## VII. ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDINGS: SITE 7K-C-396

Site 7K-C-396 is a prehistoric site with two main loci of activity. One of the loci is dated by the presence of Minguannan and Townsend ceramics to the Woodland II period (AD 1000 to 1600). The site is located on a low rise on the north bank of Muddy Branch, both in agricultural fields and adjacent woods.

### A. Previous Work

Site 7K-C-396 was located by UDCAR during a Phase I survey of the area. During the survey, 109 shovel test pits were excavated at 20- and 40-foot intervals over the entire area of the low rise. Prehistoric artifacts were recovered from 49 shovel test pits, 45 percent of those within the site boundaries. Artifact density varied from one to three artifacts per shovel test. In seven shovel tests, artifacts were recovered from intact strata beneath the plowzone. One possible prehistoric feature, a concentration of charcoal flecks, was also located within these undisturbed strata. Artifacts recovered during the Phase I survey include a chert stemmed point, jasper and quartz flakes, a rhyolite flake, and grit-tempered ceramics. The ceramics were tentatively identified as Minguannan ware, a Woodland II variety. All the artifacts recovered from below the plowzone were quartz and jasper flakes. On the basis of these discoveries, Phase II significance evaluation of the site was recommended.

### B. Phase II Excavations

Phase II excavations at Site 7K-C-396 included 51 supplemental shovel tests designed to fully define the limits of the site, particularly at its north end, which is close to Site 7K-C-394, and to examine parts of the site not tested during the Phase I investigation (Figure 16). A total of 31 3x3-foot test units were also excavated on the site, targeting artifact concentrations identified during the Phase I and supplemental Phase II shovel testing (Figure 17). The results of the Phase II investigations revealed two prehistoric loci with artifacts buried below the plowzone. The combination of shovel testing and test units enabled the investigators to determine the limits of Site 7K-C-396 and the extent of the buried loci (Figures 18 and 19).

*Locus 1*

Locus 1 is at the southern end of the site on a bench or levee of Muddy Branch. This locus is in the wooded part of the site, at an elevation of about 15 feet above sea level and approximately 5 feet above Muddy Branch. Phase II STPs 1 through 5 and 13 through 26 were excavated in this locus. This portion of the site is crossed by a steep drainage ditch, excavated in historic times, that enters the site from the north and empties into Muddy Branch. Testing was carried out on both sides of the ditch. In this area, Phase I testing revealed a thin concentration

