ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF THE CANE RIVER-CRAGGY 230 kV TRANSMISSION LINE IN BUNCOMBE AND MADISON COUNTIES, NORTH CAROLINA

by

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MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

Personnel from the Research Laboratories of Anthropology spent four person-days surveying approximately 5.7 mi of the proposed Carolina Power and Light Company's Cane River-Craggy 230 kV transmission line in Buncombe and Madison counties. During the course of the survey two small prehistoric sites were recorded in or adjacent to the proposed corridor. Both appear to be surface scatters lacking buried cultural deposits. As a consequence, the sites are not eligible for nomination to the National Register, and archaeological clearance is recommended for the project.

INTRODUCTION

At the request of Carolina Power and Light Company, the Research Laboratories of Anthropology conducted an archaeological survey of a proposed transmission line corridor in Buncombe and Madison counties, N.C. The sections of the Cane River-Craggy 230 kV transmission line that were surveyed begin at a point on the east bank of the French Broad River, just south of N.C. 251, in the vicinity of Woodfin. The surveyed transects end just east of the S.R. 1540 and U.S. 19 intersection near Mars Hill. The transects consist of 12 segments comprising a total length of approximately 5.7 mi. They are 100 ft wide, and are located in areas considered to have the greatest potential for containing archaeological sites.

Each transect was subjected to survey of varying intensity depending on local environmental conditions, particularly slope and ground cover. Some steep, wooded segments were not intensively surveyed, whereas knoll and ridge tops and alluvial bottoms were intensively studied. Overall these latter areas exhibited good surface visibility which greatly facilitated the survey.

The objectives of the survey were to locate and evaluate the research potential of as many archaeological sites as possible within the corridor. A <u>site</u>, as defined here, refers to at least two spatially related artifacts or features that are indicative of prehistoric or historic activities. This definition excludes only the isolated "spot-find" which could result from a myriad of fortuitous events. No such sites were identified during the course of the survey.

The evaluation of a site's potential or significance was guided by criteria of the National Register which state that archaeological resources are considered significant or potentially eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places if they have "yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important to prehistory or history" (36 CFR Part 80.1). Although this guideline is vague, it seems that, minimally, a site should have spatial and depositional context well enough preserved to permit behavioral analysis beyond simple chronological determination.

Two small prehistoric archaeological sites were recorded during the survey. Both consist of light to moderate surface scatters with little potential for containing intact cultural deposits. They are not considered eligible for nomination to the National Register; therefore, clearance is recommended for the project. Four additional prehistoric sites, encountered <u>outside</u> the project area during the course of investigations, are also reported.

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The survey area can be divided into two major physiographic divisions, mountain and intermountain plateau. The latter lies on either side of the French Broad River and consists of a deeply cut plain that is not sharply dissected. It is, however, much more rugged than the typical Piedmont topography, and there are few level surfaces except along floodplains. These landforms vary in extent depending on stream rank. The intermountain area is bordered by rather abrupt mountain ranges that are steep and rugged. Few expanses are suitable for agricultural use, but some of the mountain gaps between the knolls and peaks are similar to the intermountain area in relief (Goldston 1942:3).

The French Broad River drains the survey area and flows in a slightly northwesterly direction. Tributary streams flow in a generally westerly direction and include Reems, Beaverdam, Flat, and Ivy creeks (Perkins 1923:789).

The original forest cover consisted of chestnuts, oaks, hickories, maple, poplar, and walnut. White pine, spruce, and hemlock were interspersed among these hardwood species. Today the chestnut has succombed to the chestnut blight, and most of the original forest has been cut-over at least once. In areas where the forests were timbered and not totally cleared, hardwoods continue to predominate, whereas in areas that were once cleared for cultivation, white pine and locus are found. In both cases, mountain laurel and rhododendron form a thick undergrowth (Goldston 1942:4).

From the ethnohistoric accounts and the archaeological record, it is evident that the animals occupying these habitats were not only plentiful but also varied, including some species that are locally extinct such as elk, wolf, mountain lion, and bison. Other animals that are present today and must have been even more prevalant in the past include bear, bobcat, gray fox, raccoon, fox squirrel, and beaver (Shelford 1974:23, 40). In addition, the French Broad River and its tributaries abound with several varieties of fish, amphibians, and seasonally available water fowl, all of which were certainly available during the prehistoric period. This cornucopia of natural resources led Adair (1930:240) to declare that "there is not a more healthful region under the sun than this country."

ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The cultural sequence for the Appalachian Summit Region in western North Carolina was worked out during the years of the Cherokee Project conducted by the Research Laboratories of Anthropology and has been reported in several unpublished manuscripts, theses, and disserations. Syntheses of this research have been published in two seminal publications, <u>Cherokee Prehistory</u> (Dickens 1976) and <u>Cherokee</u> <u>Archaeology</u> (Keel 1976). The following outline is drawn from all these sources, as well as from more recent data.

Evidence for occupation during the Paleoindian period is scant and consists, for the most part, of sporadic surface finds by local relic collectors. In addition to the typical fluted, lanceolate projectile points, there have also been scattered reports of Hardaway-like specimens, especially from the eastern mountains. Most of the Paleoindian specimens have been made from locally available materials which suggest that small, local groups with limited outside contacts occupied the region (Purrington 1983:108).

Palmer-like projectile points and tools have been found on the surface of many sites, although their discovery in a stratified column has not yet been documented. Early Archaic occupations are also represented by widely scattered finds of Kirk points, usually on the surface or from disturbed subsurface contexts. Kirk sites are distributed over a wide range of valley and upland evironments, suggesting a very mobile population with a generalized adaptive strategy. However, most Kirk sites have been found in upland settings (Purrington 1983:113).

Morrow Mountain and Guilford specimens are also frequently encountered throughout the western mountains, and remains of the former have been extensively excavated at the Warren Wilson site (31Bn29). As is true for the Southeast in general, the Late Archaic Savannah River period is abundantly represented, and several sites have been excavated. Both Guilford and Savannah River specimens are usually manufactured from locally available raw materials, particularly quartz and quartzite.

The Archaic period terminates with the introduction of a cord and fabric-impressed ceramic tradition accompanied by small stemmed and sometimes large triangular projectile points. This Early Woodland manifestation has been termed the Swannanoa phase and stylistically appears to be related to the early pottery traditions of the Northeast.

A distinctive ceramic style evidencing fluctuations and shifts in the kind and direction of influence is recognized as characteristic of the period following the Swannanoa phase. This stylistic shift is definitive of the Pigeon phase and is defined primarily by the manufacture of checked-stamped and simple-stamped pottery. In contrast to the preceding Swannanoa phase, the Pigeon phase seems to have resulted from interaction in the Southeastern carved paddle-stamping tradition. Further Southeastern influence can be seen in the addition of tetrapodal vessel supports.

The Connestee phase follows the Pigeon phase and again reflects a general participation in the Southeast ceramic tradition. Simple stamping and check stamping continue as surface finishes, although a variety of treatments including brushing, cork marking, and complicated stamping are also present. Tetrapodal supports are again common, although their size is significantly diminished in comparision with the Pigeon specimens. In addition to the above distinctions, perhaps the

most important differences between the Connestee phase and those preceding it are non-ceramic. Small platform mounds were in use, and a number of exotic Hopewellian objects have been recovered in a Connestee context (cf. Keel 1976).

The Late Woodland period is represented by the Pisgah phase which is characterized by rectilinear complicated-stamped pottery with a distinctive collared rim. Platform mounds, palisaded villages, and maize agriculture place the Pisgah phase in the South Appalachian Mississippian pattern (Ferguson 1971). Extensive excavations have been carried out at several Pisgah sites including Warren Wilson (31Bn29) and Garden Creek Mound (31Hw1) (Dickens 1970, 1976). In addition to these riverine sites, a small compact Pisgah site located two miles from the nearest floodplain and 3100 ft above sea level has been excavated recently (Moore 1981). These widespread Pisgah materials represent the remains of the prehistoric Cherokee.

