

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY
OF FOREST SERVICE ROAD 556 A-2 IN THE
DAVY CROCKETT NATIONAL FOREST
HOUSTON COUNTY TEXAS**



By

William E. Moore

**Brazos Valley Research Associates
Contract Report Number 208**

2008

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF FOREST SERVICE ROAD
556 A-2 IN THE DAVY CROCKETT NATIONAL FOREST
HOUSTON COUNTY, TEXAS

BVRA Project Number 08-22

Principal Investigator

William E. Moore

Prepared for

William Vance
Post Office Box 220
Bayside Texas 78340

Prepared by

Brazos Valley Research Associates
813 Beck Street
Bryan, Texas 77803

ABSTRACT

An archaeological survey along a 0.52-mile segment (0.83 acre) of Forest Service Road 556 A-2 in Track K-1b-III and Compartment 23 of the Davy Crocket National Forest in eastern Houston County was conducted by Brazos Valley Research Associates (BVRA) on June 17, 2008. The investigation was conducted by a 100% Pedestrian Survey of the road accompanied by shovel testing. No evidence of a prehistoric site or historic site was observed, and no artifacts were collected. The road does not cross any major creeks, and the soils in the area consist of firm clay at the surface in most places. Therefore, the length of road examined does not appear to be in a high probability area for a prehistoric site. It is recommended that the landowner not be required to retain a professional archaeologist for more work in this area. Copies of the final report are on file at the Office of the National Forests and Grasslands in Lufkin, Davy Crockett National Forest in Ratcliff Texas Historical Commission (THC), Texas Archeological Research Laboratory (TARL), and BVRA. The records are housed at the National Forests and Grasslands in Lufkin.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am grateful to those who made the successful completion of this project possible. Barbara J. Williams, Heritage Program Manager at the National Forests and Grasslands of Texas, provided a map of the project area and Merlinda Schory, Resource Assistant at the Davy Crockett National Forest, assisted in other aspects of the project such as providing information regarding the purpose of this project, and she guided the Project Archaeologist to the project area. The field survey was performed by Lisa G. Shaddox. The cover and figures in this report were prepared Lili G. Lyddon.

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	ii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iii
CONTENTS	iv
INTRODUCTION	1
ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING	4
ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND	5
METHODS OF INVESTIGATION	7
RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS	10
RECOMMENDATIONS	13
REFERENCES CITED	14

Appendix I: Shovel Test Log

FIGURES

Figure 1. General Location Map	2
Figure 2. Project Area on Ratcliff Topographic Quadrangle	3
Figure 3. Shovel Test 1	8
Figure 4. Shovel Test Map.....	9
Figure 5. View of Forest Service Road 556 A-2 (looking north).....	11
Figure 6. View of Clay at Surface of Road (mixed with gravels).....	12

INTRODUCTION

In order to obtain legal access to private property surrounded by Forest Service land, a Special Use Permit is required. This permit calls for the area to be examined by an archaeologist and a biologist. The landowner (William Vance) retained BVRA to conduct an archaeological survey along Forest Service Road 556 A-2 that is located in Track K-1b-III and Compartment 23 of the Davy Crockett National Forest in eastern Houston County (Figure 1). The project area is depicted on the United States Geological Survey 7.5' topographic quadrangle Ratcliff (3195-143) (Figure 2). No biological assessment was performed.

