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**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL
EVALUATION OF
THE OAK POINT PARK
& NATURE PRESERVE
PLANO, TEXAS**

Texas Antiquities Permit Number 3580

Jesse E. Todd
and
Lance K. Trask

Prepared for:

CARTER & BURGESS, INC.

7950 Elmbrook
Dallas, Texas 75247

Prepared by:

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Cultural Resources Report 2004-38
December 14, 2004

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ABSTRACT

AR Consultants, Inc. (ARC) conducted an archaeological evaluation of the Oak Point Park & Nature Preserve in Plano, Texas in order to determine if locations within the tract were suitable for prehistoric and historic occupation. The park site contains approximately 800 acres and Rowlett Creek flows through the park. The proposed park site is located between SH 5 and Parker Road in the City of Plano, Texas. A records check indicated that historic properties might be located within the park, but an on-the-ground evaluation failed to find any evidence of the properties. However, the evaluation did discover 10 knolls that were above flooding and adjacent to Rowlett Creek as well as overbank levees that parallel the creek. Since the City of Plano intends to construct concrete trails along Rowlett Creek, it is ARC's recommendation that these elevations above flooding be shovel tested. Also ARC concludes that deep trenching be conducted where piers are to be placed for foot bridges that will span Rowlett Creek. The remainder of the park area is in the floodplain and has a low potential of containing buried prehistoric deposits as shown by previous investigations in the immediate area as well as within the Rowlett Creek floodplain.

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INTRODUCTION

In early December, 2004, AR Consultants, Inc. conducted an evaluation of the proposed Oak Point Park & Nature Preserve which consists of approximately 800 acres in Plano, Texas. Concrete nature trails are to be placed adjacent to Rowlett Creek and foot bridges are to be constructed across it. This evaluation was conducted for the City of Plano through the office of Carter & Burgess, Inc. in Dallas, Texas. The proposed park is adjacent to and east of Rowlett Creek from SH 5 to Jupiter Road except for a small conical shaped portion that is west of and adjacent to Rowlett Creek and north of and adjacent to Jupiter Road. Chaparral Road is the northern boundary and Emerald Coast Drive forms a portion of the eastern boundary. The park continues southwesterly from Jupiter Road to Parker Road and is bounded on the west by Spring Creek Parkway and on the east by Morton Vale Road. Los Rios Boulevard now is placed along portions of what once was Morton Vale Road (Figure 1).

The scope of the project included a records review and a summary of fieldwork done in the surrounding area, a field inspection of the proposed pipeline routes, creation of an appropriate research design and the methodology proposed to fit the research design, and a final report. This report was written in accordance with the guidelines for short reports adopted by the Texas Historical Commission, Archeology Division, and developed by the Council of Texas Archeologists (ND), but the format is somewhat different.

The following report contains a brief of the natural environment and then a summary of previous investigations in the area as known from published sources. This is followed by a description of the field findings and then the formulation of a research design and methodology. The last chapter presents recommendations that arise from the study. A list of references cited concludes the report.

This report has been termed an "*evaluation*" as it is a formal presentation of map assessment archaeological potential coupled with an experiential assessment based on a "windshield" survey of the pipeline routes. The evaluation includes field inspection which provides a ground truth impression of site potential that incorporates the natural environment into the determination of those areas with high and low potential for archaeological sites, and into the preparation of a formal research design (Binford 1964). The evaluation does not reach the level of a reconnaissance as defined in the Airlie Report (McGimsey and Davis 1977:74), or in the Council of Texas Archeologists Guidelines for Cultural Resource Management Reports (ND:2), or in 36CFR Part 66, as it does not involve any real on the ground field survey, other than getting out of a vehicle. Rather, it might be termed an Archeology Assessment Report (McGimsey and Hester 1977:74).