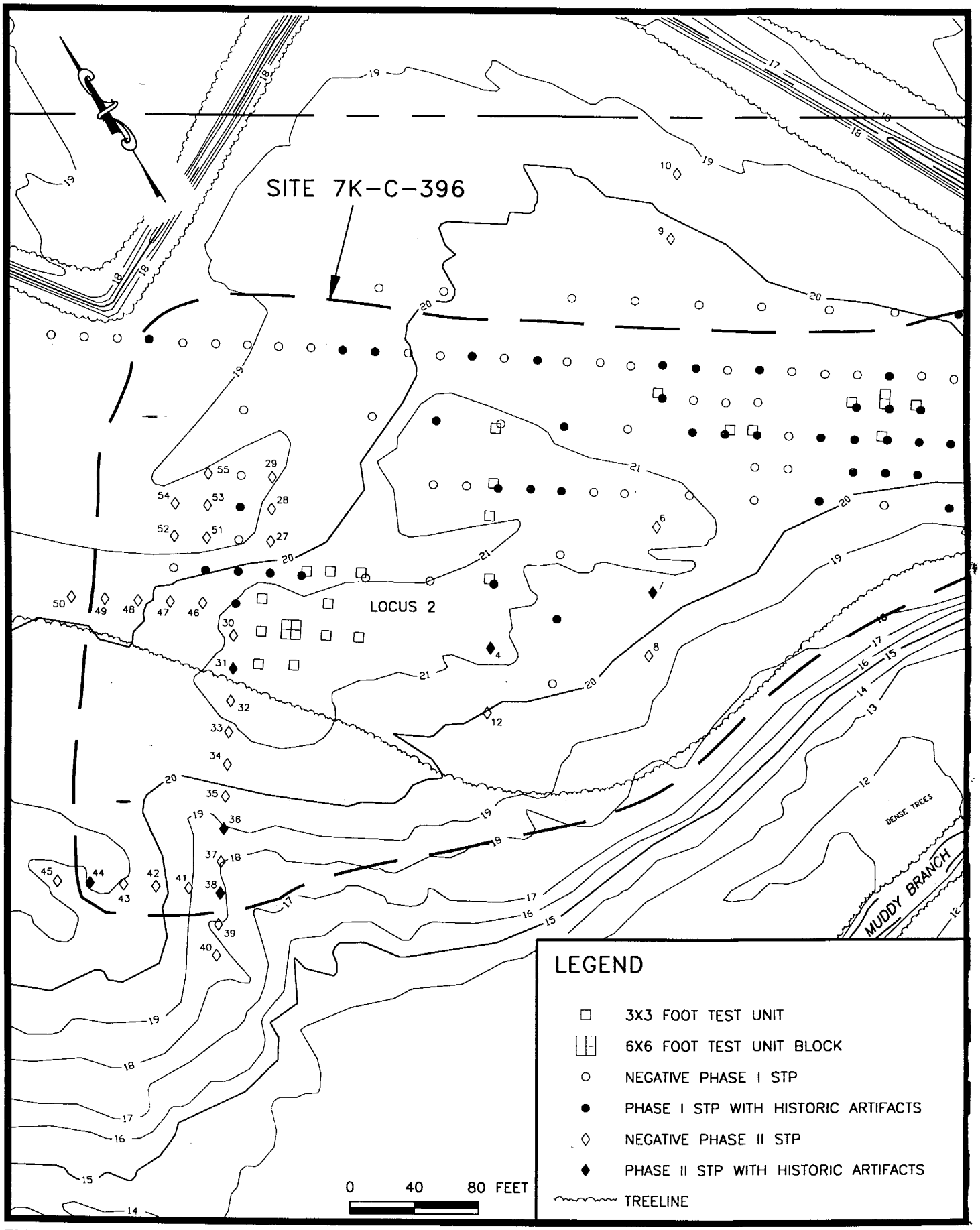



**FIGURE 16a: Plan of Site 7K-C-396, Showing Phase II Shovel Testing**

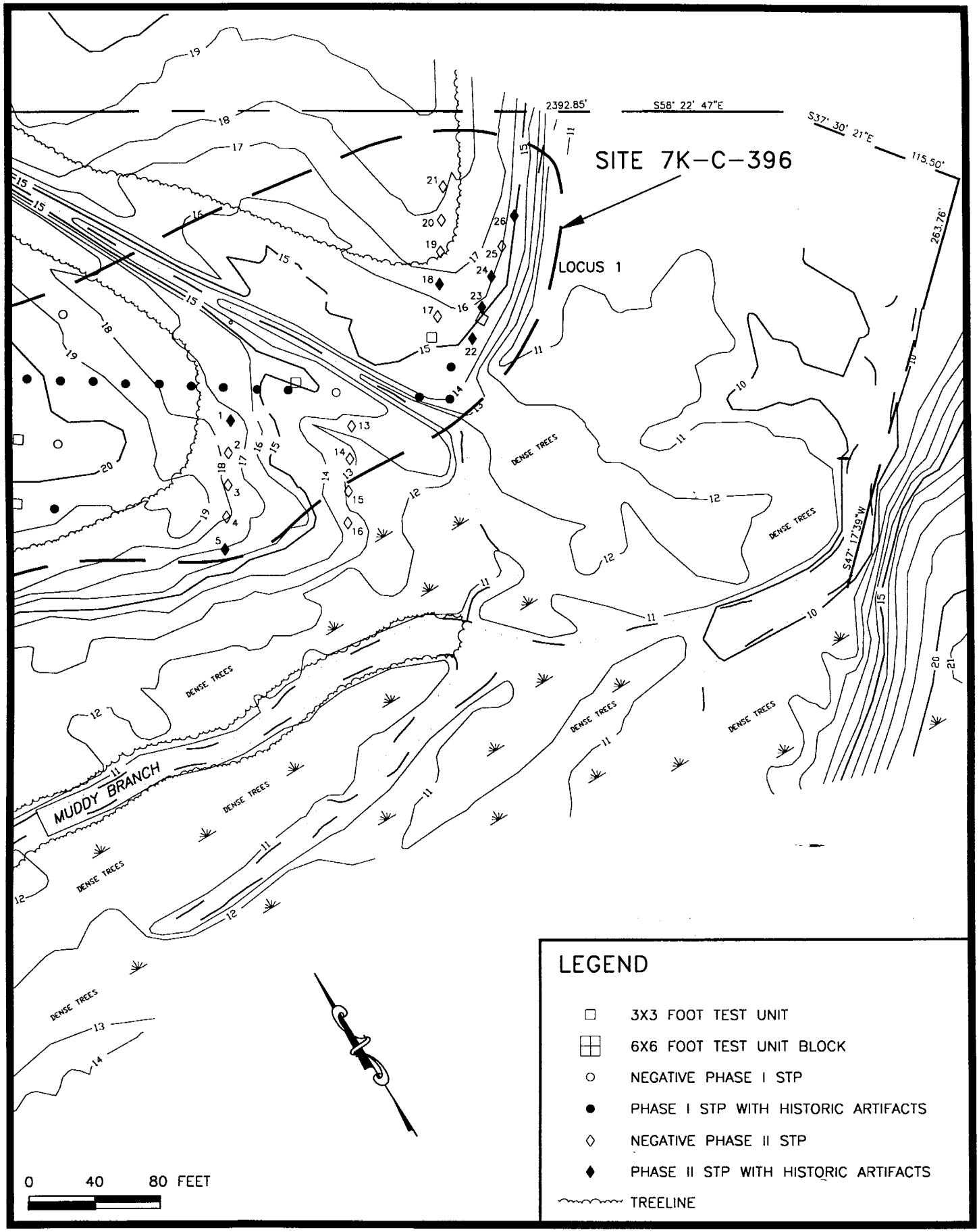



**FIGURE 16b: Plan of Site 7K-C-396, Showing Phase II Shovel Testing**

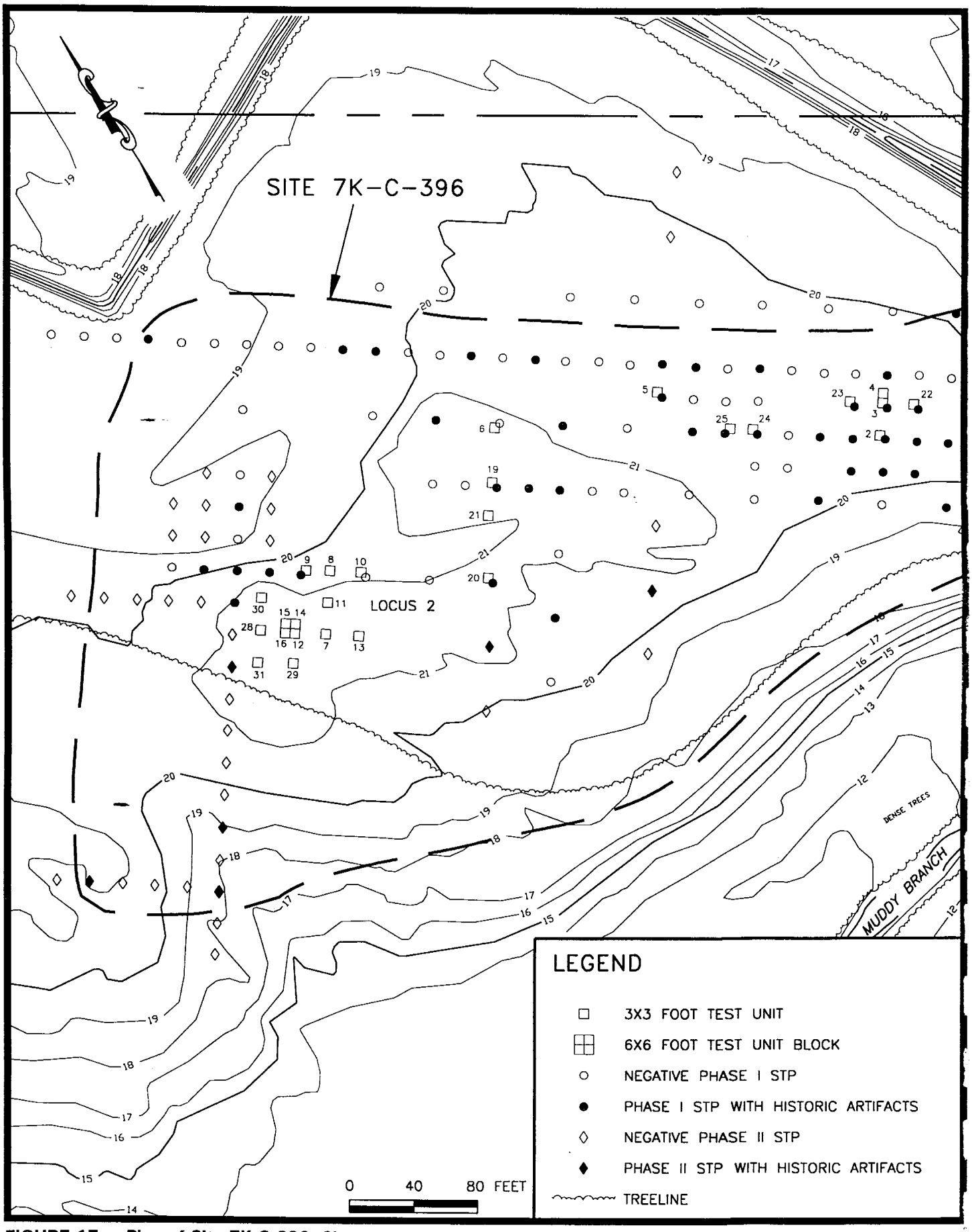



