

*AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY FOR
SUEMAUR EXPLORATION & PRODUCTION, LLC'S
HOSKINS MOUND-POCONO PROSPECT
WELL PAD SITE AND ACCESS ROAD
IN BRAZORIA COUNTY TEXAS*



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*Brazos Valley Research Associates
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WELL PAD SITE AND ACCESS ROAD IN BRAZORIA COUNTY, TEXAS

BVRA Project Number 10-03

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ABSTRACT

An archaeological survey of a proposed well pad site and access road in the Brazoria National Wildlife Refuge in south Brazoria County, Texas was performed by Brazos Valley Research Associates (BVRA) on February 5, 2010. The area investigated consisted of 6.29 acres. No archaeological sites were found, and no artifacts were collected. The area was found to be marshy with clay at the surface. Copies of the report are on file at the Texas Historical Commission (THC), Texas Archeological Research Laboratory (TARL), Texas State Library, Suemaur Exploration & Production, LLC, Dixie Environmental Services, Co., LP (DESCO), and BVRA.

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DEFINITION OF STUDY AREA

The project area consists of a well pad site and access road in the Brazoria National Wildlife Refuge in Brazoria County, Texas (Figure 1). The well pad site is 400 feet x 400 feet, and the access road is 3800 feet long and 30 feet wide. The project area is in a marshy area that is flat and featureless, and the nearest bodies of water are two unnamed lakes sixty meters to the southeast and southwest. This tract is viewed as a medium to high probability area for the presence of a significant prehistoric site because oyster and rangia shell is often found in similar settings, and this resource was used by the local Indians in prehistoric times as a food source. The project area is depicted on two topographic quadrangles. They are Christmas Point (2995-112) and Hoskins Mound (2995-113) (Figure 2).

