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An Intensive Cultural Resources Survey Of 9.65 Acres Along Cinema Ridge, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

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AN INTENSIVE CULTURAL RESOURCES SURVEY

OF 9.65 ACRES ALONG CINEMA RIDGE, SAN ANTONIO, BEXAR COUNTY, TEXAS

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FINAL-REDACTED

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San Antonio, Texas

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Texas Antiquities Committee Permit Number: 7960

ASF17-043-01

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Management Summary:

In March 2017, the Northside Independent School District (NISD) (Client) contracted **Raba Kistner Environmental, Inc. (RKEI)** to perform an intensive cultural resources survey within a 9.65-acre tract of land along Cinema Ridge, located immediately south of Oliver Wendell Holmes High School in San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas. The purpose of this survey was to determine if cultural resources were located within the Area of Potential Effect (APE), and if feasible, assess their significance and eligibility for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and for formal designation as a State Antiquities Landmark (SAL). As the area of potential effects (APE) is located on land owned by a political subdivision of the State, the project falls under the Antiquities Code of Texas (ACT), as administered by the Texas Historical Commission (THC). The field work was conducted March 23 and 24, 2017 under Texas Antiquities Committee (TAC) Permit No. 7960, issued to Antonio E. Padilla, who served as Principal Investigator. Mark Luzmoor served as the Project Archaeologist and Chris Murray assisted during the field work.

Background research revealed that no previously conducted cultural resources surveys or previously recorded archaeological sites are located within the boundary of the APE. Surface visibility was around 20 percent throughout the APE. Approximately 50 percent of the APE contained fill brought in from recent construction activities near the APE, while the other 50 percent was covered by thick underbrush. During the pedestrian survey, it was noted that approximately 10 percent of the terrain contained a slope greater than 20 percent. Due to the presence of fill and the greater than 20 percent slope, only 4.35 acres of the 9.65-acres were able to be adequately surveyed. As a result, 10 shovel tests (STs 1–10) were excavated within the APE.

During the excavation of the shovel tests within the APE, it was revealed that impacts to the APE from fill dumping activities impacted a larger area than originally perceived. Of the 10 shovel tests excavated seven (STs 1–3, 5, and 7–9) showed evidence of disturbance from filling activities. Additionally one shovel test (ST 7), contained a piece of aluminum a pop top from a can, intermixed with the fill. Only three shovel tests (STs 4, 5, and 10) contained intact soils; however they were negative for cultural material.

No cultural materials were encountered within the STs or observed on the surface during the investigations of the APE. Based on the current investigations and due to the lack of cultural materials and cultural features within the APE, RKEI recommends no further archaeological work within the current project boundaries. All field records generated by this project will be curated in accordance with the Texas Archaeology Research Laboratory requirements and the TAC permit.

Table of Contents:

List of Figures:

Chapter 1: Introduction and Area of Potential Effects

Raba Kistner Environmental, Inc. (**RKEI**) was contracted by the Northside Independent School District (NISD) (CLIENT) to perform an intensive cultural resources survey within a 9.65-acre (ac) tract near Cinema Ridge for the construction of new school facilities just south of Oliver Wendell Holmes High School in west-central San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas (**Figure 1-1**). The property is currently owned by NISD a political subdivision of the State. As such the project falls under the Antiquities Code of Texas (ACT) as administered by the Texas Historical Commission (THC). The purpose of the survey was to locate any surface-exposed or buried cultural materials and assess their significance and eligibility for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and for formal designation as a State Antiquities Landmark (SAL). All work was performed in compliance with the ACT under Texas Antiquities Committee Permit No. 7960.

This report summarizes the results of the field investigations, and provides recommendations regarding the proposed project. Following this introductory presentation and the description of the APE, Chapters 2 and 3 provide background on the setting of the project area, as well as the culture history and previous archaeological investigations that have taken place in the vicinity of the APE. Chapter 4 outlines the field and laboratory methods employed during the project and the Chapter 5 summarizes the results of the field investigations. Chapter 6 provides a brief summary of the findings and provides recommendations regarding the planned project.

Area of Potential Effect

The Area of Potential Effect (APE) is located in west-central San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas, just south of Oliver Wendell Holmes High School and immediately west of the Regal Cinemas Cielo Vista 18 movie at the end of Cinema Ridge. The APE is approximately 9.65 ac in size and is depicted on the *San Antonio West, Texas* (2998-244) U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) 7.5-minute topographic quadrangle map **(Figure 1-2)**. The property directly south consists of undeveloped land, and the plot directly east consists of a residential neighborhood. Huebner Creek runs approximately 0.85 km to the east of the APE.

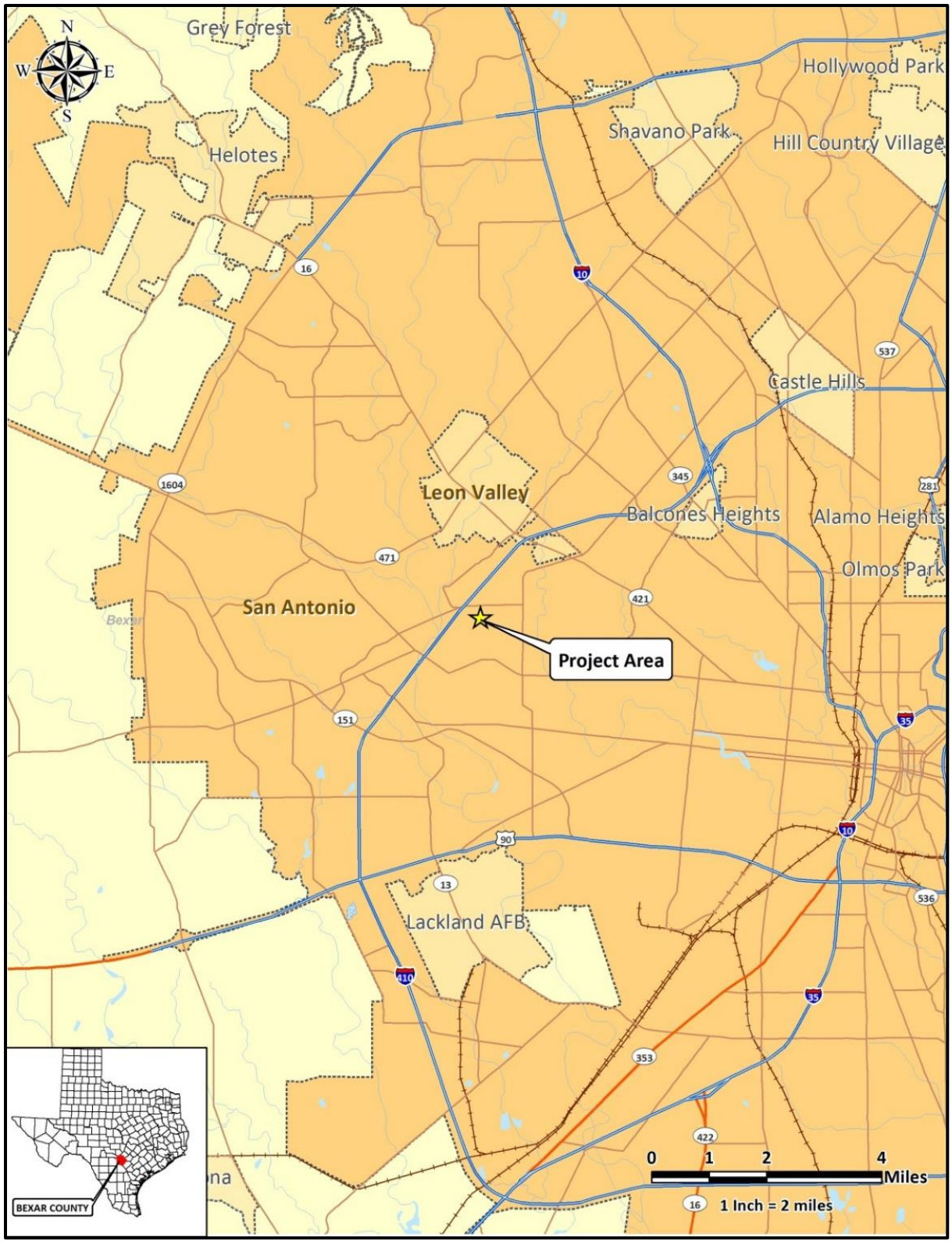


Figure 1-1. The project area in west-central San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas.

