

6.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Phase I archaeological investigations throughout the Choptank Road/SR 15 Improvement Project alignment were conducted between the winter of 2001 and the spring of 2005, and involved the investigation of 42 proposed areas of impact; this total includes proposed roadside test areas, water detention basins, drainage areas, and the school drive location. The Phase I testing regimen consisted of a combined methodology relying primarily on subsurface investigation (through the placement of regularly-spaced STPs) and was supplemented by intensive surface inspection where permitted by conditions at the time of survey. This resulted in the identification of fifteen previously unknown sites and the supplementing of data relevant to a previously identified site. Of these fifteen cultural resource areas, two are representative of prehistoric use, four are predominantly historical in nature, and the remaining eight contain both prehistoric and historical components.

The Phase I survey at the proposed School Drive, situated at the very southern extent of the Choptank Road Improvement Project, resulted in the collection of a narrow array of non-diagnostic prehistoric lithic artifacts and three fragments of historical cultural material. The overwhelming majority of material was removed from the plow zone stratum, and was distributed throughout the overall test area. The registration of this site in the files of the DE HCA is required, based upon the criteria for prehistoric sites as defined by the DE SHPO *Guidelines*, however the compromised nature of the archaeological deposits due to previous agricultural activities would appear to preclude further archaeological investigation in the School test area. Therefore, KSK does not recommend any additional Phase II testing for eligibility of this site for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. Registration of this site in the DE HCA files will be accomplished prior to submission of the final version of the Choptank Road/SR 15 Improvement Project Phase I/II report, and the relevant site information included in the final document.

Phase II archaeological testing of ten sites/loci (7NC-F-76, 7NC-F-92, 7NC-F-94, 7NC-F-97, 7NC-F-98, 7NC-F-99/Locus 2, 7NC-F-99/Locus 3, 7NC-F-99/Locus 4, 7NC-F-100, 7NC-F-102) within the Choptank Road Improvement Project area required the excavation of the equivalent of 31 five by five-foot EU's and produced highly variable quantities of archaeological materials. The artifact assemblage collected during the Phase II investigation consists of a combined universe totaling 8,507 artifacts; this assemblage includes a wide variety of prehistoric and historical materials and artifact classes.

Excavation at six of the ten sites/loci (7NC-F-76, 7NC-F-97, 7NC-F-98, 7NC-F-99/Locus 2, 7NC-F-99/Locus 3, 7NC-F-102) that were investigated during this current Phase II study produced relatively limited quantities of cultural material from both within and below the omnipresent plow zone, and resulted in the identification of few features. Post holes, in all likelihood associated with historical and/or modern agricultural practices, predominate the feature assemblage. Two of the sites (7NC-F-92 and 7NC-F-99/Locus 4) subjected to Phase II subsurface investigation produced more complex artifact assemblages and contained relatively intact sub-plow zone features, while the remaining two sites (7NC-F-94 and 7NC-F-100) explored during this portion of the Choptank Road improvement project exhibit substantial artifact presence, good sub-plow zone integrity, and contain several predominantly undisturbed features. As such, these latter two sites are considered eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places (NR), with further rationale behind this assessment addressed below.

6.1 Ineligible Sites

7NC-F-76

Initially identified by representatives of the DE HCA during an informal surface inspection of the site area concurrent with the construction of the Back Creek Golf Course, this prehistoric occupation is located on and adjacent to the southern banks of Back Creek at its crossing of Choptank Road. Results of Phase I shovel testing served to extend the previously identified boundaries of the site to the south, with subsequent Phase II investigations at 7NC-F-76 consisting of a single excavation unit within the small concentration of prehistoric artifacts identified during KSK's subsurface survey. This excavation unit, although exhibiting a relatively unimpacted soil profile considering its proximity to the visibly reworked topography of the adjacent golf course, did not produce evidence of subsurface features or undisturbed artifact deposits. The few prehistoric artifacts collected from the plow zone of this unit appear to be indicative of an ephemeral artifact presence contained within this portion of 7NC-F-76. Although it is possible that additional evidence of a more substantial prehistoric occupation of this site is present in other portions of the landform, the results of the current archaeological investigation do not suggest these conditions are present within the present Choptank Road improvement project LOC. The sparse artifact presence, inability to identify the appropriate cultural period through diagnostic artifacts, and the lack of features within the tested site area detract from this site's potential eligibility for nomination to the NR.

