

APPENDIX F
PUBLIC HANDOUT



STATE OF DELAWARE
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
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DOVER, DELAWARE 19903

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS AT FORD FARM, DOVER, DELAWARE

Archaeological sites such as the Ford Farm site contain a record of the activities and events that occurred in a particular location in the prehistoric past. These are comparable but far less complex than the small towns, farmsteads, community gathering spots, and individual workshop areas of today. Unlike the written and richly illustrated documents of more recent history, the prehistoric record is comprised of clusters of objects in buried contexts. These objects, which include pottery, fragments of stone tools, bone, and preserved organic remains, were left behind by the inhabitants of a site where such objects were manufactured, used, or consumed. These objects have become the artifacts that archaeologists use to reconstruct what these people ate, what kinds of houses they lived in, what kind of tools they made, and how they conducted their day to day activities. Lacking any writings that can chronicle how these people lived, archaeologists are left with these clusters of artifacts and traces of structures that once stood on the site to assist in reconstructing what actually took place in prehistory.

This information is irreplaceable and lost forever once an archaeological site is destroyed. To avoid such losses, the Delaware Department of Transportation, with the assistance of the Cultural Resource Group of Louis Berger & Associates, Inc., is conducting test excavations to evaluate the quality of the information contained within the Ford Farm site.

The site, which is situated on a bluff overlooking the St. Jones River in Dover, has the potential to contain a series of prehistoric occupations dating back to perhaps as early as 10,000 years ago. Evidence of buried land surfaces has already been found a few meters below the surface of the site. Though no artifacts associated with Indian cultures have been found associated with these early layers, deeply buried stone tool fragments have been found on the site, a rarity in the state of Delaware. There have also been more recent finds of prehistoric pottery, stone tools, cooking hearths, and other cultural remains dating to around 1500 years ago. Preliminary evidence shows that the site may have been a small camp occupied near the bluff edge for the purpose of hunting, fishing, and foraging along the St. Jones River.

The test excavations presently being conducted on the site will be designed to collect additional information concerning how long the site was occupied, which Indian groups lived on the site, and what purpose the site may have served its inhabitants. It may have been a hunting or fishing camp used by small groups, or it may have been a more established camp occupied by a larger group for the long term.

After the excavations are completed and the artifacts, features, and environmental information from Ford Farm have been thoroughly analyzed, a report will be prepared for DelDOT and the Delaware State Historic Preservation Office, which interested persons can obtain from DelDOT. The artifacts recovered from the site will be permanently housed at the Delaware State Museum. If you would like additional information concerning the project, please contact Kevin Cunningham, DelDOT archaeologist, at 739-3829, or Dr. Robert Wall of Louis Berger & Associates at 202-331-7775.