey results for each of the surveyed sections within the proposed corridor are summarized below.

Section 1

Length: 400 ft.

Surface Visibility: 100%.

Location: This is the site of the Newton Grove Substation at the northern end of the proposed 230 kV tap line, located on a poorly drained upland surface just north of NC 50/55 and less than a mile northwest of Newton Grove.

Conditions: This area had been heavily disturbed by bulldozing.

Comments: Because of massive earth-moving activity, this section was not surveyed for archaeological sites.

Section 2

Length: 400 ft. Surface Visibility: 25%. Location: Just north of NC 50/55, along a level upland surface. Conditions: Overgrown field. Comments: Nothing found.

Section 3

Length: 850 ft.

Surface Visibility: 100%.

Location: Just south of NC 50/55, along a level upland surface flanking an unnamed tributary of Coharie Creek.

Conditions: Excellent. This field recently had been plowed and rained on. Comments: Nothing found.

Section 4

Length: 400 ft.

Surface Visibility: 0%.

Location: Across the valley and adjacent valley slopes of a small tributary of Coharie Creek.

Conditions: Heavily wooded valley slopes with dense undergrowth; swampy and wooded stream valley.

Comments: This section was considered to have a low potential for archaeological remains and therefore was not surveyed.



Figure 2. Map Locating Survey Sections and Archaeological Sites Near the Newton Grove 230 kV Tap Line.

Section 5

Length: 450 ft.

Surface Visibility: 25%.

Location: Gradually sloping upland surface adjacent to an unnamed stream that flows south into Coharie Creek.

Conditions: Overgrown field.

Comments: Nothing found.

Section 6

Length: 400 ft.
Surface Visibility: 0%.
Location: Developed right-of-way for Interstate 40 (under construction).
Conditions: Heavily disturbed.
Comments: Because of massive earth-moving activity, this section was not surveyed for archaeological sites.

Section 7

Length: 150 ft.

Surface Visibility: 100%.

Location: Gradually sloping upland surface along the west valley edge of an unnamed tributary that flows south into Coharie Creek, just south of the Interstate 40 right-of-way.

Conditions: Excellent. This field recently had been plowed and rained on.

Comments: Nothing found.

Section 8

Length: 200 ft.

Surface Visibility: 80%.

Location: Gradually sloping, western valley edge of an unnamed stream that flows south into Coharie Creek.

Conditions: Cultivated field planted in soy beans.

Comments: Nothing found.

Section 9

Length: 400 ft.

Surface Visibility: 40-80%.

Location: Gradually sloping, western valley edge of an unnamed stream that flows south into Coharie Creek.

Conditions: Recently clearcut with moderate ground disturbance.

Comments: Nothing found.

Section 10

Length: 250 ft.

Surface Visibility: 80-100%.

Location: Gradually sloping, western valley edge at near the confluence of two unnamed streams that flows south into Coharie Creek.

Conditions: Cultivated field planted in soy beans.

Comments: One small prehistoric archaeological site (31Sp251) was located 100 ft west of the proposed transmission line corridor. This site is situated on a low ridge that overlooks the stream confluence.

Section 11

Length: 300 ft.

Surface Visibility: 40-80%.

Location: Gradually sloping, western valley edge at the confluence of two unnamed streams that flows south into Coharie Creek.

Conditions: Recently clearcut with moderate ground disturbance. Comments: Nothing found.

Section 12

Length: 600 ft.

Surface Visibility: 0%.

Location: Across the valley and adjacent valley slopes of a small tributary of Coharie Creek.

Conditions: Heavily wooded with dense undergrowth along the valley margins; wooded and swampy within the stream valley.

Comments: This section was considered to have a low potential for archaeological remains and therefore was not surveyed.

Section 13

Length: 1150 ft.

Surface Visibility: 80-95%.

Location: Level upland surface along the western valley edge of an unnamed stream that flows south into Coharie Creek.

Conditions: Harvested corn field with excellent survey conditions.

Comments: One prehistoric archaeological site (31Sp252) was located 100 ft east of the proposed transmission line corridor. This site is situated at the immediate edge of the stream valley slope, on a slightly elevated low knoll.

Section 14

Length: 250 ft.

Surface Visibility: 60-80%.

Location: Along the gradually sloping, northern valley edge of Coharie Creek. Conditions: Cultivated field planted in soy beans. Comments: Nothing found.

Section 15

Length: 1400 ft.