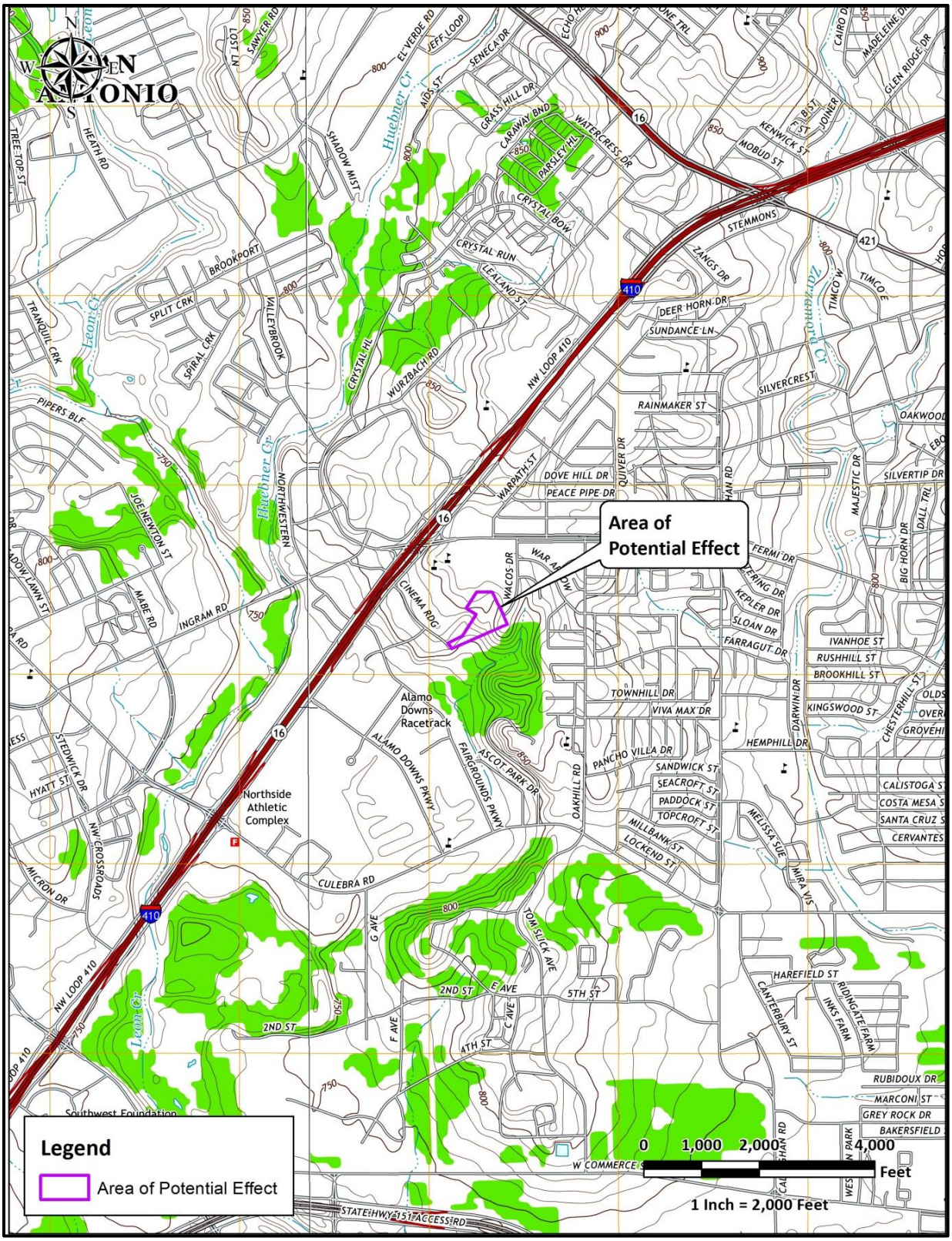


Figure 1-2. The APE on the San Antonio West, Texas (2998-244) USGS 7.5-minute topographic quadrangle map.

The APE consists primarily of thick underbrush, a large fill pile, and steep (<20 percent slopes) terrain (**Figure 1-3**). According to a historic aerial photograph from 1986 (**Figures 1-4**), several loads of fill were dumped within the APE from nearby construction projects. This continued until roughly 2002 when the movie theater and other businesses were constructed near the APE (**Figure 1-5**). These continued dumping events altered the elevation of the central portion of the APE by approximately 50 percent. Due to large amounts of rain over the years, a 10 foot wide chasm has developed within the construction fill area, exposing a 10 to 15 foot stratified profile of fill deposited over the years (**see Figure 1-3 and Figure 1-6**). Due to the artificial landscape created by the fill (4.5 ac) and the greater than 20 percent sloped terrain (0.8 ac) only 4.35 ac of the APE was able to be adequately surveyed (**see Figure 1-3**). The remaining 4.35 ac the APE contained heavy shrubbery and thick undergrowth (**Figure 1-7**).

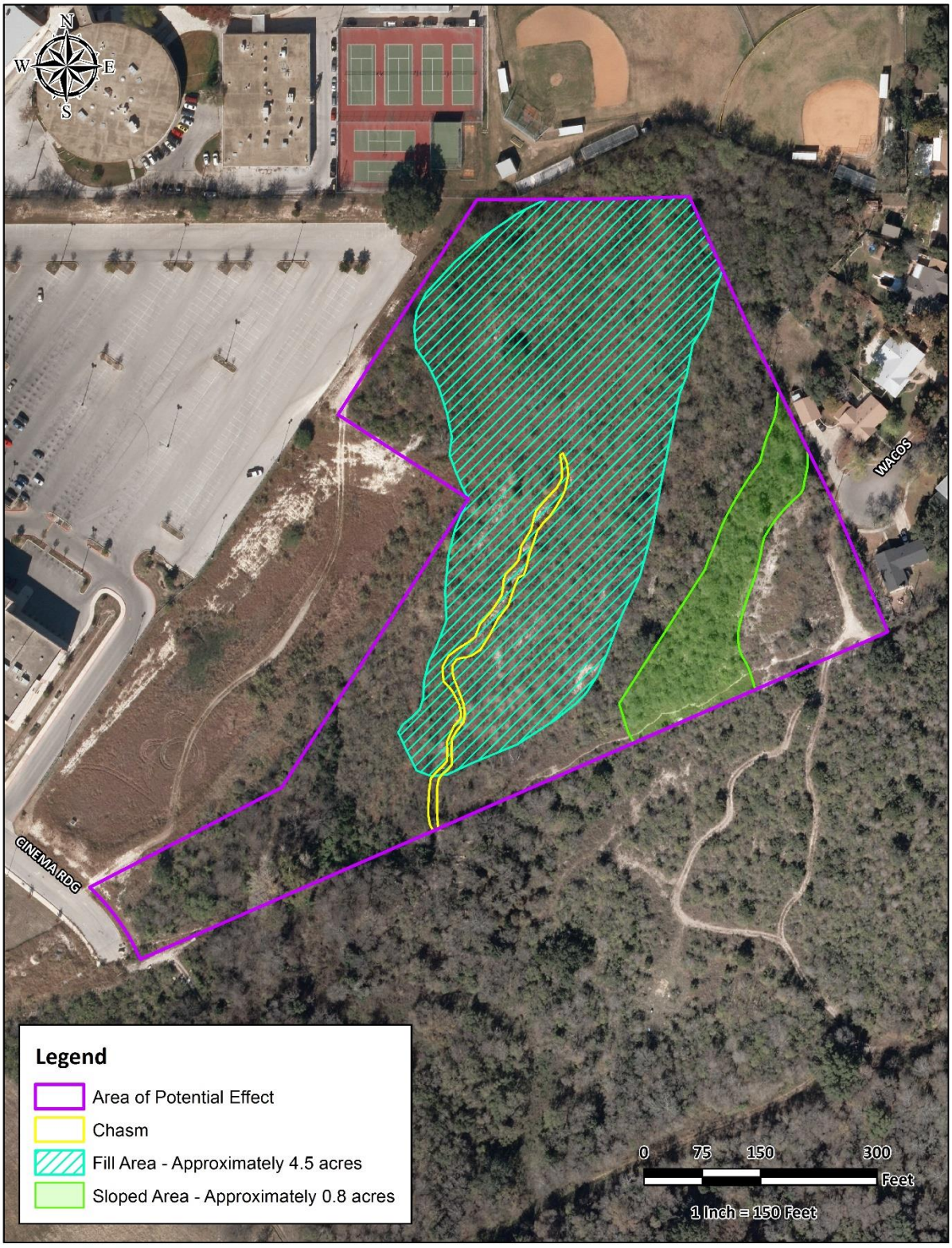


Figure 1-3. Map of the APE showing area occupied by fill and greater than 20 percent slope.