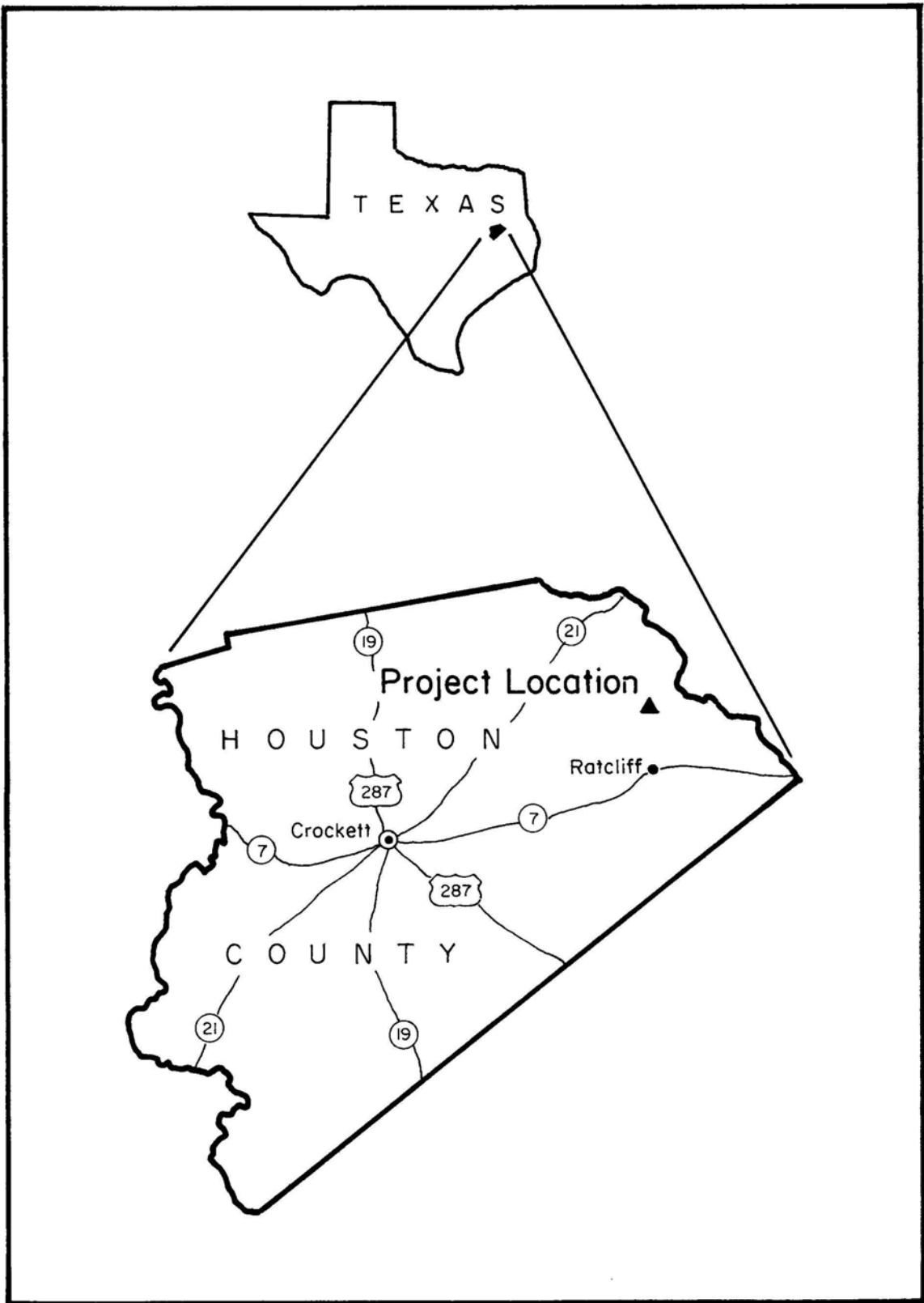


Figure 1. General Location Map

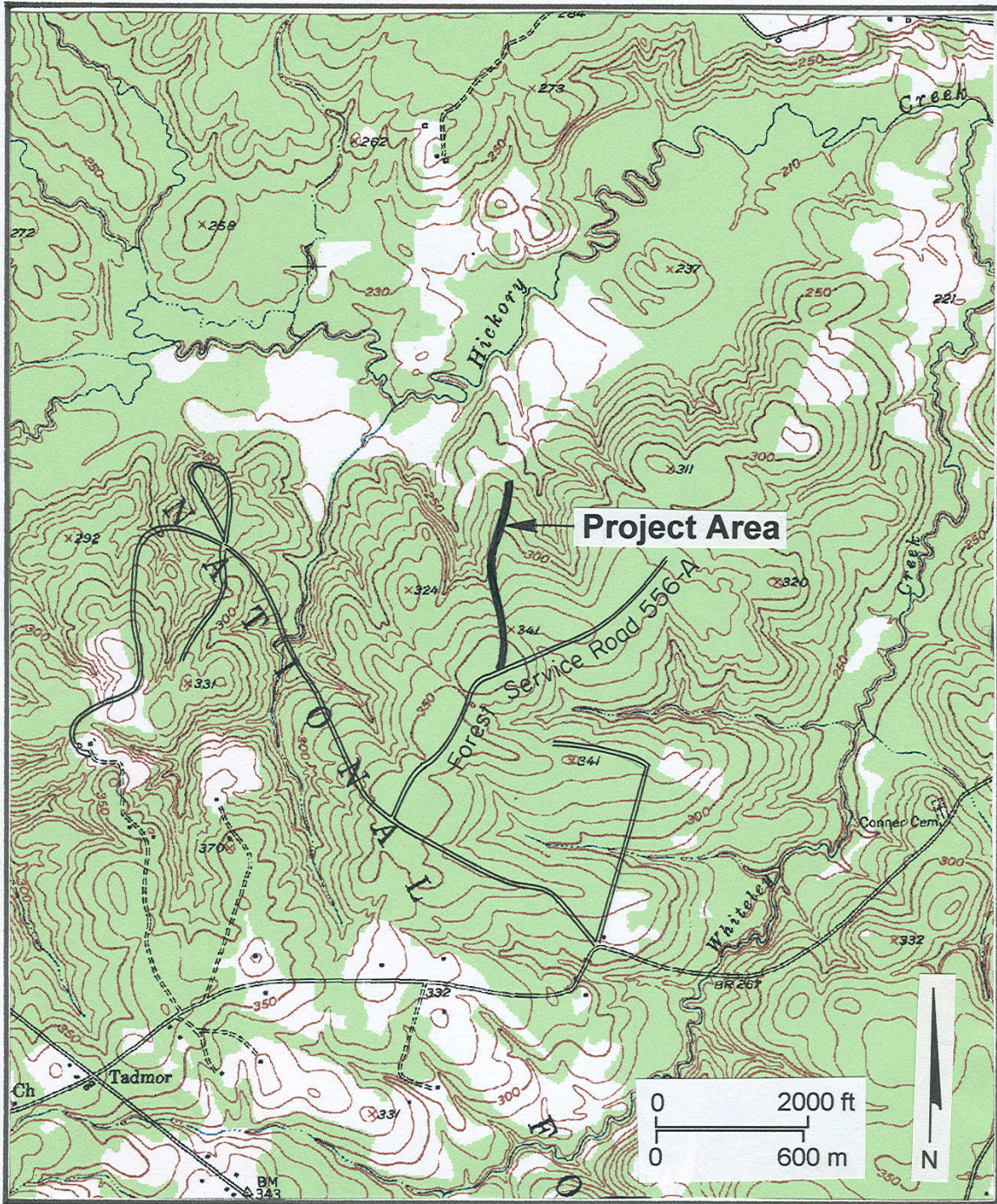


Figure 2. Project Area on Ratcliff Topographic Quadrangle

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The project area is located within the West Gulf Coastal Plain section of the Coastal Plain physiographic province as defined by Fenneman (1938:100-120). Fenneman subdivides this province according to the age of the geological formations (Gulf series) that roughly parallel the Texas coastline. The area is hilly and situated within the East Texas timber belt. Gould (1969) describes it as an area characterized by gently rolling to hilly topography with light colored soils that are acid sandy loams or sands. The climate is subhumid to humid, and the weather is considered to be predominately warm. Annual rainfall for Angelina County is 38.9 inches. A January minimum temperature of 42 degrees Fahrenheit and a July maximum temperature of 95 degrees Fahrenheit combine to produce a growing season of 274 days (Kingston and Harris 1983:180). The altitude varies from 200-400 feet.

According to the soil survey for Houston County (Steptoe 2002), there are four soil types in the project area. They are Attoyac fine sandy loam, 1 to 3 percent slopes (AtB), Bowie fine sandy loam, 1 to 3 percent slopes, (BwB), Sacul fine sandy loam, 1 to 3 percent slopes (SaB), and Woodtell very fine sandy loam, 5 to 15 percent slopes (WoE). AtB soils are deep sandy soils found on toeslopes in pine and hardwood forests. They are well drained, and the water table is more than six feet. BwB soils are moderately deep sandy soils found in the uplands on footslopes or toeslopes. They are well drained, and the water table is greater than six feet. SaB soils are deep sandy soils found in the uplands on footslopes or toeslopes. They are moderately well drained, and the water table is perched at two to four feet during December through April. WoE soils are deep sandy soils found in the uplands on side slopes. They are well drained, and the water table is greater than six feet.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