Surface Visibility: 0%.

Location: Across the low valley and steep southern valley slope of Coharie Creek.

Conditions: Low, swampy, and wooded stream valley; moderately steep and heavily wooded valley slope with dense undergrowth.

Comments: This section was considered to have a low potential for archaeological remains and therefore was not surveyed.

Section 16

Length: 450 ft.

Surface Visibility: 100%.

Location: Well-drained, level upland surface immediately south of Coharie Creek valley. Conditions: Harvested sweet potato field with excellent survey conditions. Comments: Nothing found.

Section 17

Length: 350 ft.

Surface Visibility: 70-90%.

Location: Well-drained, level upland surface just south of Coharie Creek valley. Conditions: Harvested corn field with excellent survey conditions. Comments: Nothing found.

Section 18

Length: 700 ft. Surface Visibility: 10-30%.

Location: Well-drained, level upland surface between Coharie Creek and an unnamed tributary that flows toward Coharie Creek. Conditions: Cultivated field planted in soy beans.

Comments: Nothing found.

Section 19

Length: 400 ft.

Surface Visibility: 90%.

Location: Well-drained, upland surface just north of a small intermittent stream that flows east toward Coharie Creek.

Conditions: Cultivated field planted in soy beans.

Comments: Nothing found.

Section 20

Length: 1100 ft.

Surface Visibility: 10-30%.

Location: Level upland surface just north of an unnamed stream that flows east into Coharie Creek. This center of this survey section is drained by a small, intermittent stream.

Conditions: Cultivated field planted in soy beans.

Comments: Nothing found.

Section 21

Length: 700 ft.

Surface Visibility: 0%.

Location: This survey section cuts across the northern valley slope and swampy valley of an unnamed tributary that flows east into Coharie Creek.

Conditions: Heavily wooded with dense undergrowth along the valley margin; wooded and swampy within the stream valley.

Comments: This section was considered to have a low potential for archaeological remains and therefore was not surveyed.

SITE DESCRIPTIONS

Two prehistoric sites were discovered by the archaeological survey of the proposed Newton Grove 230 kV Tap Line and are discussed below.

31Sp251 (RLA-Sp242) (Figure 2)

This prehistoric archaeological site is located about 2200 ft southeast of the intersection of NC 50 and NC 55, west of Newton Grove, on a low prominence that overlooks the confluence of two small streams that flow south into Coharie Creek (UTM: 17/738690/3902980; Elev: 175 ft). The site was defined by the occurrence of three metavolcanic secondary flakes and one quartz secondary flake within a 50 by 50 ft area,

and lies about 100 ft west of the proposed transmission line corridor (150 ft west of the proposed centerline). At the time of survey, the site supported a sparse crop of soy beans and surface-collecting conditions were excellent with 80-100% visibility. Although no culturally diagnostic artifacts were found, the relatively large size of the recovered flakes suggest that the site probably dates to the Archaic period. The size of the site and small number of artifacts found suggest that it probably represents a short-term hunting camp.

The observed low artifact frequency and evidence of soil deflation at this site suggest that it has a low research potential. No further work is recommended.

31Sp252 (RLA-Sp243) (Figure 2)

This prehistoric archaeological site is located about 2000 ft northwest of the intersection of US 13 and SR 1648, southwest of Newton Grove, on a low prominence overlooking a small stream that flows south into Coharie Creek (UTM: 17/738590/3902490; Elev: 185 ft). The site was defined by a small number of lithic artifacts scattered over a 100 by 150 ft area, and lies about 100 ft east of the proposed transmission line corridor (150 ft east of the proposed centerline). The site was situated in a harvested corn field which had excellent (80-95%) surface visibility. Ten lithic artifacts were surface collected, including a probable Guilford projectile point mid-section made of metavolcanic rock, two metavolcanic biface fragments, six metavolcanic flakes, and one small quartz flake. The small number of artifacts, including one Guilford point, suggest that the site represents a short-term Middle Archaic (ca. 4500 BC) hunting camp.

As with 31Sp251, this site is considered to have a low research potential; consequently, no further work is recommended.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Archaeological survey and assessment of the proposed Newton Grove 230 kV Tap Line corridor recorded two new archaeological sites (31Sp251 and 31Sp252). Both sites are considered to have very low research potential and are located outside the proposed corridor. Given these results, it is our opinion that the proposed project will not adversely affect any significant archaeological resources. Clearance is therefore recommended for the project.

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