**FIGURE 17a: Plan of Site 7K-C-396, Showing Phase II Test Units**

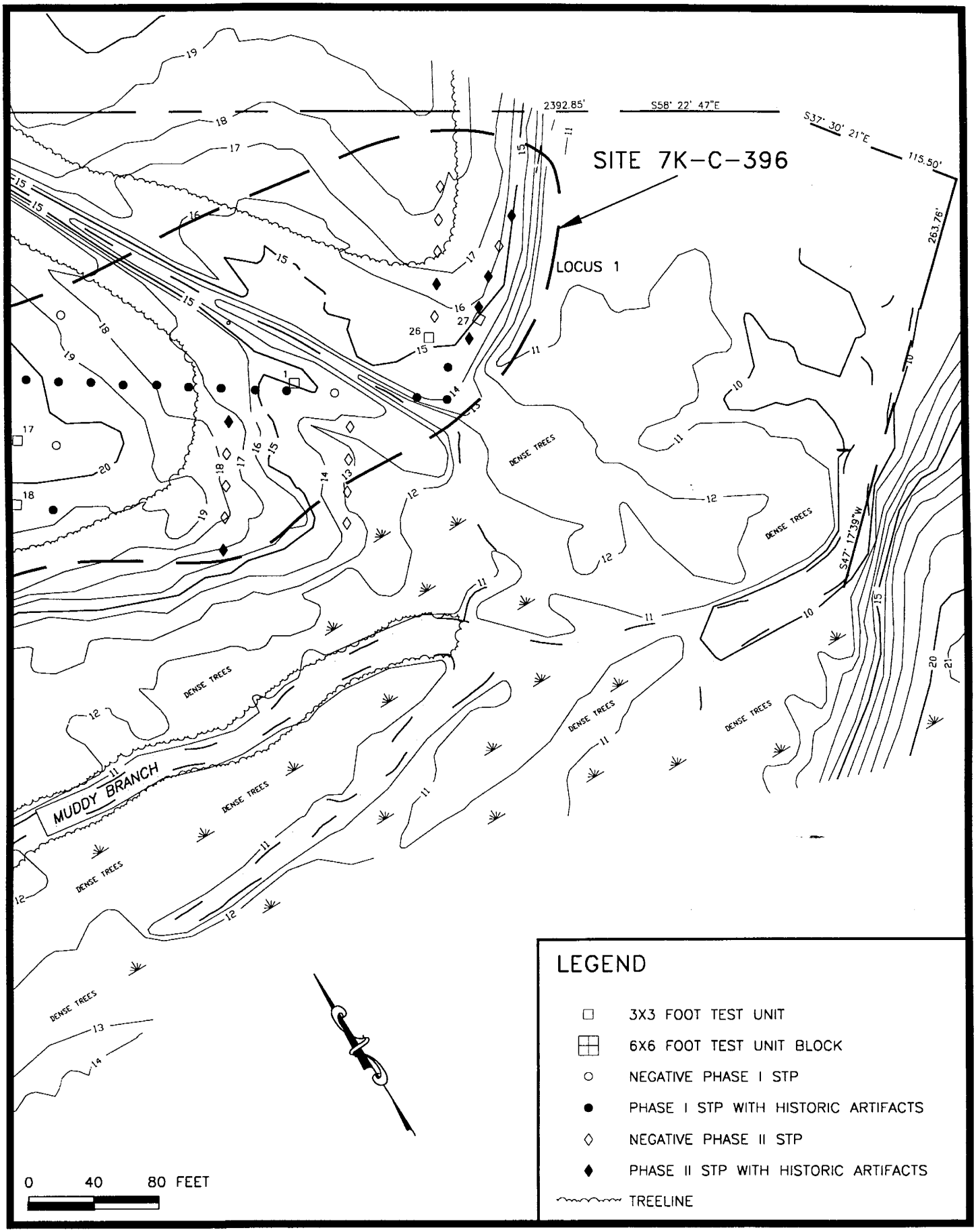



**FIGURE 17b: Plan of Site 7K-C-396, Showing Phase II Test Units**

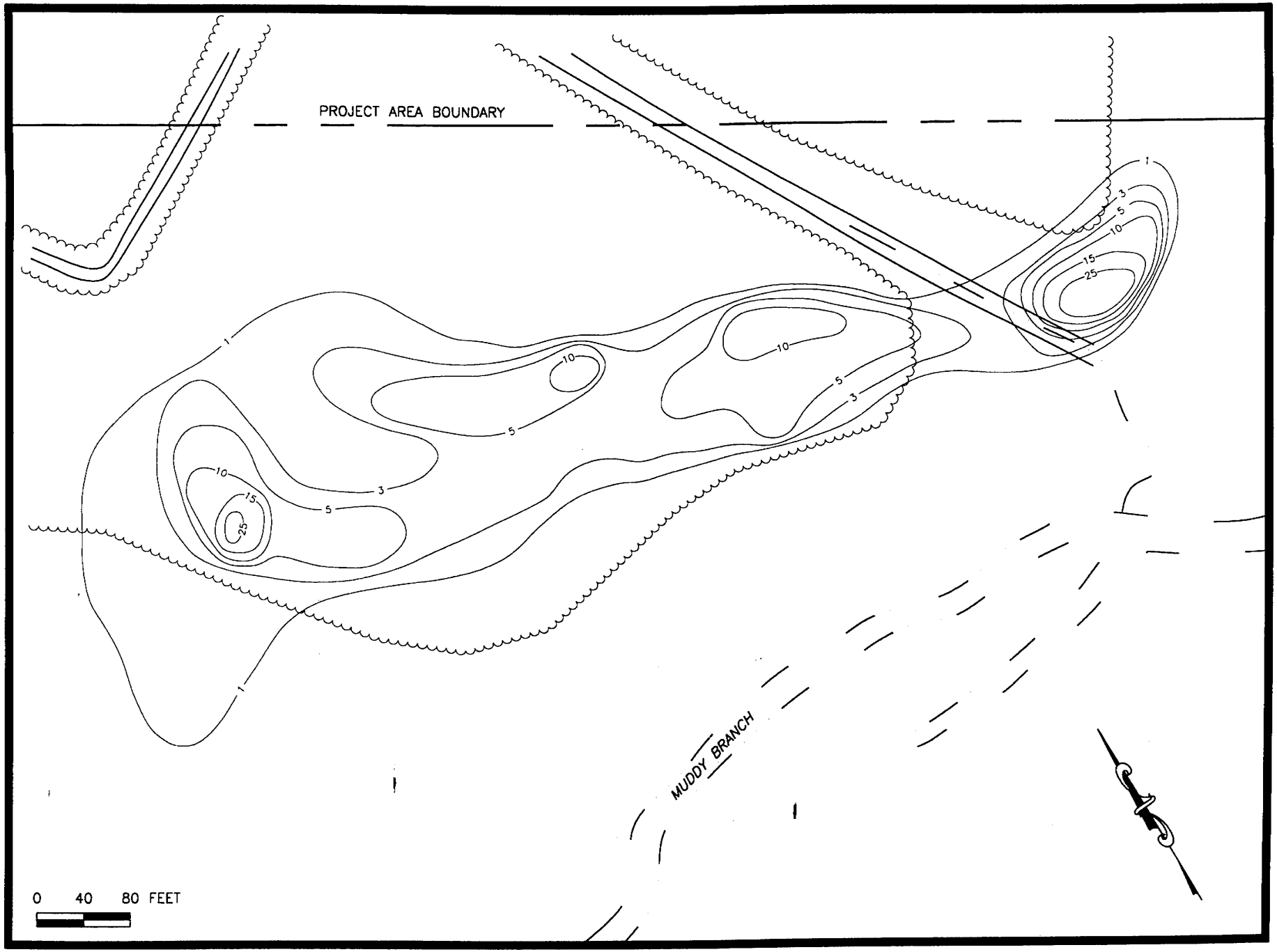



FIGURE 18: Prehistoric Artifact Distribution, Site 7K-C-396, Based on Test Unit Data