According to a published planning document for the Eastern Planning Region of Texas (Kenmotsu and Perttula 1993:Figure 1.1.2), Houston County is situated within the Southeast Texas archeological study region. In 1985, according to a statistical overview published by the Texas Historical Commission (Biesart et al. 1985:114), there were nine documented prehistoric sites in the county. The archaeological potential of Houston County is reflected in part by the increasing number of recorded sites found as a result of numerous cultural resource management studies. As a result of these investigations, the number of recorded sites now stands at over 260 (TARL site files). Small and large area surveys have been conducted in Houston County, and the majority of these did not locate archaeological sites. According to the TARL site records, 87 archaeological surveys and related projects have been carried out in Houston County, and only 24 discuss archaeological sites or resulted in the identification of previously unrecorded sites. Most of the areas investigated in the county were associated with oil and gas projects (n=60), and the majority of these studies were performed by James E. Corbin. Other projects include two field schools sponsored by the University of Texas at Austin in 1977 and 1982, water distribution lines, transmission lines, a fiber optic cable project, the proposed Bédias Reservoir, the Tennessee Colony Reservoir, a city park, and survey of the Davy Crocket National Forest and Mission Tejas State Park. These studies date to the 1970s (n=5), 1980s (n=36), 1990s (n=39), and 2000s (n=3). Most of the early recorded sites were documented by landowners and amateur archaeologists, and some of these are potentially significant such as 41HO1 which was recorded by Edward B. Jelks in 1954 as a site containing glass beads, lead bullets, gun parts, arrow points, and sherds. A second interesting site is 41HO6. It was documented by Alex D. Krieger in 1944 as a location where a small cannon was uncovered in 1940 during plowing of a field by the landowner.

Several investigations have been conducted in Southeast Texas that are relevant to interpreting the archaeology of the project area. In fact, the project area is in the center of a region that has been the recipient of several major reservoir construction projects. Other, smaller projects have been conducted by private archaeological contract firms, state agencies such as the Texas Department of Transportation and the Texas Water Development Board, and amateur archaeologists. Reservoirs in the area that have been examined by archaeologists include Addicks and Barker (Wheat 1953), Lake Livingston (Nunley 1963), Wallisville (Shafer 1966; Ambler 1970), and Lake Creek (Boyd and Button 1985).

Works which have sought to synthesize prehistoric data relevant to the project area include an early contribution by Sayles (1935) and the writings of Hole (1974), Shafer (1975), Shafer and Stearns (1975), Shafer et al. (1975), Patterson (1979, 1983), Ambler (1973), Story (1981), Story et al. (1990), and Aten (1983). The latest work, an expansion of Aten's (1979) doctoral dissertation, is a particularly ambitious and useful attempt to integrate ethno-historical, archaeological, and geo-morphological data for the Upper Texas Coast. Other important sources are a planning document by the Texas Historical Commission (Martin et al. 1995) and an overview of the National Forests in Texas by John Ippolito (1983).

The nearest group of sites in the area consists of five sites that were recorded during the University of Texas Field School in 1977 in the Davy Crockett National Forest (Fields 1979). Sites 41HO26 – 41HO29 and 41HO51 were recorded along Hickory Creek. These sites are described as artifacts scatters and a single lithic flake located on rises or terraces adjacent to the Hickory Creek floodplain and in the uplands above the creek. Only one site (41HO26) contained diagnostic artifacts, and it dates to the Late Prehistoric period based on the presence of ceramics. Section 106 review was conducted for a Forest Service timber project within the area in the early 1980s. It should be stated here that survey techniques in those days often did not involve shovel testing. Therefore, it is possible a site could have been overlooked during this study.

