

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY AND ASSESSMENT OF TWO
WAYNE COUNTY BORROW PIT LOCATIONS

By

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Management Summary

An archaeological survey and assessment was conducted at two borrow pit sites in Wayne County, North Carolina (No Clearinghouse number was available). The sites are approximately one and two acres in extent and located southwest of Goldsboro, 1.5 mi apart. Because surface visibility was generally good, and neither location was in a depositional environment, a pedestrian survey was sufficient to assess their archaeological potential. No archaeological remains were observed, and both impact zones are considered to have a low potential for cultural resources. As a consequence, no further archaeological study or mitigation is recommended.

Introduction

On February 21, the authors conducted an archaeological survey of two borrow pit sites southwest of Goldsboro in Wayne County, North Carolina. The study was done at the request of Wilson Construction Company of Salisbury. The borrow pits will provide fill to be used in the construction of a new bridge at State Road 1008-Neuse River crossing.

Borrow pit site 1 is located .5 mi east of the Neuse River, on the south side of S.R. 1008. This location is adjacent to an old borrow area that has filled with water to form two small lakes. The second site is located .7 mi west of the Neuse, also on the south side of S.R. 1008 (Figure 1).

The impact area of the first pit is approximately an acre in extent, rectangular in outline, and measures 100 ft by 500 ft. The second impact zone, covering approximately 2 acres, forms a truncated triangle and measures 500 ft along its sides, 200 ft at the base, and 80 ft at the top (Figure 2).

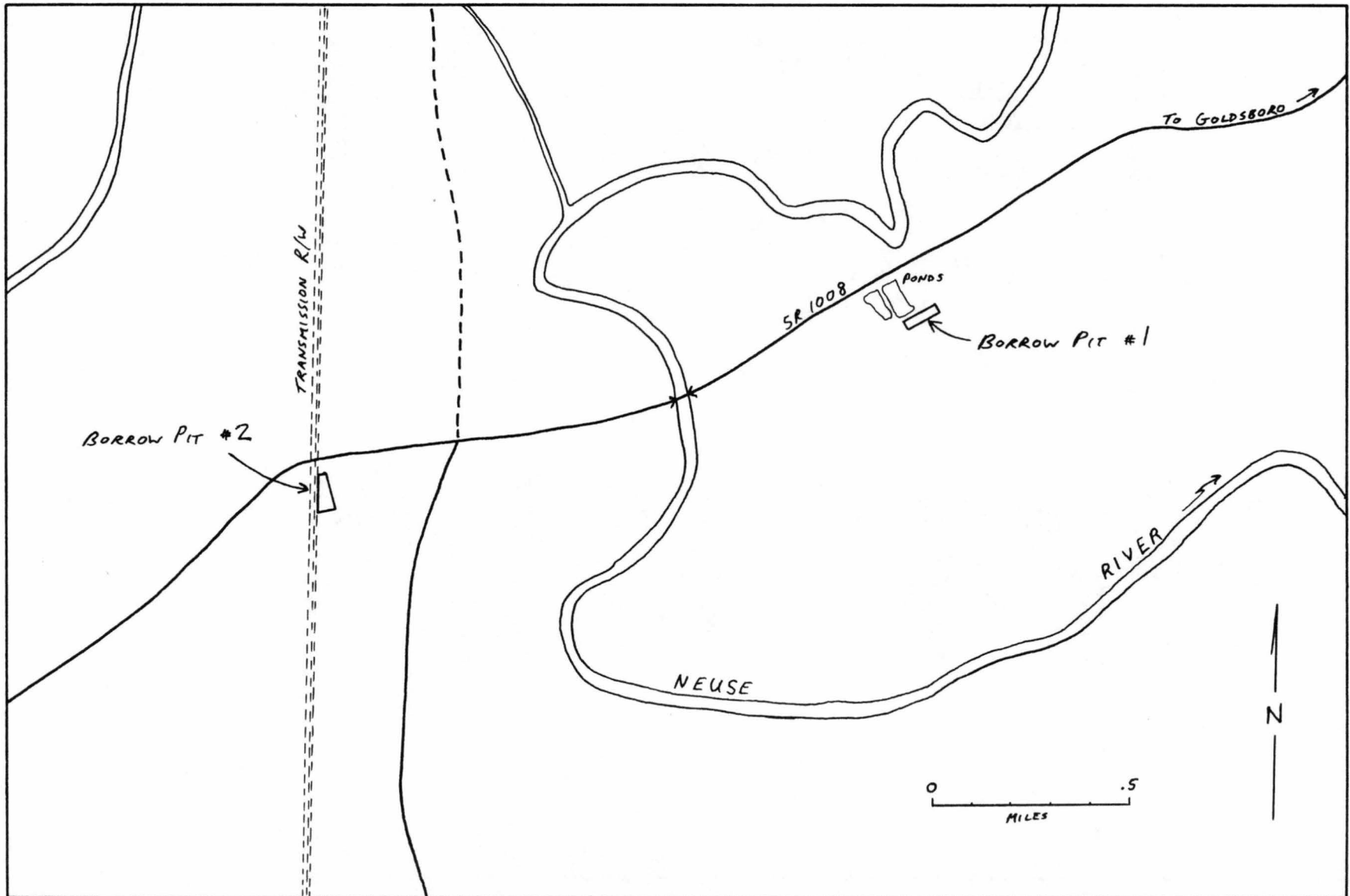


Figure 1. Map of project vicinity locating borrow pit sites.

