

Northeast Archaeology Research Center, Inc.

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May 28, 2021

RE: Archaeological Phase I Survey of the Proposed Salmons Quarry Operations Project, Bowden Point Road, Prospect, Waldo County, Maine (MHPC # 0177-24)

Dear Chip:

We write to inform you of the completion of the archaeological phase I survey of the proposed Salmons Quarry Operations Project, Bowden Point Road, Prospect, Waldo County, Maine (MHPC # 0177-24). The work was conducted by the Northeast Archaeology Research Center, Inc. (NEARC) on behalf of Haley Ward and their client Salmons Inc. The project area is located off Bowden Point Road on Bowden Point, which is formed by the confluence of the Marsh River and Penobscot River (Figures 1 and 2). The project includes an approximately 50-acre parcel of land proposed for the development of a quarry processing plant, pier and other related infrastructure (Figure 3). The actual quarrying activity will occur on a separate parcel.

The project area has never received archaeological survey but was determined to be archaeologically sensitive by the Maine Historic Preservation Commission (MHPC) during their initial project review (see MHPC review letter dated 2/10/2021). The MHPC indicated that the Salmons Quarry Operations Project parcel has a high probability for containing a Native American archaeological site(s) given the location near the confluence of the Marsh River and the Penobscot River as well as the presence of other known previously recorded sites in the vicinity, but not within the Project. Specifically, the MHPC requested survey of all areas of the property/project less than 60 ft in elevation above the high tide line, which equates to approximately 200 m from the shore depending on slope (Figure 4). Additionally, the MHPC requested that a post-contact archaeological survey be conducted as well due to the potential presence of three historic structures/dwellings that are mapped near the project vicinity in 1859, including the T. Stinson, J. Crockett and R. Bowden households, for whom the point is named.

The goal of the archaeological phase I survey was to determine if archaeological sites of potential significance are present within the proposed project area or to establish that it is unlikely that sites of potential significance are present. Significant sites are those that meet eligibility criteria for the National Register of Historic Places. The archaeological work adhered to standards and guidelines as determined by the Maine Historic Preservation Commission (MHPC) for archaeological studies in Maine.

As detailed below three newly recorded post-contact archaeological sites likely representing nineteenth and twentieth century residential households/farmsteads were identified during the phase I survey (MHPC site numbers pending). The sites are all located along the western boundary line of the project and the majority of the site components extend outside the project area. Given the location of the sites along the project edge, it is recommended that 25-ft construction free buffer zones be established around the historic resources (see Figure 2). If buffer zones are not feasible, then phase II testing is recommended to determine NRHP eligibility at any site(s) where construction impacts cannot be avoided. In addition to the three post-contact sites, a single pre-contact Native American site (MHPC site number pending) was newly identified on the basis of six weathered rhyolite flakes eroding from the shoreline of the Penobscot River. The Native American site falls approximately 40 m (130 ft) outside the project boundary and will not be impacted by project construction, therefore no further work is recommended for this site. Aside from the three post-contact sites, no additional buffer zones or archaeological work is recommended prior to project construction.

Project Description

The Project is situated on a point of land in Prospect known as Bowden Point that is formed by the confluence of the Marsh River on the west and the Penobscot River on the east. Heagan Mountain is the most dominate feature of the overall landscape and rises 166 m (545 ft) above sea level approximately 1.7 km (1.1 mi) to the southwest of the project. In general Bowden Point is characterized by rock and slope with a few scattered residential homes along Bowden Point Road, which travels along the top of the landform and offers views of the Penobscot River. The project area is on the northern tip of the point on the downslope side of Bowden Point Road where the land begins to descend steeply towards the Penobscot River.

The overall project area is wooded with signs of previous logging, but no other major prior disturbances are readily visible. Vegetation is mixed woodland and includes mature softwoods with an underbrush of both coniferous and deciduous growth. Tree species include birch, pine, aspen, spruce, fir, maple, and beech. Several logging roads and old farm roads crisscross the project, particularly on the north end. One of these established roads will be utilized as southern access for the project as it heads north from its intersection with Bowden Point Road.

No named streams are mapped within the project area, but several small seasonal drainages are present within the landscape and a flowing unnamed stream runs generally north-south just outside the northwest corner of the project, emptying into the Penobscot River near the proposed pier location. While there are no named drainages, much of the project area is dominated by rocky wetlands and bog. This is particularly true closer to the Penobscot River where the land is excessively rocky and dissected with little soil development.

