

## ABSTRACT

A complete Phase I archaeological survey, including background research, geomorphology, and field investigations, has been completed for the Delaware Department of Transportation's (DelDOT) proposed State Route (S.R.) 24 Improvements, S.R. 1 to Love Creek and Holly Lake Road to Oak Orchard Road project located in Rehoboth and Indian River hundreds, Sussex County, Delaware. The project Area of Potential Effect (APE) is located on the Fairmount and Frankfort, Delaware 7.5 minute United States Geological Survey (USGS) topographic quadrangles, in the Eastern Shore Coastal Plain physiographic province.

The archaeological APE consists of two discrete segments of roadway corridor and stormwater management areas. The northern S.R. 1 to Love Creek roadway segment measures approximately 25.9 m (85.0 ft) in width and 4.0 km (2.5 mi) in length, and follows the existing S.R. 24 alignment. The southern Holly Lake Road to Oak Orchard Road segment measures approximately 25.9 m (85.0 ft) in width and 5.2 km (3.2 mi) in length, and follows the existing S.R. 24 alignment. The stormwater management areas and drainage easements total approximately 4.19 ha (10.35 ac). Background and geomorphological research identified 29 areas within the archaeological APE that retain intact soils of appropriate age to contain pre-contact archaeological resources, and historic documents indicated that there was the potential for historic archaeological resources.

Each of the test areas was surveyed *via* hand excavated shovel test pits (STPs). A total of 734 STPs was used to fully survey the S.R. 24 Improvements archaeological APE. Individual STPs were spaced along transects and grids at 15.0 m (49.2 ft) intervals. Retest STPs were emplaced at 7.5 m (24.6 ft) intervals surrounding culturally positive STPs in order to delineate the extent of the artifact distribution. STPs were excavated in natural stratigraphic levels to culturally sterile subsoil, and all fill that was removed from the STPs was screened in order to recover any cultural materials which might be present.

The S.R. 24 Improvements Phase I archaeological survey yielded 11 historic period artifacts (ceramic, brick, metal), all but one (a nail) of which are not functionally diagnostic due to their small size and incomplete form, and are not temporally diagnostic due to their lengthy manufacturing and use periods. All except one of the artifacts were recovered from the upper levels of the plowzone, indicating that they could be modern and/or are from mixed stratigraphic contexts. None of the artifacts is associated with any historic structures or features. The artifacts are indicative of general residential/domestic and agricultural/rural land use and/or litter and do not contribute significant information about the specific land-use history within the archaeological APE; therefore, no additional archaeological research within the S.R. 24 Improvements archaeological APE is warranted.