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ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF THE PROPOSED TITUS COUNTY BOAT RAMP

TITUS COUNTY, TEXAS

Texas Antiquities Permit Number 4438

Jesse Todd, MS, MA

Submitted to:

ECS

3000 Aspen Drive
Paris, Texas 75462

Submitted by:

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Cultural Resources Letter Report 2007-26
March 12, 2007

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ABSTRACT

A cultural resources survey was conducted on March 9, 2007 of the proposed Titus County Boat Ramp, parking lot and bathroom facilities on the shore of Lake Bob Sandlin in Titus County. The survey was done for ECS which is doing the environmental permitting for the Titus County Freshwater Supply District (TCFWSD). Since the TCFWSD is a political entity of the State of Texas, an antiquities permit is required and Texas Antiquities Permit Number 4438 was issued for the archaeological survey. A records search did not reveal any historic or prehistoric cultural resources in the approximately 0.3 acre study area. An intensive pedestrian archaeological survey of the entire tract failed to locate any prehistoric or historic archaeological sites exposed on the surface and none were uncovered in five shovel test pits. We request that the Texas Historical Commission concur with our recommendation that clearance be provided for the proposed construction of the boat ramp, parking lot and bathroom facilities. We further recommend that if buried cultural materials older than 50 years are encountered, work should stop in that area and the Archeology Division of the Texas Historical Commission should be notified. Work should not continue until discussions with the Texas Historical Commission have been concluded.

INTRODUCTION

On March 9, 2007, AR Consultants, Inc. conducted an intensive pedestrian archaeological survey on one-third of an acre upon which a boat ramp, a parking lot and bathroom facilities are to be constructed by the Titus County Freshwater Supply District (TCFWSD). The study area is located on the shore of Lake Bob Sandlin and along the road to the district headquarters southwest of Fort Sherman Dam Road (Figure 1). The archaeological survey was conducted through ECS which is doing the environmental permitting. The scope of the project included a records review, a field survey during which sites found were to be recorded and during which shovel testing was to be carried out, and a final report.

The archaeological survey was done because the TCFWSD a political subdivision of the State of Texas, and, in addition, the archaeological survey was done at the request of the Archeology Division of the Texas Historical Commission in a letter dated November 21, 2006. This report was written in accordance with the guidelines for letter reports adopted by the Texas Historical Commission, Department of Antiquities Protection, and developed by the Council of Texas Archeologists (N.D.).

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

The survey area is located in a part of the Piney Woods region of northeast Texas (Diamond, Riskind, and Orzell 1987: Figure 1). Major timber trees are pine, oak, hickory, and sweet gum. Other hardwood associations are found in low, wet bottomlands. Understory vegetation includes green briar, sumac, poison ivy, yaupon, crape myrtle, dogwood, and many other species. This is in the Austroriparian biotic province (Blair 1950: Figure 1).

The underlying geology consists of the undivided Wilcox Group which consists of silty and sandy clay that contain ironstone deposits (Bureau of Economic Geology 1966). The soils in the project area belong to the Woodtell-Freestone Soil Association which consists of gently sloping to moderately steep savannah loams and sands (Roberts 1990: General Soil Map). The specific soil in the study area consists of Woodtell fine sandy loam with 5 to 20 percent slopes (Roberts 1990: Sheet 37). The Woodtell Series has a B horizon (subsoil) which is clay listed as being 6 inches (15 cm) below the ground surface.

PREVIOUS CULTURAL RESOURCE INVESTIGATIONS

Cultural resources studies have primarily been the result of lake construction, lignite mining and community development. Archaeological investigations in the Cypress Creek basin have been carried out at Lake O' The Pines, Lake Cypress Springs, Lake Monticello, Lake Swanano, and Lake Bob Sandlin and have been summarized by Thurmond (1990). The following culture history is derived from these sources.

