



STATE OF DELAWARE  
*DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION*  
P.O. BOX 778  
DOVER, DELAWARE 19903

THOMAS R. CARPER  
GOVERNOR

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION OF THE WHITBY BRANCH SITE  
STATE ROUTE 1 CORRIDOR  
NEW CASTLE COUNTY, DELAWARE

The Delaware Department of Transportation, in conjunction with the Cultural Resource Group of Louis Berger & Associates, Inc., is conducting archaeological investigations in the proposed path of State Route 1 through New Castle County. State Route 1 is being constructed to relieve congestion on US Route 13 and provide a safer, faster route from Wilmington to southern Delmarva and the Ocean beaches.

DelDOT's planning studies included a survey for prehistoric and historic resources along the highway corridor. This survey, completed in 1995, identified a prehistoric campsite in one of the stormwater management areas located near Whitby Branch, which is a tidal creek in the upper reaches of the Appoquinimink River. The Whitby Branch Site appears to be what Delaware archaeologists refer to as a Woodland I period procurement site or possibly a base camp, dating to the period from 3000 BC to AD 1000. The site represents an important era in Delaware prehistory when local inhabitants were first making the transition from seasonal hunting and gathering to more sedentary lifeways. The site was chosen for excavation because there is very little information available about the prehistoric groups that lived along the Appoquinimink River at this time and because the site contains well preserved, almost undisturbed occupation areas.

During the 1995 study, two cooking/heating areas represented by clusters of fire-cracked rock were identified. These features may represent remnant surface hearths, and much of the stone tools and debris was centered around these features, suggesting that they were the foci of campsite activities. Artifacts recovered from the site during the 1995 investigations include stone spear or dart points, a grooved axe, and fragments of ceramic vessels. The 1996 excavations will focus on the exposure of block areas within the site, in order to recover information on the internal structure of the camp. After excavation, the recovered material will be cataloged and analyzed to determine the periods of occupation, the types of plants and animals that were used by the occupants, and the season of the year when the camp was visited.

If you would like additional information concerning the project, please contact Kevin Cunningham, DelDOT archaeologist, at 739-4642, or Rob Jacoby at the site.