Figure 1-4. The APE in 1986, note the amount of grading and fill being brought in to the APE.

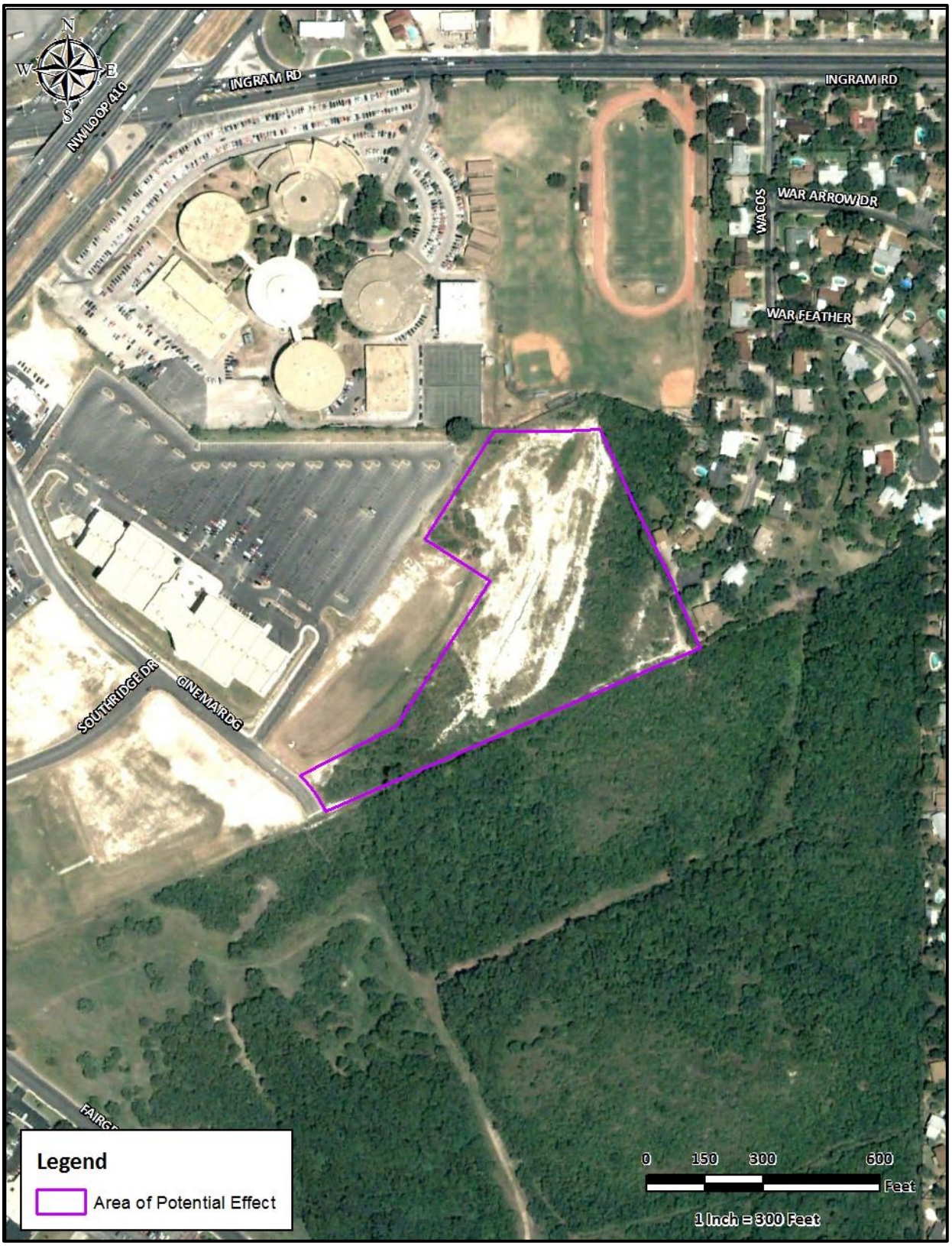


Figure 1-5. The APE in 2002, note the continued practice of bringing fill in from surrounding construction projects.

Figure 1-6. View of the southeast profile of the chasm within the APE; facing southeast.

Figure 1-7. Overview of thick undergrowth encountered within the APE; facing southwest.

Chapter 2: Environmental Setting

Project Area Setting

The project area is located in the south-central Texas geographic region within the Blackland Prairie eco-region. The Blackland Prairie is an area of low topographic relief and poor drainage, prone to frequent flooding (Collins 1995). The Blackland Prairie physiographic region is characterized by gently undulating topography and is generally defined as grasslands punctuated by riparian bands along creeks, rivers, and other drainages. Creation of the Blackland Prairies occurred during the late Tertiary, with the erosions of soils on the Edwards Plateau. These soils were deposited by eolian and colluvial processes across an existing, eroded parent material of the Gulf Costal Plain, creating a mix of deep Tertiary and Quaternary calcareous clay soils (Black 1989a).

Soils

Review of the National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) datasets depict two soil types within the APE, Heiden-Ferris complex (HoD3) and Austin silty clay (AuB) (**Figure 2-1**). Heiden-Ferris complex soils cover 8.2 ac of the project area and are composed of two distinct soil series Heiden and Ferris series. Heiden series soils are nearly level to steep soils that are typically encountered alongside slopes of ridges on dissected plains, base of slopes, footslopes, and shoulders of interfluves. These soils are characterized as deep to very deep, well-drained soils that were derived from weathered mudstone and reach a depth of 178 centimeters (cm). Ferris series soils are well drained, deep, gently sloping to steep soils formed in calcareous clayey mudstone residuum and reach a depth up to 203 cm. These soils are typically encountered on back and side slopes or ridges within dissected plains (NRCS 2017).

Along the southcentral edge of the project area, approximately 1.45 ac is composed of Austin silty clay. Austin series soils are characterized well drained, moderately deep soils that are found on nearly level to sloping erosional uplands. These soils are derived from weathered chalk residuum and reach depths up to 144 cm.

