## AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY FOR THE MILITARY HIGHWAY WATER SUPPLY CORPORATION NORTH SYSTEM 12" WATERLINE LOOP PROJECT IN CAMERON COUNTY, TEXAS

Antiquities Permit 5558



By

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Antiquities Permit 5558

**BVRA Project Number 10-06** 

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#### ABSTRACT

An archaeological survey of a proposed water transmission line in southern Cameron County, Texas was performed by Brazos Valley Research Associates (BVRA) on March 10, 2010 under Antiquities Permit 5558 for the Military Highway Water Supply Corporation (WSC). Five high probability areas totaling 2.94 acres were investigated through a surface inspection and backhoe trenching. No archaeological sites were found, and no artifacts were collected. Copies of the report are on file at the Texas Historical Commission (THC), Texas Archeological Research Laboratory (TARL), the Texas State Library, J. F. Fontaine & Associates, Inc., the Military Highway WSC, and BVRA.

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#### **DEFINITION OF STUDY AREA**

The project area consists of five high probability areas where the water transmission line will be placed in close proximity to resacas in Cameron County (Figure 1). The water transmission line will be placed within the rights-of-way of Farm-to-Market Road 800, Gamble Road, Long Road, Robert Road, and a private ranch road. The pipe is twelve inches in diameter and will be placed in a trench two feet wide and four feet deep. The Area of Potential Effect (APE) is within the highway right-of-way, approximately 10 feet in width. The five areas investigated are viewed as high probability areas for the presence of a prehistoric site because of their proximity to resacas, a setting where significant sites have been documented in the general area. The project area is depicted on three USGS 7.5' topographic quadrangles. They are Santa Maria (2697-221) (Figure 2), La Paloma (2697-212), and Olmito (2697-211) (Figure 3).



Figure 1.General Location



Figure 2. Area 1 and Backhoe Trenches 1 and 2



Figure 3. Areas 2-5 and Backhoe Trenches 3-10

#### MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

This project was performed in order to identify any cultural resources that might be present within the five high probability areas. The client is the Military Highway WSC. BVRA was retained by the client to perform the archaeological survey per the request of the Texas Historical Commission (THC). The Principal Investigator was William E. Moore, and James E. Warren performed the field survey with the assistance of Arthur Romine and Bobby Jemison. The field survey was carried out on March 10, 2010 and involved 24 person hours.

#### METHODS

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 Cameron 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 Maslyk et al. (1999), Kibler (2002), and Griffith et al. (2005). The project area was investigated by a 100% Pedestrian Survey and two backhoe trenches at each of the five high probability areas. The backhoe trenches were dug to the depth of the APE, and samples of the excavated earth were screened. The project was documented through field notes and backhoe trenches appears below.

#### Backhoe Trench 1

This trench was excavated on the south side of Farm-to Market Road 800 in the vicinity of *Resaca de los Fresnos* (Area 1) and on the west bank of the *resaca*. It was 5 meters long and 60 centimeters wide and dug to a depth of 1.3 meters. The trench was excavated in arbitrary levels of 30 centimeters, and samples of earth (20 shovels full) were screened using <sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inch hardware cloth. The soil in this trench consisted of clay loam (10YR 4/4) to a depth of 60 centimeters and clay (10YR 4/5) from 60 centimeters to the bottom of the trench. The location of this trench is depicted in Figure 2 (Area 1).

#### Backhoe Trench 2

This trench was excavated on the south side of Farm-to Market Road 800 in the vicinity of *Resaca de los Fresnos* and on the east bank of the *resaca*. It was 5 meters long and 60 centimeters wide and dug to a depth of 1.2 meters. The trench was excavated in arbitrary levels of 30 centimeters, and samples of earth (20 shovels full) were screened using 1/4 inch hardware cloth. The soil in this trench consisted of clay loam (10YR 4/4) to a depth of 50 centimeters and clay (10YR 4/5) from 50 centimeters to the bottom of the trench. The location of this trench is depicted in Figure 2 (Area 1).

#### Backhoe Trench 3

This trench was excavated on the northwest side of Gamble Road where it crosses *Resaca del Rancho Viejo* and on the southwest bank of the *resaca*. It was 5 meters long and 60 centimeters wide and dug to a depth of 1.25 meters. The trench was excavated in arbitrary levels of 30 centimeters, and samples of earth (20 shovels full) were screened using <sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inch hardware cloth. The soil in this trench was clay loam (10YR 4/2) to a depth of 50 centimeters and clay (10YR 5/3) from 50 centimeters to the bottom of the trench. The location of this trench is depicted in Figure 3 (Area 2).

