

5. THE FIRST PHASE II PROJECT

*In order to understand the site,
especially within the highway alignment,
a Phase II survey was undertaken.*

Phase II investigations began in April 2001 with tests in the woods, following up on the findings of the original survey. The first unit, number 12, was dug near the "pot drop" unit 10, which was outside the impact area of the project.

In this survey, we were directed by two different mandates. The Department of Transportation wanted to know what was in the area to be disturbed by the road. The State Historic Preservation Officer was quite reasonably interested in the extent of the site, regardless of the project boundaries.

The logic behind these two points of view was quite sound for their parts, but the Principal Investigator was tasked with satisfying both. The

excavation plan therefore reflected the needs of both.

The State Historic Preservation Officer wanted to know the horizontal extent of the site, which is an essential element in any National Register finding of eligibility. Unit 11, near the edge of White Marsh Branch, had yielded deeply-buried artifacts, indicating that cultural remains spanned the peninsula.

To satisfy the SHPO requirement, we first opened a line of test units that extended all the way to White Marsh Branch. Then we came back to the proposed right-of-way and put tests into the right-of-way and its immediate area. This spread of units revealed a wide variety of conditions and cultural manifestations.

Since the exact alignment had not been finally determined, we tested not only in the proposed alignment, but in its general vicinity.

Phase II work began with an open day on the site Saturday, April 21. One of the volunteer diggers was the SHPO, Daniel Griffith, with his students from his Wesley College archaeology course. Griffith opened unit 12, near the "pot drop" site. The unit obligingly produced a single sherd of Townsend-series pottery, which is much newer than the sherds found nearby. Aside from some modern trash, the rest of the artifacts from the unit were heat-modified stones.



Figure 31: Dan Griffith's Wesley College class on site, April 21, 2001.



Figure 32: Wesley College students sift the dirt as their teacher, Daniel Griffith, shovels.

The units that day were laid out in a rough crescent, partly for crossing most of the proposed roadway. It was a good start toward understanding the site.

Unit 13 was situated near the bank of the small stream that marks the northwest edge of the study area. Immediately apparent, right under the leaf mold, was a pit feature, which also



Figure 33: The first of several deep pits was found on the bank of the drain at the west side of the project area. During the initial Phase II tests, it was partly excavated and called the “western pit.”



Figure 34: Profile of unit 14

was identified in unit 14, a meter away. These two units yielded flakes and fire-cracked rocks all the way to the bottom of the pit, which was reached more than a meter down. Unit 14, which proved to be on the edge of the pit, was not so deep, but it was also full of artifacts.

A row of three tests proved to be less productive. Tests 15, 16, and 17 were located a few meters south of unit 12. Unit 15 yielded no artifacts at all. Unit 16 contained three flakes. In addition to some modern trash, unit 17 yielded a fire-cracked rock in three joining pieces, a jasper flake and a broken pebble. This was our first inkling that there was a space in the middle of the peninsula with few if any artifacts.

We then turned our attention to the area within the proposed corridor. Units 18 and 19. They were excavated to depths of 45 and 40 centimeters, respectively. Both yielded fire-cracked rocks; a straight-stemmed jasper point was found between 30 and 40 centimeters deep in unit 19.

Unit 20 was an extension of unit 13, designed to further explore the deep feature. It was opened in arbitrary levels of ten centimeters. Each level was rich in artifacts, including heat-modified rock and flakes. We resolved to close the unit

for later detailed study, so that we might continue our broad purpose of covering the whole study area at this stage in the process.



Figure 35: Along the fence line, units yielded rock-filled features unlike any found elsewhere on the site.

Units 21 and 22 were situated to the south, near the midpoint of the peninsula. From these two units, we recovered a quartz chunk and a fire-cracked rock fragment.

We then opened a line of tests along the bank of White Marsh Branch, numbered 23 through 28. The original intent was to dig a hole every five meters, but of course the locations of trees dictated the actual locations. Unit 11, in the Phase I survey, had yielded deeply buried artifacts near the bank.

Unit 23 was a meter-square test between 49 and 50 meters south of the base line E-J. Opened to a depth of 65



Figure 36: Units on the White Marsh Branch side of the peninsula were positioned to miss trees, which caused erratic spacing. Here are Dan McCoy, Dawn Corbett, Gary Morgan, and John Hoffman, opening part of the row of tests.

centimeters, where we encountered what was interpreted as an argillic B horizon. There were no artifacts in the top twenty centimeters, but between 20 and 55 centimeters we found twenty flakes.

Unit 24 was seven meters closer to the bank, and it contained artifacts to a depth of about seventy centimeters. It yielded some Coulbourn clay-tempered pottery and a stemmed projectile point. After the 70-80 centimeter arbitrary level produced no artifacts, we stopped digging.

More Coulbourn sherds were found in unit 25, four meters to the south. Artifacts were found to the last arbitrary level, 65-75 centimeters down. This unit contained fire cracked rocks



Figure 37: John Hoffman opens a unit.



Figure 38: There were two features in Unit 28. This was the upper one, observed as a cluster of fire-cracked rocks at 30 centimeters. These rocks were particularly small examples of the type.

and flakes in all the levels.

Unit 26, on the edge of the bluff, was on a level near the highest point on the line. The bottom level, 60-70 centimeters, contained a single flake. The total count of jasper flakes was 23, and the chert flakes numbered eight.

