

Phase II and Phase III Project Cover Sheet

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REPORT INFORMATION:

1988 Kavanagh, M. and C.A. Ebright
Archeological Testing of Four Prehistoric Sites in Town Creek Valley, Allegany County, Maryland.
Submitted to the Maryland State Highway Administration

Library ID No: 00000078 Catalog/Shelving ID: AG 22

Research Firm/Institution:

Maryland Historical Trust
Shaw House, 21 State Circle
Annapolis, MD 21401

Sites examined:

18AG44	18AG60	18AG148	18AG160
NRHP Eligible: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		NRHP Eligible: <input type="checkbox"/>	NRHP Eligible: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Justification		Justification	Justification

Project Details:

Phase I	
Phase II	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Phase III	

Project Justification:
Intensive archeological testing was conducted at four prehistoric sites in the Town Creek Valley along proposed alignments for the National Freeway (US Route 48) in Allegany County. In 1985, it was recognized that newly proposed modifications to the AGEA alignments and tie lines would directly impact two previously identified sites, the Murley Branch site (18AG60) and a portion of the Wallizer site (18AG44). Subsequent survey in the area revealed the presence of two more sites, Whittaker I (18AG148) and Wild Turkey (18AG160), and based on the recovery of substantial cultural material, these sites and the original two were recommended for Phase II testing.

MAC Accession: 1977.021, 1978.004, 1985.005, 1985.006

Project Objectives:

- Determination of site limits; establish site location vis-a-vis the proposed highway alignment.
- Determination of site chronology; collect a sample of diagnostic artifacts sufficient to characterize the time period(s) of occupation.
- Determination of site function; collect a sufficient sample of artifacts to make a preliminary statement of site function and major activities.
- Examination of site structure; using a systematically-collected sample, evaluate the distributions of various artifact classes to make preliminary assessment of site structure (i.e., different temporal loci, activity areas, etc.).
- Assessment of site stratigraphy; record soil stratigraphy, determine the preservation of features, determine the nature of soil deposition, and observe the context of artifacts.
- Assessment of site scarcity; by comparison with other sites, determine the rarity or scarcity of such a site within the region.
- Assessment of research potential; determine the extent of preservation of various classes of remains from good context. Address regional research goals which would assist in site interpretation.
- Evaluation of site significance; using the above data, evaluate the significance of the site under the National Register of Historic Places criteria.

Research Potential:

The information on site function and chronology obtained during Phase II testing can be used to formulate specific questions regarding the prehistoric settlement/subsistence system in Town Creek Valley. The relationship among the shared temporal occupations at the various sites can be further elaborated/defined. The results could be tied into a regional framework using survey and site data from this valley as well as adjoining areas in order to formulate a more detailed picture of prehistoric occupation/utilization of this region.

The Wallizer site (18AG44) is a rare archeological resource with excellent research potential, intact features below plowzone, and excellent preservation of floral and faunal remains. Several basic chronology questions at the site (as a whole) still need to be worked out, but it is certain that there is a well-represented Monongahela presence there. Thus, there are a number of research questions which would pertain to the village's role in the interaction sphere given its decidedly peripheral location relative to the major Monongahela area in western PA. How does this site compare to other Monongahela sites in terms of village layout? How does the site compare with others in terms of its setting? How does the artifact assemblage compare, again with other Monongahela sites and is there evidence of what its role was in relation to others? Do burial practices conform to those of the western PA sites, as well as with the nearby Cresaptown site (18AG119)? What were the principal constituents of the diet and what seasonal and health-related information can be gleaned from it? Testing suggested a heavy reliance on local high-quality cherts for tools. Can this be verified? Can tool function be determined through the analysis of various residues?

The Murley Branch Site (18AG60) yielded evidence of Early Archaic, Late Archaic, and Late Woodland occupations. Because of both site flooding and reduction of the testing program (due to highway project decisions), the vertical integrity of the site was not determined and remains as the most important goal for future work at the site. Testing at the Whittaker I site (18AG148) demonstrated that the site was occupied from the late Middle Archaic through the Terminal Archaic. However, a low density of formal tool types, as well as heavy reuse of tools, suggests that the site is primarily a low density short-term use site (or lithic scatter) lacking features. This is not a particularly unique resource to the region and its future research potential is slim. The Wild Turkey site (18AG160) appears to be a single function tool-manufacturing site and, more importantly, it appears to be a rare single component site with good

horizontal integrity. Since over 80% of the debitage at the site consists of local poor-quality chert, the source of this material needs to be identified. A large sample of lithics from the site could then be used to analyze the steps in reduction and tool manufacture that took place at Wild Turkey. In addition to the lithic analysis, organic residue studies would shed light on processing/procurement activities taking place at the site as well as perhaps identifying the season(s) of occupation.