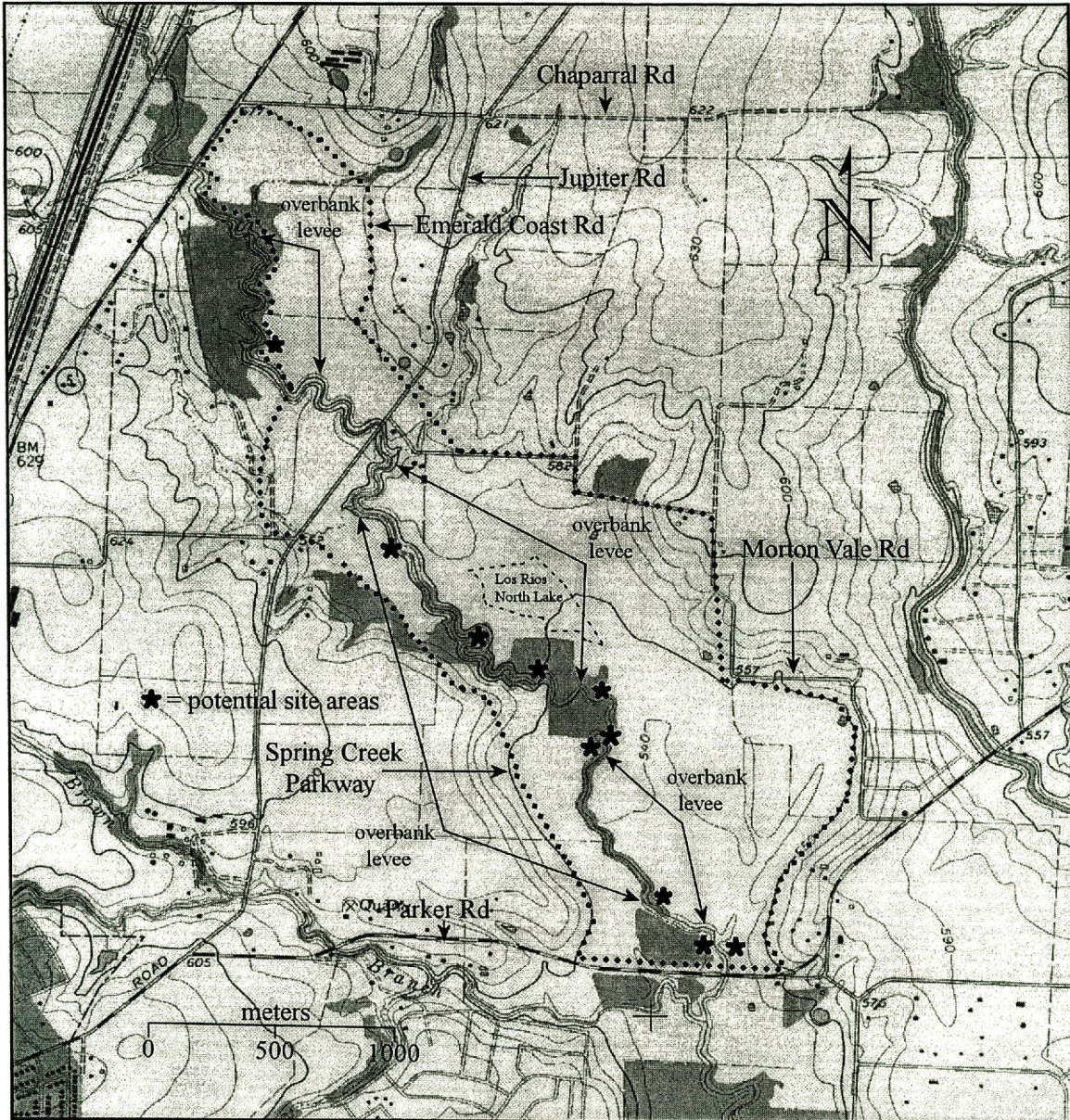


Figure 1. Proposed Oak Point Park & Nature Preserve boundaries and elevated areas above flooding located on a portion of the Plano, Texas 7.5' USGS map.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Collin County lies in North Central Texas. It lies totally within the Blackland Prairie region of Texas (Diamond, Riskind, and Orzell 1987: Figure 1). The eastern portion of the county is drained by the East Fork of the Trinity River, and the western portion is drained by the Elm Fork of the Trinity River. Narrow bands of bottomland forest are confined to the drainages throughout the county (Minor 2003). The study area is located in the eastern floodplain of Rowlett Creek in the southern part of the county which drains into the East Fork of the Trinity River.