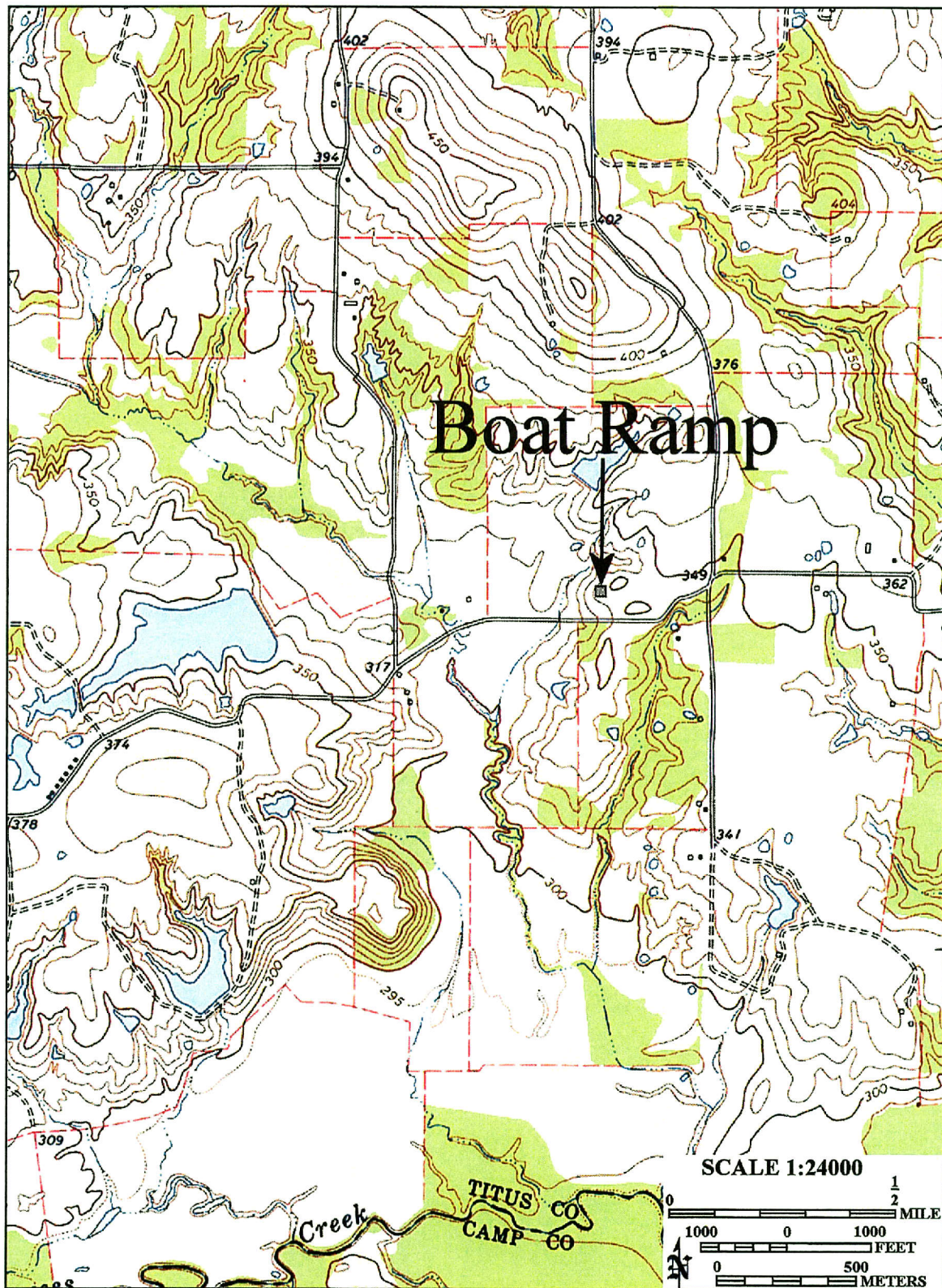


Figure 1. The study area located on a portion of the Monticello, Texas 7.5' USGS map.

The earliest occupation appears to have been by 10,000 B.C., based on the presence of fluted Clovis and Folsom dart points. These and other finely crafted projectiles have been recovered in numerous places but always on the surface of the ground or in mixed contexts. They have yet to be discovered in a primary context in northeast Texas. Aboriginal occupation continued through the successive centuries but the evidence is scattered and more teasing than substantive before A.D. 1.

By about A.D. 700, pottery and arrow points were added to the Native American's set of tools. These technological changes coincided with a gradual increase in population size. Prehistoric Caddoan peoples are first recognized about A.D. 800. Some of these early Caddoans occupied large villages which were located on major drainages, but small dispersed settlements were also present throughout the region. The villages occasionally contained low earthen mounds and usually consisted of several individual houses. The economy was based on foods secured by hunting and gathering, although farming was probably practiced by A. D. 1000.

About A.D. 1300, a shift in site location away from the major drainages and into the headwaters of smaller tributaries resulted in the rearrangement of people into small but numerous hamlets scattered throughout the upper Cypress Creek Watershed (Perttula 1995:342). Major villages continue to be located on the banks of the Red River in Texas and Louisiana during this period. Farming was certainly important during this period, and these people are recognized in the historic period.

In his evaluation of site locations in the Cypress Creek Drainage Basin, Thurmond (1990: Figure 30 and 31) indicates a low density of prehistoric sites in upland areas and he goes on to say (1990:220) that:

Again, archeological surveys in the Cypress basin have concentrated on stream valleys in general, and particularly on the valleys of major watercourses. Only during the Lake Monticello project were upland areas surveyed, and even then not very intensively. Despite these biases, the frequent occurrence of sites along smaller streams is indicated. One must suspect that the occurrence of sites in upland areas may be higher than the present data would indicate.