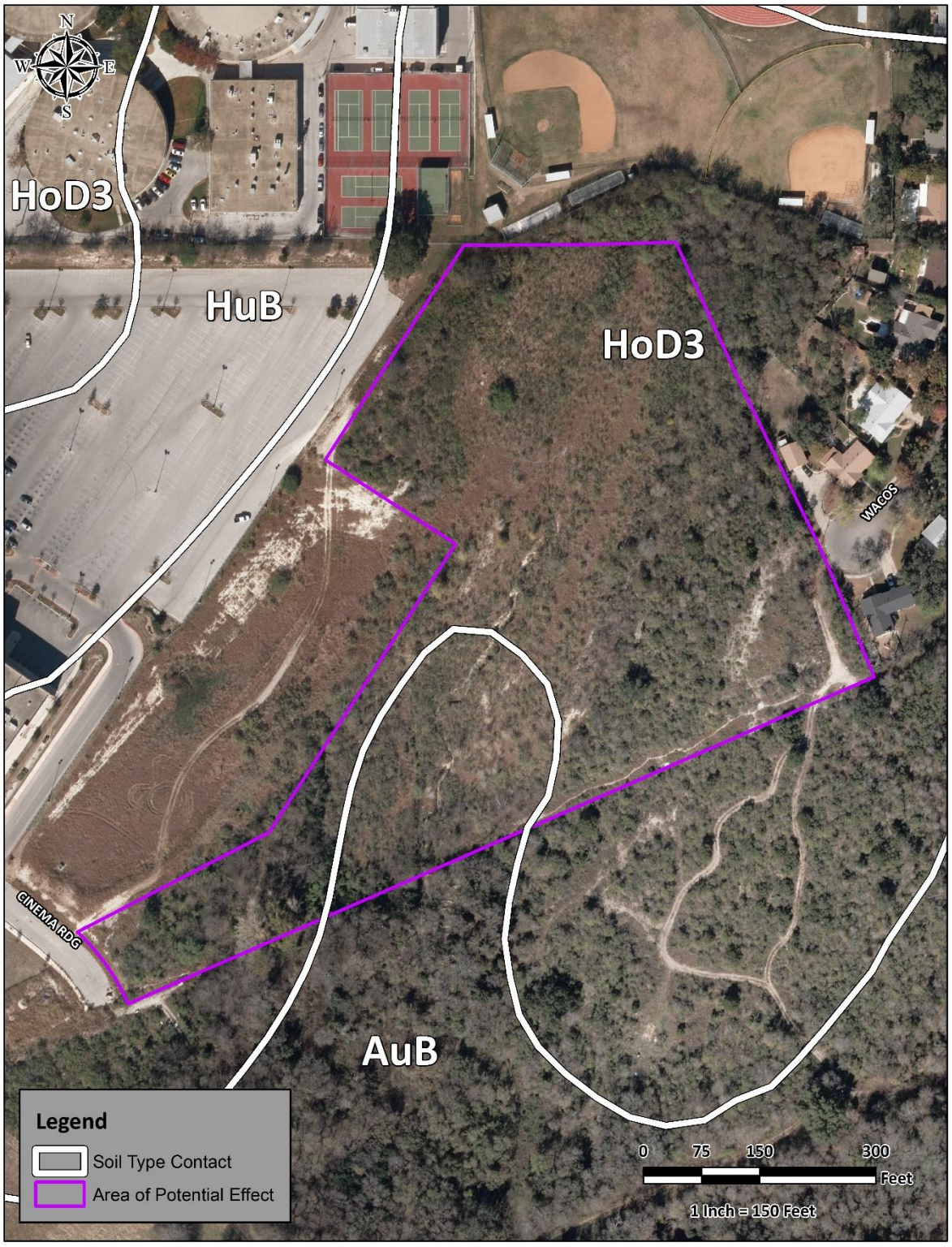


Figure 2-1. Soils encountered within the project area and vicinity.

Flora and Fauna

The project area is located near the juncture of the Balconian and Taumaulipan biotic provinces (Blair 1950). Because the project is situated at the ecotone of two biotic provinces it Floral and faunal resources consist of a mix of the two provinces. Trees, plants and grasses in this region include cedar (*Juniperus ashei*), live oak (*Quercus fusiformis*), Texas mountain laurel (*Sophora secundiflora*), mesquite (*Prosopis glandulosa*), prickly pear (*Optunia* sp.), agarita (*Berberis trifoliolata*), cat claw (*Smilax bona-nox*), mustang grape (*Vitis mustangensis*), sotol (*Dasylirion texanum*), and Spanish dagger (*Yucca* sp.).

The fauna that inhabit the south-central Texas region includes at least 95 bird and 29 mammal species. The area also contains a wide array of reptiles, fish and amphibians. Mammal species that were noted within the APE include white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*), nine-banded armadillo (*Dasypus novemcinctus*), Virginia opossum (*Didelphis virgininana*), striped skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*), raccoon (*Procyon lotor*), coyote (*Canis latrans*), cottontail rabbit (*Sylvilagus audubonii*), feral hog, domestic and feral cat, and squirrel.

South Texas Climate

The climate in south-central Texas is humid subtropical with hot and humid summers. From May through September, hot weather dominates with the cool season beginning around the first of November and extending through March. Winters are typically short and mild with little precipitation. San Antonio averages only 33 inches (in) of rain per year (Southern Regional Climate Center 2017; based on monthly averages from 1980 to 2010). Monthly temperature averages range between 52°F in January to 85°F in August.

Chapter 3: Culture Chronology and Previous Archaeology

Culture Chronology

The cultural history of South Central Texas spans approximately 11,500 years. Archaeologists have divided the occupation of the region into four principal periods and several sub-periods: Paleoindian, Archaic, Late Prehistoric, and Historic. The periods are characterized by changes in climatic conditions, distinct vegetation types and structures, and concomitant adaptive changes by human populations in hunting and gathering technologies and strategies, general material culture, and at the tail end of the cultural sequence, the arrival of non-indigenous populations. The standard summaries of the culture chronologies of Central Texas accepted by many of the regional archaeologists were produced by Collins (1995) and Prewitt (1981). Below is a brief summary of the cultural sequence that has been reconstructed by archaeologists for the south-central part of the state.

Paleoindian

The oldest cultural materials found in the region date to the Paleoindian Period. The period spans roughly from 11,500–8800 BP (Collins 1995, 2004). The Aubrey site in Denton County has one of the earliest occupations, with radiocarbon assays dating to between 11,542 ± 11 BP and 11,590 ± 93 BP (Bousman et al. 2004:48). Paleoclimatic proxy measures suggest that a cooler climate with increased precipitation was predominant during the Late Pleistocene (Mauldin and Nickels 2001; Toomey et al 1993), the later portion of the period.

Initial reconstructions of Paleoindian adaptations typically viewed these hunter-gatherers as traversing extreme distances in pursuit of now extinct mega-fauna such as mammoth and mastodon. While these Paleoindians populations did exploit the Late Pleistocene mega-fauna when it was accessible, a number of faunal assemblages from an increasingly larger number of sites indicate that the Paleoindian diet was more varied and consisted of a wide range of resources, including small game and plants. The Lewisville (Winkler 1982) and the Aubrey sites (Ferring 2001) produced faunal assemblages that represented a wide range of taxa, including large, medium, and small species. Information on the consumption of plant resources during the Paleoindian period is lacking. Bousman et al. (2004) reported that the late Paleoindian component at the Wilson-Leonard site reflected the exploitation of riparian, forest, and grassland species. Analysis of Paleoindian skeletal remains indicates that the diets of the Paleoindian and later Archaic hunter-gatherers may have been similar (Bousman et al. 2004; Powell and Steele 1994).

The early portion of the Paleoindian Period was characterized by the appearance of Clovis and Folsom fluted projectile points that were used for hunting mega-fauna. Typical projectile points produced at sites with occupations dating to the later portion of the Paleoindian period included the Plainview, Dalton, Angostura, Golandrina, Meserve, and Scottsbluff types. Meltzer and Bever (1995) have identified 406 Clovis sites in Texas. One of the earliest, 41RB1, yielded radiocarbon assays that put the maximum age for the Paleoindian component at 11,415 ± 125 BP (Bousman et al. 2004:47).

Sites in Bexar County that contain Paleoindian components include St. Mary's Hall (Hester 1978, 1990), Pavo Real (Collins et al. 2003), the Richard Beene site (Thoms et al. 1996; Thoms and Mandel 2006) and 41BX1396 (Tomka 2012). St. Mary's Hall, 41BX229, was first encountered in 1972 during the construction of a house just outside the school's property. The Pavo Real site, 41BX52, is located along Leon Creek in northwest Bexar County. The site first was documented in 1970 and has been investigated several times over the past 40 years (Collins et al. 2003). The Richard Beene site, 41BX831, is located along the Medina River in southern Bexar County (Thoms et al. 1996). Site 41BX1396 is located in Brackenridge Park in San Antonio, Texas, and was encountered during installations for lighting in 2010. Dating of organic samples indicated that occupation at the site occurred as early as 10,490–10,230 BP.