7NC-F-92

Feature 1, identified on site 7NC-F-92, consists of a wide, deep subsurface disturbance containing quantities of a dense, gray-green sedimentary stone. According to Dr. Kelvin Ramsey of the DE Geological Survey, who examined a sample derived from this pit feature, the stone is not native to Delaware but instead occurs in the Ridge and Valley Province of Pennsylvania and Maryland. Although some of the material appears to have been modified using accepted prehistoric lithic reduction technology, this feature also contains several extremely large, unbroken cobbles of the same material weighing in excess of 20 pounds. Laboratory analysis of this material assemblage included lithic refit efforts, in an attempt to identify the lithic deposition sequence, inferred through the dispersal of the material within the feature matrix. Additional information sought from the refit process is a determination of the extent of lithic debitage retention within the feature, contrasted with the possible removal of individual lithic fragments for use elsewhere. Results of the refit process indicate several cores were subjected to reduction and at least a portion of the resultant debitage deposited within the feature in conjunction with the cores.

Samples were taken of examples of carbon flecking from within the feature, but they have not, at the time of the submission of this draft report, been subjected to a radiocarbon age determination. Local landowners and individuals familiar with nineteenth-century vernacular architecture in the vicinity of the project area were interviewed to determine if anyone had seen such stone being used for fireplaces, fenestration, or other architectural details, however no new information was obtained from the interviews. Therefore, this feature and its contents remain an enigma. A series of radiocarbon date determinations will be sought from the carbon samples retrieved from varying levels within the feature matrix. Issues with the movement of the local groundwater levels may pertain to obtaining accurate results.

The extent of the Phase II investigation at 7NC-F-92 served to remove nearly 100% of Feature 1, yet the function and temporal affiliation of the feature and associated site are as yet indeterminate.

Should this feature represent multiple depositional episodes, the dearth of prehistoric material throughout the remainder of the site would appear incongruous. Overarching conclusions regarding the temporal association and function of this site are premature, pending the results of the radiocarbon dating.

7NC-F-97

Although no cartographic evidence of a historical structure was identified in the vicinity of this site during the background research portion of either the Phase I or the Phase II archaeological investigations, a historical artifact concentration was identified in this area during shovel testing. Located directly across the current road alignment from the late nineteenth century B.T. Bigg's residential complex, site 7NC-F-97 was subjected to Phase II investigation in an effort to locate any possible structural remains associated with the artifacts, as well as to possibly define the relationship between the B.T. Biggs property and the historical artifact presence.

Cultural material recovered from this site area during the archaeological investigations consisted of an array of nineteenth century domestic and architectural debris, with a light intermingled prehistoric lithic presence. All cultural material was collected from the plow zone, and no evidence of historical structural elements, undisturbed prehistoric artifact deposits, or features were identified. Lack of integrity within the cultural presence, inability to identify a temporal association for the prehistoric component whether through the presence of features or diagnostic materials, and the dearth of defining information regarding the historic occupation of this site preclude its nomination to the NR. The nineteenth century component of 7NC-F-97 can tentatively be identified as the dispersed remains of a probable domestic occupation, based upon the artifact assemblage, however any potential elements of this component that could contribute to NR-eligibility are not within the current project boundaries.