The last phase in the aboriginal history of western North Carolina is defined by a Lamar-like ceramic tradition known as Qualla (Egloff 1967). Platform mounds, nucleated villages, and a horticultural economy point to a continuum of development and interaction with the Southeast which began as early as Pigeon times. However, the arrival of Europeans and intensive interaction through trade, contact, and finally conquest signalled the end of aboriginal cultural traditions. By the early nineteenth century, little remained in the material culture that had distinctive prehistoric roots.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Cherokee undoubtably occupied the Appalachian Summit region for several centuries prior to the arrival of the first Europeans. In 1540, the Spanish expedition of Hernando De Soto marked the first venture of Europeans into the western Carolina mountains. De Soto was followed closely by Juan Pardo who led two expeditions between 1566 and 1568 (Depratter et al. 1982). The Cherokee apparently maintained sporadic contacts with Spanish settlements to the south during the latter part of the seventeenth century. In 1673, when the first English explorers, James Needham and Gabriel Arthur, arrived they reported that the Indians had Spanish guns and brass kettles (Alvord and Bidgood 1912:214).

During the middle of the eighteenth century, large numbers of settlers began to come into the Carolina Piedmont. A few moved into the foothills of the Blue Ridge and were met with Cherokee resistance. These hostilities continued until the Cherokee were defeated in 1761. After their defeat, the Indians were pushed further into the mountains.

At the beginning of the Revolutionary War, the Cherokee became British allies, but they were quickly defeated in 1776 by General Rutherford's North Carolina militia. During the Rutherford campaign, most of the Cherokee towns were destroyed and their crops devastated. Subsequent treaties took more area west of the Blue Ridge and opened the area to colonial expansion (Cross 1977:2).

At the end of the Revolutionary War, in 1784, Scotch-Irish settlers from the upper Catawba area began to cross the mountains into the Swannanoa Valley, and the "Swannanoa settlement" was founded in 1784-1785. Soon afterwards other settlements were established on Upper Reems Creek, Lower Reems Creek, and Flat Creek (Sondley 1922:61).

Bumcombe County was formed from parts of Burke and Rutherford counties in 1791, and Madison County was carved from Buncombe in 1850 (Perkins 1923:786).

SURVEY METHODS

Archaeological survey of the proposed Cane River-Craggy 230 kV transmission line corridor was accomplished by visual inspection of all designated areas with surface exposures sufficient to permit the identification of cultural materials. Most level land surfaces crossed by the corridor were cleared and provided excellent conditions for survey. Hillslopes, however, were usually wooded. These steep landforms were inspected for rockshelters but were not systematically examined for surface artifacts. Specific field conditions and survey methods for the 12 surveyed corridor segments (labeled A-L) are described below (see Figure 1).

Segment A

Length: 5,600 ft.

Location: Along the east side of the French Broad River, crossing N.C. 251.

Description: This segment is comprised mostly of steep slopes (usually >20%) adjacent to small tributaries that drain the eastern edge of the French Broad valley. Inspection of these wooded slopes indicated minimal potential for archaeological remains. Three level hilltops, comprising 800 ft of the corridor and located just north and south of N.C. 251, had excellent surface visibility (ca. 60-75%) due to earlier plowing and were carefully examined. No cultural remains were found.



Figure 1. Location of surveyed segments along the Cane River-Craggy 230 kV Transmission Line.

Segment B

Length: 1,100 ft.

Location: Along the north and south slopes of Reems Creek.

Description: This entire segment was comprised of extremely steep land surfaces exceeding 40-50% slope. No floodplain exists along this portion of Reems Creek. Consequently, this segment was not inspected for cultural remains.

Segment C

Length: 1,600 ft.

Location: Along the north and south slopes of a small tributary stream valley that flows beside S.R. 1727.

Description: Although the much of this segment consisted of steep (20-30% slope) wooded hillslope, both the north and south ends (900 ft of the transmission corridor) were moderately level hilltops. The southern hilltop was a plowed tobacco field with 80-100% visibility. The northern hilltop was an abandoned agricultural field with patchy visibility (0-75%). No cultural material was observed in either area. Segment D

Length: 800 ft.

Location: Along the north slope of a ridge between S.R. 1740 and U.S. 25-70.

<u>Description</u>: This segment of the transmission corridor was situated on a wooded hillside (20% slope). Intensive inspection of the ground surface was restricted to an old cornfield adjacent to the southern 200 ft section of Segment D. No cultural material was observed despite adequate surface exposure (70% visibility).

Segment E

Length: 800 ft.

Location: Along the north and south slopes of an unnamed tributary of Flat Creek that parallels S.R. 1836, and just north of U.S. 25-70.

