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Stone Creek Park Rockwall County, Texas

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AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF THE PROPOSED

STONE CREEK PARK

ROCKWALL COUNTY, TEXAS

Texas Antiquities Permit Number 7199

By:

Molly A. Hall, MA
Principal Investigator

Prepared for:

CITY OF ROCKWALL
108 E. Washington
Rockwall, Texas 75087

Prepared by:

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Cultural Resources Report 2015-15
March 13, 2015

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ABSTRACT

The City of Rockwall is proposing to construct the 14.4-acre Stone Creek Park on the northwest corner of John King Boulevard and Featherstone Drive in Rockwall, Texas. AR Consultants, Inc. (ARC) was contracted to survey the route and conducted the survey March 6, 2015. No prehistoric or historic archaeological sites were found during the survey. This follows the predictions made prior to field work which were based on the project area's location in the upper reaches of the Thompson Branch Watershed. Given the results of this survey, AR Consultants, Inc. recommends that further cultural resource investigations are unnecessary for this project, and requests that the Texas Historical Commission concur with this recommendation.

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INTRODUCTION

The City of Rockwall is proposing to construct the 14.4-acre Stone Creek Park in Rockwall County, Texas. Most of the park consists of a 11.5-acre rectangle bounded by Featherstone Drive on the south, John King Boulevard on the east, and J. W. Williams Middle School property on the north. An additional 2.9 acres north follow the intermittent Thompson Branch to the north and will be incorporated into the park (Figure 1). An existing one-acre pond in the southeast corner of the property will also be part of the park.

AR Consultants, Inc. (ARC) was contracted to conduct a cultural resource survey, which included archival research, to determine the prehistoric and historic archaeological presence in the proposed park property. In the scope of work dated February 27, 2015, ARC recommended that entire property be intensively surveyed and systematically shovel tested. The Texas Historical Commission agreed with this survey strategy. The cultural resource survey was conducted on March 6, 2015.

The cultural resource investigation was required because the City of Rockwall is a State entity and Texas Antiquities Permit Number 7199 was issued for the archaeological survey. Relevant legislation includes the Antiquities Code of Texas (Texas Natural Resource Code, Title 9, Chapter 191). The Archeology Division of the Texas Historical Commission will review this report on behalf of the State.

This report is written in accordance with report guidelines adopted by the Archeology Division of the Texas Historical Commission, and developed by the Council of Texas Archeologists (n.d.). The following report presents a brief description of the natural setting of the project area, followed by a discussion of the culture history and previous investigations in the region surrounding the study area. A chapter on the research design and methodology employed in the investigation is then followed by the results of the field investigation. The report concludes with recommendations followed by the references cited.