Rowlett Creek is mapped as having Quaternary aged alluvium floodplain and channel deposits adjacent to the creek which consist of sand, silt, and gravel. The park area is underlain by the Upper Cretaceous-aged Austin Chalk deposits which contains chalk interbedded with calcareous clay (Bureau of Economic Geology 1991). There are two small springs on Rowlett Creek although they do not appear on USGS maps. Pegues Springs were used for 1873 camp meetings and are now just seeps on the Los Rios golf course, and Muncey Springs are located near Old Indian Hole and will soon be covered by Dallas bedroom communities (Brune 1981:123).

Soils in the floodplain of the proposed park are mapped as the Trinity-Frio association which consists of deep, nearly level clayey and loamy soils while the upland and upland slopes are classified as belonging to the Ferris-Houston association which are sloping to strongly sloping upland clays. (Hanson and Wheeler 1969:General Soils Map). Soils within the park area are frequently flooded and occasionally flooded Frio clay and occasionally flooded Trinity clay in Rowlett Creek's floodplain and channel and Houston Black clay with 1 to 3 percent slopes on the upland slopes and eroded Altoga silty clay with 8 to 12 percent slopes and eroded Austin silty clay with 5 to 8 percent slopes along the upland ridges (Hanson and Wheeler 1969:Sheet 53).

As indicated above, Collin County is located in the Blackland Prairie vegetative area of Texas (Gould 1975; Kuchler 1969: Region No. 68). Kuchler classifies the prairie as being dominated by *Andropogon-Sipa* grasses, and Gould notes that little bluestem is the climax dominant. Various other grasses are present as well. It is believed by Lynott (1979) and others that the prairie was inhabited once by now absent herbivores including bison and antelope. Certainly, deer inhabited the floodplain forest along Rowlett Creek in the past, but that environment is gone today.

CULTURE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The history of the Collin County region can be traced to as early as 8,000 to 9,000 B.C. and since that time, it appears to have been continuously occupied (Crook ND). The physical evidence of past occupation in the county has been termed "cultural resources," and many of these resources have been of such significance that they have been recognized, recorded and in many cases preserved (RMA/Texas 1986).

Prehistoric Native American settlement in Collin County began at least 10,000 years ago as attested to by the presence of distinctively shaped dart points. No very early prehistoric sites have been recorded in the county but Paleo-Indian sites have been reported from Denton County to the west in the valley of the Elm Fork of the Trinity River. Nevertheless, artifact collectors report the presence of Folsom, Scottsbluff and other Paleo-Indian points from the surface of sites in the region. The presence of exotic, i.e., non-local, lithic resources indicates that these early people traveled a territory where higher quality lithics were available or were involved in a system of raw material trading. These early people hunted now extinct large game but probably also foraged off the land.

The subsequent period, the Archaic, lasted from 7,000 to 6,000 B.C. to possibly as late as A.D. 700 to 800. The Archaic peoples lived throughout the county but particularly along the major and minor stream valleys where they were able to hunt animals and gather wild plants (Lynott 1977). Dart points, grinding stones, fire-cracked rock and scrapers are common artifacts found on Archaic sites. The earliest Archaic peoples continued making and using exotic cherts for dart points, but as time passed, there was a shift toward the use of local lithics for chipped stone tools. These local materials are described as Uvalde Gravels (Menzer and Slaughter 1971; Byrd 1971). Small scatters of lithic debris have been recorded in upland areas throughout the county (Lynott 1974; Hughston and Lynott 1974; Peter 1990; Hunt, Peter and Allday 1991). These sites appear to be Archaic in age but none have been thoroughly studied and their relationship to the Lake Lavon sites is uncertain.