Description: This entire segment was in thickly-sown pasture at time of survey. Most of the area consisted of steep (20-30%) valley slope. The floodplain of the unnamed tributary was low, narrow (approx. 50 ft on each side), and covered in thick grass. Given these conditions, intensive surface inspection was not undertaken.

Segment F

Length: 1,300 ft.

Location: Along the south valley slope of Stanfield Branch.

<u>Description</u>: This portion of Stanfield Branch valley is very narrow and steep-walled. This entire survey segment lay along a steep (20-40%) wooded slope that was covered with hemlock and rhododendron. Because of these conditions, no additional investigation was warranted. Segment G

Length: 1,600 ft.

Location: Along the floodplain and lower valley slopes of Eller Branch just northeast of Jupiter, NC.

<u>Description</u>: With the exception of approximately 400 ft of steep valley slope (wooded/pasture) at the north and south ends of Segment G, surface visibility was generally sufficient for identifying archaeological remains. Visibility along the west side of Eller Branch, in pasture, was patchy (0-40%) with surface exposures consisting primarily of an eroded cow path along the stream bank. Along the north side of the stream, however, visibility ranged from 50-70% due to agricultural plowing. One site (Bn 165), containing both prehistoric and historic archaeological remains, was recorded at this location. This site is described in greater detail in the following section.

Segment H

Length: 3,600 ft.

Location: Along the south and north valley slopes of Ivy Creek, approximately 1.8 mi below Forks of Ivy.

Description: Most of Segment H consisted of very steep (40-70%), wooded slopes along Ivy Creek. The creek is entrenched at this location and possesses no floodplain. On the south side of the creek, much of the slope is in pasture. Because of slope characteristics, these areas were not intensively inspected. A grassed-over field atop a steeply sloped ridge at the south end of Segment H was carefully examined. This field had ca. 20% surface visibility and was moderately level. No cultural remains were observed.

Segment I

Length: 3,600 ft.

Location: Along a ridge top and slopes between S.R. 1557 and U.S. 19-23, approximately 2.0 mi south of Mars Hill, NC.

Description: This segment possessed a variety of different survey and environmental conditions. The southern 300 ft of the corridor lies atop a ridge that had just been planted in wheat (100% visibility). Inspection of this field failed to yield any archaeological evidence. North of this field, for about 2,600 ft, the corridor crosses very steep (40-50% slope) land covered in pasture and forest. Because of excessive slope, this land was not inspected for archaeological remains. Finally, the northernmost 700 ft of Segment I is comprised of steep, eroded, and partly wooded slopes along the west side of U.S. 19-23. Although inspection of this area did not yield any archaeological evidence, a small site (Md 65) was discovered upslope and atop the ridge in an old cornfield. This site is described in the next section.

Segment J

Length: 2,400 ft.

Location: Along a ridge west of Little Ivy Creek, between U.S. 19-23 and California Creek.

Description: This segment consists mostly of moderately steep (20-60%), wooded ridge slopes. Because of these conditions and general inaccessibility, this survey segment could not be carefully inspected for archaeological remains. The generally steep slope and lack of identified sites at similar locations elsewhere along the transmission line corridor suggest that significant remains do not exist at this location.

Segment K

Length: 2,600 ft.

Location: Along ridge slopes west of Little Ivy Creek and south of California Creek.

Description: This segment crosses steeply sloped (30-40%), wooded land. For reasons similar to those described for Segment J, Segment K was not subjected to intensive field inspection.

Segment L

Length: 5,000 ft.

Location: Between S.R. 1541 and S.R. 1540 northwest of Ivy (PO), crossing California Creek, Middle Fork, and the intervening ridge.

