The border of Cecil County, MD and New Castle County, DE has been a crossroads since early colonial times. People, goods, trade – and ideas - moved on cart roads and highways between the Chesapeake and Delaware drainage and between different states in this area. Long considered an area unlikely to yield archaeological sites, surveys for the new U.S. Route 301 toll highway are painting a different picture.

The Levels Road Mitigation basin and a 4-mile portion of the U.S. Route 301 mainline are located in the headwaters of the Bohemia and Sassafras Rivers, tributaries of the Chesapeake Bay. RGA’s 2008-2011 archaeological surveys located 11 prehistoric and historic archaeological sites.

Ten sites represent the lives of Native Americans beginning about 8,000 years ago who hunted, camped, cooked, gathered foods, and made stone tools from local stones or ones imported from other areas.

The five historic sites may represent the lives of tenants and farmers during the 18th and 19th centuries in this border area. Fine ceramics, wine glasses, bottles, coins, shoe buckles and thimbles, firearms, and other artifacts suggest day to day activities. The results of the surveys indicate this border area has much to tell us about the lives of important landowners like William Rumsey as well as ordinary tenant farmers, enslaved and free African Americans.

Acknowledgements: David Cirilo and Earl Currington of SWOPT, PWNH; Dave Dechow and DESHPO staff, RGA field crew: Tara Boll, Dave Dechow, Adrianne Azzam; Alkire Ploot, Ann Davis, Monica Whitman, Claus Oelrich, Valerie Loos, Emily Smith, Steve Buss, Jim Johnson, Ben DeLancey, Ashley Walkow; Jason Kechte, Ariadne Moore, and RGA staff including Richard Grubb, Alice Domm, Phil Hayden, Pat McEachen, Jesse Walker, Paul Georgy, Alston Gaff, Mike Tomkins, Cathy Beagan, Virginia Broussard, Dan Smith and BRVAD volunteers; John Giangrant and Meghan Gregg of Century Engineering, Jay Casto, Lukie De Caro, Darren Lowery, and Kim Murrell.