



STATE OF DELAWARE
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
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ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS ALONG U.S. ROUTE 113

The Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT), in conjunction with The Cultural Resource Group of Louis Berger & Associates, Inc., is conducting an archaeological excavation program at a small prehistoric campsite near Redden. DelDOT plans to improve U.S. Route 113 between Georgetown and Milford by the addition of two additional travel lanes, which will alleviate traffic congestion and safety deficiencies.

DelDOT's planning studies included a survey for historic properties along the Route 113 corridor, and this resulted in the identification of seven archaeological sites, in addition to a number of historic buildings. In 1991, preliminary excavations were completed at the seven archaeological sites, and one site, designated 7S-F-68, was determined to merit additional excavation before construction of the new roadway.

The site chosen for excavation is located just south of Redden Crossroads. According to the Delaware state plan for management of archaeological resources, there is very little information available concerning prehistoric settlement in this area. The present excavations will therefore help to fill a gap in our knowledge of Delaware prehistory. Site 7S-F-68 was used repeatedly by prehistoric groups, beginning as early as 6500 B.C. and continuing until the period of historic settlement. There are no streams nearby that might have provided a source of water or facilitated travel, although there is a small wetland to the south of the site that might have attracted game or provided important plant foods. It is believed that prehistoric groups used the site only for brief visits and that these groups would have maintained their larger, more permanent camps or villages in the lower reaches of streams that flowed into the Chesapeake or Delaware Bays.

The 1992 excavations will focus on the exposure of large block areas within the site, in order to recover information concerning the internal structure of the campsite. Most of the material recovered consists of pottery fragments and debris from the manufacture and reshaping of stone tools. Discarded tools such as hide scrapers, spear points, and milling stones are also found at the site. Cooking areas are also preserved in the form of charcoal stains. After excavation, the recovered material will be cataloged and a number of specialized tests will be undertaken to assist in dating the periods of occupation, the types of animals that were hunted, and the types of vegetable foods that were used at the site.

If you would like additional information concerning the project, please contact Kevin Cunningham, DelDOT Archaeologist, at 739-4642.

