

**FINAL MANAGEMENT SUMMARY**  
**Archaeological Survey**  
**Route 653 Bridge Replacement, Nelson County, Virginia**  
**Project No.: 0653-062-817, B655, C501, P101, R201**  
**iPM/UPC/CSC No.: 112865**  
**Activity Code: 784**  
**VDHR File No.: 2019-0486**

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December 16, 2019

The William and Mary Center for Archaeological Research (WMCAR) conducted an archaeological survey of the area of potential effect (APE) associated with the proposed construction of a bridge replacement on Route 653 in Nelson County, Virginia on October 21-23, 2019 (Figure 1). The survey was conducted in accordance with an agreement with the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) (Project: 0653-062-817, B655, C501, P101, R201; iPM/UPC/CSC No.: 112865; Activity Code: 784; VDHR File No.: 2019-0486). This investigation was intended to provide specific information concerning the nature and distribution of archaeological resources within the proposed project environmental corridor plus a 50-ft. (15-m) buffer (project corridor). The following is an interim management summary of the survey project, including a description of the project corridor and survey results.

The proposed Route 653 Bridge Replacement Project is located in Nelson County and encompasses approximately 4.3 acres (1.74 ha), extending 125 ft. (38 m) on either side of Route 653 and 256 ft. (78 m) from the edge of the Oak Ridge Railroad Overpass (Figure 1). The project corridor lies within the Northern Piedmont region of Virginia. Topography is generally level at about 676 ft. (206 m) above mean sea level. Soils within the project corridor fall mainly within the Hayesville loam type, which is a well-drained sediment found on hillslopes and summits (United States Department of Agriculture [USDA] 2019). Route 653 is situated at the top of a ridge drained to the northeast by unnamed streams tributary to Rucker Run and to the southwest by its tributary Bob's Creek. These streams flow into the James River via the Buffalo River.

Background review reveals that no archaeological sites have been previously recorded within a 1-mile (1.6-km) radius of the project corridor. The project corridor extends across a portion of the Oak Ridge Historic District (DHR ID 062-0011) that is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) under Criteria A, B, and C (Figure 2). The bridge that currently carries Route 653 over the Norfolk Southern Railway is a previously recorded architectural resource (Oak Ridge Railroad Overpass, DHR 062-0085) that is eligible for the NRHP under Criterion C. Neither the Oak Ridge Historic District nor the Oak Ridge Railroad Overpass are documented to have any associated archaeological resources within nor as contributing to their NRHP eligibility, however.

Fieldwork involved systematic pedestrian survey of the project corridor, including both surface examination and shovel testing. Shovel testing was undertaken at intervals of not more than 50 ft. (15 m) in undisturbed areas with slopes of less than 15 percent. Areas where previous construction disturbance and/or deep fill deposition was evident were not shovel tested. Soil profiles were recorded for all representative shovel tests.

Stratigraphy within the project corridor generally consists of a single stratum over subsoil. A typical shovel test profile consists of a dark yellowish brown (10YR4/4) loam measuring 0.65 ft. (20 cm) in thickness that may represent an old plowzone. Subsoil is a reddish yellow (7.5YR6/8) sandy clay (Figure 3).

A total of 83 shovel tests were excavated systematically during the survey, none of which was positive for artifacts (see Figure 2). The lack of any evidence of archaeological resources within the project corridor is likely due, in part, to historically low population density. The lack of any previously-identified archaeological sites within 1-mi (1.6 km) similarly demonstrates limited occupation until the twentieth century. Historical maps and aerial photography show no structures within the project corridor.

The primary purpose of this survey was to provide VDOT with a statement of the nature and distribution of archaeological resources within the project corridor for the proposed bridge construction on Route 653. The effectiveness of any such survey is contingent upon and limited by the methods employed. In order to ensure recovery of artifacts, fill from shovel tests was screened through 0.25-in. (0.64-cm) wire mesh. It is felt that the survey has met its intended goals and that no significant archaeological resources were overlooked within the project corridor.

## **References Cited**

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)  
2019 USDA Natural Resources Conservation Services Web Soil Survey,  
<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/soils/survey/>, accessed October 17, 2019.