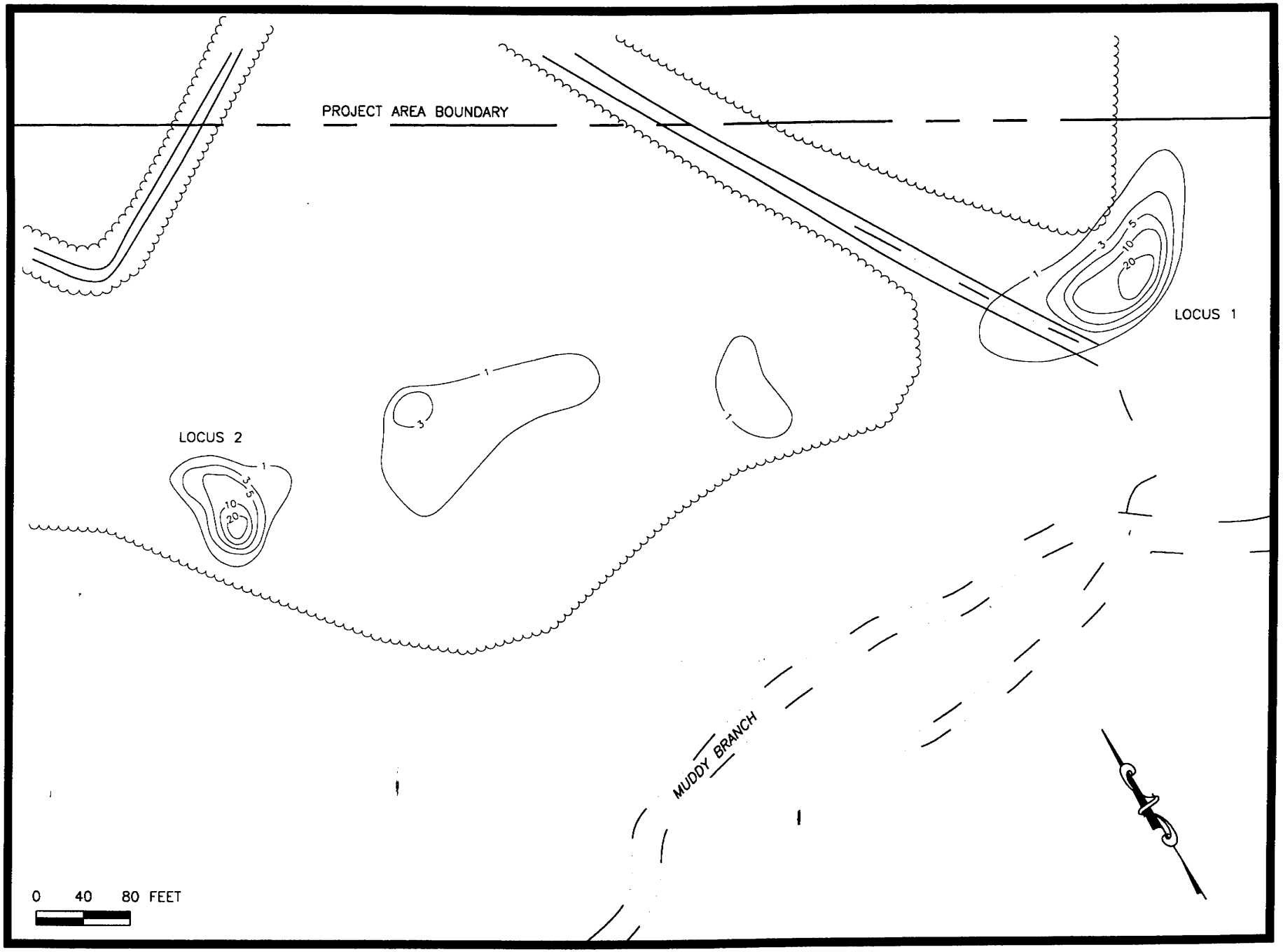



**FIGURE 19: Subplowzone Artifact Distribution, Site 7K-C-396, Based on Test Unit Data**

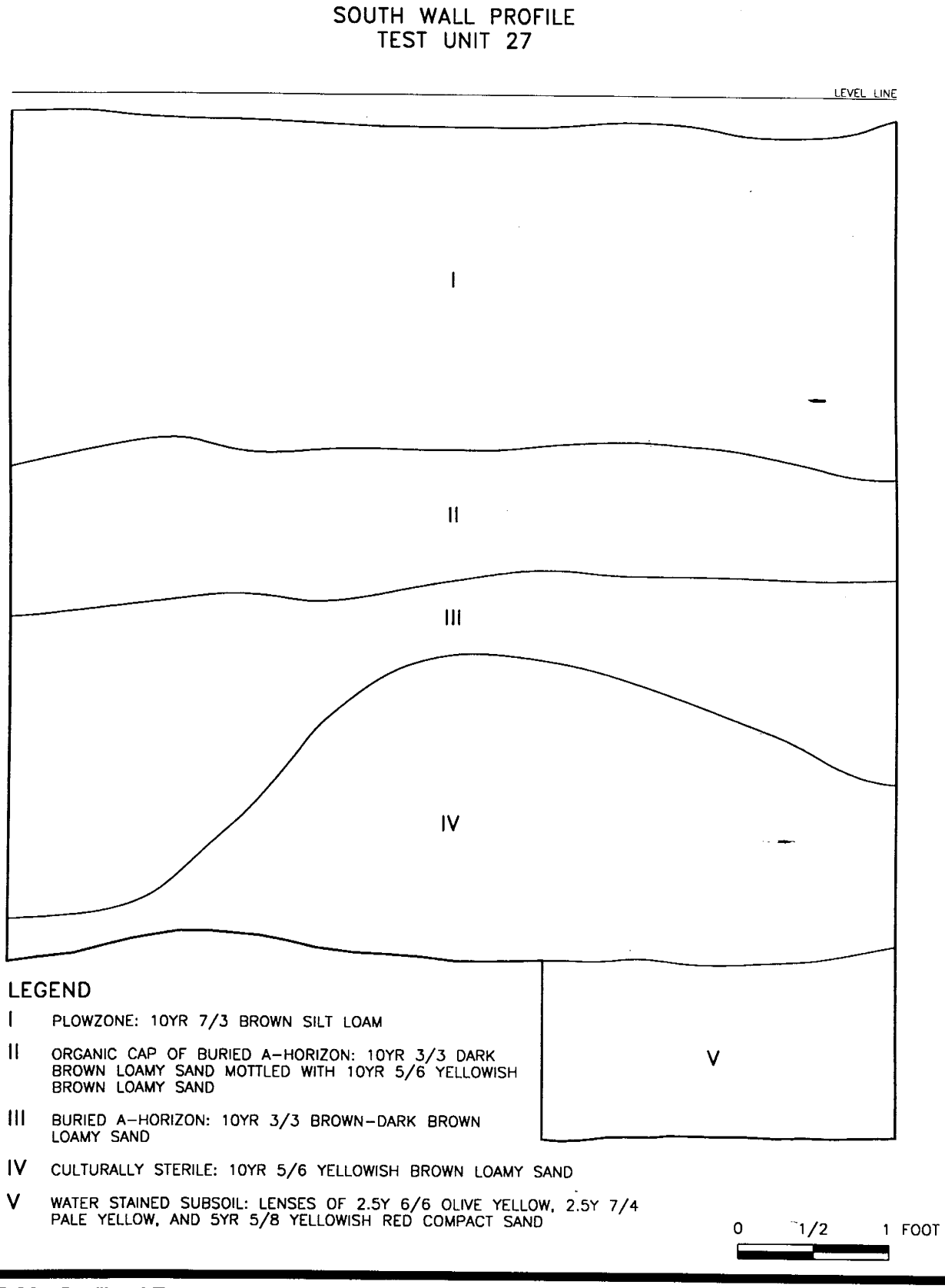



**FIGURE 20: Profile of Test Unit 27, Locus 1**

of prehistoric pottery tentatively identified as Minguannan ware. Phase II testing relocated this concentration. The densest part of the concentration was south of the drainage ditch, and density appeared to be increasing toward the east, out of the project area. In tests excavated adjacent to the bank overlooking the swamp along Muddy Branch, the bank that forms the southeastern boundary of the site, a buried A-horizon containing prehistoric pottery and debitage was discovered below the plowzone. This area containing intact, sealed deposits was designated Locus 1.

Three test units were excavated in the vicinity of Locus 1. These excavations produced an average of approximately 28 prehistoric artifacts per unit, significantly higher than in other areas of the site. Test Unit 1 was placed in the woods on the north side of the drainage ditch. The soil in this unit consisted of a thick accumulation of slopewash, with mixed historic and prehistoric artifacts, overlying a sterile subsoil. The low-lying, silty subsoil at the base of the unit profile revealed evidence of leaching, apparently the result of a fluctuating water table. Test Units 26 and 27 were placed on the south side of the drainage ditch, approximately 10 and 30 feet from the bank edge, respectively. In Test Unit 26 the plowzone yielded 6 pieces of debitage and 20 fragmentary pottery sherds. An additional 3 flakes were recovered from the first two arbitrary levels below the plowzone. No buried A-horizon was visible in this unit.

In Test Unit 27, located adjacent to the bank, prehistoric artifacts were recovered from the plowzone and from the first three levels below the plowzone (Figure 20). The most productive level in the unit, an organically rich buried A-horizon lying immediately beneath the plowzone, contained 12 sherds and a single jasper flake. The next undisturbed layer showed evidence of leaching organic material above yellowish brown sand, and contained an additional 10 sherds and 1 fragment of fire-cracked rock. The preserved A-horizon in Test Unit 27 was probably buried by slopewash and slump from higher on the slope.

Sixty-three of the 65 sherds of prehistoric ceramics recovered from 7K-C-396 were from Test Units 26 and 27. The majority of the sherds date to the Woodland II period (AD 1000 to 1500). The amount of debitage recovered, 12 pieces from Test Unit 26 and 8 from Test Unit 27, is higher than average for the site but not as great as the amount recovered from Locus 2. Because of the great difference in the artifacts recovered, Locus 1 either represents an occupation of a different period than that in Locus 2, or an area in which different activities were carried out. Since Locus 2 cannot be dated, no firm conclusion can be reached.

*Locus 2*

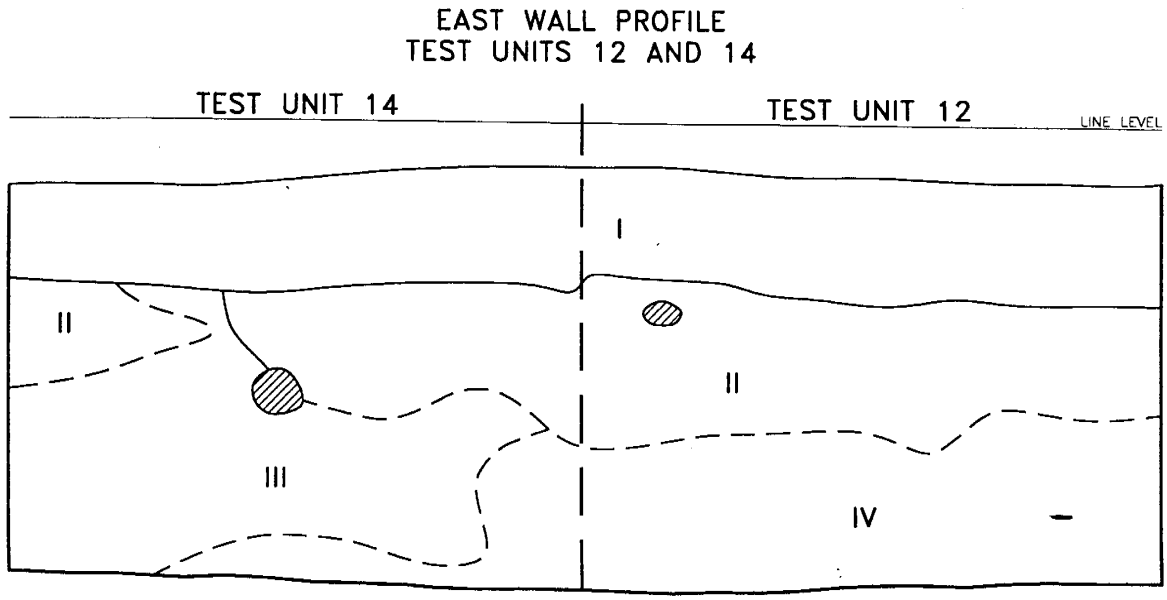
Locus 2 is at the northern end of the site on a well-drained knoll with an elevation of 21 feet at its highest point. In this area, prehistoric artifacts had been recovered from below the plowzone in three adjacent Phase I shovel tests. This concentration was investigated through the excavation of STPs 27 through 55 and Test Units 7 through 12, 14 through 16, and 28 through

31. This locus contained a high percentage of debitage. In the central portion of the locus, more material was recovered from below the plowzone than within it. The cultural stratum, which corresponded approximately to the first two 0.3-foot levels below the plowzone, was a light yellowish brown silt containing little organic material (Figure 21). The area of the buried deposits measures approximately 80x80 feet, although most of the artifacts were recovered from a smaller, high-density area measuring approximately 40x60 feet.

Within the highest-density portion of Locus 2, sampled in Test Units 12, 14, 15, and 16, an average of 42 artifacts per unit were recovered, compared to an average of 4 artifacts per unit in units not within Locus 1 or Locus 2. No diagnostic artifacts were recovered from Locus 2. The absence of ceramics and steatite bowl fragments suggests a pre-ceramic (Archaic or early Woodland I) date, but this is not certain. Locus 2 appears to be a stoneworking area, where there is no reason to assume that ceramic vessels would be used or broken, so the absence of ceramics does not rule out an occupation contemporary with the Woodland II occupation of Locus 1.

Since Locus 2 is situated on locally high ground, not subject to slopewash and too high above Muddy Branch for alluvial deposition, the cultural strata were probably buried by wind-blown soil (Foss et al. 1978; Stewart 1983). As there appears to be a correlation between artifact density and the extent to which artifacts were recovered from below the plowzone, especially in Locus 2, it is possible that the prehistoric occupation of the locus created the localized conditions which led to the burial of the site. For example, if the immediate vicinity of Locus 2 was denuded of vegetation during occupation, this may have enhanced aeolian reworking of the soil within the locus. Research in Delaware has indicated that significant aeolian activity, probably associated with long periods of dry climate, took place at the Pleistocene/Holocene boundary (ca. 8500 BC; Foss et al. 1978), in the middle Holocene (ca. 3000 BC; Curry 1980), and in recent times (ca. AD 1600; Ward and Bachman 1987; Custer et al. 1994). However, if reworking of the soils in Locus 2 was caused by human activity, it need not have been associated with these regional episodes. It is also possible that the inclusion of artifacts in the subsoil of Locus 2 was partly the result of root disturbance and treefalls.

Shovel tests were excavated to define the north edge of Locus 2, and the northwestern boundary of the site. The results of these tests indicated that the limits of both the site and the locus coincide with a gentle downward slope in those directions. To the north, STPs within an east-west swale show soil profiles with evidence of periodic saturation and poor drainage. These tests also demonstrate a marked decrease in artifact counts. To the northeast, prehistoric artifacts were recovered sporadically from the plowzone along the gently sloping ground north of Muddy Branch. Artifact density within these tests also represents a marked decrease from that within Locus 2.