7NC-F-98

Historical atlases of the 7NC-F-98 site area indicate the presence of the late nineteenth century Governor B.T. Biggs residence a short distance east of the current site area. Although the primary structure is still extant, any historical outbuildings that may have been located along the access drive to the residence are no longer evident, nor are they documented on the available historical maps. Informant interviews and historical artifacts collected during shovel testing attest to the historical presence of at least one structure in or near the current project area; the Phase II investigation sought to illuminate the location and function of this structure. Additionally, a localized prehistoric lithic artifact distribution was identified within the plow zone of the same site area during shovel testing. The single excavation unit placed within the narrow project area boundary did not clarify any questions regarding function or location, nor did it expand the prehistoric dataset. The sparse cultural material presence coupled with roadway-associated disturbance in the Choptank Road project area limits the information obtainable for this site, and no further testing is recommended.

7NC-F-99/Locus 2

The well-dispersed prehistoric component of 7NC-F-99/Locus 2 is situated atop a terrace overlooking Back Creek. Although exhibiting several of the general attributes commonly associated with the increased likelihood of a prehistoric occupation in northern Delaware (i.e. terrace adjacent to a perennial water source, southern exposure, Matapeake soils), the results of

the Phase II archaeological testing regimen resulted in the collection of a minimal quantity of prehistoric cultural material, and the identification of no features. Those artifacts that were collected were without exception retrieved from the plow zone. Historical presence at 7NC-F-99/Locus 2 is represented by an extremely ephemeral scatter of nineteenth century artifacts attributable to historical manuring practices. The poor representation of both components through the collected material culture and the complete lack of intact sub-plow zone cultural elements prevent 7NC-F-99/Locus 2 from being eligible for nomination to the NR; no further testing is recommended within the LOC at this locus.

7NC-F-99/Locus 3

Located a short distance downslope from 7NC-F-99/Locus 2, this prehistoric artifact concentration was tested with two excavation units. These EUs were placed within the prehistoric artifact scatter as defined by the Phase I shovel test. Slope of this landform is minimal, and the locus was defined as being within 500 feet of Back Creek, a perennial water source. As was observed on 7NC-F-99/Locus 3, the conditions for the presence of a prehistoric occupation at Locus 3 are very good; however the cultural material collected from within the Phase II excavation units is minimal and limited to occurrence in the plow zone. The historical component of this locus, consisting of a low quantity of small nineteenth century utilitarian ceramics, is also likely attributable to agricultural use of the area as was encountered in the northern locus. No further investigation of this portion of 7NC-F-99 is recommended, nor is the locus considered to be eligible for nomination to the NR, due to poor artifact presence, compromised artifact-bearing soil integrity, and no evidence of intact features observed within the locus.

7NC-F-99/Locus 4

The locus documented at the southern extent of 7NC-F-99 is situated atop a gently sloping landform immediately adjacent to Back Creek, on a south-trending exposure, and contains soils within the Matapeake association. As such, several contributing factors to the potential for the presence of prehistoric occupation are accounted for within this locus; the Phase II investigations served to confirm this landform use during the early Woodland I time period. The cultural material assemblage as documented during the Phase I and II archaeological investigations is comprised of a varied universe of material types and artifact classes, and is representative of extended or repetitive occupation episodes within the locus; detracting from the significance of this presence is the inclusion of the majority of the observed material within the plow zone. In addition to the prehistoric artifact presence, two semi-intact features were identified and mitigated during the archaeological investigations at Locus 4.

The chronology and function of Feature 6 are not readily apparent on the basis of the small portion remaining at the time of recovery. There are, however, several factors that serve to inform preliminary interpretation. First, the rhyolite Susquehanna Broadspear within the assemblage for this sub-locus was recovered from intact B-horizon subsoil just outside of the base of Feature 6. Since the feature was originally excavated to these depths from an overlying occupational surface, this suggests that the systemic construction of the feature postdates the early Woodland I association of the Broadspear. Second, despite the fact that no fire-cracked rock was recovered from within the feature, nearly all of the FCR present within the assemblage for this sub-locus was recovered from the plow zone contexts of EUs 8 and 9. This suggests an origin in the upper portions of the feature prior to being plow-disturbed. The lack of FCR from the base portion of the feature indicates that artifacts of this class were deposited into the feature after it was taken

out of use and suggests that the original function of the feature was not directly associated with fire-making activities. As such, a plausible interpretation of this feature is that it was excavated as some kind of storage basin at some point after the deposition of the early Woodland I Broadspear and was filled with trash after the storage function of the pit was no longer in use. Lack of diagnostic artifacts from the actual feature matrix precludes absolute dating of the in-filling event(s).

