INTRODUCTION

The Sussex East-West Corridor project is a study of the alternatives to relieve the present and projected traffic conditions along Delaware Routes 404, 18, and 9 in northern Sussex County. Year-round traffic conditions were not the primary focus of the project; rather the project was concerned with the increasing traffic demand associated with summer beach traffic moving to Delaware and Maryland beach resorts. The proposed alternatives are for a 30-mile four lane controlled access highway extending from the Delaware-Maryland line west of Bridgeville to State Route 1 outside of Lewes. The regional context of the proposed project area is shown in the Project Location Map (Figure 1). The area is characterized by farmland, wetlands and forest, with concentrations of residential, commercial, light industrial, and public services in and around Bridgeville, Georgetown, and Lewes.

In the last 15 years the population growth of this portion of Sussex County, particularly during the summer months, has been phenomenal. Since 1972 over 2,000 dwelling units per year have been added to the housing stock of the county, and the summertime population is presently about 200,000 (double the year-round residential population). A special study was prepared by DelDOT in 1987 detailing the present and projected traffic conditions in several areas in the county, and it was determined that all of the major east-west roads within the county were at or near summer capacity and that the summertime population by the year 2005 would increase by 58%, to over 321,000 people. "During the warm months, most of the principal arteries operate at capacity

or jammed conditions for many hours per week. These conditions already hinder local circulation, and in cases where key beach area travel routes pass through Sussex towns such as Bridgeville and Georgetown, the streets are choked and local access becomes difficult" (Orth, Rodgers, Thompson, and Associates 1987:6). Accordingly, DelDOT proposed several alternative alignments for an East-West Corridor, and assessments of the cultural resources conducted.

The project study area originally investigated the areas 2 to 3 miles on either side of Delaware 404 from the state line to State Route 1. As part of a preliminary assessment of the cultural resources located within the proposed project corridor, DelDOT's consultants reported the presence of at least 84 known prehistoric sites, 711 historic standing structures, and 434 potential historical archaeological sites (Catts, Custer and Hoseth 1991:59-69). Following the publication of the cultural resources reconnaissance, DelDOT determined on four potential 1000' wide project corridors located within the original 30-mile by 5-mile study area. These four corridors were labeled the "404 Alignment", the "Route 40 Alignment", the "Wishbone Alignment", and the "Route 527 Alignment" (Figure 2). A preliminary archaeological survey of selected portions of these alignments was carried out by the University of Delaware Center for Archaeological Research (UDCAR) during the winter of 1990-91, while an architectural reconnaissance of the potential corridors was conducted by Cultural Heritage Research Services, Inc. (CHRS) (Watson, Catts et al. n.d.; Tabachnick and Keller 1991). Presently, DelDOT has narrowed the potential project corridors to

two, 300' wide alignments: the "Route 404 Alignment" and the "Route 527 Alignment". These will henceforth be referred to as the Southern Alignment and the Northern Alignment alternatives, respectively. The cultural resources located within these two potential project alignments will be discussed in this report, and the other two potential corridors (Route 40 and the Wishbone alignments) will not be considered.

This volume presents an overview of three main classes of cultural resources encountered in the two proposed alignments within the East-West Corridor: prehistoric archaeological sites, historical archaeological sites, and historical standing structures. The essays that follow are summarizations of information gathered in more intensive studies of the Corridor's cultural resources (Catts, Custer and Hoseth 1991; Tabachnick and Keller 1991; Watson, Catts, et al. n.d.). For the purposes of project planning, all site data were organized into three alignment alternatives; the Northern Alignment, generally following the route of state road 527; the Southern Alignment, following existing State Road 404, and the areas of overlap utilized by both proposed alignments, located in the eastern and western portions of the project area (Figures 3 and 4). The archaeological data were gathered and analyzed by staff of the University of Delaware Center for Archaeological Research. The inventories of standing structures were compiled from the existing inventories maintained by the Delaware Bureau of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (BAHP). Analysis and assessment of the standing structures were undertaken by Cultural Heritage Research Services, Inc., of North Wales, Pennsylvania.

A summary of the cultural resources management considerations is also provided.