LEGEND

I PLOWZONE: 10YR 4/3 BROWN LOAM

II SUBSOIL WITH PREHISTORIC ARTIFACTS: 10YR 5/4 YELLOWISH BROWN LOAM

III SUBSOIL, POSSIBLY TREE RELATED: 10YR 7/4 VERY PALE BROWN LOAMY SAND

IV STERILE SUBSOIL: 7.5YR 5/6 STRONG BROWN SANDY CLAY LOAM

ROOT STAINS

CLEAR TRANSITION

GRADUAL TRANSITION

0 1/2 1 FOOT

**FIGURE 21: Profile of Test Units 12 and 14, Locus 2**

Tests located in the central portion of the site, between Loci 1 and 2, revealed a relatively low density of prehistoric artifacts and only an occasional artifact from contexts below the plowzone. The subplowzone soil deposits in the central part of the site tended to be redder in color and clayier, and exhibited a greater degree of pedogenic development than soils in the loci with buried artifacts (Figure 22). Units were generally placed in areas where Phase I results indicated the presence of comparatively high artifact counts and/or artifacts from below the plowzone. Artifacts recovered from this area consisted primarily of lithic debitage and a small amount of prehistoric pottery. With the exception of a burned tree stain recorded in Test Units 3 and 4, no significant soil anomalies were observed on any portion of Site 7K-C-396.

## C. Artifact Analysis

*General*

A total of 387 prehistoric artifacts were recovered during the Phase II testing of Site 7K-C-396. These artifacts are listed in Table 7. The assemblage is dominated by 294 pieces of lithic debitage and 65 ceramic sherds. The only tools recovered were four small unifacial scrapers, commonly called "thumbnail" scrapers, and two retouched flakes. Two bifaces and three biface fragments were also recovered, but they could all have been unfinished. No formal projectile points were recovered from the site, although a point resembling the Brewerton side-notched type was recovered from Site 7K-C-394 nearby.

TABLE 7

PREHISTORIC ARTIFACTS FROM SITE 7K-C-396

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Middle Stage Biface | 7 | Cores |
| 1 | Early Stage Biface | 294 | Lithic Debitage |
| 3 | Biface Fragments | 65 | Ceramics |
| 2 | Utilized flakes | 10 | Fire-Cracked Rock |
| 4 | Unifacial ("Thumbnail") Scrapers | | |

As Figure 17 shows, the artifacts were not evenly distributed across the site. The large majority of the artifacts, 311 (or 81 percent) were recovered from Loci 1 and 2 (Tables 8 and 9). Artifact density per unit was 28 in Locus 1, 16 in Locus 2, and 4 in the remainder of the site. Even within the loci the variation was large. Fifty-five artifacts were recovered from Test Unit 16, but only 21 were recovered from Test Unit 12, which was adjacent to Test Unit 16, and only 3 from Test Unit 29 less than 20 feet away. Such disparity between adjacent units indicates that the artifact patterning has not been badly distorted by plowing, which tends to spread out the distribution and make it more even. The concentrations in Loci 1 and 2 represent actual prehistoric activity areas.

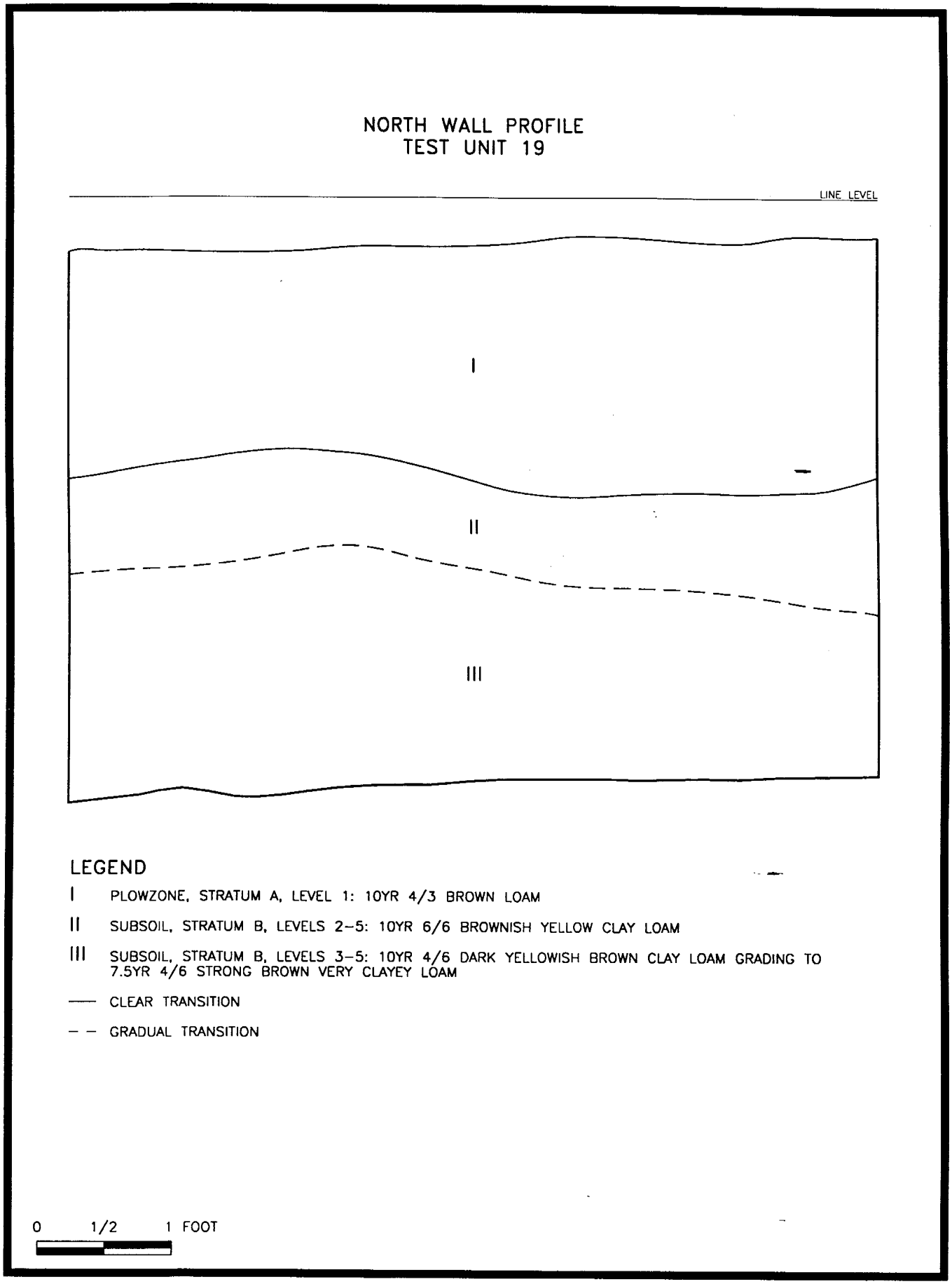



**FIGURE 22: Profile of Test Unit 19**

TABLE 8

PREHISTORIC ARTIFACTS FROM LOCUS 1, SITE 7K-C-396

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Biface Fragment | 63 | Ceramics |
| 20 | Lithic Debitage | 1 | Fire-Cracked Rock |

TABLE 9

PREHISTORIC ARTIFACTS FROM LOCUS 2, SITE 7K-C-396

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Middle-Stage Biface | 3 | Cores |
| 1 | Early-Stage Biface | 210 | Lithic Debitage |
| 1 | Biface Fragments | 6 | Fire-Cracked Rock |
| 4 | Unifacial ("Thumbnail") Scrapers | | |

*Lithics*

The stone artifacts from Site 7K-C-396 consist largely of debitage. Only a few tools were recovered, none of them diagnostic, as well as 7 cores and 10 pieces of fire-cracked rock. The lithic material on the site, mostly jasper, chert, and quartz, was derived from small cobbles. Such cobbles are readily available in central Delaware, including in Muddy Branch. The evidence suggests that one of the functions of the site, and of Locus 2 in particular, was as a stoneworking area in which locally available cobbles were fashioned into expedient tools (Custer 1987).

The five bifaces recovered from the site are listed in Table 10. None of the bifaces is diagnostic and, in fact, all of them may be unfinished. The material composition of the bifaces does not match that of the debitage; none is jasper, which makes up 46 percent of the debitage, and 2 are argillite, which makes up only 3 percent of the debitage. Although the sample is very small, it seems likely that the recovered bifaces do not represent the end product of the cobble processing that was taking place on the site. The bifaces were recovered from scattered contexts around the site, three from Locus 2. Although the bifaces are described as early or middle stage, this characterization does not mean that they were still undergoing manufacture or had not been used as tools. Blood residue and microwear analysis of early- and middle-stage bifaces from sites in northern Virginia (Petraglia et al. 1994) and the Maryland coastal plain (LBA 1991) showed that some of these items were employed as tools. It seems that only certain tasks required finished projectile points, and for others a rough biface was an acceptable tool. The presence of early- and middle-stage bifaces at Site 7K-C-396 does not indicate that biface manufacture was being carried out on the site.