Prehistoric occupation of the area represented by 7NC-F-99/Locus 4 spans a period of approximately 3,500 years and correlates with early Woodland I through middle Woodland II. Labor investment as evidenced by the presence of pit features is suggestive of more than short-term use of this area during at least one of the occupations, and the density of artifacts in the sampled areas serves to corroborate this supposition. Subtle differences in the artifact assemblages between the two identified sub-loci are too limited and temporally vague to allow much in the way of meaningful interpretation. Overall, the degree and intensity of disturbance, which was sufficient for the near-total obliteration of features and vertical mixing of almost 90% of recovered artifacts (including 100% of collected historical material), severely limits the research potential of cultural resources within this Phase II study area. It is the opinion of KSK that the resources within the current construction footprint are not eligible under any criteria for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and we do not recommend Phase III data recovery.

7NC-F-102

Phase II investigations of 7NC-F-102 were initiated in an effort to identify any potential remnant structural components associated with a cartographically documented building of unknown function. Subsurface testing identified a historical artifact scatter containing both domestic and architectural debris contained within the plow zone in the purported vicinity of the structure. Excavation of a series of units at this site location resulted in the collection of additional historical cultural material dating from the late eighteenth through the early twentieth centuries and the identification of two features, both of which can potentially be attributed to the historical occupation of this site. The smaller feature, a well-defined posthole, is representative of a ubiquitous feature classification throughout Delaware and may be associated with the historically agricultural use of this area, rather than an element of the yard associated with the historical property/structure. The shallow trench, however, in all likelihood represents the remnants of a portion of the structural footprint associated with the building noted on historical maps. Little remains of this feature beyond a thin stain at the interface of the plow zone/B-horizon; any details regarding the construction of the structure have been lost through plow impact.

Although not indisputable, the location of the historical structure under investigation at the origin of the access drive to the main residence may potentially be representative of a historic guard or gate house; examples of this structural arrangement have been identified elsewhere in northern Delaware, most notably at the nineteenth century Cazier agricultural complex (Hoseth et al 1994, De Cunzo 2004). Nothing encountered within the current artifact assemblage or the features encountered within the test area serve to confirm or disprove this potential structure function. Despite the presence of a partial structural footprint at this location, the compromised condition of the remains within the limited current project area contain little potential to further illuminate the function or occupational period of the structure, and as such no further investigation is recommended at 7NC-F102.

6.2 Eligible Sites

7NC-F-100

Based on the recovered artifacts, the historic period component at Site 7NC-F-100 appears to date to the latter half of the eighteenth-century through the early portion of the nineteenth century. The presence of large postholes and pits possibly related to structural elements suggests that there was once a building at this location, while the presence of lead window coming and personal items such as metal buttons and buckles suggest that this structure may have served as a domestic residence. Sherds of delft-like pottery suggest that the occupants may have been ethnically Dutch, or had connections with the Dutch who settled in New Castle County in the seventeenth century; however, it should be pointed out that the Dutch were by no means the only consumers of delft ceramics and tiles in North America. Background research conducted at the NCCC indicate the owners of the property after 1790 do not bear distinctly Dutch surnames (i.e. Ross, Bayard), although the Bayard family is directly descended from Ann Stuyvesant Bayard, sister of Peter Stuyvesant, the Dutch Director-General of New Netherland.

The largely acidic nature of most soil types in New Castle County precludes the long-term preservation and survival of bone in buried contexts. As might be expected for an archaeological site that appears to be two centuries old, with the exception of a small quantity of decomposed faunal material, typed generally as indefinable mammalian with the single exception of a fragmented pig incisor, very little was recovered from Site 7NC-F-100 in terms of the faunal assemblage.