Archaic Period

The Archaic Period dates between ca. 8800 to 1200 BP. It is divided into three subperiods: Early, Middle, and Late. During the Archaic, mobility strategies may have shifted to more frequent short-distance movements that allowed the exploitation of seasonal resource patches. The intermittent presence of bison in parts of Texas, combined with changes is climatic conditions and the primary productivity of the plant resources may have contributed to shifts in subsistence strategies and associated technological repertoire. When bison was not present in the region, hunting strategies focused on medium to small game along with continued foraging for plant resources. When bison was available, hunter-gatherers targeted the larger-bodied prey on a regular basis.

Early Archaic

Collins (1995) suggests that the Early Archaic spans from 8800 to 6000 BP. Projectile point styles characteristic of the Early Archaic include Angostura, Early Split Stem, Martindale, and Uvalde (Collins 1995). The Early Archaic climate was drier than the Paleoindian period and witnessed a return to grasslands (Bousman 1998). Mega-fauna of the Paleoindian period could not survive the new climate and ecosystems, therefore eventually dying out. Early Archaic exploitation of medium to small fauna intensified.

The Wilson-Leonard excavation produced a wealth of cultural materials representative of a lengthy period in regional prehistory. The projectile point assemblages from the site indicate that the lanceolate Paleoindian point forms continue from the Paleoindian into the Early Archaic (Angostura). However, relatively quickly during the Early Archaic, they are replaced by corner- and basally-notched and shouldered forms (Early Triangular, Andice, Bell) that quickly become the dominant points tipping the atlatl-thrown darts. In addition, the uses of small to medium hearths similar to the previous period were noted. The appearance of earth ovens suggests another shift in subsistence strategies. The earth ovens encountered at the Wilson-Leonard site were used to cook wild hyacinth along with aquatic and terrestrial resources (Collins et al. 1998). Analyses of Early Archaic human remains encountered in Kerr County (Bement 1991) reveal diets low in carbohydrates in comparison to the Early Archaic populations found in the Lower Pecos region. Within Bexar County, the excavations at 41BX1396 revealed an Early Archaic component, radiocarbon dated to Cal BP 8390 to 8180 (Tomka 2012).

Middle Archaic

The Middle Archaic subperiod spans from 6000 to 4000 BP (Collins 1995; Weir 1976). Archaeological data indicates that there appeared to be a population increase during this time. Climate was gradually drying leading to the onset of a long drought period. Changes to the demographics and cultural characteristics were likely in response to the warmer and more arid conditions. Projectile point styles characteristic of this subperiod include Bell, Andice, Calf Creek, Taylor, Nolan, and Travis.

Subsistence during the Middle Archaic saw an increased reliance on nuts and other products of riverine environments (Black 1989b). The increase of burned rock middens during the Middle Archaic represented the increased focus on the use of plant resources (Black 1989b; Johnson and Goode 1994). Little is known about burial practices during the Middle Archaic. An excavation in an Uvalde County sinkhole (41UV4) contained 25–50 individuals (Johnson and Goode 1994:28).

Late Archaic

The Late Archaic spans from 4000 to 1200 BP (Collins 2004). It is represented by the Bulverde, Pedernales, Kinney, Lange, Marshall, Williams, Marcos, Montell, Castroville, Ensor, Frio, Fairland, and Darl projectile points. The early part of the Late Archaic exhibited fluctuations in the temperature and rainfall. There appears to have been an increase in population at this time (Nickels et al. 1998).

Some researchers believe that the use of burned rock middens decreased during the Late Archaic. Some research has challenged this notion (Black and Creel 1997; Mauldin et al. 2003). Johnson and Goode (1994) discuss the role of burned rock middens in relation to acorn processing.

Human remains from burials related to the Late Archaic in Central and South Texas suggest the region saw an increase in population. This increase may have prompted the establishment of territorial boundaries, which resulted in boundary disputes (Story 1985). Human remains dating to this sub-period have been encountered near the Edward's Plateau.

Late Prehistoric

The Late Prehistoric Period begins ca. 1200 BP (Collins 1995; Collins 2004), and appears to continue until the beginning of the Protohistoric Period (ca. A.D. 1700). The term Late Prehistoric is used in Central and South Texas to designate the time following the end of the Archaic period. A series of traits characterizes the shift from the Archaic to the Late Prehistoric Period. The main technological changes were the shift to the bow and arrow and the introduction of pottery. The Late Prehistoric Period is divided into two phases: the Austin Phase and the Toyah Phase.

At the beginning of this period, environmental conditions were deemed to be warm and dry. Moister conditions appear after 1000 BP (Mauldin and Nickels 2001). Subsistence practices appeared similar to the Late Archaic. Projectile points associated with the Austin Phase include the Scallorn and Edwards types. The Toyah Phase is characterized by the prominence of the Perdiz point (Collins 1995).

Most researchers concur that the early portion of the Late Prehistoric period saw a decrease in population density (Black 1989b:32). Radiocarbon dates from some sites have indicated that the middens were utilized during the Late Prehistoric. Some archaeologists feel the peak of midden use was

after A.D. 1 and into the Late Prehistoric (Black and Creel 1997:273). Radiocarbon dates from Camp Bowie middens provide evidence that supports Black and Creel's arguments that burned rock middens were a primarily Late Prehistoric occurrence (Mauldin et al. 2003).

Beginning rather abruptly at about 650 BP, a shift in technology occurred. This shift is characterized by the introduction of blade technology, the first ceramics in Central Texas (bone-tempered plainwares), the appearance of Perdiz arrow points, and alternately beveled bifaces (Black 1989b:32; Huebner 1991:346). Prewitt (1981) suggests this technology originated in north-central Texas. Patterson (1988), however, notes that the Perdiz point was first seen in southeast Texas by about 1350 BP, and was introduced to west Texas some 600 to 700 years later.