No doubt, occupation in the uplands, or collection of upland resources, may have left some evidence in the upland areas (Perttula 1995: 337). However, evidence of the utilization of these areas has been poorly recorded although numerous surveys have been conducted in these areas.

Native American groups were pushed out of the northeast Texas area by the mid-1800s and Titus County was organized in 1846 from parts of Bowie and Red River counties. The early settlers were largely individual farmers who held small property holdings and supported themselves on a grain and livestock economy. These subsistence farmers grew corn and vegetables at first and cotton and wheat became more prominent over time.

Commercial cotton production began in the 1830s and cotton was shipped to the Gulf Coast through Jefferson until rail lines replaced the water travel after the Civil War.

Previous Investigations

The Titus County Freshwater Supply District contracted with Southern Methodist University to conduct an archaeological survey of Lake Bob Sandlin project area prior to impoundment. One hundred six sites ranging in age from the Late Archaic through Historic European times were recorded (Sullivan 1978). After the survey, seven sites were tested. Also, an archaeological survey of nearby Lake Monticello (McCormick 1973) recorded 69 sites ranging in age from the Archaic to Caddo IV (A.D. 1200-1500) times. The results of comparisons of settlement patterns from the archaeological surveys of the two lake areas is that Caddoan hamlets were located along minor tributaries and that occupation along Big Cypress Creek was of a limited nature.

No archaeological sites are recorded within or immediately adjacent to the study area (Texas Archeological Sites Atlas 2007). However, site 41TT648 is located approximately 635 feet southeast of the study area. The site consists of a Friley arrow point, a broken Friley arrow point and lithic debris. The site is probably Caddoan and was recorded during an archaeological survey of proposed water pipeline improvements for the City of Mount Pleasant

METHODOLOGY

The proposed boat ramp development tract was walked in north-south oriented transects spaced approximately 10 m apart. The Council of Texas Archeologists (2002) recommends three shovel tests per acre. Although the study area is only one-third of an acre, five shovel tests were excavated. Notes were taken of the vegetation, terrain, soil and other relevant information as were photographs. No deep testing was done due to the shallow depth to the subsoil.

Although site 41TT684 had been recorded southeast of the study area, it was felt that no prehistoric archaeological sites would be encountered during the survey due to the distance from water. Site 41TT684 is adjacent to an intermittent drainage. Historic sites might be present since roadways were in close proximity.

RESULTS

This portion of the report consists of a description of the study area followed by a description of the survey. Shovel tests are discussed specifically in the text and their locations are plotted on Figure 3.

The proposed boat ramp, parking lot and bathroom facilities are to be constructed on a gentle southwest facing slope (Figure 2). Vegetation includes bermuda grass, dandelions and native grasses. The shore line is covered in bunch grass and other native grasses. A dirt, two-track road runs across the slope and hematitic sandstone is present on the slope

where the two-track road is present. Ground visibility ranged from 30 to 100 percent and the eye-height visibility was excellent.

The study area was first walked in meandering northeast-southwest transects. No cultural materials older than 50 years were seen on the ground surface. Lake Bob Sandlin is approximately 7.5 lower than its normal elevation. This has exposed about an 18 m wide shoreline. The shoreline was walked and visually inspected. No cultural materials older than 50 years were seen on the ground surface despite the 50 to 100 percent ground visibility. The shoreline was not shovel tested since the ground surface was exposed subsoil and the excellent ground visibility.

In addition, the area bordering the boat ramp site was visually examined but not shovel tested. No cultural materials were seen on the ground surface despite the 30 to 60 percent ground visibility. After the pedestrian archaeological survey, the study area was shovel tested. All of the shovel tests were culturally sterile.



Figure 2. View downslope to lake of the study area. View is to the southwest.

Shovel test 1 uncovered 19 cm of brown (10YR4/3) fine sandy loam overlying brownish-yellow (10YR6/6) fine sandy clay that extended to 32 cm which, in turn, was underlain by yellowish-brown (10YR5/8) sandy clay subsoil that ranged to 47+ cm below the ground surface. Shovel tests 2 and 3 encountered the same soils but the contacts were at 26 and 18 and 36 and 25 cm, respectively. The shovel tests were terminated at 49 and 37

cm below the ground surface, respectively. Shovel test 4 also encountered the same soils, but the contacts were at 6 and 12 cm and the shovel test was terminated at 20 cm below the ground surface. However, Shovel test 5 only encountered the brown fine sandy loam overlying the yellowish-brown subsoil at 7 cm. Shovel test 5 was terminated at 13 cm below the ground surface.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

No archaeological sites were discovered on the ground surface during the intensive pedestrian archaeological survey of the project area or in 5 shovel tests. The absence of prehistoric sites may be due to the absence of water and lack of knappable lithic resources. The absence of historic sites may be due to the distance to former roadways that have been modified today.