METHODS OF INVESTIGATION

Prior to entering the field, the site records at TARL and the Archeological Sites Atlas were checked for the presence of previously recorded archaeological sites in the project area and vicinity. Relevant archaeological reports documenting work in Houston County were reviewed in order to become familiar with the types of prehistoric and historic sites found in the area. The area was investigated by Lisa G. Shaddox on June 17, 2008. The project area was Forest Service Road 556 A-2, which is 0.52 mile long and between three and four meters wide. The entire road was walked and examined for evidence of cultural materials on the surface. Shovel testing began at the north end and continued to the point where Forest Service Road 556-A2 intersects with Forest Service Road 556 A. The road was driven from south to north and the first shovel test was dug approximately .10 mile from the property boundary at the north end. At this point, a large tree limb blocked access so the first test was dug at this point, and the second test was dug at the north end of the road. The researcher then drove from north to south and excavated the remaining six tests along the top of the ridge at intervals of .10 and .20 miles measured by the vehicle odometer. Only one test was excavated in sandy soil. At the north end of the road, Shovel Test 1 was dug through 45 cm of loose sandy loam and sandy clay to a depth of 45 cm (Figure 3). The remaining seven tests were terminated at less than 10 cm due to the presence of firm, red clay at the surface. The tests were concentrated along the ridge with no tests being dug on the steep slope, and the tests were dug adjacent to the road in an attempt to test undisturbed soil. Shovel test data were noted in the field, and a shovel test log was created from this information (Appendix I). The project was documented through field notes and digital photography. Figure 4 depicts the location of the eight shovel tests.



