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DIVISION OF HIGHWAYS

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**HISTORIC ARCHEOLOGY RESEARCH PROGRAM AT THE
WHITTEN ROAD SITE (7NC-D-100)**

A historic archeology research program is being conducted by the Delaware Department of Transportation, Division of Highways, and the Federal Highway Administration in conjunction with the University of Delaware Center for Archaeological Research at the Whitten Road site in New Castle County, Delaware.

The Whitten Road site (7NC-D-100) is located in southern White Clay Creek Hundred, New Castle County, Delaware, due west of Whitten Road (Route 346) and 200 feet north of the Christina River. The significant component of the site is an eighteenth century occupation which appeared to be a dwelling and/or agricultural complex. Prehistoric components were also present but not regarded as significant. A concentration of historic artifacts including ceramics and glass dating from the mid 18th to early 19th century were identified in a preliminary walkover and the data from the controlled surface collection defined the boundaries of the site.

Although the site had been repeatedly plowed, a portion of an archaeological feature (post mold) association with the structure or architecture of a former house remained beneath the plow zone, penetrating into sterile subsoil. The size and artifact content of the features suggest a cellar hole for a main residential structure. The feature, approximately 17 feet by 25 feet, is within the range of cellar holes on other 18th century sites excavated in the Tidewater region.

The Whitten Road Site is significant because it is likely to contribute data important in the understanding of the history of this area and the surrounding region. In association with the undisturbed structural remains, other undisturbed midden deposits were present and it is very probable that within the site's boundaries other subsurface features remain beneath the plow zone. The presences of undisturbed remains allows for the characterization of spatial patterning for this 18th century site type which has never been encountered during previous research in the northern Delmarva area. Specific classes of data present at the site, including, spatial utilization, food remains, and artifact classes, may be related to the socio-economic standing of the site's inhabitants. This data is also important in comparing this site with those found in southern Delaware (Lewes area) dating from the same period (Thomas 1983).

Some of the most significant information to be derived from historic archaeological studies in northern Delaware helps confirm research done at more recent sites. The more recent research focused on the spatial utilization which took place after the change in the middle decades of the 19th century. Therefore, the Whitten Road Site, which dates to the 18th century, provides a chance to look at a rural site's spatial utilization prior to those changes.

If you would like further information concerning this cultural resource project, please contact Kevin Cunningham at 736-4644 or Jay Custer at 451-2821.