As previously described, the project area is generally sloped to the north and east and elevations range from 203 ft at the southern point of access to 29 ft where the proposed pier is to be constructed. The slope is most severe on the southern end of the project and while still steep in some areas on the northern end, there are a few more level landforms in this portion of the project, which is the area where the phase I testing was primarily focused.

Archaeological Phase I Survey

Archaeological phase I survey was performed over four days from May 10 through May 13, 2021 and included the excavation of a total of 47 0.5 m x 0.5 m test pits situated at 5.0 and 10.0 m intervals along testing transects positioned to best sample archaeologically sensitive landforms (see Figure 4). As previously mentioned, in regard to pre-contact Native American sensitivity, the MHPC requested survey of all areas of the property/project less than 60 ft in elevation above the high tide line, which equates to approximately 200 m from the shore depending on slope (as indicated in Figures 2 and 4). The survey for post-contact archeology encompassed a broader area and included a walkover survey to determine the presence or absence of cellar holes or other evidence of historic residential or industrial occupations.

Results Pre-contact Native American Archaeological Testing

A total of 42 test pits were excavated along landforms sensitive for Native American archaeology. As depicted in Figures 5 and 6, the test pits were concentrated in two areas in the northern half of the project; one area is located where the pier/access road is proposed, and one area is to the east of the pier along the northern side of the proposed processing area.

The test pits (n= 18) at the proposed pier/access road were placed along eight sampling transects positioned to best test the landform and excavated to depths of 26 to 61 cm below ground surface (cmbs) with an average depth of 53 cmbs (Figure 7; Appendix I). Stratigraphy was generally consistent and included an uppermost 'Ao' organic horizon of black silty loam measuring 6 to 26 cm in thickness, overlying a developed 'B' soil horizon of yellow brown silty loam measuring 7 to 16 cm in thickness. Occasionally, the 'B' horizon was absent. All excavations were terminated within sterile, basal 'C' horizon soils characterized by 9 to 22 cm of light olive brown silty clay on top of a pale olive clay. These soils corroborate the NRCS soil classification for the area as Boothbay silt loam, which form from glaciolacustrine deposits and/or fine-silty marine deposits (USDA 2021).

The test pits (n=24) excavated along the north side of the proposed processing station to the east of the pier were placed along 10 sampling transects. The transects were positioned along the most level areas of the landscape, including a small, forested knoll that rises above the Penobscot as well as along a few smaller surrounding knolls separated by wetlands and rocky bog (Figure 8; Appendix 1). As previously mentioned, much of the area is sloped, but a few testable landforms are present. Stratigraphy was variable depending on the landform. Shallow, wet soils were encountered in some locations, primarily consisting of a black or dark grey brown silty loam 'Ao' or 'Ap' plow zone horizon overlying a light brownish grey silty loam 'C' horizon with occasional pebbles and cobbles and frequently saturated. In other areas, in particular transects 11, 14 and 15, more developed 'A', 'B', 'C' soil horizons were encountered and included an uppermost 'Ao' organic horizon of black silty loam measuring 12 to 28 cm in thickness, overlying a developed 'B' soil horizon of yellow brown silty loam measuring 7 to 15 cm in thickness, on top of a 'C' soil horizon characterized as a light brownish grey silty loam or clay with pebble and cobble inclusions and wet. All excavations were terminated within sterile, basal 'C' horizon soils or upon encountering water. These soils corroborate the NRCS soil classification for the area as Eldridge fine sandy loam, which form on outwash plains from a parent material of loamy lacustrine, marine, or sandy outwash deposits (USDA 2021).

No pre-contact Native American artifacts or features were identified within either of the tested areas during the phase I survey. As previously stated, one pre-contact Native American site was recorded along the shore of the Penobscot River represented by six pieces of weathered Rhyolite debitage that were found on the surface at low tide. The site is approximately 40 m (130 ft) outside the project boundary and will not be impacted by project construction.