About A.D. 700 to 800, a major change is found in the artifacts and settlement patterning of the prehistoric sites. Sites tend to congregate along the mainstem of the East Fork of the Trinity River. This is attributed to the drying up of the smaller tributaries. During this period, which is known as the Late Prehistoric, Caddoan pottery from East Texas appears as trade material along with the indigenous Nocona Plain pottery. It has been suggested that farming may have been practiced. Arrow heads appear about this same time and apparently the bow and arrow had been added to the hunting tools. The other interesting thing is the appearance of large, circular pits constructed at sites along the East Fork and its tributaries. No good explanation has been posed about the function of these features although various authors have offered their interpretations (Stephenson 1952; Lynott 1975; Bruseth and Martin 1987).

At the end of the Late Prehistoric period, there appears to have been a general abandonment of the Collin County and the North Central Texas area based on an absence of sites with trade goods that might have been obtained from French, Spanish or English traders (Skinner 1988). This simplistic interpretation is tied to a general drying trend and attempts to factor in negative information generated by professional and avocational archaeologists who have conducted numerous site surveys throughout the region. There is very little evidence of historic era Native American occupation anywhere in the county until historic accounts indicate that groups were present in the early 1800s.

In 1845, settlers from Peters Colony moved into what is now the Plano area. The county was established by 1846 and the county seat was at Buckner until 1848 when it was moved to McKinney. By 1852, a post office was established and the community needed a town name. The people settled on Plano which in Spanish means "flat" after a recommendation by Dr. Henry Rye because he thought the word meant "plain" which described the terrain. The town was incorporated in 1873, and the first newspaper, the *Plano News*, was published in 1874. The Houston and Texas Central Railway connected Plano to Dallas. By 1888, the St. Louis, Arkansas and Texas Railway Company intersected the Houston and Texas Central Railway making Plano a good market for Blackland farmers. Plano had a population of approximately 1,200 people by 1890 along with six churches, two cotton gins, three schools and two newspapers. Plano continued to grow from people living and working in Dallas, and by 1990, it was a city that contained 128,713 people. Over the years, Plano has been a home to three colleges, one professional soccer team and is known as the Balloon Capital of Texas for the balloon races it continues to host every September (Schell and Wells 2003:1).

Recent Investigations

North of the study area in Allen, AR Consultants (Skinner and Skinner 1996) discovered site 41COL194 a tenant house and 41COL195, a brick lined cistern in an archaeological survey of Allen Station Park which is located adjacent to Cottonwood Creek. A limestone dam with an associated pump foundation and a limestone foundation to a water tank were found associated with the dam and the remnants of a concrete dam built in 1912 also were discovered. The limestone dam was revisited and investigated further by AR Consultants, Inc. (Skinner 2002). Soil was removed from the dam and the total length of the dam was investigated. The dam was built in 1874 by the Houston & Texas Central Railroad to provide water for its steam engines.

According to the Texas Archeological Site Atlas (TASA 2004), sites that have been investigated along Rowlett Creek including 41COL88 and 89 which are located north of the study area and were recorded during a study done for the City of Allen's wastewater project. Site 41COL88 consists of a historic farmstead and 41COL89 is a historic cemetery. South of the study area, AR Consultants, Inc. (Skinner 1999) recorded a lithic and fire-cracked rock scatter, the Black Shoe site (41DL384), a lithic and fire-cracked rock scatter along with mussel shells and bones, and a historic residence site (41DL386) adjacent to Rowlett Creek and in the Firewheel Golf Course in the City of Garland. The uppermost terraces and part of the floodplain of Spring Creek southwest of its