#### Backhoe Trench 4

This trench was excavated on the northwest side of Gamble Road where it crosses *Resaca del Rancho Viejo* and on the northeast bank of the *resaca*. It was 5 meters long and 60 centimeters wide and dug to a depth of 90 centimeters. The trench was excavated in arbitrary levels of 30 centimeters, and samples of earth (20 shovels full) were screened using ¼ inch hardware cloth. The soil in this trench consisted of clay (10YR 3/1) over standing water at the bottom of the trench. The location of this trench is depicted in Figure 3 (Area 2).

#### Backhoe Trench 5

This trench was excavated on the southwest side of Long Road adjacent to a bend in the *Resaca del Rancho Viejo* and on the north bank of the bend. It was 5 meters long and 60 centimeters wide and dug to a depth of 1.3 meters. The trench was excavated in arbitrary levels of 30 centimeters, and samples of earth (20 shovels full) were screened using ¼ inch hardware cloth. The soil in this trench consisted of sandy loam (10YR 4/1) to a depth of 40 centimeters and loamy clay (10YR 5/3) to the bottom of the trench. The location of this trench is depicted in Figure 3 (Area 3).

#### Backhoe Trench 6

This trench was excavated on the southwest side of Long Road adjacent to a bend in the *Resaca del Rancho Viejo* and on the east bank of the bend. It was 5 meters long and 60 centimeters wide and dug to a depth of 1.3 meters. The trench was excavated in arbitrary levels of 30 centimeters, and samples of earth (20 shovels full) were screened using ¼ inch hardware cloth. The soil in this trench consisted of sandy loam (10YR 4/1) to a depth of 40 centimeters and loamy clay (10YR 5/3) to the bottom of the trench. The location of this trench is depicted in Figure 3 (Area 3).

#### Backhoe Trench 7

This trench was excavated on the south side of a private road adjacent to a bend in the *Resaca del Rancho Viejo* and parallel to the *resaca*. It was 5 meters long and 60 centimeters wide and dug to a depth of 1.2 meters. The trench was excavated in arbitrary levels of 30 centimeters, and samples of earth (20 shovels full) were screened using ¼ inch hardware cloth. The first 15 centimeters consisted of caliche road material. The soil in this trench consisted of loamy clay (10YR 3/1) to a depth of 40 centimeters and loamy clay (10YR 4/2) with calcium carbonate nodules to the bottom of the trench. The location of this trench is depicted in Figure 3 (Area 4).

#### Backhoe Trench 8

This trench was excavated on the south side of a private road adjacent to a bend in the *Resaca del Rancho Viejo* and parallel to the *resaca*. It was 5 meters long and 60 centimeters wide and dug to a depth of 1.3 meters. The trench was excavated in arbitrary levels of 30 centimeters, and samples of earth (20 shovels full) were screened using ¼ inch hardware cloth. The first 15 centimeters consisted of caliche road material. The soil in this trench consisted of loamy clay (10YR 3/1) to a depth of 50 centimeters and loamy clay (10YR 4/2) with clay nodules to the bottom of the trench. The location of this trench is depicted in Figure 3 (Area 4).

#### Backhoe Trench 9

This trench was excavated on the north side of a private road that runs parallel to a bend in the *Resaca del Rancho Viejo* and parallel to the *resaca*. It was 5 meters long and 60 centimeters wide and dug to a depth of 1.2 meters. The trench was excavated in arbitrary levels of 30 centimeters, and samples of earth (20 shovels full) were screened using <sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inch hardware cloth. The soil in this trench consisted of clay (10YR 3/1) to a depth of 70 centimeters and loamy clay (10YR 5/3) to the bottom of the trench. The location of this trench is depicted in Figure 3 (Area 5).

#### Backhoe Trench 10

This trench was excavated on the north side of a private road that runs parallel to a bend in the *Resaca del Rancho Viejo* and parallel to the *resaca*. It was 5 meters long and 60 centimeters wide and dug to a depth of 1.3 meters. The trench was excavated in arbitrary levels of 30 centimeters, and samples of earth (20 shovels full) were screened using 1/4 inch hardware cloth. The soil in this trench consisted of sandy loam (10YR 4/2) to a depth of 90 centimeters and sandy loam (10YR 5/3) to the bottom of the trench. The location of this trench is depicted in Figure 3 (Area 5).

#### 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. The APE is in the rights-of-way of roads. According to a survey by Prewitt & Associates, Inc. in 1999 (Maslyk, et al. 1999:iv), these settings lack "contextual integrity." Overall, the areas investigated contained soils described as clay loam, clay, and sandy loam at the surface over clay and loamy clay. The soils were present between 40 and 120 centimeters. Most of the ground surface area near the resacas has been disturbed through root plowing and other agricultural practices such as plowing. The original surface at most of the backhoe trench locations has been removed by excavation of borrow ditches that occurred when the roads were constructed.

#### 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 of the trench at any of the five areas investigated, 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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BACKHOE TRENCH PROFILES