Architectural features such as post holes and pit features have survived the effects of plowing on 7NC-F-100, albeit in a compromised state. A comparative study of the types and styles of eighteenth-century vernacular architecture in Delaware and the Mid-Atlantic region can generate hypotheses regarding the nature/function and spacing of posts and beams, which could then be compared and contrasted with the evidence from this site. Such information could also generate hypotheses of where and at what distance other major structural beams would be located. A limited review of literature concerning the construction methodologies of late eighteenth century structures in northern Delaware has produced multiple possibilities regarding the nature of this building and its possible foundation elements. Contemporary sites excavated throughout New Castle and Kent Counties have exhibited wide-ranging variety with reference to structural dimensions and construction methodology (Bedell 2001, De Cunzo 2001-2002), including post-in-ground, earthfast, ground-laid sill, stone or brick foundation (with or without full or partial basement), or pier foundation. At this juncture, from what little evidence has thus far been obtained, it would be premature to assume that this was an earthfast or post-in-ground type of structure, although the pit features encountered during the Phase II investigation of 7NC-F-100 bear several similarities to those recorded as structural elements in several sources (Ferguson 1992, Catts et al 1995, Grettler et al 1995, Heite and Blume 1998, Bedell et al 1999, Bedell et al 2002, Bedell 2002). The “house and garden” style of construction and spacial organization, introduced toward the turn of the eighteenth century and increasingly common throughout the nineteenth century, represents another possible association for the archaeological remains constituting site 7NC-F-100. The deliberately portable nature of these small tenant residences necessitated their construction atop a pier foundation system, and the footprints of the structures tended to be relatively constrained, ranging from 16 to 20 feet in dimension for the primary structure (Siders and Andrzejewski 1997). Background research to date has not identified a specific location for the brick structure identified on the 1790 sale documents. Although it is possible that the subsurface features containing period bricks and other architectural debris

encountered during the Phase II investigation are elements of this structure, this identification is currently unsupported by cartographic or archaeological evidence.

Rural, domestic archaeological sites of this time period are generally characterized by a low frequency of artifacts. Given that a large amount of the artifacts at this site are bound up within the plow zone, screening of the plow zone soils to recover the artifacts within this package of soils is arguably beneficial to the understanding of the origin and evolution of this site.

Although a certain diminution of provenancial integrity is inherent in a site that presents a plow zone component as a contributing element, the presence of several features intrusive into the B-horizon and underlying subsoil speak to a retained integrity for some aspects of site 7NC-F-100. Additionally, despite the historical agricultural use of this area, with its continuous reworking of the soil and displacement of artifacts within the matrix, several field studies have been conducted which attest to the relatively limited movement of artifacts through the plow zone when repeatedly subjected to standard plowing methodologies; this displacement is contingent upon object size and soil qualities, among other factors (O'Dell and Cowen 1987, Dunnell and Simek 1995, Schindler 2004).

Finally, it would appear that this site, under Criterion D, has the potential to contribute to our knowledge of Delaware's early post-contact inhabitants and their relationships to adjacent settlements (Middletown, Odessa), as well as structural construction technology, consumer habits, and trade opportunities in "frontier" Delaware.

In spite of the strong and varied prehistoric artifact presence encountered during the archaeological investigation of 7NC-F-100, this component of the overall site does not appear to contribute toward eligibility for the National Register. This recommendation is based on the disturbed context (plow zone) of the bulk of the material in addition to the complete lack of evidence of prehistoric features as defined during the previous phases of investigation.

7NC-F-94

Potentially representing a tenancy occupation from the latter half of the nineteenth century through the early twentieth century, 7NC-F-94 contains a predominantly intact structure foundation as well as a tremendous quantity of associated historical domestic and architectural material. Based on both cartographic evidence and the manufacturing dates of the retrieved artifact assemblage, Site 7NC-F-94 would appear to date from the fourth quarter of the nineteenth-century to the first half of the twentieth. Two structures are depicted in this general location on historical atlases of New Castle County (Hopkins 1881, Baist 1893), while a single structure is depicted in this general location on the 1931 USGS topographic quad sheet for Smyrna, DE, the last time a structure is indicated on the reviewed historical maps of this location.