conjunction with Rowlett Creek was investigated by Geo-Marine, Inc. (Buysse et al 1998) for the Firewheel Golf Course as well, but no archaeological sites were found. Site 41DL29 was discovered during a Texas Department of Transportation archaeological survey, and it consists of an Archaic lithic scatter (TASA 2004). Interestingly, these sites are located on limestone knolls or ridges above Rowlett Creek and not in its floodplain. AR Consultants (Skinner and Whorton 1994) conducted an archaeological survey of 248 acres which was on both sides of a tributary to West Rowlett Creek but did not find any sites. PBS&J (Sills and Cliff 2003) discovered a buried Late Archaic site in a natural levee of Rowlett Creek south of its conjunction with Spring Creek. The site was buried approximately 3 meters deep and dated to 2180 \pm 40 B.P., with a 2-sigma calibrated age of 110 to 370 B.C. (Beta-173456). Within the proposed park area, AR Consultants, Inc. (Todd, Trask and Jennings 2004) excavated five backhoe trenches within the Rowlett Creek's eastern floodplain for the 15 acre Los Rios Lake. Depths of the trenches ranged from 1.97 to 3.91 meters, but no cultural materials were found. Although some distance from the proposed park area, Geo-Marine, Inc. (Cliff et al 1996) investigated the skeletal remains found on a bench east of the confluence of Rowlett Creek and what is today Lake Ray Hubbard. Remains of four individuals were found as well as a conch shell pendant and marine shell beads. The skeletal remains were dated to 970 \pm 60 years B.P. (Beta-83331) which is a calibrated age from A.D. 1010 to 1165.

Several surveys have been conducted along Spring Creek which is analogous to Rowlett Creek. Linder-Linsley (1996) excavated a burial in a terrace next to Spring Creek's channel in the Spring Creek Park Reserve in Garland, Texas. AR Consultants (Skinner 1990, 1991 and 1993) conducted several archaeological surveys along Spring Creek. In the 1990 survey of the Spring Creek Forest Preserve, a historic structure foundation (41DL304) was discovered on a ridge overlooking Cedar Creek and a historic trash dump (41DL305) was recorded, but no prehistoric sites were found. The Spring Creek Nature Area was investigated in 1991, but no prehistoric sites were found in the floodplain. However, an Archaic lithic scatter (41COL82) was discovered on a ridge overlooking the creek. The surveyors also found a historic cemetery, the Routh Cemetery (41COL83). Geo-Marine, Inc. (Green, James and Hunt 1997) reinvestigated the cemetery. In addition, a historic domicile (41DL372) located in Spring Creek's floodplain was found in their survey. Another archaeological survey (Skinner 1993) north of Spring Creek in the Spring Creek Green Belt did not discover any sites. In Garland, Geo-Marine, Inc. (Cliff, Hunt and Peter 1989) investigated the Weary site, a lithic scatter, adjacent to Spring Creek in the Spring Creek Forest Preserve. Only four flakes a piece of fire-cracked rock were found, but, this illustrates that the artifact recovery from sites adjacent to the creek is small; therefore, locations containing similar sites should be investigated carefully in order to discern these fragile prehistoric sites.

The 1930 soil map for Collin County was checked to determine if historic residences were located within the proposed park area. Six historic residences are shown along Morton Vale Road. R. King Harris, who was at Southern Methodist University at the time, marked on the 1939 General Highway Map for Collin County sites that he found while exploring for cultural materials within the county. He found no archaeological sites within the proposed park area, but several residences, most of which are on the 1930

Collin County soils map, are shown. A portion of the 1939 map with the residences is shown on Figure 2.

Conversations with various collectors and especially Mr. John McGraw, former president of the Collin County Archeological Society and district judge, indicated that cultural materials were not found on uplands adjacent to Rowlett Creek in the proposed park area, but along the creek and in the creek's banks. In addition, discussion with both Mr. McGraw and Mr. Bill Dakin, Parks and Wildlife Manager for the City of Plano, informed the surveyors of the possible location of the Muncie Massacre site where the Muncie family, except for a son who was in Throckmorton, and a family friend were massacred by Comanche Indians in 1844. The family was living in a temporary board building while the cabin was being built. The site supposedly is located east of SH 5 and west of Rowlett Creek. Mr. McGraw dedicated a plaque for the massacre which was placed west of Rowlett Creek, but the plaque subsequently was moved to the campus of Collin County College on Spring Creek Parkway.