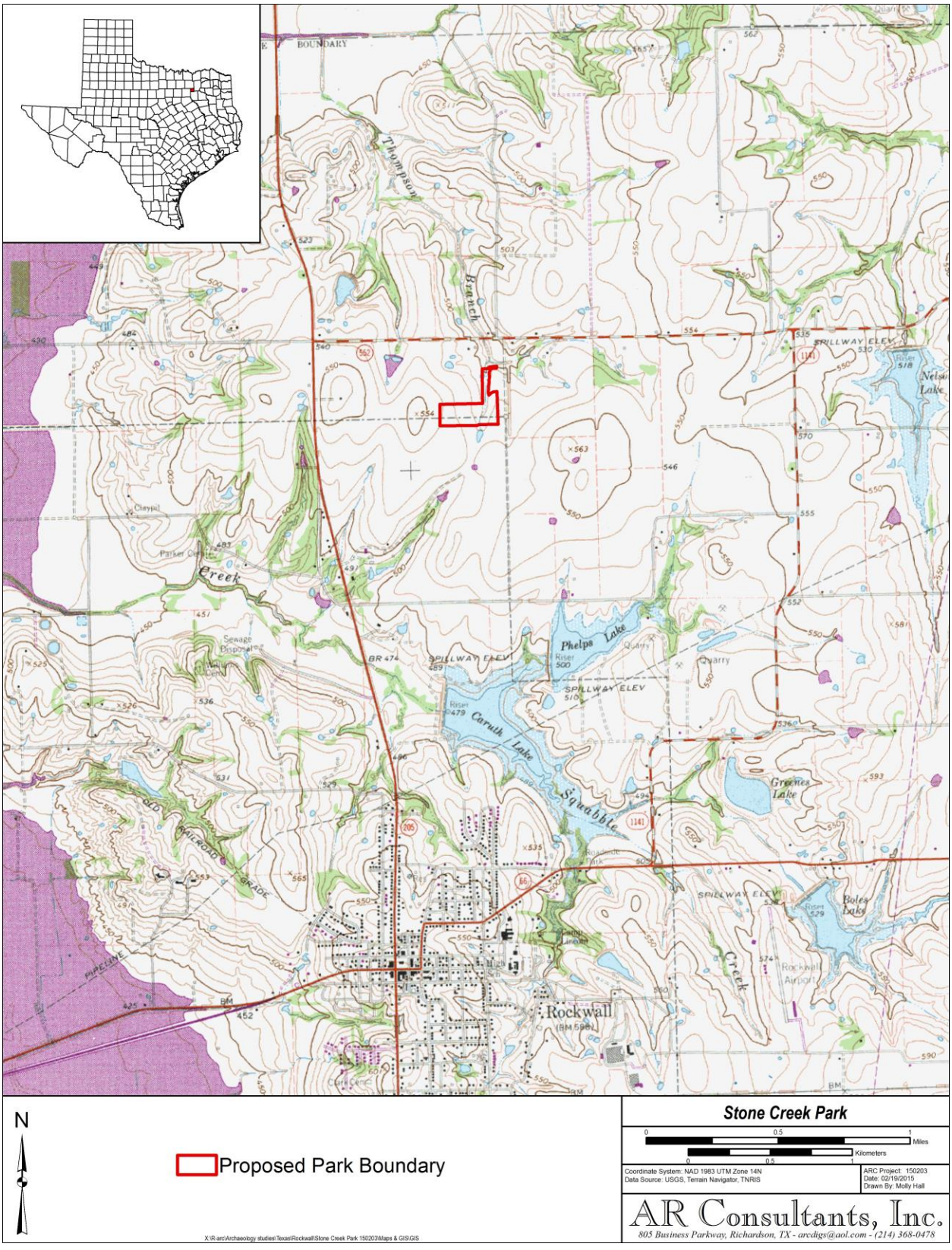

Figure 1. The proposed Stone Creek Park property shown on a portion of the Rockwall, TX 7.5' USGS topographic map.

Administrative Information:

Sponsor:	City of Rockwall
Review Agencies:	Archeology Division of the Texas Historical Commission
Principal Investigator:	Molly A. Hall, MA
Field Crew:	Molly Hall
Survey Dates:	March 6, 2015
Field Days:	1
Acres Surveyed:	14.4
Sites Recorded:	None
Curation Facility:	Records curated at TARL, no artifacts collected

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

The project area is in the Northern Blackland Prairie Ecoregion of Texas (Griffith et al. 2007). The Blackland Prairie was once an expanse of rolling tallgrass prairie. This region features low, stair-step hills and plains (Bureau of Economic Geology 1996). The park property is situated in the upper reaches of the Thompson Branch Watershed near the divide between Squabble Creek and Thompson Branch.

The geology of the project area is anchored by the Upper Cretaceous-aged Marlbrook Marl (Bureau of Economic Geology 1988). This formation consists mostly of calcareous clay with some silt and glauconite. Most of park is mapped as Houston Black clay with 1- to 5-percent slopes and Heiden clay with 3- to 5-percent slopes (Pringle 1977:Sheets 2-3). The narrow strip containing the drainage is mapped as Altoga silty clay with 3- to 12-percent slopes. Houston Black clay has a 60-inch-thick A horizon of very dark gray clay above the dark gray clay AC horizon. Like the Houston Black series, the Heiden series is an upland soil and has a 27-in-thick A horizon above an olive clay AC horizon. The Altoga soil forms on old, high terraces. This series has a 5-in-thick A horizon of grayish-brown silty clay above the light yellowish-brown silty clay B horizon.

CULTURE HISTORY

The history and prehistory of North Central Texas is summarized in several reports prepared by the University of North Texas (Lebo and Brown 1990; Brown and Lebo 1991; Ferring and Yates 1998). The most commonly used chronology for the region was established by Prikryl (1990) which divides the Late Prehistoric, the time from the use of the bow and pottery to the Historic Native American, into two periods: Late Prehistoric I (A.D. 700 to 1200) and Late Prehistoric II (A.D. 1200 to 1600).