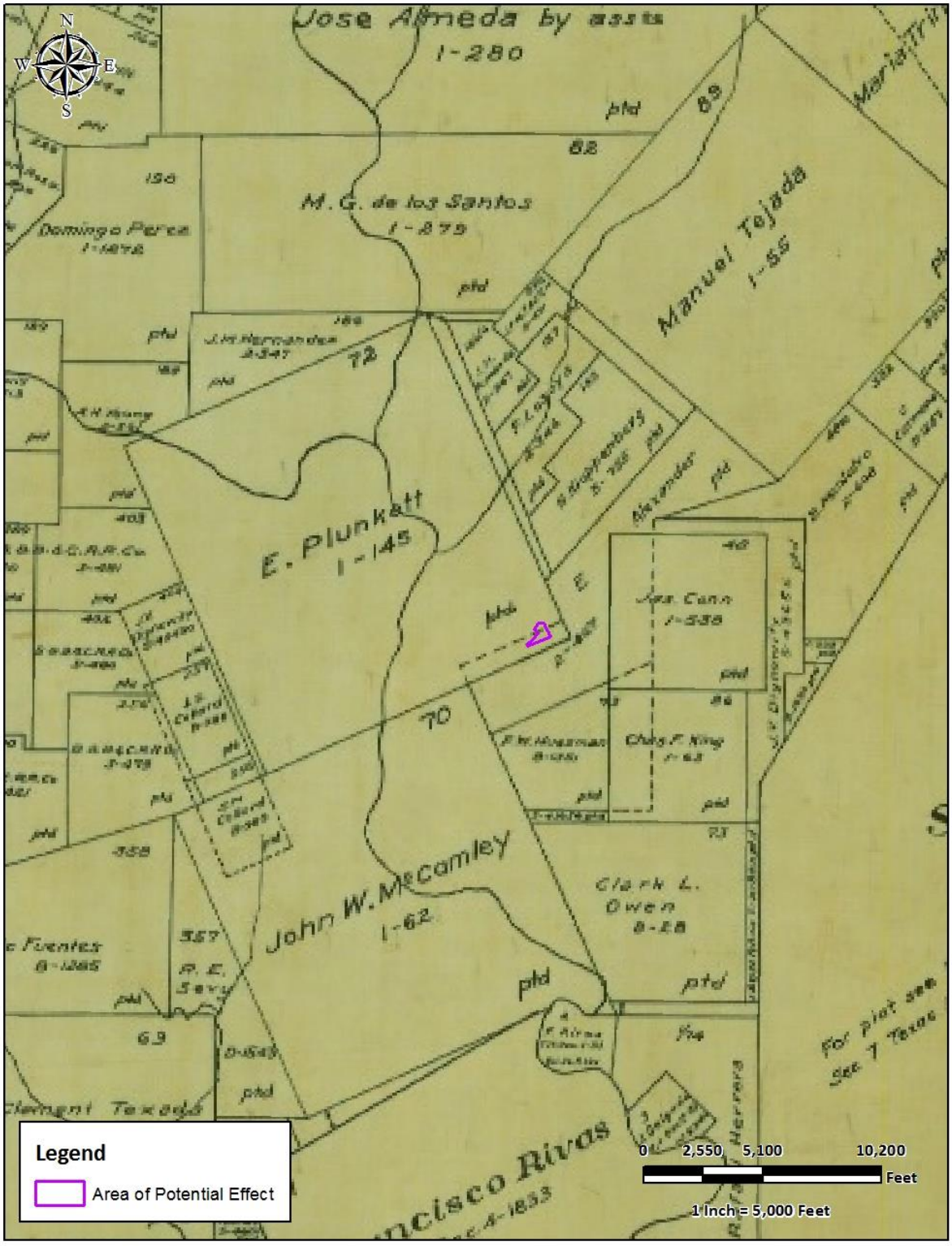
Early ceramics in Central Texas (ca. A.D. 1250 to 1300) are associated with the Toyah Phase of the Late Prehistoric and are referred to as Leon Plain ware. The Leon Plain ceramic types are undecorated, bone-tempered bowls, jars, and ollas with oxidized, burnished and floated exterior surfaces (Ricklis 1995). There is notable variation within the type (Black 1986; Johnson 1994; Kalter et al. 2005). This variation can be attributed to differences in manufacturing techniques and cultural affiliation. Analysis of residues on ceramic sherds suggests that vessels were used to process bison bone grease/fat, mesquite bean/bison bone grease, and deer/bison bone grease (Quigg et al. 1993).

The return of bison to South and Central Texas during the Late Prehistoric resulted from a drier climate in the plains located to the north of Texas and increased grasses in the Cross-Timbers and Post Oak Savannah in north-central Texas (Huebner 1991). The increased grasses in the two biotas formed the "bison corridor" along the eastern edge of the Edwards Plateau and into the South Texas Plain (Huebner 1991:354–355). Rockshelter sites, such as Scorpion Cave in Medina County (Highley et al. 1978) and Classen Rock Shelter in northern Bexar County (Fox and Fox 1967), have indicated a shift in settlement strategies (Skinner 1981). Burials dating to this period often reveal evidence on conflict (Black 1989b:32).

History of the APE

The west-central portion of Bexar County was largely uninhabited until the mid-1800s. Maps, including Upshur and Lindsey's 1837 map of Bexar County, indicate that the project area was once a portion of a larger parcel consisting of a league and labor granted to Elizabeth Plunkett and is documented in the Elizabeth Plunkett Survey No. 72 Abstract 573 (**Figure 3-1**). Historical documents do not indicate when Plunkett arrived in San Antonio; however, she started making land claims in the area by 1840, if not earlier, based on the 1937 Upshur and Lindsey map. The project area is first mentioned when Plunkett paid her yearly taxes in 1840 to the Bexar County Sheriff, William Elliot (Bexar County Deed Records [BCDR] F2: 387–388). Eventually Ms. Plunkett transferred the property to John Plunkett in 1854 (BCDR L2: 485).

Mr. Plunkett then sold the property in 1877 to H. B. Adams and E. D. L. Wickes (BCDR 5: 264) who then divided the property evenly into a northwestern and a southeastern portion. The northwester portion was sold to William F. Walker in 1877 while the southern portion was retained by H.B. Adams and E. D. L. Wickes (BCDR 7: 304).



Source: 1932 Image Provided by Texas General Land Office

Figure 3-1. The Elizabeth Plunkett Survey No. 72 on the 1837 Upshur and Lindsey's map of Bexar County (Texas General Land Office 2017).

The southeastern portion of the Elizabeth Plunkett Survey No. 72 where the APE is located, was eventually acquired by F. Smith and Company in 1897 (**Figure 3-2**). Eventually in 1902, F. Smith and Company sold the 1,168 acres to H. Wehmeyer Sr. From 1902 to 1998 the property has been divided, sold, and held in a trust.

Review of historical aerial photographs reveal that the area has not been developed and no possible historic-age buildings or structures were identified. In the 1938 aerial photograph, tree cover of the property is patchy with some open space tree, indicating that the area may have been maintained. Gradually overtime vegetation began to engulf the entire APE. However sometime prior to 1986 development of the area impacted a majority of the APE. A large area had been cleared out and used as a dumping or staging ground for the surrounding construction projects.

Source: 1897 Image Provided by Library of Congress

Figure 3-2. The F. Smith and Company Property on the 1897 Map of Bexar County: Showing Subdivisions of Original Surveys and Names of Present Owners (Library of Congress 2017).

Previous Archaeology

Background research revealed that no previously conducted cultural resources surveys or previously recorded archaeological sites are located within the boundary of the APE. Examination of a 1-kilometer (km) radius of the APE, revealed that five archaeological surveys have been conducted (THC 2017) (**Figure 3-3**). Surveys were conducted in advance of infrastructure improvement projects composed of road and water related projects. Two linear surveys were conducted in 1977 by TxDOT along what would become Loop-410. No other information is available concerning these surveys (THC 2017). In 2009, SWCA Environmental Consultants conducted a constraints analysis of Phase I of the Bexar County Flood Control Capital Improvement Program which was composed of 18 separate projects throughout Bexar County. One of these projects (LC-8) lies within a 1 km buffer of the current project area. This project included the construction of a 597 meter (m) long, 19.5 m wide span bridge along Ingram Road to an elevation above the 100-year floodplain of Leon Creek. As a result of this project, no new archaeological sites were encountered (Miller et al. 2011). As a part of the Bexar County Capital Improvement Program, Raba Kistner Consultants investigated project area LC-17 which was located just north of LC-8. The survey consisted of approximately 2.64 miles (165 total ac) of a proposed flood control project along Huebner Creek from Ingram Street to just past Bandera Rd. As a result of this project, two new sites were encountered: 41BX1879 and 41BX1880. Site 41BX1879 is a sparse campsite, with cultural material composed of fire-cracked rock and debitage which possesses little if any research potential. Site 41BX1880 consists of a heavily-looted, burned rock midden which partially extends into LC-17. Cultural materials included three lithic tools and debitage. Due to the highly disturbed nature of both sites, the authors did not recommend any additional work at either site (Clark & Murray 2011).

In 2011, Hicks & Company conducted an intensive linear survey for Phase II of the City of San Antonio's Leon Creek Greenway Development Project, from Ingram Road to Loop-410. This hike and bike trail extended 2-km from Ingram to Loop 410. No archaeological sites were recorded as a result of this project (Champion 2011).