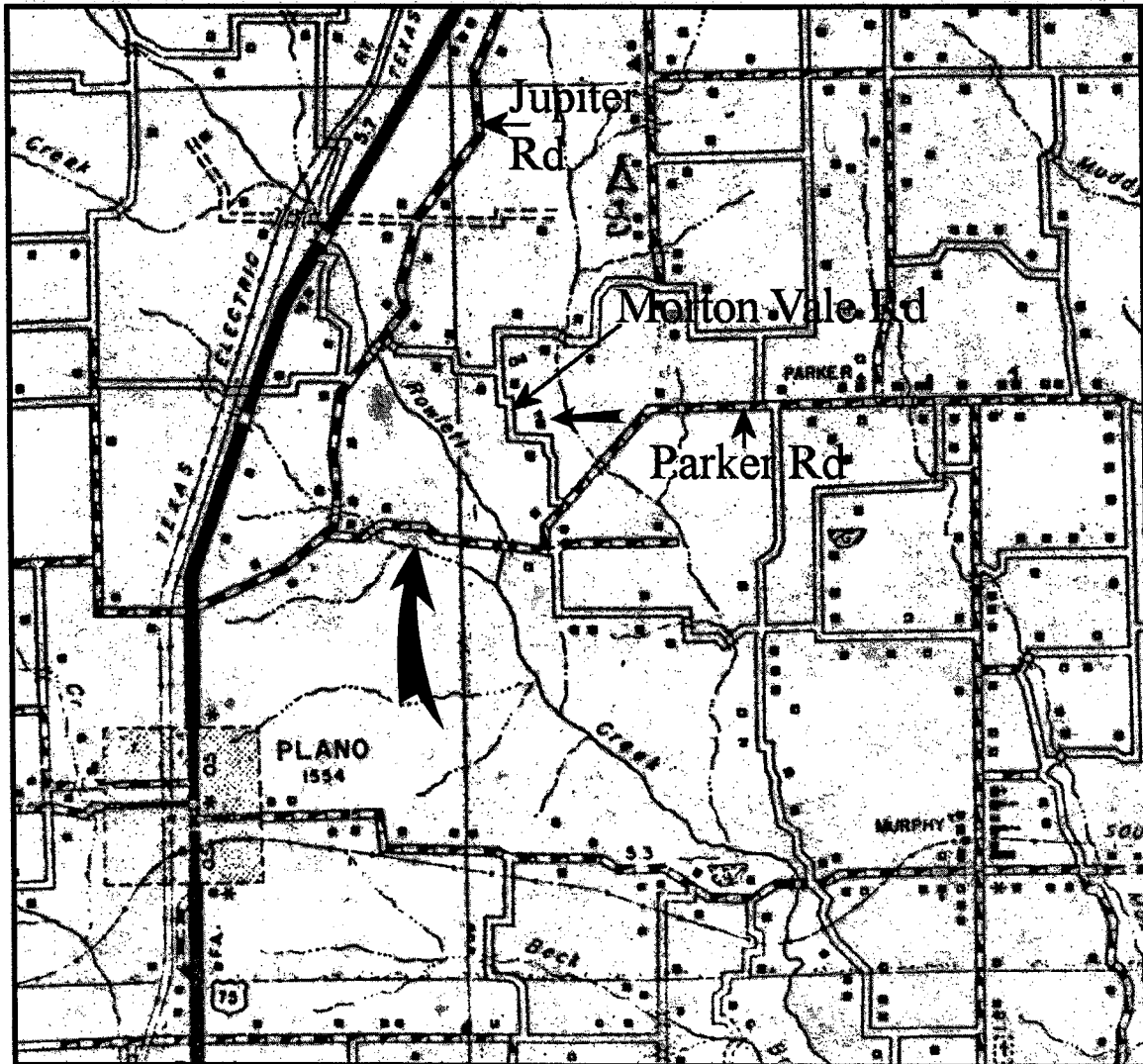


Figure 2. Portion of the 1939 General Highway Map for Collin County with the proposed Oak Point Park & Nature Preserve site indicated by an arrow. Notice the residences and Cottonwood School along Morton Vale Road.

FIELD INVESTIGATION

On December 2, 3 and 9, 2004, the authors inspected the proposed Oak Point Park & Nature Preserve, and with the aid of the appropriate project system design maps, USGS maps, and soils information for Collin County, notes were made about locations that presented high potential for cultural materials. The notes included observations about the general location of the elevations above flooding along Rowlett Creek and the adjacent uplands. These observations did not constitute an archaeological survey nor did the inspection reach the level of a reconnaissance as outlined in the CTA report guidelines.