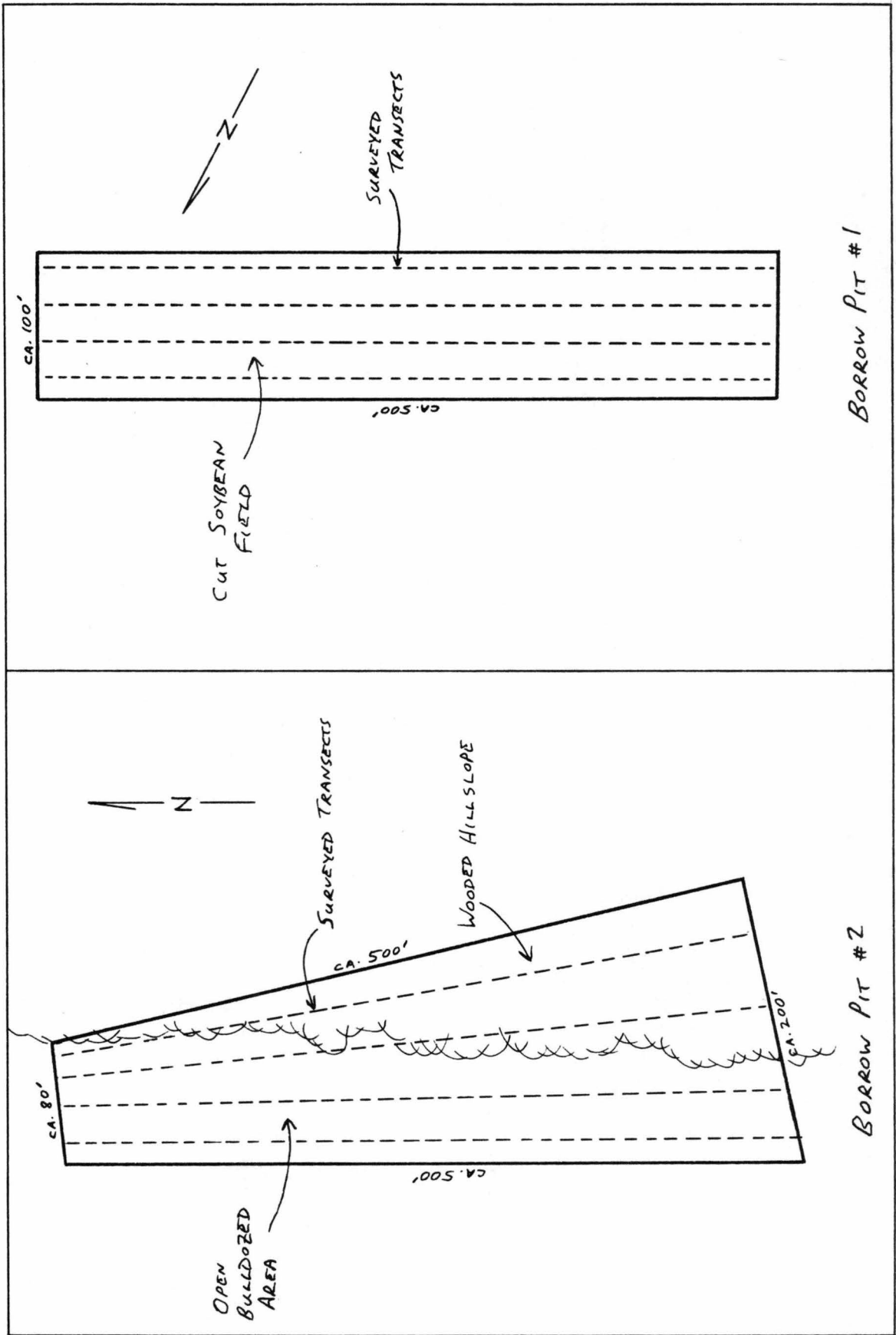


Figure 2. Sketch maps of borrow pit sites.

Environmental Factors

Wayne County is located in the central Coastal Plain and is bordered by Wilson, Greene, Lenoir, Duplin, Sampson, and Johnston counties. Generally, the terrain is flat to gently rolling. South of the Neuse, in the "sandhills" area, however, the surface is more undulating. The Southwest Goldsboro topographic map vividly illustrates this difference, and the project sites also have different slope characteristics. Borrow Pit #2 is located along the flank of a broad bluff with a slope of at least 20 percent. In contrast, Borrow Pit #1 is flat and slopes less than one percent.

