

2.0 METHODS

2.1 Background Research

Prior to the initiation of the geomorphological and archaeological fieldwork, background research was conducted. Background research for the project included the examination of the Delaware archaeological site files, the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) files, the historic resources inventory files, reports documenting previously conducted cultural resource studies, relevant state-wide historic contexts, and historic as-built roadway plans housed at the Delaware State Historic Preservation and DelDOT offices. In addition, information about the history of the archaeological APE was provided during informal interviews with local informants.

2.2 Fieldwork

The School Bell Road Improvements project Phase I fieldwork was conducted in two stages. The first stage was a geomorphological reconnaissance of the archaeological APE in order to assess the nature of the landforms and soils within it, and to determine if appropriate areas existed for the implementation of Phase I archaeological survey procedures. Geomorphological investigations included the examination of the soils/sediments contained in the project APE, *via* expedient hand excavated auger borings, in order to determine the presence or absence of *in situ* soils, slope, microrelief, the depth of potential cultural deposits, and any areas of modern disturbances which would preclude the preservation of buried archaeological resources. Areas with less than 15 percent slope, no obvious disturbances (e.g., cut and fill or grading operations, below-ground utility installation), and relatively intact, well-drained soil horizons were chosen as appropriate locations for Phase I archaeological fieldwork. The results of the geomorphological investigations and recommendations for Phase I survey were presented in a report previously submitted by Skelly and Loy, Inc. to DelDOT and the Delaware SHPO (Gundy *et al.* 2003).

Phase I archaeological field procedures consisted of a visual examination of the entire archaeological APE, followed by subsurface testing of the six test areas delineated during the geomorphological reconnaissance. The Phase I archaeological survey was accomplished February 2-3, 2004 and March 7-11, 2004. Totals of 161 shovel test pits (STPs) and two 1.0 x 1.0 m (3.3 x 3.3 ft) test units were used during the survey. STPs were spaced at 15.0 m (49.2

ft) intervals along transects within each test area. Radial retest STPs were emplaced at 5.0 m (16.4 ft) intervals around culturally positive STPs. The two test units were judgmentally emplaced in areas where pre-contact period artifacts were present. All of the STPs and test units were excavated by arbitrary 10.0 cm (3.9 in) levels within natural strata to a minimum depth of 10.0 cm (3.9 in) into the culturally sterile subsoil. The A/B soil horizon interface represents the Holocene/Pleistocene boundary below which no cultural resources should be present. All of the sediments recovered from each STP and test unit were screened through 0.64 cm (0.25 in) mesh hardware cloth. Information regarding the soil texture and color, depth of any cultural materials recovered, and any soil disturbance was recorded on Skelly and Loy's standard excavation forms. Daily field notes and STP excavation information were kept by the field director. Field data were recorded on standardized field forms and were supplemented with notes made on the project maps, as warranted. The fieldwork was documented *via* 35 mm and some digital photography.

2.3 Laboratory

Recovered artifacts were transported to Skelly and Loy's laboratory in Monroeville, Pennsylvania, where they were processed. Once in the laboratory, all recovered artifacts were recorded, washed/dry brushed, sorted by class, labeled, and re-bagged. Each recovered artifact was individually examined and described. Artifacts were first divided into major categories according to material type, and then further subdivided into more specific functional or typological categories within each type. Artifacts were prepared for curation at the Delaware State Museum according to their guidelines (Delaware SHPO 2001). Provenience information and an artifact catalog are included as Appendix A. The Phase I survey of the School Bell Road Improvements project archaeological APE yielded pre-contact period artifacts.

2.4 Curation

The School Bell Road Improvements project Phase I survey materials, including field notes, maps, photographs, and artifacts, are being temporarily stored at Skelly and Loy's Monroeville, Pennsylvania facility. Permanent curation of the project materials will be with Delaware State Museums.