TABLE 10

BIFACES FROM SITE 7K-C-396

| Description | Material | Context | Weight |
|---|---|---|---|
| Indeterminate Biface Fragment | Argillite | Test Unit 1<br>Stratum B, Level 2 | 3.7 g |
| Indeterminate Biface Fragment | Chert | Test Unit 15<br>Stratum A | 0.1 g |
| Early-Stage Biface | Chert | Test Unit 16<br>Stratum B, Level 3 | 5.3 g |
| Indeterminate Biface Fragment | Quartz | Test Unit 20<br>Stratum A | 13.2 g |
| Middle-Stage Biface | Argillite | Test Unit 29<br>Stratum A | 7.9 g |

The six unifaces recovered from the site are listed in Table 11. The unifaces are all chert or jasper, the two most common stones in the debitage. Four of the unifaces, all recovered from Locus 2, are formal tools, small endscrapers of a type commonly known as "thumbnail" scrapers (Plates 1 and 2). The production of these scrapers was probably one of the activities carried out in Locus 2. Such scrapers could have been used in many different activities, including scraping hides and processing plant foods. The other two unifaces are retouched flakes, one fashioned from a cortical flake 5 cm long.

TABLE 11

UNIFACES FROM SITE 7K-C-396

| Description | Material | Context | Weight |
|---|---|---|---|
| Endscraper | Jasper | Test Unit 12, Stratum B, Level 2 | 2.4 g |
| Endscraper | Jasper | Test Unit 14, Stratum B, Level 2 | 3.6 g |
| Endscraper | Chert | Test Unit 15, Stratum B, Level 2 | 2.2 g |
| Retouched Flake | Chert | Test Unit 24, Stratum A | 1.2 g |
| Endscraper | Jasper | Test Unit 28, Stratum A | 2.3 g |
| Retouched Cortical Flake | Chert | Surface | 31.1 g |

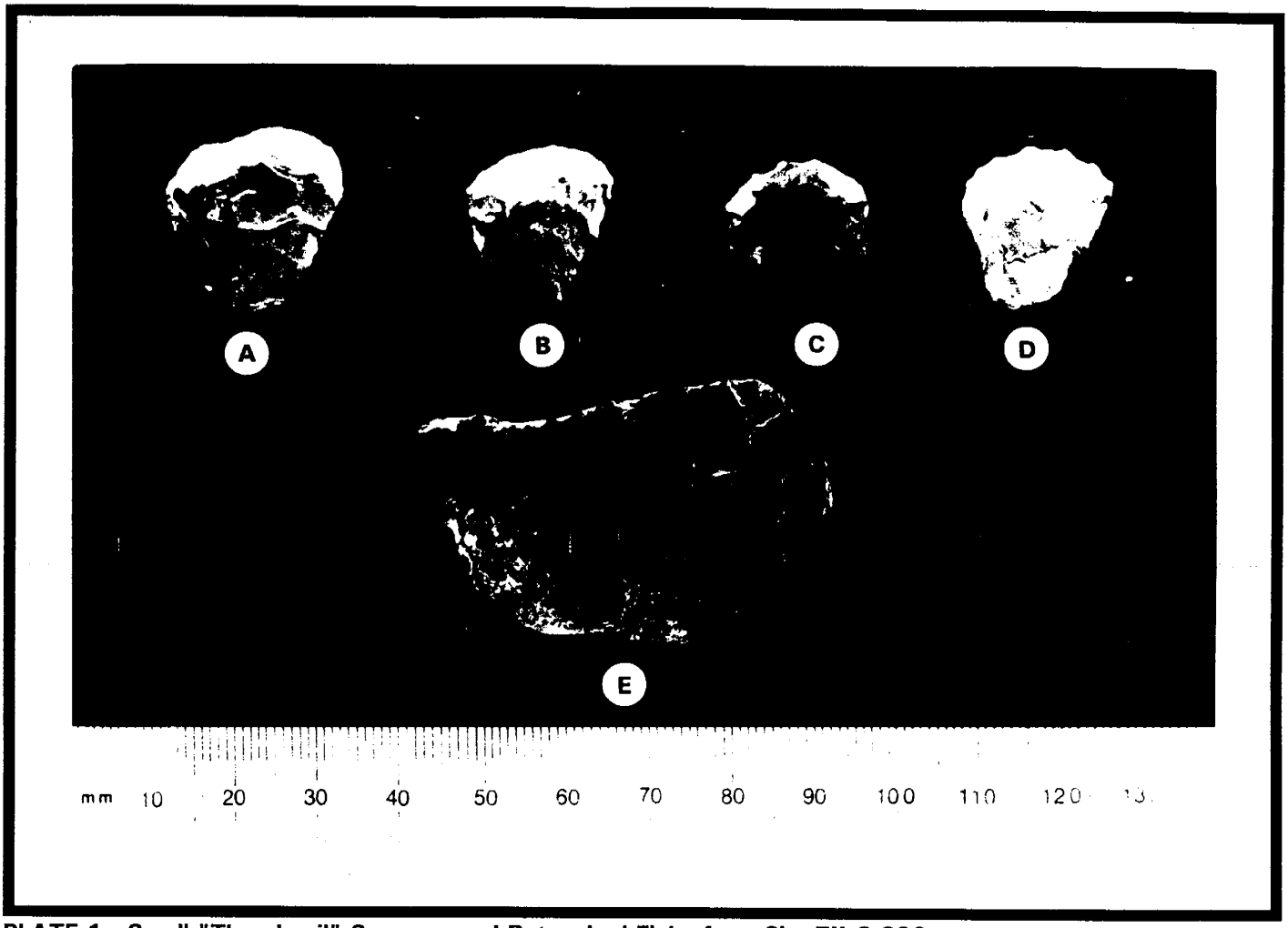



**PLATE 1: Small "Thumbnail" Scrapers and Retouched Flake from Site 7K-C-396**

- **A** Endscraper, Jasper (Cat. #32)
- **B** Endscraper, Jasper (Cat. #26)
- **C** Endscraper, Chert (Cat. #37)
- **D** Endscraper, Jasper (Cat. #74)
- **E** Retouched Flake, Chert (Cat. #112)

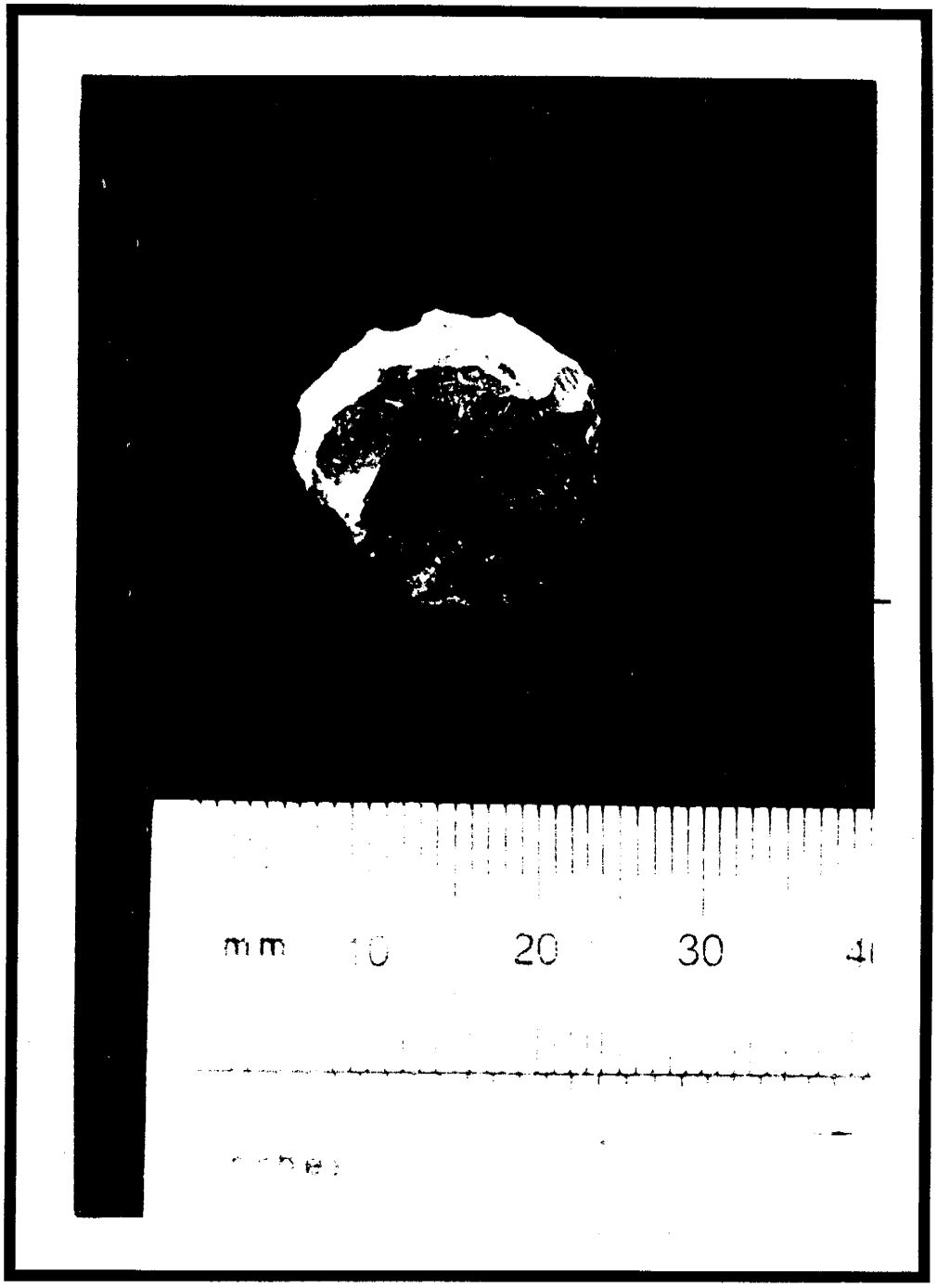



**PLATE 2: Detail of "Thumbnail" Scraper from Site 7K-C-396 (Cat. #37)**

The cores recovered from Site 7K-C-396 are listed in Table 12. Both bipolar and freehand cores were recovered, showing that both of these technologies were in use on the site. One of the cores was recovered from an intact stratum within Locus 1, indicating that cobble processing did take place in this part of the site. The cores were all quite small, from 0.7 to 14.8 grams, with a mean of 5.4 grams, showing that rather small cobbles were employed in the technology used on the site.