<u>Description</u>: The bottomlands along California Creek (encompassing 1,000 ft of the corridor's length) were the largest encountered during the survey. Collecting conditions were excellent with surface visibility of 100% on both sides of the creek. A moderately dense site

(Md 63) containing both prehistoric and historic archaeological remains was identified adjacent to S.R. 1541 on a low eroded knoll at the edge of the floodplain. The floodplain itself was devoid of material except in the immediate vicinity of Md 63. Similarly, no archaeological remains were identified within the corridor along the east side of the creek, despite excellent collecting conditions along both the floodplain and lower valley slopes. A small prehistoric site (Md 64), however, was located about 200 ft north of the corridor at the back edge of the floodplain. The intervening ridge between California Creek and Middle Fork, being wooded and steeply (30-40%) sloped, was not subjected to intensive field inspection. Middle Fork valley also afforded generally favorable survey conditions. This section of Segment L was 600 ft in length and crossed recently plowed and planted (in wheat/oats) fields with 40-100% surface visibility. Careful field inspection failed to produce any archaeological evidence. Finally, the steep (20-50%) and wooded portion of Segment L north of S.R. 1540 also was not subjected to intensive survey. Sites Md 63 and Md 64 are described below.

SITE DESCRIPTIONS

Six archaeological sites were recorded during the course of the survey (Figures 2-4); only two of these (Bn 165, Md63) are located within the transmission line corridor. Descriptions of these sites are provided below. An inventory of recoverd artifacts is provided in Appendix I.

Bn 165 (Figure 2)

This site is located on the north side of Eller Branch, approximately 0.7 mi eastnortheast of Jupiter, NC (Mars Hill 7.5-minute



Figure 2. Map locating Bn 165 (Scale 1:24,000).



Figure 3. Map locating Md 65, Md 66, and Md 67 (Scale 1:24,000).



Figure 4. Map locating Md 63 and Md 64 (Scale 1:24,000).

quadrangle; UTM:17/3958770/357270). The site is situated on a low, eroded knoll at the back edge of the floodplain, adjacent to the confluence of Eller Branch and an unnamed tributary. Bn 165 was defined by a light to moderate scatter of lithic artifacts, fire-cracked rock (observed but not collected), and historic pottery over a 75 x 150 ft area. Late Archaic Savannah River and 19th/early 20th century cultural components are represented by the artifact collection. This site lies within the proposed transmission line corridor.

Md 63 (Figure 4)

This site is located on the west side of California Creek, approximately 0.6 mi northwest of Ivy (PO) (Mars Hill 7.5-minute quadrangle; UTM:17/3965440/363350). The site is situated on a low knoll at the back edge of the floodplain and has been subjected to moderate sheet wash and gullying. Because of these conditions, the potential for intact cultural deposits at this site is considered to be low. Md 63 was defined by a moderately dense concentration of lithic tools, debitage, pottery, and fire-cracked rock over a 150 x 200 ft area. All artifacts except fire-cracked rock were collected. Cultural components represented by the artifact collection include Archaic, Middle Woodland, Mississippian, and 19th/early 20th century Anglo-American. This site lies within the proposed transmission line corridor.

Md 64 (Figure 4)

This site is located on the east side of California Creek, approximately 3,000 ft above the bridge at Ivy (PO) (Mars Hill 7.5-minute quadrangle; UTM:17/3963000/361130). The site is situated on a low knoll at the back edge of the floodplain and consisted of a very light scatter of lithic artifacts, debitage, potsherds, and fire-cracked

rock over a 50 x 150 ft area. Surface visibility was excellent (100%) at time of survey; all observed artifacts except fire-cracked rock were collected. Archaic and Woodland/Mississippian cultural components are represented within the artifact collection. This site will not be impacted by proposed transmission line construction.

Md 65 (Figure 3)

This site is located just west of U.S. 19-23, approximately 0.8 mi north of the Ivy Creek bridge and 1.8 mi south of Mars Hill, NC (Mars Hill 7.5-minute quadrangle; UTM:17/3965680/363500). The site is situated on a hilltop overlooking the confluence of Big Branch and an unnamed stream, just west of Little Ivy Creek. Md 65 is defined by two large quartzite flakes found approximately 100 ft apart within an old cornfield with 90% surface visibility. Flake characteristics suggest a probable Archaic period site use. This site will not be impacted by proposed transmission line construction.