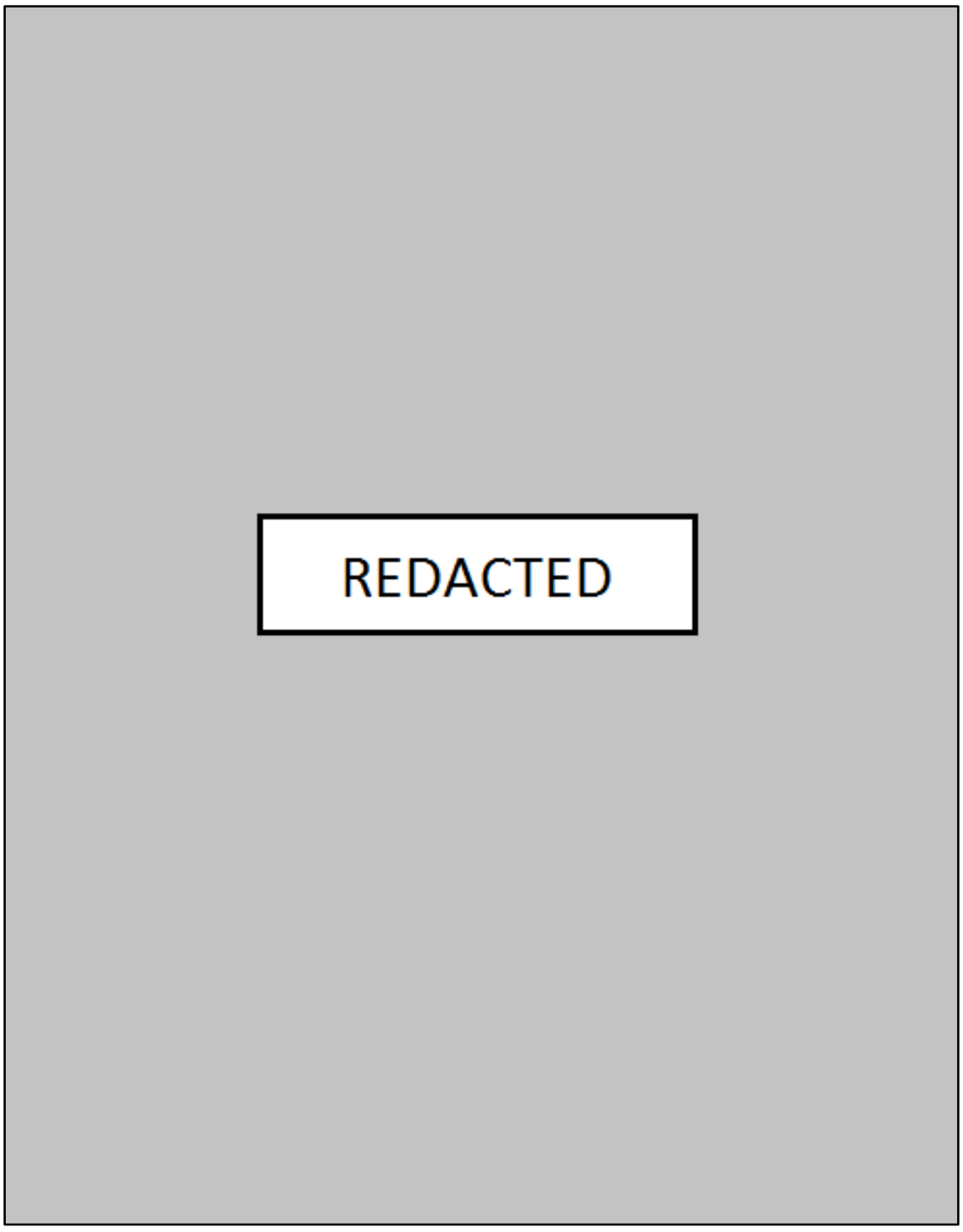


Figure 3-3. Archaeological Investigations within 1 km of the APE.

The review of the projects and newly recorded sites within the vicinity of the APE indicates that most archaeological components are found east of the Edwards Plateau and are most likely Late Prehistoric assemblages. These components likely represent the remains of hunter-gatherer groups visiting the Blackland Prairie on hunting expeditions targeting either medium or large ungulates such as deer and antelope or bison. While such visits would also have occurred during preceding times, it appears that the remnants of such Early and Middle Archaic activities have been scoured from the landscape except perhaps in the vicinity of major streams that cross-cut the Blackland Prairie.

Chapter 4: Methods of Investigation

RKEI utilized a combination of visual surface inspection and shovel test excavations to assess surface and shallowly buried archaeological deposits. Shovel testing was conducted in areas judged to have high probabilities for cultural deposits and/or when surface visibility was below 30 percent. In addition, shovel tests were excavated to aid in archaeological site boundary delineation. All work complied with THC and Council of Texas Archeologists (CTA) survey standards for Texas for the overall project area.

Field Methods

The archaeological survey consisted of a 100 percent pedestrian survey of the entire project APE. Since approximately half of the APE was either fill material or greater than a 20 percent slope, only 10 shovel tests (STs) were excavated. All shovel tests were approximately 30 cm in diameter and, unless prevented by obstacles or buried features, extended to a depth of 60 centimeters below surface (cmbs). Each shovel test was excavated in 10-cm intervals. All soil from each level was screened through ¼ inch hardware cloth. Any collected artifacts were to be labeled with appropriate provenience information for laboratory processing and analysis. A shovel test form was completed for each excavated shovel test. Data collected from the shovel test included the final excavation depth, a tally of all materials encountered from each 10-cm level, and a brief soil description (texture, consistency, Munsell color, inclusions). The location was recorded using a Garmin, hand-held, GPS unit. Shovel test locations were sketched onto a current aerial photograph of the APE as a backup to the GPS information. Any additional observation considered pertinent was included as comments on the standard shovel test excavation form.

Laboratory Methods

All project related documentation produced during the survey was prepared in accordance with federal regulation 36 CFR Part 79, and THC requirements for State Held-in-Trust collections. Field notes, field forms, photographs, and field drawings were placed into labeled archival folders and converted into electronic files. Digital photographs were printed on acid-free paper, labeled with archivally appropriate materials, and were placed in archival-quality plastic sleeves when needed. All field forms were completed with pencil. Ink-jet produced maps and illustrations were placed in archival quality plastic page protectors to prevent against accidental smearing due to moisture. A copy of the report and all digital materials were saved onto a CD and stored with field notes and documents. As all artifacts were recovered from private property, they will be returned to the property owner at the completion of the project. No cultural materials were collected during the course of the survey.

Chapter 5: Results of Investigations

In March of 2017, **RKEI** performed a pedestrian survey of the proposed location of new school facilities on Northside Independent School District owned lands in west-central San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas. The APE encompassed approximately 9.65-ac; however due to the presence of 10–15 feet thick construction fill dumped across 4.5 ac of the APE and the 0.8 ac containing greater than 20 percent slope, only 4.35 ac were able to be adequately surveyed. The survey consisted of a visual inspection of the ground surface for cultural materials and the excavation of 10 shovel tests (STs) throughout the APE (**Figure 5-1**). The pedestrian survey was conducted utilizing 15 transects placed 30 m apart. Of the 10 shovel tests excavated, two were located within the filled area for confirmation of soils while the remaining eight were excavated in the remaining 4.35 ac (**see Figure 5-1**).

The majority of the APE is situated on a generally level upland formation with a gentle slope to the southwest. Along the center of the project area, trending northeast/southwest, the topography drastically changes due to the artificial landscape created by the fill dumping events that have occurred over the years. Along the southeastern portion of the APE, the formation slopes (20 percent slope) southeasterly to a generally level upland landscape.

Vegetation is composed of trees with thick underbrush occupying a majority of the area. Areas not covered in thick brush, were areas where dirt two-track and cleared roads cross the APE, along the southern boundary, the southeast corner, and along the northern boundary. Due to the thick vegetation across the APE ground surface visibility varied between 5 and 10 percent. Due to the lack of ground surface visibility, shovel tests were excavated in these areas.

Disturbances observed impacting the APE were composed of both natural and artificial impacts. Natural disturbances consisted of erosion due to weathering. Artificial disturbances include the artificial landscape created by the continuous dumping of fill and the creation of the two-track and cleared roads. During the survey, piles of modern trash were scattered along both sides of the road, at the southeastern corner of the APE (**see Figure 5-1**). Trash observed included a pile of roofing shingles (**Figure 5-2**), cut logs, machine cut and treated lumber, window glass, and other piles of modern trash (**Figure 5-3**). The material noted in the trash dump dated to the late-twentieth and early twenty first century, and therefore was not labeled as a feature.