TABLE 12

CORES FROM SITE 7K-C-396

| Description | Material | Context | Weight |
|---|---|---|---|
| Bipolar Core | Jasper | Shovel Test Pit 11<br>Stratum A | 0.7 g |
| Bipolar Core | Quartz | Test Unit 9<br>Stratum A | 1.1 g |
| Bipolar Core | Chert | Test Unit 9<br>Stratum A | 2.1 g |
| Bipolar Core | Chalcedony | Test Unit 20<br>Stratum B, Level 2 | 0.7 g |
| Freehand Core | Quartz | Test Unit 25<br>Stratum B, Level 2 | 7.6 g |
| Freehand Core | Jasper | Test Unit 27<br>Stratum D | 13.1 g |
| Freehand Core | Chert | Test Unit 30<br>Stratum A | 14.8 g |

The largest category of artifacts recovered from Site 7K-C-396 was lithic debitage, with 294 pieces (Table 13). A large portion of the debitage, 109 out of 294 pieces, or 37 percent, had remnant cobble cortex. Cortex was noted on specimens of every type of stone in use at the site, including rhyolite and argillite, indicating that those stones were also derived from cobbles. The debitage consisted largely of jasper (135 pieces, 46%), chert (69 pieces, 23%) and quartz (60 pieces, 20%). The remainder of the assemblage consisted of rhyolite (14 pieces, 5%), argillite (8 pieces, 3%), quartzite (6 pieces, 2%) and two pieces of unidentified stone.

TABLE 13

LITHIC DEBITAGE FROM SITE 7K-C-396

| Description | Jasper | Chert | Quartz | Rhyolite | Argillite | Quartzite | Other |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Decortication Flake | 15 | 3 | 2 | 1 | | 1 | |
| Early Reduction Flake (w/cortex) | 24 | 6 | 6 | 1 | | 1 | |
| Early Reduction Flake | 28 | 14 | 10 | 3 | 2 | | 1 |
| Biface Reduction Flake | 14 | 7 | 3 | 2 | | | — |
| Flake Fragment | 24 | 26 | 15 | 2 | 5 | 2 | 1 |
| Flake Fragment (w/cortex) | 16 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 1 | | |
| Shatter | 5 | 5 | 14 | 1 | | 1 | |
| Shatter (w/cortex) | 9 | 5 | 9 | 2 | | 1 | |

Site 7K-C-396, and Locus 2 in particular, appears to have been a cobble-processing station (Plate 3). Cobbles and large pebbles were collected from bars in the stream and worked in at least two ways, by bipolar and freehand techniques (Stewart 1987). It seems unlikely that the cobbles were being processed into projectile points or other carefully finished tools. Only 26 bifacial reduction flakes were recovered, less than 9 percent of the total debitage. Although the use of ¼-inch screens limits the recovery of small thinning flakes, sites where projectile points were being produced usually produce far more than were recovered from 7K-C-396, and more early- and middle-stage bifaces (Ebright 1992; LBA 1991). It also seems unlikely that 7K-C-396 was the site of quarrying activity. The cobbles were not large, and the stone was of indifferent quality; such material is widely available in Delaware, and there was no need for prehistoric people to quarry such stone at 7K-C-396 for transport elsewhere. Also, no "turtle bifaces" or other quarry blanks were recovered during testing. Similar processing stations, based on local cobbles, are known from elsewhere in Delaware (Custer 1987).

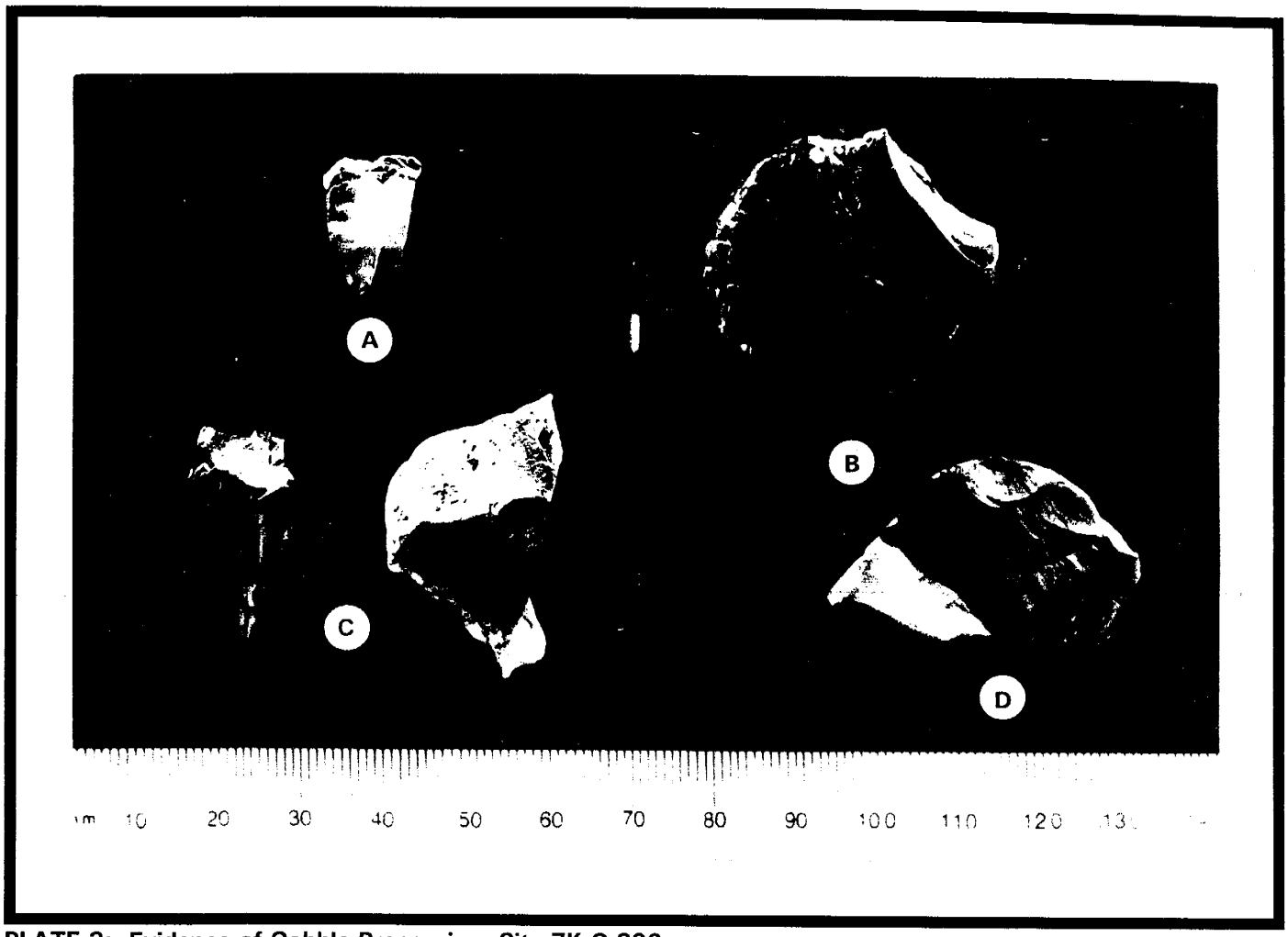



**PLATE 3: Evidence of Cobble Processing, Site 7K-C-396**

- **A** Bipolar Core, Chert (Cat. #22)
- **B** Freehand Core, Chert (Cat. #78)
- **C** Block Shatter, Jasper (Cat. #47, 33)
- **D** Decortification Flake (Cat. #98)

The evidence suggests that the stoneworking carried out at 7K-C-396 was directed toward the production of expedient tools for use in food-gathering activities that were the site's main purpose. People came to Muddy Branch to fish, hunt, or gather plants for food or basketry, and they used the local cobbles to make the flake tools and small scrapers they needed for this work (Flenniken 1981). The cobble tool industry at 7K-C-396 resembles the one studied by Riley, Watson, and Custer (1994) at Site 7K-C-360. At 7K-C-360, an Archaic and Woodland I site located only a mile away from 7K-C-396, local cobbles were processed into flake tools and small scrapers, but finished projectile points were not produced. Such an industry could have been carried out at any time from the beginning of the Archaic period to European contact.