Historic European	A.D. 1800 to Present
Historic Native American	A.D. 1600 to A.D. 1850
Late Prehistoric II	A.D. 1200 to A.D. 1600
Late Prehistoric I	A.D. 700 to A.D. 1200
Late Archaic	2,000 B.C. to A.D. 700
Middle Archaic	4,000 B.C. to 2,000 B.C.
Early Archaic	6,000 B.C. to 4,000 B.C.
Paleo-Indian	ca. 11,000 B.C. to 6,000 B.C.

Prehistoric Native American settlement in North Central Texas began at least 10,000 years ago as attested to by the presence of distinctively shaped dart points (Crook and Harris 1957) at the Lewisville site and the Aubrey Clovis site (Ferring 2001) in Denton County to the west. Moreover, artifact collectors report the presence of Clovis, Folsom, Scottsbluff, and other Paleo-Indian points from the surface of sites in the region. Though no Clovis points have been reported from Rockwall County, six, three, and one have been found in adjacent Dallas Hunt, and Kaufman counties, respectively (Bever and Meltzer 2007). The presence of exotic, non-local lithic resources indicates that these early people traveled to 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 Archaic period (6,000 B.C.-A.D. 700) is characterized by increased alluviation of water channels and a generally wetter environment than the previous period. This change in climate resulted in modification of Native American subsistence patterns, with broad exploitation of bottomland food resources. This, in turn, resulted in clusters of seasonal settlements along large drainages, including the Trinity River and its various forks and tributaries, and a marked increase in population density. With the advent of repeated, seasonal occupation of sites along drainages came a perceived increase in territorial constrictions among different groups in the region, with several authors citing the limited use of regional lithic resources as evidence of this trend (Skinner 1981; Prewitt 1983). The earliest Archaic peoples continued using exotic cherts for dart points, but, as time passed, there was a subtle shift toward the use of locally available stone, specifically Uvalde Gravels, for chipped stone tools (Menzer and Slaughter 1971; Prikryl 1990: 47-65).

During Late Prehistoric I, a small amount of pottery appears at the Baggett Branch site, 41DL149 (Prikryl and Perttula 1995:189). From A.D. 1000 to 1300, pottery appears in North Central Texas that has similarities to Caddo pottery. This similarity is not well understood, and

may be the result of trade with Caddo to the east, adoption of Caddo ceramic manufacture, Caddo settlement in North Central Texas, or some combination of these scenarios (Prikryl and Perttula 1995:189-190). Arrowheads appear about this same time, signaling the bow and arrow's introduction to the hunting toolkit. Additionally, houses were found at the Cobb-Pool site, 41DL148 (Peter and McGregor 1988:140). Fritz (1993) mentions the use of corn for food in North Central Texas during this time and Todd (1999) suggests that the presence of mussel shell hoes in North Central Texas indicates some form of farming.

Stephenson (1952:305-312) tried to create a chronological sequence for the Upper Trinity River Basin when he defined the Late Prehistoric Wylie Focus, which was dated to A.D. 1300 to 1600, based on shell and clay-grit tempered pottery which, he believed, was Caddo in origin. The Wylie Focus was characterized by large circular pits, no indigenous pottery, flexed burials (both single and multiple and in poorly defined burial pits), maize agriculture and villages. The Wylie Focus term was discarded when Bruseth and Martin (1987:280) dated pits at the Bird Point Island and the Adams Ranch sites to the Late Archaic period.

It has been suggested that the climate was drier during the Late Prehistoric II. Bison may have been utilized more than in Late Prehistoric I times. The presence of bison-scapula hoes, especially in northern North Central Texas, suggests an increase in horticulture or, at least, its first appearance. This concept is supported by the presence of sites along sandy terraces instead of the floodplain area where Late Prehistoric I sites are found. Also, there is a marked Plains influence on lithic tool assemblages found in North Central Texas dating to this period (Prikryl 1990:80).

At the end of the Late Prehistoric periods, there appears to have been a general abandonment of the North Central Texas area (Skinner 1988). Along the Red River in Montague and Cooke Counties and across the Red River in Oklahoma, there is both archaeological and ethnographic evidence of historic Taovaya, Wichita, and Yscani Indians (Bell et al. 1967; John 1992:204). Since the Spanish could not subdue these tribes, they made them their allies with promises of help against the Osages.