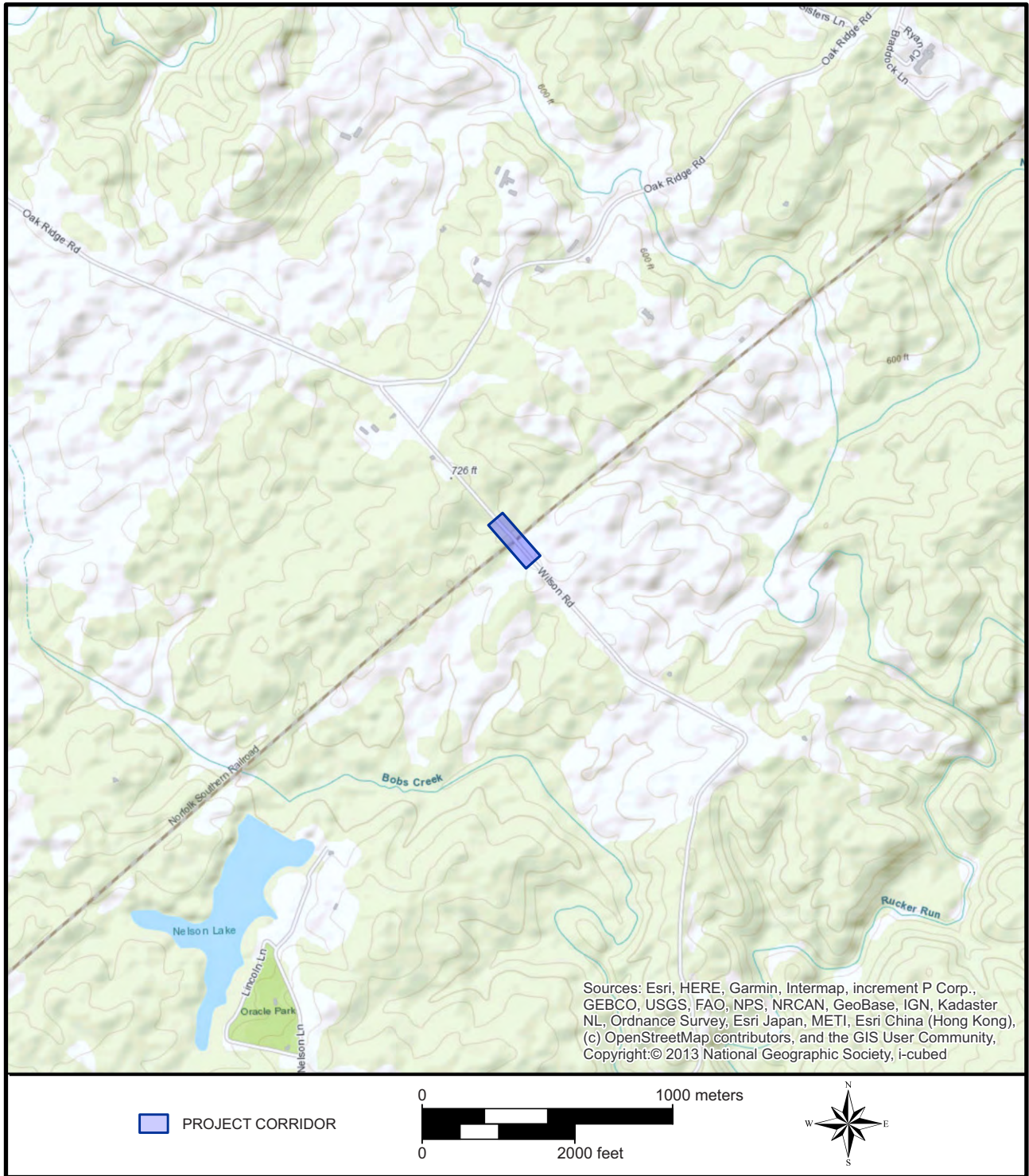
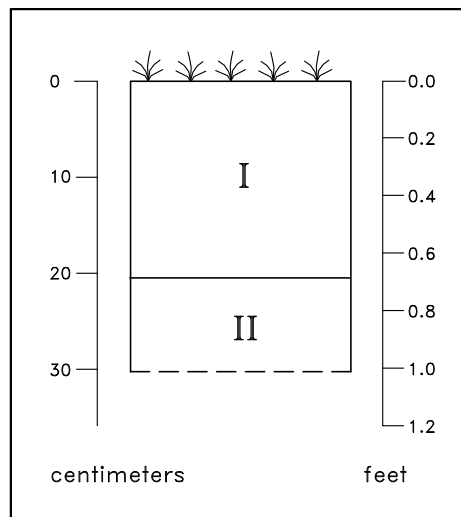


Figure 1. Project corridor and environs.



Figure 2. Shovel test locations within project corridor.



- I - Dark yellowish brown (10YR4/4) loam
- II - Reddish yellow (7.5YR6/8) sandy clay

*Figure 3. Shovel test B14, profile.*