*Ceramics*

Sixty-five sherds of prehistoric ceramics were recovered from Site 7K-C-396, all but two from Test Units 26 and 27 in Locus 1 (Plate 4). The sherds are listed in Table 14. The majority of the sherds are probably of two Woodland II varieties, quartz-tempered Minguannan and shell-tempered Townsend/Rappahannock. These later wares are distinguished from earlier varieties with the same tempers and range of surface treatments (Wolfe Neck and Mockley) by being generally thinner and more highly fired (Custer 1984; Egloff and Potter 1982; Griffith 1982). Minguannan ware, defined by Custer (1984), is very similar to ceramics called Potomac Creek in the Chesapeake region. Sherds were also recovered that fit into two earlier categories. One sherd of Coulbourn ware, a variety tempered with clay nodules and dating to 400 BC to AD 200, was recovered. Two thick sherds tempered with quartz and mica were recovered, probably Hell Island ware, dated to AD 600 to 900 (Thomas 1966). One sherd was recovered with a large chunk of rhyolite in the paste. Use of this technique is very rare in Delaware, where rhyolite is not common, but it is well known from the Clemson Island cultures of the Upper Delaware and Susquehanna valleys. Sherds identified as Clemson Island ware have been recovered from the Leipsic Site (Custer et al. 1994), only a few miles north of 7K-C-396, so there is some precedent for ceramic connections between central Delaware and central Pennsylvania. None of the sherds recovered was large enough to speculate on the dimensions or shape of the vessels, and no rim sherds were found. Several sherds with coarse sand temper were recovered, but they were all too small and too heavily eroded to be assigned to a ware type.

The majority of the sherds recovered were too worn to speculate on the surface treatment of the vessels. One sherd of Townsend/Rappahannock ware was recovered that is incised with a herringbone pattern. According to Griffith (1977), this design element was most common in the early Woodland II period, circa AD 1000 to 1200. The other sherds with identifiable surface treatments were either smooth or cordmarked, both very common techniques used over very long time periods.

TABLE 14

PREHISTORIC CERAMICS FROM SITE 7K-C-396

| Number | Temper | Surface Treatment | Ware Type |
|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | Quartz | Cordmarked | Minguannan |
| 7 | Quartz | Plain/Smoothed | Minguannan |
| 26 | Quartz | Indeterminate | Minguannan |
| 1 | Quartz and Rhyolite | Cordmarked | |
| 1 | Shell | Incised | Rappahannock Incised |
| 3 | Shell | Plain/Smooth | Rappahannock |
| 3 | Shell | Cordmarked | Townsend |
| 4 | Shell | Indeterminate | Townsend |
| 1 | Clay | Indeterminate | Coulbourn |
| 2 | Quartz and Mica | Cordmarked | Hell Island |
| 7 | Coarse Sand | Indeterminate | |
| 1 | Quartz and Sand | Indeterminate | |
| 1 | Quartz and Shell | Indeterminate | |
| 3 | Quartz, Sand, and Shell | Cordmarked | |

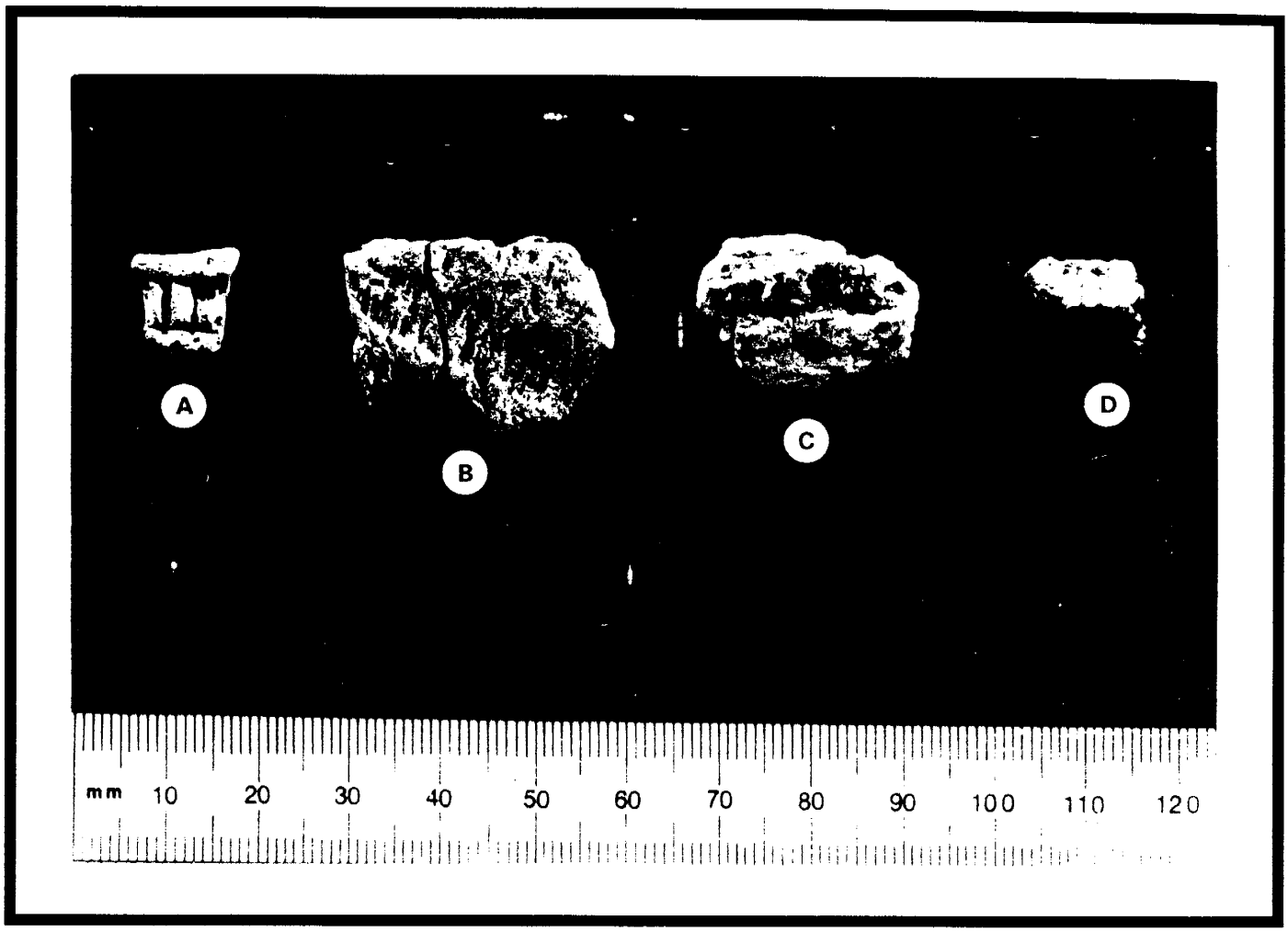



**PLATE 4: Prehistoric Ceramics, Site 7K-C-396**

- A Rappahannock Incised Sherd (Cat. #71)
- B Townsend Cord-marked Sherd (Cat. #70)
- C Minguannan Cord-marked Sherd (Cat. #80)
- D Hell Island Cord-marked Sherd (Cat. #71)

## B. Site 7K-C-396

Site 7K-C-396 is a prehistoric site with two major loci of activity. Buried cultural deposits are present in both loci. In Locus 1, an intact A-horizon has been buried under slopewash. This buried soil contains a ceramic concentration dating to the Woodland II period, probably representing a gathering camp or procurement station used by the prehistoric inhabitants while they gathered and hunted in the wetlands along Muddy Branch. In Locus 2, lithic debitage derived from the processing of local cobbles into flake tools and small scrapers has been buried by windborne soil or become incorporated into the subsoil by bioturbation or aeolian reworking. The area between the two loci contained artifacts within and below the plowzone, but in substantially lower quantities. Both Loci of Site 7K-C-396 probably represent what Custer (1984, 1994) calls procurement stations, places where prehistoric peoples camped while gathering food in the adjacent wetlands.

The intact A-horizon in Locus 1 dates to the Woodland II or Late Woodland period (AD 1000 to 1600). The few anomalous potsherds, representing types diagnostic of earlier periods, are not sufficient to indicate substantial use of the site before AD 1000. The A-horizon contains substantial quantities of pottery, as well as organic material. The soil has no doubt been disturbed by bioturbation and land clearing but retains substantial integrity. Larger potsherds and even reconstructible vessels are likely to be present in such intact soils, and organic remains such as charred seeds may be present. This intact deposit represents an excellent opportunity to examine the food-gathering and processing activities of one group of prehistoric people.

No diagnostic artifacts were recovered from Locus 2. Both within and below the plowzone, the artifacts in the locus consisted of small endscrapers and debitage derived from the processing of local cobbles. The subplowzone deposits in Locus 2 consist of yellowish brown silt probably deposited through aeolian activity. The subplowzone artifacts were buried by blowing soil, or became incorporated in the loess stratum through some combination of human activity, aeolian processes, and bioturbation. In any case, the locus does retain considerable integrity. No historic artifacts were recovered from the subplowzone strata, and the prehistoric artifacts were very consistent. The locus most likely represents occupation during a single period of prehistory. Locus 2 was not a separate lithic processing station, but part of a gathering camp; the tools made there were for immediate use in gathering or butchering activities.

Site 7K-C-396 is considered eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion D. The site can contribute to our knowledge of regional prehistory, particularly in the areas of subsistence, chronology, and lithic and ceramic technology (Custer 1986, 1994). Because of the preservation of two unplowed artifact concentrations, both probably representing single periods of prehistory, the site's artifacts can be analyzed as the remains of particular prehistoric groups. These occupations can probably be closely dated through a combination of artifact analysis and C-14 dating. The artifacts themselves, residues present on them, and organic