European occupation of area began with Spanish and French expeditions, and establishment of trading settlements along the Red River in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries (Kumler 2015). Early settlement of the region began in the 1840s when the Republic of Texas actively promoted the migration of settlers by offering its most abundant asset: land (Staumbaugh and Staumbaugh 1958; Northcutt 1998). Large tracts of undeveloped land were given to impresarios, who in turn, promised to bring in a specified number of families into Texas. One of the first and largest undertakings was that of W. S. Peters and his associates, known as the Texas Emigration and Land Company, who formed the Peters Colony. Promoters of the Peters Colony recruited primarily non-Texan families, many of whom came from the Upland South of the United States.

Texas was annexed by the United States in 1846 the area that is now Rockwall County was part of Henderson County and then Kaufman County in 1847 (Bass 2015). Finally, in 1873, Rockwall County was formed. Around the same time, the construction of the railroad through Rockwall caused a major shift in the region's economy toward agriculture, specifically cotton. Another

major shift has been taking place over the last 50 years as the county has been absorbed into the greater Dallas metropolitan area, consequently becoming less rural.

Previous Investigations

A review of the Texas Archeological Sites Atlas (TASA 2015) shows that there are no previously recorded archaeological sites, cultural resource surveys, historical markers, cemeteries, or National Register Properties within the proposed park property. One site, 41RW27 is located a half a mile southwest of the current survey area. This site was recorded in 2013 by Integrated Environmental Solutions, LLC and consists of a low-density scatter of historic artifacts and five structures. The site dates to the mid-20th century and was recommended not eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

The largest archaeological survey in Rockwall County was conducted at Lake Ray Hubbard (formerly Forney Reservoir) by the Dallas Archeological Society (DAS) (Harris and Suhm 1963). Thirty-three archaeological sites were recorded. This survey described 20 sites already known to the Dallas Archeological Society membership (Hannah 1941; Hannah and Harris 1948; Harris 1948, 1960), and located 13 previously unrecorded sites. Limited excavations were subsequently conducted at the Lower Rockwall site (Lorrain and Hoffrichter 1968) and the Upper Rockwall site (Ross 1966). These excavations provided evidence of the way of life practiced by the prehistoric peoples who occupied this part of the East Fork valley. Recent work conducted by ARC at 41RW2 (the Upper Rockwall site) recovered the remains of at least six Native Americans along with animal bones and lithic artifacts.

ARC has conducted several cultural resource surveys in Rockwall County, all of which found no sites, features, or artifacts. In 1999, ARC surveyed a 30-acre area for three parks approximately nine miles south of the current project area for the City of Heath (Skinner 1999). ARC also surveyed approximately 15,000 feet of sewer pipeline route adjacent to Sabine Creek for Royse City but failed to discover any archaeological sites on the ground surface or in 48 shovel tests (Todd 2004). The East Fork Water Reuse pipeline route, which runs north/south across Rockwall County west of the study area, and the Lake Tawakoni Water Supply pipeline, which terminates in southeastern Rockwall County, were surveyed by ARC (Todd 2006; Todd and Skinner 2005).

Four historic maps dating from 1923 to 1968 were reviewed prior to the survey (TSHD 1936, 1954; USDA 1923; USGS 1963). One structure is mapped near the east side of the project area on the 1923 and 1936 maps, but it does not appear on later maps. This structure should be located under or on the east side of John King Boulevard, but it is possible some evidence of it could be in the proposed park property. No other structures or features were mapped within the park property. Additionally, no structures are visible in the project area on recent aerial photos.

RESEARCH DESIGN & METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Based on the research conducted prior to the survey, two hypotheses were developed. First, it was hypothesized that it is unlikely to encounter prehistoric archaeological sites within the park property. This is because the property is in the upper reaches of the watershed, where access to water is unreliable and inconsistent. This lack of water means there were few food resources in the property. Additionally, there are no known tool stone sources in the area.

The second hypothesis states that there was low potential for encountering historic sites in the project area. There are no structures or features shown in the project area on the historic maps. However, historic trash scatters may be located in the drainages or where the route crosses historic roads.