The date range would suggest that a thorough review of municipal, county, state and federal records might reveal the identities of the inhabitants of this structure. Such research might also shed light on whether or not the structure was occupied on a year-round or a seasonal basis, and whether the occupants were the same individual(s) throughout the period of the structure's use and existence. The site appears to represent an occupation by either tenant farmers or farm laborers. Previous archaeological investigation of agricultural sites in northern Delaware from this historical period has to date been relatively limited, with less than 5% (N=6) of excavated sites in New Castle County identified as being active during this era of rapid economic, technological, and social change (De Cunzo 2004). In addition to being representative of a little-investigated time period, the occupants of this site – likely in a lower economic percentile and

possibly African-American – are potentially members of an equally under-represented economic group in the archaeological record. De Cunzo (2004) states that less than 10% (N=15) of excavated archaeological sites throughout northern Delaware were occupied by tenant or wage labor individuals.

Given the relatively recent date of this historical site, there was some degree of preservation of the faunal assemblage. Most of the bones that were recovered were fragmentary, although identifiable within the assemblage are skeletal elements of unidentified birds, turtle carapace fragments, and oyster shell. The majority of the faunal material collected during the Phase II excavations at 7NC-F-94 is comprised of fragmentary mammal bone, including an extremely limited presence of cow and pig bone. A very few bones exhibit evidence of having been reduced using a saw as the finishing implement, although for the majority of the faunal material the bones are too fragmentary to be able to comment with certainty if they were sawn versus butchered with a cleaver/axe. Small mammal remains appear to be substantially present in the retrieved assemblage; however to date no formal faunal analysis has been conducted on the assemblage in an effort to further define the species comprising the remains.

With regard to evidence pertaining to the occupants of site 7NC-F-94, an artifact of personal grooming recovered from within the foundation, a metal hair straightening comb, has since 1894 and is still today marketed by the manufacturer to African-Americans. In addition, an oyster shell of moderate size and somewhat worn condition was collected from the plow zone; the shell has been manually double-pierced along an edge (see Plate 28). This deliberate boring of holes would permit the threading of a cord or string to permit the suspension of the artifact, although whether used as an object of personal ornamentation or for another purpose is indeterminate. These two artifacts, although potentially considered “ethnic identifiers” (Brown and Cooper 1990), in and of themselves are not sufficient proof that an occupant of the identified structure was an African-American; however additional archival and/or oral research into the history of the structure’s occupants is hoped to resolve this question. The presence of prehistoric material within the historical assemblage also suggests the potential modification of the shell during a prehistoric time period, although the edges of the drilled holes do not exhibit signs of wear or decomposition potentially indicative of age. The recovery of women’s jewelry, children’s toys and articles of clothing from both within the foundation and surrounding yard context is compelling evidence that for at least a short period, a household comprised of a mix of ages and genders occupied the structure.

The “house and garden” dwelling and style of yard organization introduced in the discussion of 7NC-F-100 has also potentially been encountered in the remnants of the tenant structure of 7NC-F-94. By the end of the nineteenth century, this manner of housing temporary agricultural workers was ubiquitous across the Delaware landscape, and several examples currently remain standing (i.e. the Ridgely Tenant House, the Wharton Tenant House, the Barker’s Landing Tenant House). Although the somewhat lengthy side axis and relative permanence of the foundation are not necessarily characteristic of the traditional house and garden, other factors such as the marginal location and lower economic stratum suggest the possible application of this tenancy housing model to the structural remains encountered in 7NC-F-94.

Also contributing to the eligibility of Site 7NC-F-94 is the opportunity to obtain site-related information through the use of oral histories. Interviews with former residents of the site vicinity or even the specific site location has in previous studies contributed significantly to the information pool regarding the location of physical site elements (i.e. privies, wells, outbuildings), specific land use information, occupational histories (i.e. single family habitation, seasonal rental, multiple sequential occupations, etc.), and economic and social details

unavailable through artifact analysis or other archaeological means (Holland 1990, Catts 2001-2002).

