

## 7.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The intent of this report has been to develop a planning tool that will be of use in anticipating areas of archaeological sensitivity within the area likely to be impacted by the various proposed alternative alignments currently being considered for the U.S. 301 Project Development. Because it is a representation of probabilities rather than absolutes, the model cannot specify that an archaeological site will fall within a certain location and not another. Rather, its purpose is to define areas of greater or lesser archaeological sensitivity.

The model is not able to anticipate all the areas within which sites might be found. As suggested in the various discussions about the model's limitations, this shortcoming could be resolved in part by supplementing the model's characterization of a particular area with a pedestrian reconnaissance. This will assure that any relevant hydrological or topographical information that is smaller than the cell resolution of GIS will be identified, such as remnant drainages or small knolls. When field testing is underway, the field archaeologists will be better able to test an area appropriately if they have the latitude to reassess its relative archaeological potential.

Even with this provision, the model may not be able to identify all areas of interest. Because of the epistemological limitations inherent in any attempt to reconstruct the reasoning behind the choices made by Native Americans of the prehistoric period, any model will at best only represent an approximation of their thinking. As noted by De Cunzo and Fithian, our understanding of the factors that contributed to the selection of particular locations as settlements by the earliest European settlers are poorly understood, and any attempts to predict where these sites might be found must as a consequence be of only limited value. In order to compensate for these limitations, it is suggested that a significant percentage of the area of potential effect associated with the eventual preferred alternative be surveyed using high-probability testing intervals. This should provide both a test of the model and a mechanism for collecting data that can be used to refine our understanding of the site selection criteria used by Native Americans and early European settlers. The U.S. 301 Project Development field study may also provide an opportunity to refine Heite and Blume's (1992) model for identifying family burial plots.

Another subject that a field survey of the preferred alternative might shed light on is the exact nature of the anomalous sites identified by Kise, Straw & Kolodner in their survey along Choptank Road. While the anecdotal accounts of the character of the deposits and the nature of the geology of the setting suggest that exploitation of locally available lithic resources could be responsible for the formation of the site, the information available to date is too tenuous to regard this proposition as anything other than one of a number of viable hypotheses. The discovery of similar sites during the course of a survey might offer an opportunity to evaluate this class of sites more thoroughly.

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