Just over the edge of the bluff, unit 27 yielded artifacts in the bottom level, 50 to 60 centimeters down. The



Figure 39: Cara Blume discusses the site with visitors from Canada and the chief of the local Lenape organization. Left to right: Dennis Coker, Bryan Crybe, Blane Coker, Bruce Stonefish, and Cara Blume.

top 15 centimeters yielded no artifacts, however.

The final square along the bank, unit 28, proved to be a meter deep, with two features. The first, encountered at 35 centimeters, was a scatter of fire-cracked rocks. A pit feature encountered at 60 centimeters, contained a sherd, fire cracked rocks, and flakes of rhyolite, jasper, and chert.

This row of tests clearly demonstrated that the bank of White Marsh Branch was occupied in



Figure 40: Unit 28, the lower pit feature

prehistoric times. The large number of artifacts in the site contrasted starkly with the paucity of materials in units 15, 16, 17, 21 and 22, in the middle.

The rest of the units, 29 through 36, were opened in the path of the new road as it was then proposed.

Unit 29 contained a cluster of rocks, larger than the usual Kent County cobbles, that were fire reddened and broken.

Units 30 and 31 were outside the fence line, near the edge of the woods. They contained modern trash in the topsoil and, in 31, a layer of fill on top.

Units 32 thorough 35 were situated along the south side of the proposed roadway. Artifacts were sparse in these four units, and none were diagnostic.

During the last days of the excavation, on May 1, visitors from the

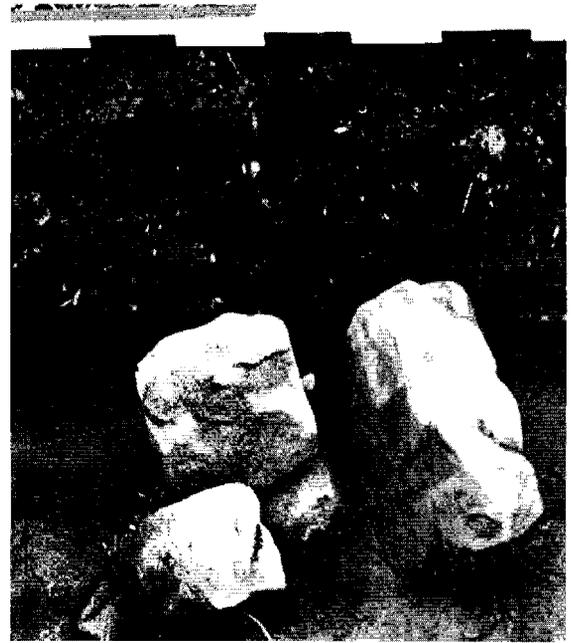


Figure 41: These particularly large rocks show evidence of fire. They were clustered in this pile in Unit 29.

legally-recognized Moraviantown Lenape community in Ontario, Canada, visited the site during a tour of their ancestral territories (Figure 39).

An on-site meeting with DeDOT and SHPO representatives was held May 16, at which time a new road alignment was introduced. This route would cross the woods farther into the undisturbed area. To address these changes, a new campaign of Phase II excavations was planned.

We prepared an Archæology Month exhibit for a session May 19 at the Cheswold Fire House, hosted by the local Lenape tribal organization. Work in the field would resume the following month to accommodate the revised proposal for the road's route.

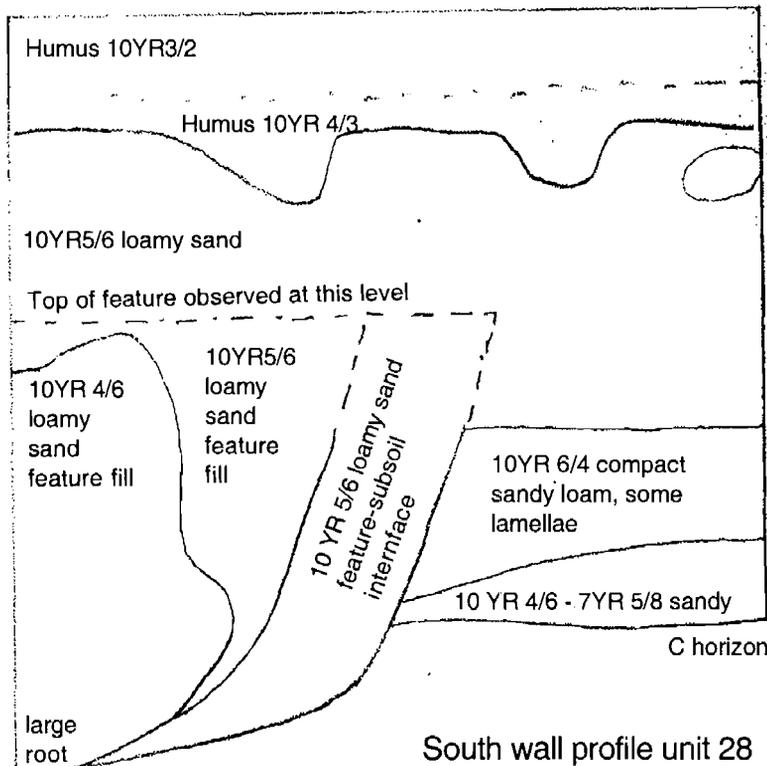


Figure 42: Profile of the unit shown in Figure 40, above