Although large stands of pines form most of the forests, mixed hardwoods prevail along the bottomlands and in areas with poorly drained soils. Approximately 40 percent of the Borrow Pit #2 site is forested. Pines predominate, but there are also a few scattered oaks and hickories. The remainder of the tract has been recently logged and bulldozed. Borrow Pit #1 has been cultivated for at least 100 years. At the time of the survey, it was covered with sparse soybean stubble.

The surface soil at Borrow Pit #1 is a brown sandy loam .8 ft thick. It is underlain by a tanish orange, sandy clay. According to an early USDA soil study, this soil belongs to

the Kalima series, and under conditions of good drainage, provides a favorable crop medium (Derrick, et al. 1916). A more recent survey places this soil type in the Wickham-Johns association (Wayne County Planning Board 1978:15). Although not noted in the soil survey reports, a large number of quartz pebbles are present throughout the upper horizon.

The soil associated with Borrow Pit #2 contains more sand than the Kalima soil. The surface material is greyish in color and blends into a yellow sandy subsoil. This soil belongs to the Wagram association, which makes up approximately 20 percent of the land in Wayne County. These soils have low natural fertility and a low water holding capacity (Wayne County Planning Board 1978:13).

Prehistoric and Historic Background

Several environmental impact archaeological surveys have been conducted in Wayne County. One such project was undertaken in the Thoroughfare Swamp Basin, which is located only a few miles south of the proposed borrow pit locations. Here 161 archaeological sites were recorded. This study was the first to systematically survey a lateral stream system in the coastal plain, and the results demonstrated that significant archaeological resources could be found along such streams (Phelps 1976:24).

The Thoroughfare Swamp sites ranged in age from ca. 10,000 B.C. to A.D. 1850. Most dated to the Archaic period (8000 - 2000 B.C.) with Kirk (7000 - 6000 B.C.) and Morrow Mountain (4500 - 3500 B.C.) components occurring most frequently. The majority of the Archaic sites represented small camps, with some being reoccupied throughout the period. Several Woodland (2000 B.C. - A.D. 1715) sites also were found in the Thoroughfare Swamp drainage. As with the Archaic sites, most represented small temporary camps, but some semi-permanent and permanent villages were also recorded (Phelps 1976:22-23). The last Indians to live in the area were the Tuscarora who occupied fortified villages and maintained seasonal hunting quarters. After a protracted conflict with English colonists, they moved to New York in 1722 to join their kinsmen in the Iroquois Confederacy.

Wayne County, established in 1779 when Dobbs County was split in half, was named after General Anthony Wayne who distinguished himself during the American Revolution. "Prior to 1730, the only occupants of the territory were Indians and wild animals" (Daniels 1914:15). Some of the earliest white settlers were Quakers. By 1779, 5,000 people had trickled into the county. Most of the early white settlers were subsistence farmers, and according to a traveler writing before the American Revolution:

There is but little specie in circulation, there being no occasion for it; for a planter raises his own meats, beef and bacon, his own corn and bread, his drinks, cyder and brandy, his fruit, apples, peaches, etc., and a great part of his clothing, which is cotton (Daniels 1914:16).

This agricultural base laid the foundation for the extensive agricultural production which today is the major economic activity in the county.

Survey Methods

Borrow Pit #1 was located in a cut soybean field with excellent surface visibility (80%). Survey of this project site consisted of walking four 500 ft transects and inspecting the ground surface for artifacts (Figure 2). Transects were spaced approximately 25 ft apart. Due to the lack of evidence at both sites for recent alluviation or colluviation, subsurface testing was deemed unnecessary.

Survey of Borrow Pit #2 also consisted of walking four 500 ft transects and inspecting the ground surface for archaeological remains (Figure 2). Transects were spaced 20-50 ft apart and provided comprehensive coverage of the project area. Additionally, spoil piles from several coring holes (previously excavated as geologic tests) dispersed across the project site were carefully inspected.

Over 60% of the area examined had excellent surface visibility (60-80%); the remainder consisted of a wooded hillslope with poor visibility. Shovel testing was not considered necessary in this latter area given the presence of previously excavated coring holes and the low probability of archaeological remains as suggested by slope characteristics.

Results and Recommendations

No aboriginal archaeological remains were identified in either project area. Borrow Pit #2 contained some recent trash scattered across the project site, as well as the remains of a 20th-century barn or outbuilding which had been recently bulldozed. No evidence existed of the structure's original location. Because of their recent age and disturbed context, these remains are not significant.

Both Borrow Pit sites are well away from any water sources (excluding the recent lakes at Borrow Pit #1), and in areas that would not appear to offer any particular attraction to prehistoric or early historic settlers. Given these environmental conditions and the negative results of the survey, clearance is recommended for the projects without additional study.

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