

ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

You may wonder why we have a subject of archaeology at a highway meeting. We have found some Mastodon bones and several Indian graves, but these have been isolated cases, and in the past, archaeology has not been a problem for the highway department.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL LAWS—CHECK ALL FEDERAL CONSTRUCTION SITES

In the last year or so this situation has changed. Several federal laws and regulations continue to get us further involved. The National Historic Preservation Act (Public Law 89-665), the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA), and the Moss-Bennett Act (Public Law 93-291) are the prime reasons for our involvement. In May 1974 the Moss-Bennett Act amended a 1960 law by deleting a few words referring to construction of a dam and inserting a clause referring to alteration of terrain caused by a federal construction project or program. Thus an act that previously applied only to dam projects now applies to all federal or federal-aid construction.

If we were involved with locations listed in the National Register of Historic Places, the problem would be fairly small; but the wording, "properties eligible for inclusion in the National Register" is the kicker, since the wording has been determined to mean "any property" until surveyed by experts to show that the property does not contain a significant historical or archaeological site.

MAY BE 100,000 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES IN INDIANA

Dr. Keller of Indiana University estimates there are approximately 100,000 archaeological sites in Indiana. Most of these are not significant, and most of the locations are not known. From the number

of possible sites scattered all over the state it is easy to see that we have a sizeable problem.

ARCHAEOLOGISTS WORKING FOR ISHC

For about a year we have used five consultant archaeologists as experts working for us to survey areas that will be disturbed by planned improvements. The findings of the archaeologists will affect planning, design, state-aid and construction.