Results of the Walkover Survey and Testing for Post-contact Archaeology

The walkover portion of the phase I survey for post-contact archaeology was performed by NEARC archaeologist Sarah Loftus on May 12th and 13th, 2021. During the survey historic maps were utilized in the field to try to identify any cellar holes or remnant features or artifacts associated with three 19th century households that appear near or within the project area in 1858 (Figure 9) (Chase 1858). Given the sloped and rocky nature of the landscape any long-term settlement/occupation would likely have been limited to the northern half of the project, which is where the historic structures are mapped. Two cellar holes (Historic Sites 1 and 3) were identified in this area as well as one site that includes a series of rock walls and a rock cluster (Historic Site 2). The three sites are briefly detailed individually below and will be further defined in the final report.

Historic Site 1

Historic Site 1 is located along the western project boundary on the west side of a cleared two-track road. The site consists of a stoned lined cellar hole and a dug, stone lined well (Figures 10 - 12). A surface survey of scattered artifacts and architectural materials at the site revealed late-nineteenth and early twentieth century artifacts, however it is possible an earlier mid-nineteenth century element is present. Two shovel tests were excavated and included 6 wire nails and 9 small fragments of redware.

Based on georeferencing, it appears likely that Historic Site 1 is in the location of the former residence of J. Crockett in 1858 (see Figure 9) (Chase 1858). A structure also appears in this general location on USGS topographic maps from the 1940s and the dwelling may have been occupied through that time period (Figure 13).

Historic Site 2

Based on the 1858 map, Historic Site 2 may represent remnant elements of the former household of D. Glidden (see Figure 9). No structures appear in this area on the 1940s USGS topographic maps and no definitive cellar hole was identified during the survey, but rock walls, a rock cluster and several old roadbeds fork in this location (Figures 14 and 15). As with Historic Site 1, the site is along the edge of the western project boundary. There is a level, grassy knoll to the southwest of the rock walls outside the project area that looks like the best place to build a structure if one was historically located in this area. Given the location of the knoll outside the project, this area was not tested, but two test pits were excavated near the stone wall alignments (see Figure 14). Both test pits were negative for cultural materials, but it is possible the stone walls are part of a larger farmstead that is mostly outside the project area to the west.

Historic Site 3

Historic Site 3 is on the very northern tip of the project on a gently sloped terrace above the Penobscot River at the end of the same dirt road that passes by Historic Site 1 (Figure 16). The site includes a cellar hole and a collapsed wooden outbuilding (Figure 17). The structure does not appear on the 1858 historic map but is present on 1940s USGS topographic maps (see Figures 9 and 13). Based on the construction materials, which include a poured concrete foundation walls on top of stone and a collapsed roof built with wire nails and asphalt shingles, it appears likely the dwelling was built or significantly modified during the early to mid- twentieth century. It is possible that earlier material underlies these later elements at the site, but this seems unlikely. The area surrounding the cellar hole is characterized by extremely thick bamboo and disturbed soils. A single shovel test excavated near the southeastern corner of the cellar hole within the project area was negative for cultural material, but further testing could reveal intact deposits.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Archaeological phase I survey has been completed for the proposed Salmons Quarry Operations Project, Bowden Point Road, Prospect, Waldo County, Maine (MHPC # 0177-24) as part of the Section 106 review process for the project. Three newly recorded post-contact archaeological sites representing nineteenth and twentieth century residential households/farmsteads were identified during the phase I survey (MHPC site numbers pending).

The sites are all located along the western boundary of the project and the majority of the site components extend outside the project area (see Figure 2). Given the location of the sites along the project edge, it is recommended that 25-ft construction free buffer zones be established around the historic resources (see Figure 2). If buffer zones are not feasible, then phase II testing is recommended to determine NRHP eligibility at any site(s) where construction impacts cannot be avoided. In addition to the three post-contact sites, a single pre-contact Native American site (MHPC site number pending) was newly identified on the basis of six weathered Rhyolite flakes eroding from the shoreline of the Penobscot River. The Native American site falls approximately 40 m (130 ft) outside the project boundary and will not be impacted by project construction, therefore no further work is recommended for this site. Aside from the three post-contact sites, no additional buffer zones or archaeological work is recommended prior to project construction.

The full technical report detailing the results of the study will be submitted in the upcoming months. Please let us know if you have any questions and thank you for the opportunity to conduct this study.

Sincerely,



Sarah Loftus, PhD
Project Director, NE ARC, Inc.



Robert N. Bartone, M.A., RPA
Director, NE ARC, Inc.

References

Chase, W. H
1858 *A Topographical Map of Waldo County, Maine*. J. Chace., Jr. Philadelphia.