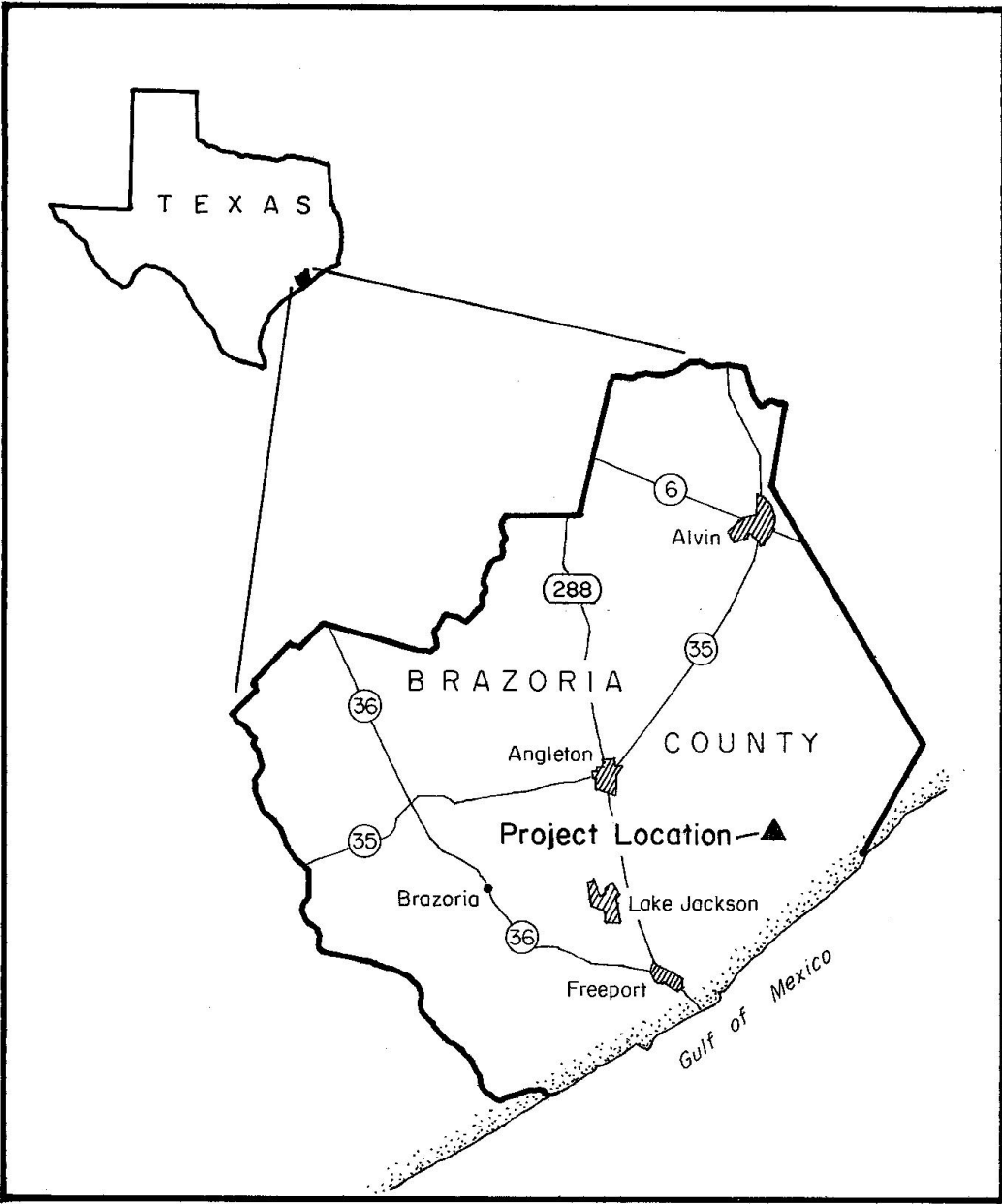


Figure 1. General Location

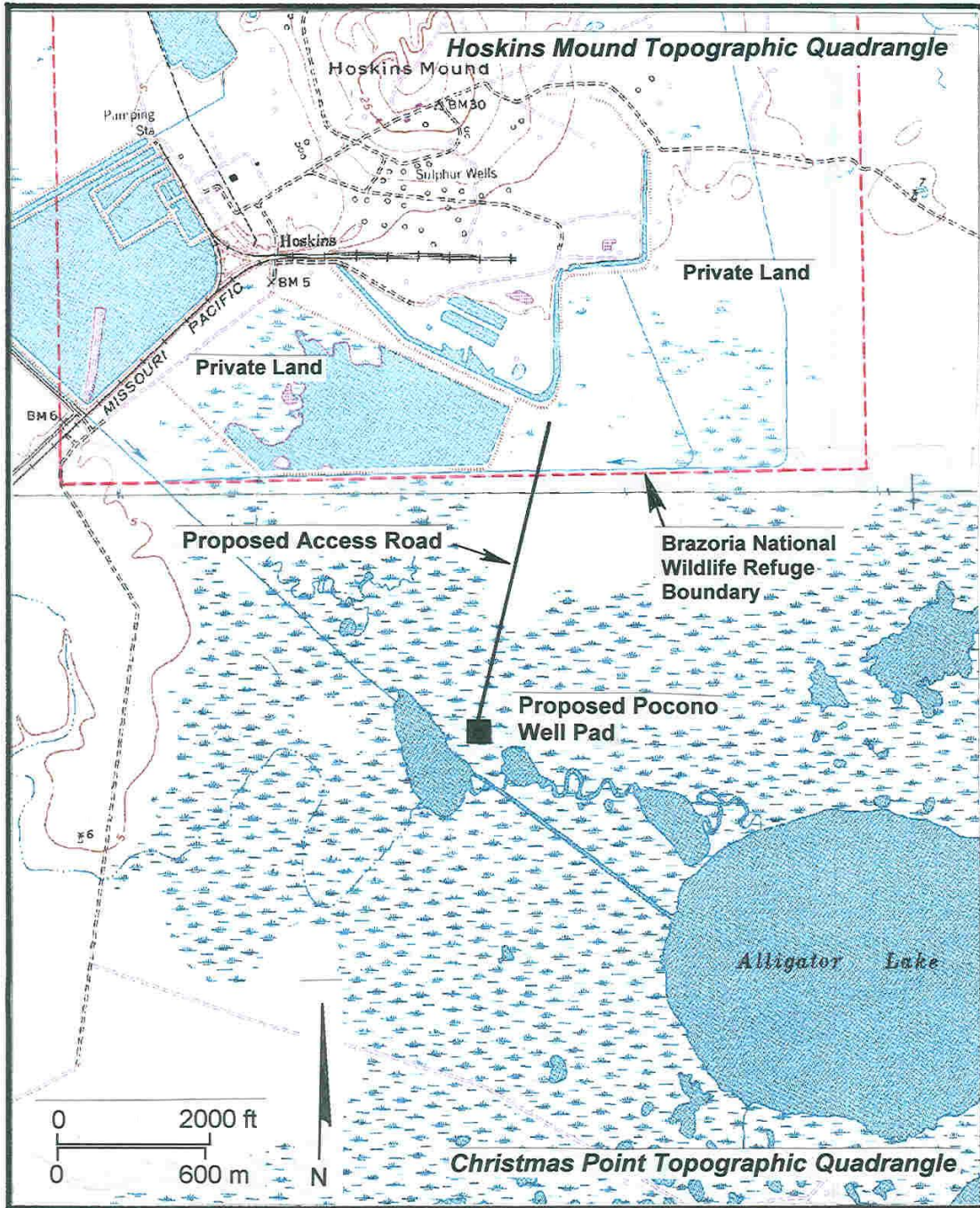


Figure 2. Project Area on Topographic Quadrangles

MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

This project was performed in order to identify any cultural resources that might be present within the proposed well pad site and access roads locations. Suemaur Exploration & Production, LLC (client) is the sponsor, and the client wanted to make sure that no significant cultural resources will be affected by the proposed construction. DESCO was retained by the client to perform an environmental assessment, and BVRA subcontracted with DESCO to conduct the current archaeological survey. William E. Moore was the Principal Investigator, and Phillip C. Bishop performed the field survey. The project was carried out on February 5, 2010 and involved eight person hours.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Prior to entering the field, the site records at TARL and the Atlas were checked for the presence of previously recorded archaeological sites and projects in the project area and vicinity. Relevant archaeological reports documenting work in Brazoria County were reviewed in order to become familiar with the types of prehistoric and historic sites found in the area. Some of the major works utilized are reports by Biesart et al. (1985), Kenmotsu and Perttula (1993), and Moore and Baxter (2007a, 2007b, and 2007c). The project area was investigated by a 100% Pedestrian Survey, shovel probes, and shovel tests within the footprint of the proposed well pad site and access road in areas where enough soil was present to warrant this activity. Since much of the area contained clay at the surface and (in some cases) standing water, these areas were visually observed and not shovel tested. Photographs of the project area were taken with a digital camera.