Methodology

Survey was conducted in accordance with the standards set forth by the THC (n.d.). Field personnel walked the entire property in transects no more than 30 m apart. Six shovel tests were placed within the 14.5-acre property where ground visibility was below 30 percent and where slopes were less than 20 percent. Shovel tests averaged 30 cm in diameter. The clay fill was inspected visually and broken into smaller chunks in order to determine if cultural materials were present. Shovel test matrices were described on the basis of composition, texture, and color. The Munsell Soil Color Chart (2009) was used to identify soil colors. Field personnel made notes about the ground exposure, drainages, soil types, and disturbed areas where subsoil was exposed. Photographs were taken during the survey using a GPS-equipped digital camera. Shovel test and project boundary locations were marked with a handheld GPS receiver.

RESULTS

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first describes the project area's natural setting along with results of the pedestrian survey. Conclusions derived from the survey close the chapter. Shovel tests are described generally throughout the text and are detailed in Table 1 at the end of the Survey Results section.

Survey Results

The southwest portion of the project area is a plowed field that was recently scraped by a developer, leaving 100-percent ground visibility at the time of survey (Figure 2 and Figure 3). The rest of the property was covered in one- to three-foot-tall grasses with scattered trees (Figure 4 and Figure 5). Bois d'arc, oak, and juniper trees were concentrated along the creek, the pond edge, and fence lines. The north half of the western portion was terraced when it was being farmed. Part of the property located along John King Boulevard and just north of shovel test (ST) 05, has been built up to create a level surface 3-6 feet above the natural surface (Figure 3 and Figure 6). No shovel tests were excavated on this raised portion. The narrow stream floodplain is covered with short grasses and a few scattered trees (Figure 7).

Figure 2. The southern edge of the Stone Creek Park property, facing west. Note the scraped field in the background.

Figure 3. The proposed Stone Creek Park and shovel test locations shown on a recent aerial photograph.

Figure 4. The terraced field south of the school property, facing west-northwest.

Figure 5. The property east of the pond, facing north-northwest.

Figure 6. The built-up portion of the property, just north of ST05, facing northeast.

Figure 7. The stream corridor, facing south from the north end.

Six shovel tests were excavated in the property where ground visibility was less than 30 percent and slopes were less than 20 percent (Figure 3). Four shovel tests (ST01-04) were terminated at 25-60 cm below the surface (cmbs) due to water. All four of these STs revealed very dark gray clay. ST01 exposed the addition of calcium carbonate at 40 cmbs. ST05 revealed a top layer of very dark gray clay underlain by dark gray clay with a middle layer where the two sediments are mottled. No color or texture change was noted in ST06, which was excavated to 80cmbs. No artifacts, features, or structures were found in the shovel tests or on the surface of the property.

Table 1. Shovel Test Descriptions.

ST#	Depth (cm)	Description	Comments/ Artifacts
01	0-40 40-60	Very dark gray (10YR3/1) clay Very dark gray (10YR3/1) clay with 5% calcium carbonate Terminated due to water	None
02	0-25	Very dark gray (10YR3/1) clay Terminated due to water	None
03	0-50	Very dark gray (10YR3/1) clay Terminated due to water	None
04	0-50	Very dark gray (10YR3/1) clay Terminated due to water	None
05	0-20 20-50 50-60	Very dark gray (10YR3/1) clay Very dark gray (10YR3/1) with 20% dark gray (10YR4/1) clay Dark gray (10YR4/1) clay	None
06	0-80	Dark gray (10YR4/1) clay	None

Conclusions

No archaeological sites, features, or artifacts were identified during the survey. This was expected for prehistoric sites, due to the lack of reliable water sources and other necessary natural resources. This result was also expected for most of the project area regarding historic sites. The only location that might have had evidence of historic occupation was the southeast corner. No evidence was found and it is likely the structure mapped nearby on historic maps was actually located where John King Boulevard is.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this investigation was to determine if significant cultural resources are present in the proposed Stone Creek Park property in Rockwall County, Texas. No archaeological sites were recorded. ARC concludes that further cultural resource investigations are unwarranted within the proposed project area and recommends that the Texas Historical Commission concur with this assessment. However, if buried cultural materials are discovered during construction, the Archeology Division of the Texas Historical Commission should be notified.

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