Figure 3. Shovel Test 1

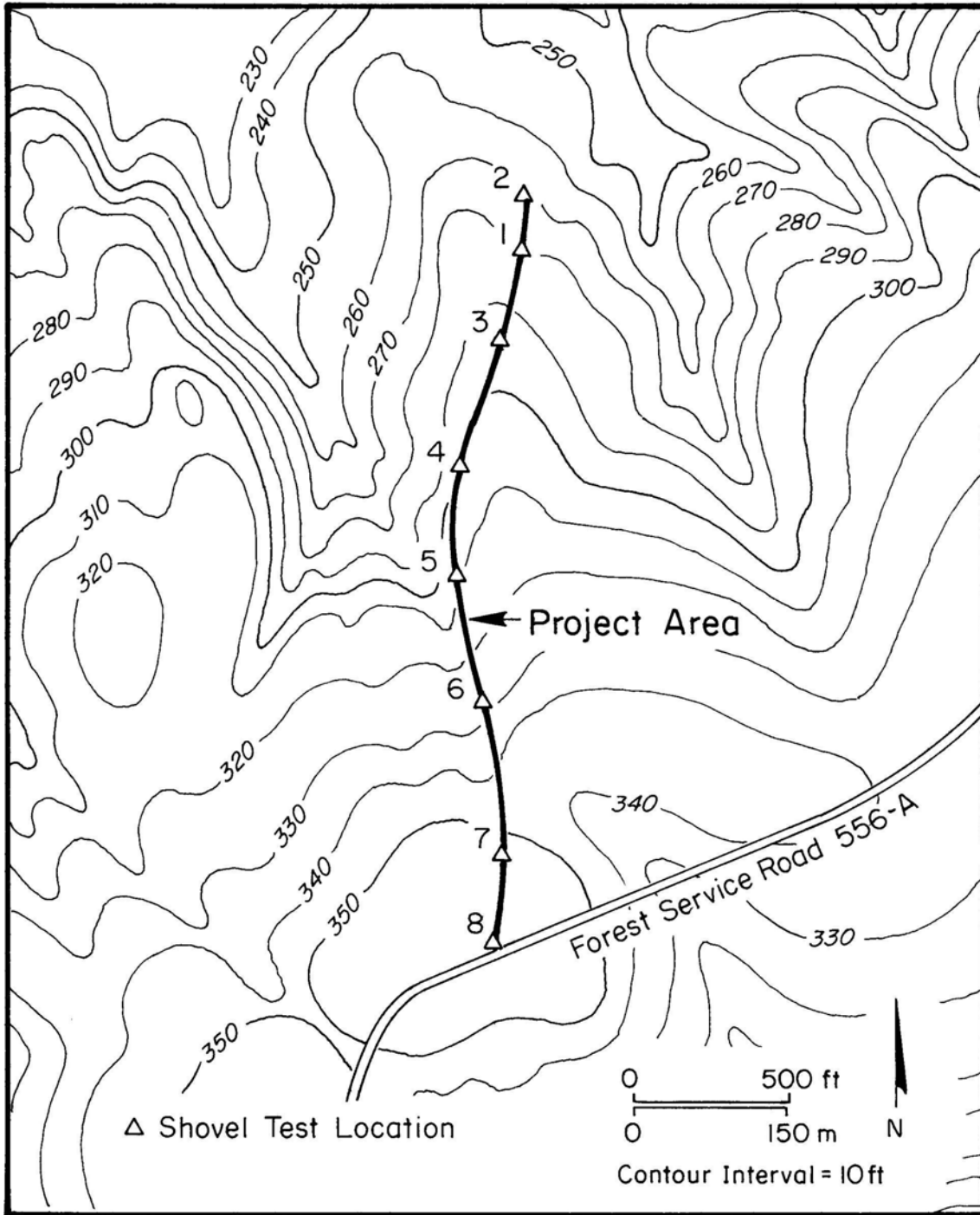


Figure 4. Shovel Test Map

RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

Examination of the files at TARL in Austin, Texas and the Archeological Sites Atlas revealed no sites have been recorded in the project area, and a professional archaeologist had not previously examined any portion of the road. The project area is located on land owned by the Forest Service and is in the boundaries of the Davy Crockett National Forest. The road was found to be narrow (3-4 meters wide) and bordered by pine trees and various understory plants (Figure 5). A 100% Pedestrian Survey and shovel testing did not identify a prehistoric site or historic site in the area investigated. The shovel tests found that clay was at or near the surface throughout the length of the 0.52-mile road (Figure 5). In addition, the road does not cross or run parallel to any major streams. Therefore, this area was probably not considered a likely setting by prehistoric groups for a camp. On the map provided by the Forest Service, a small stream is depicted as crossing the road, but this was not observed in the field, and no drainage appears on the topographic map Ratcliff. The road had been scraped and pushed in order to make it passable for vehicular traffic. It is possible that this area was visited in prehistoric times, but no evidence of prehistoric activity was observed. No raw materials suitable for the manufacture of stone tools were seen on the surface or in the shovel tests, and no historic artifacts were noted. The presence of prehistoric sites along Hickory Creek to the northeast suggests that this was a more suitable area for habitation sites and other activities. Should a site be present in the road, it would have been disturbed by maintenance activities, and it is not likely that any artifacts found today would be in their original context. It should be stated here that the soils in the project area are not the moderately deep and deep sandy soils as described in the soil survey.



Figure 5. View of Forest Service Road 556 A-2 (looking north)



Figure 6. View of Clay at Surface of Road (mixed with gravels)

RECOMMENDATIONS

No archaeological sites were found as a result of this survey, which was conducted in accordance with the Minimum Survey Standards as outlined by the Texas Historical Commission, Archeology Division. It is recommended that the landowner be allowed to use this road with no additional survey by a professional archaeologist. In the event cultural materials (prehistoric or historic) are observed by the landowner along this road, the staff archaeologist at the Davy Crockett National Forest should be advised in case additional archaeological survey is required.

REFERENCES CITED

Ambler, J. Richard

1970 *Additional Archeological Survey of the Wallisville Reservoir Area, Southeast Texas*. Texas State Building Commission, Archeology Program Report Number 8.

1973 *Excavations in the Trinity River Delta: The Lost River Phase*. Texas Archeological Survey, unnumbered report. The University of Texas at Austin.

Aten, Lawrence E.

1979 *Indians of the Upper Texas Coast: Ethnohistoric and Archeological Frameworks*. Ph.D. dissertation, The University of Texas at Austin.

1983 *Indians of the Upper Texas Coast*. Academic Press.

Biesart, Lynne A., Wayne R. Roberson, and Lisa Clinton Spotts

1985 *Prehistoric Archeological Sites in Texas: A Statistical Overview*. Office of the State Archeologist, Special Report 28. Texas Historical Commission.

Boyd, Douglas K., and Van Tries Button

1985 *Overview of Ethnohistorical and Archeological Resources of the Proposed Reservoir Locations for the San Jacinto Project, Montgomery and San Jacinto Counties, Texas*. United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation, Southwest Region, Amarillo.

Fenneman, Nevin M.

1938 *Physiography of Eastern United States*. McGraw Hill. New York.

Fields, Ross

1979 *Report on the 1977 University of Texas Field School: Archaeological Survey in Houston County, Texas*. Report submitted to the United States Department of Agriculture, United States Forest Service. Department of Anthropology, The University of Texas at Austin.

Gould, F. W.

1969 *Texas Plants: A Checklist and Ecological Summary*. The Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas, Texas Agricultural Experiment Station. College Station.

Hole, Frank (editor)

1974 *Archeological Investigations Along Armand Bayou, Harris County, Texas*. Houston Archeological Society Report Number 2.

