

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 (SHPO) and DeIDOT offices. In addition, information about the history of the archaeological APE was provided during informal interviews with local informants, particularly members of the Nanticoke Indian Tribe, long-time residents of the area. Nanticoke tribal members reviewed project mapping and provided information about specific historic families and places associated with, and uses of the archaeological APE. If archaeological sites were identified, this information could be incorporated into the descriptions and interpretations of those resources. In addition, McCormick Taylor and DeIDOT personnel provided information regarding ongoing historic structures research in the S.R. 24 Improvements archaeological APE.

2.2 Fieldwork

The S.R. 24 Improvements project Phase I fieldwork was conducted in two stages in June 2003 and January 2004. 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 archaeological 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 submitted by Skelly and Loy, Inc. to DelDOT and the Delaware SHPO (Gundy and Sams 2003).

Phase I archaeological field procedures consisted of a visual examination of the entire archaeological APE, followed by subsurface testing of the 23 test areas delineated during the geomorphological reconnaissance and six stormwater management areas delineated by DelDOT subsequent to the original geomorphological studies. A single transect of shovel test pits (STPs) located approximately 7.6 m (25.0 ft) off of the existing S.R. 24 centerline was emplaced within each roadway improvement test area, with multiple transects emplaced in the larger test areas such as the stormwater management facilities locations. The STPs were spaced at 15.0 m (49.2 ft) intervals within each transect and numbered sequentially within each test area. Radial (retest) STPs were emplaced at 7.5 m (24.6 ft) intervals around culturally positive STPs. All of the STPs 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 (Photographs 10 and 11). All of the sediments recovered from each STP 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 disturbances were recorded on Skelly and Loy's standard excavation forms. Daily field notes and STP excavation information were kept by the field director 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. In-depth artifact analyses were not undertaken due to the ephemeral and non-diagnostic nature, as well as the small size, of the artifacts. 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. The Phase I survey of the S.R. 24 Improvements archaeological APE yielded only historic period artifacts. Artifacts were prepared for curation at the Delaware State Museum according to their guidelines (Delaware State Historic Preservation Office 2001). Project materials are temporarily stored at Skelly and Loy's Monroeville facility. Provenience information and an artifact catalog are included as Appendix A.



Photograph 10. Typical STP (STP D-26) showing Strata 1 and 2, facing north.



Photograph 11. Typical STP (STP N285 E630) showing Strata 1 and 2, facing east.