Based upon the absence of archaeological sites, AR Consultants, Inc. recommends that further cultural resource investigations are unwarranted and that the TCFWSD be allowed to construct the boat ramp, parking lot and bathroom facilities on the 0.3 acre that was investigated. We further recommend that if buried cultural materials older than 50 years are encountered, work should stop in that area and the Archeology Division of the Texas Historical Commission should be notified. Work should not continue until discussions with the Texas Historical Commission have been concluded.

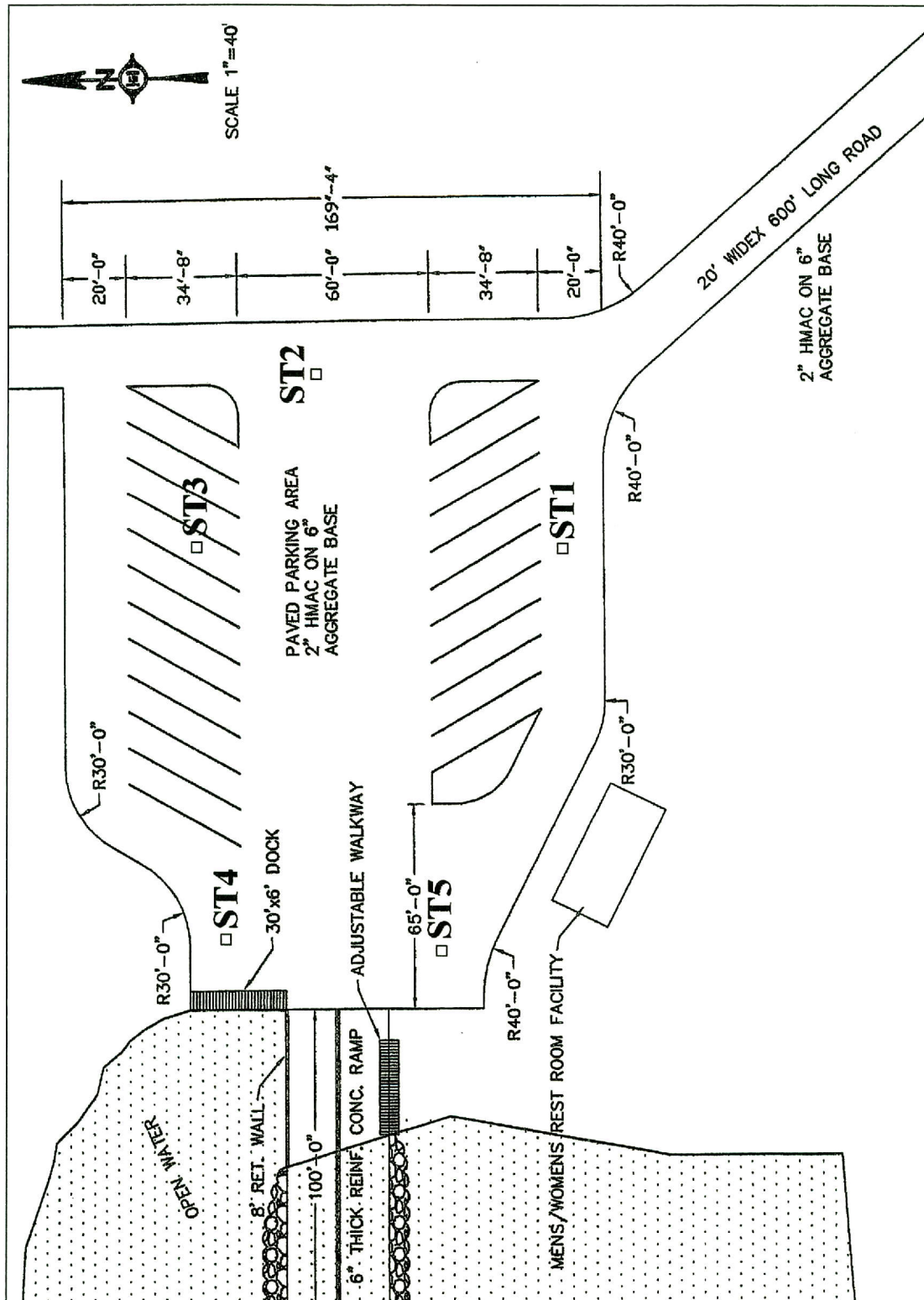


Figure 3. Shovel test locations plotted on a plat of the proposed boat ramp, parking lot and bathroom facilities provided by ECS.

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