It is KSK's opinion that this site is eligible for listing in the National Register based in part on its potential to produce information regarding subsistence and consumer practices of turn of the century tenant families in Delaware. Additionally, opportunity for comprehensive site excavation and analysis during roadside archaeological investigations such as the Choptank Road/SR 15 Improvement project is frequently somewhat constrained, due in part to the narrow areas of investigation that are often limited to general front yard areas (McCann and Ewing 2001-2002). In the instance of 7NC-F-94, the predominantly intact physical remains of the structure's foundation contained entirely within the proposed limits of construction provide an opportunity to investigate not only the well-defined interior of the building's footprint, but also the surrounding front and side yard areas. Research opportunities for intra-site patterning and inter-site comparisons are abundant with regard to this turn of the century agricultural site.

The complete prehistoric artifact assemblage collected from 7NC-F-94 consists of a relatively narrow array of lithic materials and artifact categories, with quartz and jasper well represented among the collected prehistoric material. A relative predominance of lithic material on 7NC-F-94 was encountered in the B-Horizon in contrast to the results of testing elsewhere within the Choptank Road alignment. Excavations in sub-plow soils at this site resulted in the collection of 11 prehistoric artifacts (57.89% of the total 7NC-F-94 prehistoric assemblage) from within five excavation units (5 x 5 feet square each). The overall assemblage is comprised of quartz and jasper debitage with a limited fire cracked rock content, while temporally diagnostic artifacts are limited to a single quartz Woodland I projectile point. Despite the presence of a partially undisturbed prehistoric component within the B-horizon of 7NC-F-94, this element of the site has thus far been found to be limited with regard to the range of both material and function; no evidence of prehistoric features has been encountered. The prehistoric component of 7NC-F-94, therefore, is recommended to be a non-contributing element of eligibility for the National Register of Historical Places.

6.3 Prehistoric Summary

Throughout the Choptank Road/SR 15 Improvement Project study area, the overall limited size of the prehistoric artifact scatters and low densities of associated artifacts indicate that the majority of the prehistoric sites may represent short-term procurement related encampments. Given the limited number of artifacts collected, detailed interpretations of site functions or of the specific activities performed in conjunction with these occupations remain unclear.

Some patterning with regard to site location is readily evident across the prehistoric occupations, with convenient access to a perennial source of potable water, a moderate elevation above the watersource, a less than 5% slope to the occupied landform, and the presence of well-drained Matapeake soils are consistent aspects of prehistoric occupational locations throughout the alignment. Those areas in greater proximity to the watersource (7NC-F-99/Locus 4 and 7NC-F-100) that also exhibit a southern exposure expressed the potential for having been subjected to relatively long term or repetitive occupations.

Lithic material variations within the assemblages are relatively infrequent, with the majority of artifacts consisting of locally exploited resources. Although exceptions to this limited range of resource procurement is evident in the exotic materials within the assemblages of 7NC-F-100, 7NC-F-99/Locus 4, and most drastically in 7NC-F-92, the majority of the cultural lithic material

encountered throughout the Choptank Road alignment is comprised of readily available jasper, quartz, and quartzite.

It is KSK's opinion that six of the sites (7NC-F-76, 7NC-F-91, 7NC-F-92, 7NC-F-97, 7NC-F-98, 7NC-F-99) subjected to Phase II archaeological investigation and presented above do not show evidence of integrity or internal artifact patterning that would warrant their eligibility to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Given the findings stated in the body of this document, it is also the opinion of KSK that the historical structural elements and artifact deposits contained within sites 7NC-F-94 (KSK #14) and 7NC-F-100 (KSK #4) represent two potentially significant archaeological resources that should be considered eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NR). As was the case with many of the sites that were tested, these two sites contain both prehistoric and historic period components; however as of the current level of investigation it is the historic period components contained within these two sites that primarily merit consideration of their eligibility for the NR.