RESULTS

Examination of the files at TARL in Austin, Texas and the Atlas revealed no sites have been recorded in the project area, and a professional archaeologist had not previously examined the tract. No archaeological sites were found during the course of this survey. At the time of this survey, the area was covered with salt grass. Most of the project area contained clay at the surface or less than ten centimeters of sandy soil overlying the clay. According to the published soil survey for Brazoria County (Crenwelge et al. 1981: Sheet 79), the project area is located within the soil type described as Harris Clay (19), and this appears to be consistent with what was observed in the field. This soil is described as a nearly level, saline soil found in marshes. Typically, this is saline clay to a depth of sixty inches. It is very dark gray and neutral in the upper part and grades to gray and moderately alkaline in the lower part. This soil is very poorly drained, and surface runoff is very slow. It floods occasionally during abnormal high tides. The water table is within 20 inches of the surface throughout most of the year. The native vegetation on this soil is salt marsh, and areas containing these soils are used mainly as rangeland and wildlife habitat.

RECOMMENDATIONS

No evidence of a prehistoric or historic site was found as a result of this survey. It is recommended that the client be allowed to proceed with construction as planned. Should evidence of an archaeological site be encountered during the excavation associated with the well pad or access road, all work must stop until the THC can evaluate the situation. This survey was conducted in accordance with the Minimum Survey Standards as outlined by the THC.

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