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AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF AREAS PROPOSED FOR
MODIFICATION IN THE VICINITY OF DEL RIO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Kenyon McDonald and Thomas R. Hester

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THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT SAN ANTONIO
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY REPORT, NO. 11

UTSA - Center for
Archaeological Research

In accordance with an agreement between URS/Forrest and Cotton, Inc., consulting engineers (Dallas, Texas), and the Center for Archaeological Research at the University of Texas at San Antonio, an archaeological survey was conducted on property adjacent to the Del Rio International Airport, Val Verde County, Texas. The specific area examined during the survey is the proposed site for airport expansion and construction as part of the Del Rio International Airport Master Plan. The locality examined encompassed a total of 197 acres and extended along the runway, on the south, from approximately midway to approximately 800 meters beyond (going west).

The main purpose of the survey was to determine if there existed any historic or archaeological evidence that would warrant preservation or further investigation. The stated objectives of the survey were:

1. Ascertain if archaeological or historical resources exist within the area to be affected.
2. Identify and appraise the significance of any resources found.
3. Evaluate the impact of project modification, if any, on the resources.
4. Recommend procedures for mitigation of any anticipated adverse impacts.

The area investigated lies adjacent to the Del Rio International Airport in western Val Verde County. The airport is located approximately 4 miles north from the center of Del Rio slightly west of Del Rio High School. It is an area of rolling hills with

level topography encompassing the Del Rio Airport vicinity. Vegetation consists primarily of mesquite and associated thorny brush, prickly pear and grasses. At the time of the survey the area was suffering severe drought conditions. Therefore, ground cover was very sparse. These conditions were present in all but a small part (some dry tanks and roadways) of the survey area.

SURVEY ACTIVITIES

Field inspection was carried out on July 9 and 10, 1975, by Kenyon McDonald of the Center for Archaeological Research under the general supervision of Dr. Thomas R. Hester. The survey was conducted on foot and consisted of a detailed inspection of the terrain throughout the total project area. The dryness of the area enabled the surveyor to thoroughly inspect the complete area without difficulty.

The Cuellar property south of the runway, and the Gulick land adjacent to it, were readily accessible and were entered from the access roads. The Gulick property was most thoroughly investigated. This is high ground (1040 feet or 317 meters above sea level) and was predicted to be the most likely spot for the occurrence of archaeological remains.

SURVEY RESULTS

A careful investigation of the proposed modification area revealed no significant archaeological or historical remains. The western portion at the end of the existing runway exhibited a large

number of siliceous stones but artifactual remains were almost non-existent. One small scraper approximately 4 centimeters in diameter was found about 200 meters directly beyond the present runway. On the high area on the Gulick property two cores (chert nodules from which flakes were struck by prehistoric stone workers) were found approximately 200 meters apart.

None of these scattered lithic artifacts occurred at what might be considered a prehistoric site. We thus attach no particular significance to them.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

An intensive surface survey of areas to be incorporated in the expansion of Del Rio International Airport failed to produce any evidence of significant historic or prehistoric cultural resources. Some very scattered evidence of prehistoric utilization of the area was noted. We do not believe that any further archaeological work is required in the study locality.