Md 66 (Figure 3)

This site is located on the floodplain along the west side of Little Ivy Creek, just above its confluence with Ivy Creek at the community of Forks of Ivy, NC (Mars Hill 7.5-minute quadrangle; UIM:17/3961860/360980). The site is situated in an old tobacco field and garden plot and had approximately 80% surface visibility at time of survey. The site was defined by a light scatter of fire-cracked rock, lithic artifacts, and pottery over a 50 x 150 ft area. All artifacts were collected except fire-cracked rock. Late Archaic and Woodland/Mississippian period occupations are reflected by the artifact sample, as well as a 19th/early 20th century Anglo-American occupation. This site will not be impacted by proposed transmission line construction. Md 67 (Figure 3)

This site is located on the north side of Ivy Creek, 1,200 ft above its confluence with Little Ivy Creek and approximately two miles south of Mars Hill, NC (Mars Hill 7.5-minute quadrangle; UTM:17/3961720/ 360500). The site is situated on a high area in the floodplain and was estimated to be approximately 150 x 150 ft in area; however, recent plowing and planting prevented surface collecting. Three flakes were collected from the edge of the field and fire-cracked rock was observed. The landowner reported finding numerous projectile points and other artifacts in the field. This site will not be impacted by proposed transmission line construction.

CONCLUSIONS

The two sites, Bn 165 and Md 63, intersected by the proposed transmission line corridor are not considered to be significant according to National Register criteria. Both are situated on eroded knolls and have been subjected to intensive cultivation for several years. As a consequence, it is extremely unlikely that buried deposits with spatial integrity are present. In addition, the construction of the power line will cause little if any ground disturbance in the site areas because they do not appear to be likely locations for tower installations. Archaeological clearance is therefore recommended for the project.

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APPENDIX I

INVENTORY OF ARTIFACTS RECOVERED BY SURVEY

Bn 165 (n=30)

- 1 Savannah River Projectile Point (Quartzite)
- 1 Core (Chert)
- 3 Retouched Flakes (Quartzite)
- 10 Unmodified Flakes (Quartzite)
 - 1 Unmodified Flake (Felsite)
 - 2 Unmodified Flakes (Chalcedony)
 - 1 Unmodified Flake (Chert)
 - 6 Whiteware Sherds
 - 3 Glazed Earthenware Sherds
 - 1 Blue-Edged Whiteware Sherd
 - 1 Porcelain Sherd

Md 63 (n=159)

- 1 Savannah River Projectile Point ? (Quartzite)
- 2 Small Stemmed Projectile Point Fragments (Chert)
- 1 Garden Creek Triangular Projectile Point (Chert)
- 1 Small Triangular Projectile Point (Chert)
- 1 Biface Fragment (Quartzite)
- 1 Biface Fragment (Quartz)
- 3 Scrapers (Quartzite)
- 1 Perforator (Quartzite)
- 4 Retouched Flakes (Quartzite)
- 3 Retouched Flakes (Chert)
- 1 Retouched Flake (Chalcedony)
- 11 Utilized Flakes (Chert)
- 2 Cores (Quartzite)
- 70 Unmodified Flakes (Quartzite)
- 44 Unmodified Flakes (Chert)
- 4 Unmodified Flakes (Quartz)
- 2 Unmodified Flakes (Chalcedony)
- 3 Medium Quartz-Tempered Residual Sherds
- 1 Medium Quartz-Tempered Simple Stamped Sherd
- 3 Glazed Earthenware Sherds

Md 64 (n=12)

- 1 Bifurcate Projectile Point (Chert)
- 1 Medium Triangular Projectile Point (Quartzite)
- 1 Large Bifacial Scraper (Quartzite)
- 1 Bifacially Worked Flake (Chert)
- 5 Unmodified Flakes (Quartzite)
- 3 Sand-Tempered Residual Sherds

Md 65 (n=2) 2 Unmodified Flakes (Quartzite)

Md 66 (n=35)

- 1 Savannah River Projectile Point (Quartzite)
- 1 Small Triangular Projectile Point (Chert)
- 1 Cobble Chopper (Quartzite)
- 2 Retouched Flake (Chert)
- 1 Retouched Flake (Quartz)
- 1 Core (Quartzite)
- 14 Unmodified Flakes (Chert)
- 8 Unmodified Flakes (Quartzite)
- 1 Medium Quartz-Tempered Residual Sherd
- 1 Medium Quartz-Tempered Fabric-Marked Sherd
- 3 Glazed Earthenware Sherds
- 1 Blue-Edged Whiteware Sherd

Md 67 (n=3)

- 1 Retouched Flake (Quartzite)
- 2 Unmodified Flakes (Quartzite)