- Ippolito, John E.
1983 *A Cultural Resources Overview of the National Forests in Texas*. United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service. National Forests and Grasslands in Texas, Lufkin.
- Kenmotsu, Nancy Adele, and Timothy K. Perttula
1993 *Archeology in the Eastern Planning Region, Texas: A Planning Document*. Department of Antiquities Protection, Cultural Resource Management Report 3, Texas Historical Commission, Austin.
- Kingston, Michael T., and Ruth Harris
1983 *The Texas Almanac and State Industrial Guide (1984-1985)*. The Dallas Morning News.
- Martin, William A., Timothy K. Perttula, Nancy A. Kenmotsu, Linda Roark, Jamie Wise, James E. Bruseth, John E. Ippolito, Velicia Hubbard, and Walter Kingsborough
1995 *Cultural Resource Management Planning for the National Forests and Grasslands in Texas*. Department of Antiquities Protection, Cultural Resources Management Report 6. Texas Historical Commission.
- Nunley, John P.
1963 Appraisal of the Archeological Resources of Livingston Reservoir, Polk, San Jacinto, Trinity, and Walker Counties, Texas. Report submitted to the National Park Service by the Texas Archeological Salvage Project, The University of Texas at Austin.
- Patterson, Leland W.
1979 A Review of the Prehistory of the Upper Texas Coast. *Bulletin of the Texas Archeological Society* 50:103-123.

1983 Prehistoric Settlement and Technological Patterns in Southeast Texas. *Bulletin of the Texas Archeological Society* 54:253-270.
- Perttula, Timothy K.
1997 *Archeological Survey of Pastures 145A and 147B for the Texas Department of Criminal Justice at the Eastham State Prison Farm, Houston County, Texas*. Archeological and Environmental Consultants, Reports of Investigations Number 2.
- Sayles, E. B.
1935 *An Archaeological Survey of Texas*. Medallion Papers Number 17.

- Shafer, Harry J.
1966 *An Archeological Survey of the Wallisville Reservoir, Chambers County, Texas*. Texas Archeological Salvage Project, Survey Report Number 2. The University of Texas at Austin.
- 1975 Comments on Woodland Cultures of East Texas. *Bulletin of the Texas Archeological Society* 46:249-254.
- Shafer, Harry J., and Thomas B. Stearns
1975 *Archeological Investigations at the Scott's Ridge Site (41MQ41), Montgomery County, Texas*. Texas A&M University, Anthropology Laboratory Report Number 17.
- Shafer, Harry J., Edward P. Baxter, Thomas B. Stearns, and J. Phil Dering
1975 *An Archeological Assessment of the Big Thicket Preserve*. Texas A&M University, Anthropology Laboratory Report Number 19.
- Sorrow, William M.
1973 *Preliminary Archeological Reconnaissance of Selected Areas to be Affected by the Trinity River Multiple-Purpose Project, Texas*. Texas Archeological Salvage Project, Research Report Number 17.
- Step toe, Levi, Jr.
2002 *Soil Survey of Houston County, Texas*. United States Department of Agricultural, Natural Resources Conservation Service in cooperation with the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station and the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board.
- Story, Dee Ann
1981 An Overview of the Archeology of East Texas. *Plains Anthropologist* 26(92):139-156.
- Story, Dee Ann, Janice A. Guy, Barbara A. Burnett, Martha Doty Freeman, Jerome C. Rose, D. Gentry Steele, Ben W. Olive, and Karl G. Reinhard
1990 *The Archeology and Bioarcheology of the Gulf Coastal Plain*. Arkansas Archeological Survey, Research Series Number 38.
- Wheat, Joe Ben
1953 An Archeological Survey of the Addicks Dam Basin. *Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin* 154:143-252.

APPENDIX I: SHOVEL TEST LOG*

Test	Depth**	Comments
1	45 cm	Soil consisted of loose sandy loam (10YR 5/6) over sandy clay (5YR 4/6). Small and large gravels have been placed on the road as a maintenance activity
2	< 10 cm	clay at surface; large gravels present
3	< 10 cm	clay at surface; large gravels present
4	< 10 cm	clay at surface; large gravels present
5	< 10 cm	clay at surface; large gravels present
6	< 10 cm	clay at surface; large gravels present
7	< 10 cm	clay at surface; large gravels present
8	< 10 cm	clay at surface; large gravels present

* All tests were negative

** All tests dug below ground surface