Field Methods

The Phase I survey was guided by procedural standards established by the Georgia Council of Professional Archaeologists in concurrence with the Georgia Historic Preservation Division. Full land coverage requirements were achieved through visual inspections of the entire survey area and systematic subsurface testing. While conducting visual inspections, any exposed surfaces were carefully examined for cultural material.

Subsurface testing was performed within the proposed project area along 30-meter (m) interval transects comprised of shovel tests spaced 30 m apart. Standard shovel tests consisted of 30 centimeter (cm) diameter cylindrical holes excavated to a minimum depth of 80 cm below surface (cmbs) or until water was encountered. Soils from each test were screened through 0.64 cm hardware cloth for the purpose of recovering any cultural material that may exist at that location. When cultural material was encountered, the material was sorted by provenience and placed into bags labeled with the pertinent excavation information before being transported to TerraX's laboratory. Any archaeological sites identified within the project area during transecting were further examined in order to better define their horizontal and vertical limits. Delineations were conducted by establishing a datum within the area of the initial find(s). From datum, close interval shovel testing was conducted in a cruciform pattern in cardinal directions until at least two consecutive negative tests were encountered in each direction. Close interval testing varied between 10 and 15-m intervals with 15-m interval tests being utilized within the interior of sites and 10-m interval tests being utilized along the outer margins of sites in order to establish more accurate boundaries. In some instances, additional close interval shovel testing was performed when deemed appropriate for adequately defining the extent of a site. A hand-held Trimble or Garmin GPS unit was used to record site locations and sketch maps of each were drawn by compass and pace and plotted to scale. Digital photographs were taken for any site recorded as well as for the survey area.

The Phase I investigation included the placement of 4,637 shovel tests along 102 transects (Figure 14). An additional 115 shovel tests were placed while performing site delineations. Of the total 4,752 shovel tests placed during this study, nine recovered cultural materials, 1,245 were culturally sterile, and 3,498 were not excavated. The primary reason for the large number of unexcavated tests was the presence of expansive wetlands located within the project area. Other reasons for non-excavated tests include road disturbance and the presence of large timber piles left behind during past logging events.

Laboratory Methods and Collection Curation

All cultural materials recovered during field projects are delivered to TerraX's laboratory in Tuscaloosa, Alabama for processing. Here, materials are sorted by provenience, cleaned, and analyzed. Along with the cultural material, all project records, photographs, and maps produced while conducting the investigation are transported for curation at the Archaeological Research Center, Troy University, Troy, Alabama. A copy of the curation agreement can be found in Appendix A.