The following discussion presents the results of the field inspection conducted by ARC and makes recommendations about the need for and type of field investigations that should be done. The presentation begins with a discussion of the proposed park area between SH 5 and Jupiter Road and proceeds southeasterly to the proposed park area between Jupiter Road and Parker Road (Figure 1). Conclusions end the chapter.

SH 5 and Jupiter Road

The area between SH 5 and Jupiter Road is bounded by Chaparral Road on the north and Emerald Coast Drive on the east. The terrain gently slopes to Rowlett Creek's floodplain which ranges from approximately 100 to 300 meters wide. The creek is approximately 4 meters wide and 3 meters deep. Water was flowing and the substrate was clay with limestone gravel, cobbles and boulders. The underlying limestone bedrock must be exposed further up the creek. Trees include bois d'arc, hackberry, oak, mesquite and eastern red cedar. Some of the bois d'arc and oak trees have 4-foot diameter trunks. Understory vegetation includes prairie grasses, bunch grass, rabbit grass, hog brush, saw greenbriar and grapevine. Water was present in low lying areas and the area was dissected by large tributaries. Modern trash was abundant along the floodplain and several tons of concrete blocks and pipe had been piled up along a small tributary to the creek. Ground visibility ranged from less than 10 to 30 percent and eye-height visibility ranged from less than 7 to 35+ meters.

Survey began in the northeastern corner of the proposed park area south of the intersection of Chaparral Road and SH 5 and east of Rowlett Creek. Survey transects were oriented roughly north-south and the surveyors walked 30 meters apart. No elevations above flooding were noted along the slope, but a knoll was found within the floodplain. An overbank levee runs from approximately where a tributary enters creek down to the first large bend in the creek. The small portion of the proposed park west of Rowlett Creek and northwest of Jupiter Road was investigated next. No elevations above flooding were found in this area. No indications of an area were found were the Muncie Massacre might have occurred or of any historic structures. No cultural materials were seen in the creek bank walls either.

The knoll is across from a bend in Rowlett Creek and adjacent to a small tributary. The dimensions are approximately 50 meters square. The elevation is less than a meter high. The overbank levee runs for approximately 1.2 kilometers along the creek, ranging from approximately 0.5 to a meter high, and two meters wide. No artifacts or shells were found.

Jupiter Road to Parker Road

The area between Jupiter Road and Parker Road is bounded by Morton Vale Road to the east and Spring Valley Parkway to the west. The terrain gently slopes to Rowlett Creek's floodplain from the east but the slope is greater on the west side due to the upland being closer to the creek. Due to the upland being closer to the creek to the west, the floodplain is less than a 100 meters wide south of Jupiter Road but is much wider approximately 600 meters north of Parker Road. The floodplain east of Rowlett Creek is quite extensive as can be seen on the topographic map of the area (Figure 1). The creek ranges from 4 to 5 meters wide and 3 to 4 meters deep. Water was flowing and the substrate was clay with limestone gravel, cobbles and boulders in places. Approximately 250 meters south of Jupiter Road, limestone was exposed in the bank profile approximately 1.5 meters below the ground surface. About mid-way between Jupiter and Parker Roads, limestone is exposed in the bank profile approximately 2.5 meters below the ground surface. The area between Jupiter and Parker Road did not contain as much vegetation as that between SH 5 and Jupiter Road. Most of the area west of Spring Creek Parkway had been cleared for park construction even though the area close to the intersection of Spring Creek Parkway and Jupiter Road was covered in small saplings. East of the creek, land had been cleared for pasture. Vegetation was similar to the area between SH 5 and Jupiter Road except more grass was present in the pastures. Water was present in low lying areas and the area was dissected by large tributaries. Modern trash was not abundant along the floodplain. Ground visibility ranged from less than 10 to 50 percent and eye-height visibility ranged averaged 20 meters.

