

ABSTRACT

The Phase II cultural resource survey of all prehistoric sites within the Early Action Segment of the State Route 1 Relief Route, which covers 17.0 miles of proposed right-of-way between Dover and Smyrna, Delaware, was conducted between September 1987 and February 1990. A total of 32 prehistoric archaeological sites ranging from the Paleo-Indian Period (ca. 12,000-6500 B.C.) through the Woodland II Period (ca. 1000-1650 A.D.) located within the proposed right-of-way were tested during the survey. Phase II testing was undertaken to determine the sites' limits, significance, and eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places.

Blood residue, flake attribute and flotation analyses conducted on artifacts recovered in Phase II excavations helped to illuminate the activities engaged at various sites in the project area, the lithic technologies of the sites' occupants, and the possible roles of these sites in local and regional settlement patterns. Specific information gleaned from these analyses includes evidence of the significant use of secondary source lithic materials for the manufacture of expedient tools and tools to supplement curated kits. In addition, it was learned that a relationship can be demonstrated between flake size and a site's proximity to a quarry source. It is further anticipated that this type of analysis, among other applications, has the potential to help define site function, particularly with regard to quarry-related sites.

Several site types were tentatively identified in the Phase II testing that will help to better define the settlement system in central Delaware through time. Macro- and micro-band base camps, procurement sites, and staging/processing camps are indicated, including a couple of sites situated in close proximity to bay/basins which generate hypotheses regarding the roles of these natural features in strategies of prehistoric cultural adaptation.

Three of the sites that may be adversely affected by the proposed project were determined to be eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. These sites are the Dover Downs site (7K-C-365A; K-06388), Site 7K-C-360 (K-06383), and the Leipsic site (7K-C-194A; K-06024). Excavations at Dover Downs produced diagnostic artifacts from all four periods of prehistory (Paleo-Indian to Woodland II). The artifact types and their distributions suggest that the site functioned as a staging/processing locus where butchering/processing activities took place in conjunction with tool manufacture, tool maintenance, and other activities. Site 7K-C-360 appears to have served in a similar capacity during the Archaic and Woodland I periods. These sites offer an opportunity for systematic investigation into the organization of lithic technologies and settlement/subsistence systems in the Mid-Drainage Zone of central Delaware during the full span of prehistory. The Leipsic site appears to be a large base camp and offers an opportunity to study intrasite patterning and to gain insights into the general conduct of life in central Delaware during the Woodland I and Woodland II periods. This intensive research can provide much needed data on prehistoric populations occupying the Peninsula between the pre-ceramic broadpoint using peoples and the later Woodland I cultures. Further work is recommended at these sites if they cannot be avoided. Twenty-nine sites that may be adversely affected were determined not to be eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.