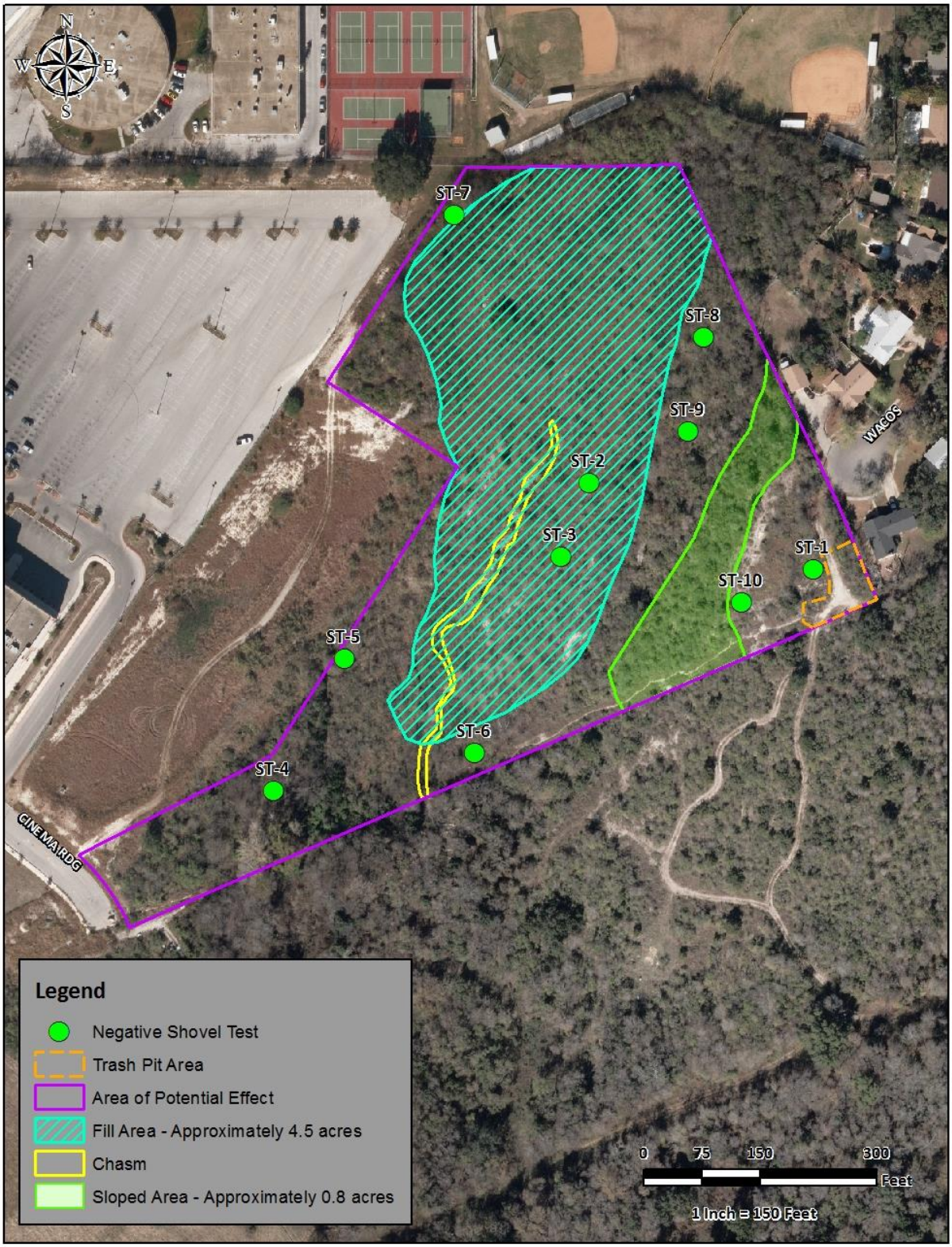


Figure 5-1. Location of shovel tests excavated and the modern trash pile encountered during the pedestrian survey.

Figure 5-2. Modern trash piles along the eastern edge of the APE; facing west.

Figure 5-3. Modern trash pile along the eastern edge of the APE; facing southeast.

Shovel Tests

Since approximately half of the APE was either fill material or greater than a 20 percent slope, 10 shovel tests were excavated during the course of the project (**Figure 5-1**). Two STs (STs 2 and 3) were excavated within the area of fill to confirm the existence of disturbed soils (**Figure 5-4**). The remaining eight shovel tests (ST 1 and STs 4–10) were excavated within areas of the APE that did visibly contain fill material or a slope greater than 20 percent. Nine of the ten shovel tests were negative for cultural material. One Shovel Test (ST 7) produced a piece of aluminum foil and a pop top from a can.

During the excavation of the shovel tests throughout the areas of the APE, revealed that impacts to the APE from fill dumping activities impacted a larger area than originally percieved. The two shovel tests excavated directly on top of the area heavily impacted by the fill activities were excavated to depths between 20 and 40 cmbs and were terminated due to compact caliche. Soils encountered within these two shovel tests consisted of a light gray (10YR 8/2) intermixed with crushed gravels. These same soils were encountered within five shovel tests (STs 1, 5, 7, 8, and 9) in the upper 10 to 40 cmbs and in the case of ST 9, to depth. In STs 5 and 8 these disturbed soils were underlain by a 10 cm thick brownish black (10YR 3/2) silty clay at a depth between 20 and 30 cmbs and were underlain again by compact disturbed soils. In ST 7 disturbed soils were encountered in the upper 40 cm (Figure 5-5) and included a piece of aluminum and a pop top from a can. These disturbed soils were underlain by intact soils composed of a brownish black (10YR 3/2) silty clay to a depth of 60 cmbs.

The remaining three shovel tests (STs 4, 6, and 10) were the only ones excavated that contained intact soils. Of the three shovel tests two (STs 6 and 10) were excavated to depth, while one (ST 4) was terminated due to compact soils. A typical shovel test profile exhibited a brownish black (10YR 6/3) silty clay with some pebbles. No cultural materials were encountered within these shovel test.

Figure 5-4. Shovel test 2 within the dumped fill area.

Figure 5-5. Shovel test 7 at 60 cmbs. Fill soils from 0–40 cmbs and a light brown disturbed layer from 40–60 cmbs.

Chapter 6: Summary and Recommendations

The archaeological survey of the 9.65-ac tract of land for the proposed NISD high school was conducted over two days in March 2017. The property consisted of approximately 4.5-ac of brought in fill and 0.8-acres of landform that exceeded 20 percent slope. Therefore, shovel tests excavated within the remaining 4.35-ac which were covered by thick underbrush. Disturbances observed impacting the APE were the artificial landscape created by the continuous dumping of fill and the creation of the two-track and cleared roads. Other disturbances observed consisted of modern trash dumped along the road at the southeastern corner of the APE, consisting of discarded roofing shingles, clear flat glass, appliances, tires, and other materials.

Due to the decreased size of the project area that was both undisturbed and below a 20 percent grade, only 10 shovel tests were excavated within the APE. The goal of these shovel tests was to determine if there were any cultural materials within the APE. During the excavation of the shovel tests, it was revealed that impacts to the APE from fill dumping activities impacted a larger area than originally perceived. Of the 10 shovel tests excavated seven (STs 1–3, 5, and 7–9) showed evidence of disturbance from filling activities that reached depths between 10 and 60 cmbs. Additionally one shovel test (ST 7), contained a piece of aluminum a pop top from a can, intermixed with the fill at a depth of 36 cmbs. Only three shovel tests (STs 4, 5, and 10) contained intact soils; however they were negative for cultural material.

Based on the investigations, a majority of the APE has been impacted due to dumping activities that have occurred during past construction activities in the area. No diagnostic prehistoric or historic materials were encountered within the project boundaries. With the lack of intact temporally diagnostic cultural material from pedestrian survey and subsurface testing, **RKEI** does not recommend any further archaeological investigations within the APE surveyed. However, should changes be made to the project APE, further work may be required.

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