Based upon the previous experience of placing 5 backhoe trenches in Rowlett Creek's floodplain, the floodplain was not as intensively investigated as along the drainage. If no elevations above flooding were seen from Los Rios Boulevard or Spring Creek Parkway, no pedestrian survey was conducted. The upland areas on both sides of the creek were investigated using northwest-southeast oriented transects which were spaced 30 meters apart. No locations that might contain cultural materials were found.

Nine knolls were found on the banks of Rowlett Creek as well as overbank levees on both banks (Figure 1). The levee on the west bank extends for approximately 3 kilometers and the northern levee on the east bank extends for approximately 2 kilometers and the southern levee extends for approximately 1 kilometer. The levees range from 0.5 to 1.5 meters high and 2 meters wide. The knolls range in size from 50 meter square to 300 meters north-south by 100 meters east-west. None of the knolls are greater than a meter above the ground surface. Some of the knolls are associated with the overbank levee. No cultural materials were seen in the bank profiles of the creek.

Conclusions

Based upon the pedestrian survey, it is apparent that elevations above flooding in the form of knolls and overbank levees are present adjacent to Rowlett Creek. Knolls associated with overbank levees have a high potential for containing archaeological sites as do the levees.

Although possibly out of the survey area, the structural foundations of what once was an office building for a tree farm should be investigated further. Portions of the foundations appear to be older than 50 years and may in fact be a structure related to the Cottonwood School on the 1930 Collin County soils map and the 1939 General Highway map.

Sites similar to the Weary site may be found on knolls and/or levees along Rowlett Creek. In addition, it is possible that burials may be present such as the one discovered on a terrace of Spring Creek. Burials similar to the one at the Harbor Pointe site (41DL369) found at the confluence of Rowlett Creek and Lake Ray Hubbard should not be uncovered since the environment is not present within the study area.

RESEARCH DESIGN & METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this research design is to insure that fieldwork made a contribution to the prehistory and history of Collin County, Texas. A records review indicated no evidence of prehistoric or historic occupation in the survey area. Since the study area is near a transportation route, the focus of the research design was on both the possible prehistoric historic occupation. Based on the known prehistoric and historic archaeology of the area, we proposed the following three research hypotheses.

The first hypothesis concerns the prehistoric occupation of the study area. It was predicted that elevations above flooding adjacent to Rowlett Creek had potential to contain archaeological sites as well as the overbank levees because of the presence of seasonal water and presence of nut trees as well as animals who feed on the nuts. In Rowlett Creek's floodplain, however, there was little likelihood of having been occupied prehistorically because of the lack of elevations above flooding as well as low biotic diversity and presumed absence of Uvalde gravel.

The second hypothesis is that historic sites might be present because the study area is adjacent to transportation routes. The presence of residences within the floodplain is unlikely due to flooding. However, AR Consultants, Inc. (Skinner et al 2002) radiocarbon dated a bois d'arc tree trunk which lay a meter below the floodplain surface of the lower East Fork. The trunk's date was 120±50 B.P. (Beta-170374), placing it in the late 1800s which is approximately 3 feet of fill within the last 150 years.

The third question that will guide survey work as well as it does in most archeological surveys is, "How did past people use the land, what record of this use did they leave behind?"

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is AR Consultants Inc.'s recommendation that much of the proposed park site is situated in areas of low probability and that archaeological survey is unwarranted in those areas. However, we recommend survey and testing on elevations above flooding adjacent to Rowlett Creek and on the overbank levees along Rowlett Creek. Shovel testing should be supplemented by augering because the trail construction's impact may be as deep as 36 inches (90 centimeters) below the surface. In areas where piers are to be placed for the construction of foot bridges, we recommend that deep testing be done because the impact will be approximately 20 feet (6.67 meters) below the surface. Deep testing will not have to reach 6.67 meters because the bedrock limestone should be encountered at a shallower depth, in some places approximately 1.5 meters below the surface. We further recommend that the Tree Farm office be investigated further as a historical archaeological site even though it has little integrity and only the concrete foundations remain. Also, any construction done within the park area between Jupiter Road and SH 5 should be done cautiously in case evidence of the Muncie Massacre is uncovered since the location of the potential historic site is unknown.

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