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REPORT OF INVESTIGATIONS No. 16

Archaeological Survey of Proposed Sewage Treatment Facilities Site in Nashville, Michigan

Project Personnel:

Principal Investigator: Robert G. Kingsley, M.A., Research Associate
Field Assistants: Donald Weston, Paul McAllister (graduate students);
Larry Wyckoff, M.A.

Introduction:

This project was performed on June 21 and 22, 1977. The project involved archaeological survey of a proposed sewage treatment facilities site west of Nashville, MI. The work was requested by Dr. Jeffery Sutherland of Williams and Works of Grand Rapids, MI; Dr. Sutherland also outlined the area to be examined.

Previous Research:

Little systematic fieldwork has been undertaken in this portion of Barry County, though preliminary survey work has been done in the western portion of the county by Western Michigan University. Inspection of the archaeological site files at the Department of Anthropology, Western Michigan University, revealed that no known archaeological sites were located within the immediate project area, or within several miles of the area.

Procedures:

As indicated, inspection of the archaeological site files was undertaken before actual fieldwork was performed.

Field procedures consisted of surface reconnaissance of the area as well as subsurface test probing in areas of poor surface visibility. Most of the area had been recently plowed and, in these areas, subsurface probes were not necessary. In unplowed and wooded areas, probes were generally spaced 25 yd apart though this interval was shortened near the Thornapple River.

Description of Survey Area:

The parcel lies in the W 1/2, Sec. 35, Castleton Twp., Barry County, MI. It is bounded on the south by the Thornapple River, and contains 95-100 acres. The strip of land immediately bordering the river is wooded; vegetation consisted of deciduous trees and abundant undergrowth. Most of this area showed evidence of annual inundation. Near the southeast corner of the parcel, within the wooded area, lies a small cleared field sown to some kind of grain. Soil profiles in the wooded area showed the topsoil to be very dark and thick; glacial subsoil and clay was encountered variously from 12-24 in below surface.

The eastern two-thirds of the area north of the wooded area was planted in corn. A low wet area lies near the center of the parcel and a small drainage ditch runs approximately east-west from this wet area to the eastern boundary of the parcel. Topsoil in this area is thin. Glacial subsoil was encountered from 8-12 in below surface; often the plowzone extended into subsoil. Glacial drift was abundant in the top and subsoil.

The remaining one-third of the parcel was pastureland. Approximately 80 subsurface probes were placed in this area revealing a soil profile similar to that of the cornfield.

Sites Recorded:

No historic or prehistoric cultural materials were encountered by the survey crew. A modern dump was discovered in the wooded area near the center of the parcel and is of no historical significance. No archaeological sites of any kind were found.

In the course of investigations, a possible mound site was visited. This site, reported to the crew by Mr. Tim Smith, city of Nashville employee, was supposedly located "about a mile west" of the survey area. The actual distance was about 3-1/2 mi, and the "mounds" were actually glacial features, probably kames.

Recommendations:

Since no historic or prehistoric cultural materials were found in the area, as outlined to me by Dr. Jeffery Sutherland of Williams and Works, it is recommended that this project proceed as planned.

Prepared and submitted by:

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