

3.0 CULTURAL CONTEXT

The prehistory of the Route 40 Improvements Project area has been addressed extensively in statewide contexts and nearby project reports (Bedell 2002; Brown *et al.* 1990; Catts and Custer 1990; Custer 1986; Custer *et al.* 1986; Custer and Cunningham 1986; Custer and De Santis 1986; De Cunzo and Catts 1990; De Cunzo and Garcia 1992; Hoseth *et al.* 1994; Lothrop *et al.* 1987; Parsons Engineering Science, Inc. 1999; Petraglia and Knepper 1996; Shaffer *et al.* 1988; Thomas 2001a, 2001b; Traver and Thomas 2001). In addition, only a single pre-contact artifact was recovered from the Phase I survey and Phase II testing of the project APE; therefore only a brief, summary pre-contact context is provided. The history of the project area likewise was covered by previous projects and by the historic resources report for the Route 40 Improvements Project (Kuncio and Hyland 2006). Specific historic contexts for the two identified historic resources are included in Sections 5.0 and 6.0 of this report.

The Paleoindian period started with the arrival of the earliest inhabitants of Delaware, *ca.* 15,000 years ago, and ended with the emergence of essentially modern environmental conditions at approximately 6,500 years ago. Paleoindian archaeological remains in Delaware include fluted projectile points attributable to the Clovis, Mid-Paleo, and Dalton-Hardaway phases, as well as early side and corner notched projectile points such as Palmer, Amos, and Kirk types (Broyles 1971; Coe 1964; Custer 1986:32). Types of Paleoindian sites include quarries, quarry reduction stations, base camps, base camp maintenance stations, outlying hunting sites, and isolated projectile point finds, with isolated projectile points the most common site type (Custer 1984:52-53). The majority of the Paleoindian site types, as defined by Gardner (1979), are directly related to lithic resource procurement and lithic tool manufacturing. "Three major concentrations of Paleo-Indian sites are noted for the northern portion of the Delmarva Peninsula" (Custer 1984:56). The Route 40 Improvements Project APE is not located within any of these three Paleoindian site concentrations, and primary sources of high-quality lithic raw materials are not present within the project APE. Quarry sites would not be expected in the APE, as Iron Hill appears to have been the quarry of choice in this section of Delaware. Hunting sites and base camp maintenance stations are predicted at any "game attractive locales" (Custer 1986:55).

"The beginning of the Archaic period coincides with the emergence of Holocene environments in Delaware and is characterized by a shift in human adaptation strategies" (Custer 1984:61). This adaptation strategy shift occurs at approximately 6,500 years ago with the emergence of bifurcate projectile points such as St. Albans, LeCroy, and Kanawha types (Broyles 1971; Chapman 1975). Based on preliminary information gleaned from excavated archaeological

sites in locations surrounding Delaware, a variety of stemmed projectile point types characterize the Archaic period from approximately 6,000 B.C. to 4,000 B.C. (Custer 1984:62). Indicators of the new adaptations include the addition of new tools, such as groundstone, to the tool kit; the addition of alternative lithic raw material sources (e.g., secondary cobble sources) for tool making; replacement of direct procurement systems by embedded systems; reduction in the range of activities carried out at special purpose sites; less reliance on cryptocrystalline lithic raw materials; increased floral resource use; reduced emphasis on hunting; and site location preference to a wider variety of environmental settings different from Paleoindian preferences.

"In the overall picture the variety of site types and activities seems to represent a diffuse adaptation (Cleland 1976) to an increasing variety of environmental settings as well as the increasing variety of resources available due to increased seasonality" (Custer 1986:65). This seasonality is reflected in the macro/micro-band/procurement site settlement types postulated for the Archaic period in Delaware. A variety of environmental settings, including swamps/marshes and their associated terraces, and floodplains of major streams would have been preferred locations for macro-band camps. The Route 40 Improvements Project APE does not contain these types of environmental settings; however, the Churchman's Marsh and the Christina River areas northeast of the project APE have yielded Archaic period sites. By 3,000 B.C., in Delaware, significant changes occurred in lifeways, climate, and environment, and signaled the end of the Archaic period.

Few Archaic period archaeological sites are known in Delaware, and of those investigated, none are stratified (Custer 1984:61, 65). The potential for the project APE to contain Archaic period archaeological remains is moderate based on the presence of previously recorded Archaic period archaeological sites nearby, and the small size of the project APE. If Archaic period remains are identified, they will most likely not be stratified or intact due to the heavy historic use and modern development of the areas peripheral to the existing roadway which comprise the project APE.

The Woodland I period begins approximately 3,000 B.C. when the rate of sea level rise slowed and riverine and estuary environments began to stabilize (Morin *et al.* 2001:3.2). An increase in population is posited for the period, along with the development of sedentism. Many large base camp sites, with associated large numbers of people, are evident in many parts of the Delmarva peninsula during the Woodland I period (Custer and Catts 1991:19). The overall trend was towards more sedentism with increases in local populations. Woodland I period lifeways varied from the Archaic period and included increases in plant processing tools; the introduction of stone and then ceramic containers; the development of incipient ranked societies; the addition of fishing gear such as netsinkers; increases in broad-bladed knives; and the development of trade and exchange networks/systems. Settlement during this period commonly consisted of repeated use

campsites and semi-sedentary to sedentary village sites along major drainages (Morin *et al.* 2001:3.3). The close of the Woodland I period is dated to approximately A.D. 1000 (Morin *et al.* 2001:3.2). Due to the lack of major drainages within the project APE, there is a low probability of identifying Woodland I period macro-band sites; however, due to the proximity of large streams to the project APE, associated Woodland I micro-band sites may be present.

The Woodland II period is dated from A.D. 1000 to the contact period, ca. A.D. 1600. The period is marked by the alteration of Woodland I lifeways (Custer 1984:146). "The basic changes noted in Delaware include the breakdown of trade and exchange networks, alterations of settlement patterns, the development of sedentary lifestyles, and the appearance of agricultural food production to varying degrees in different areas" (Custer 1984:146). Horticulture became very important across the Middle Atlantic region during the Woodland II period, although little archaeological evidence for it has been identified in Delaware (Morin *et al.* 2001:3.3). "Exploitation of sites with Woodland I components continued during Woodland II" (Brown *et al.* 1990:9). Small triangular projectile points and various styles of ceramics are temporally diagnostic Woodland II period artifacts. Two basic varieties of ceramics, Townsend and Minguannan wares, are distinguished in Delaware (Custer 1984:148). Townsend ceramics are described as shell tempered, fabric impressed exterior surface wares (Griffith 1982), while Minguannan wares exhibit sand, grit, or quartz temper with smoothed, corded, or smoothed-over corded surfaces (Custer 1981). Other items of material culture include bone and antler tools, stone celts, clay pipes, and shell beads (Brown and Basalik 1984). "No major changes are seen in social organization for the Woodland II Period of northern Delaware;" therefore, if Woodland II sites are identified in the Route 40 Improvements Project APE, they will most likely be micro-band sites associated with macro-band sites located to the northeast along the Christina River or Churchman's Marsh.