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Cultural Resources Investigations of the 150-Acre Fallbrook MDP Project in Bexar County, Texas)

Prepared for

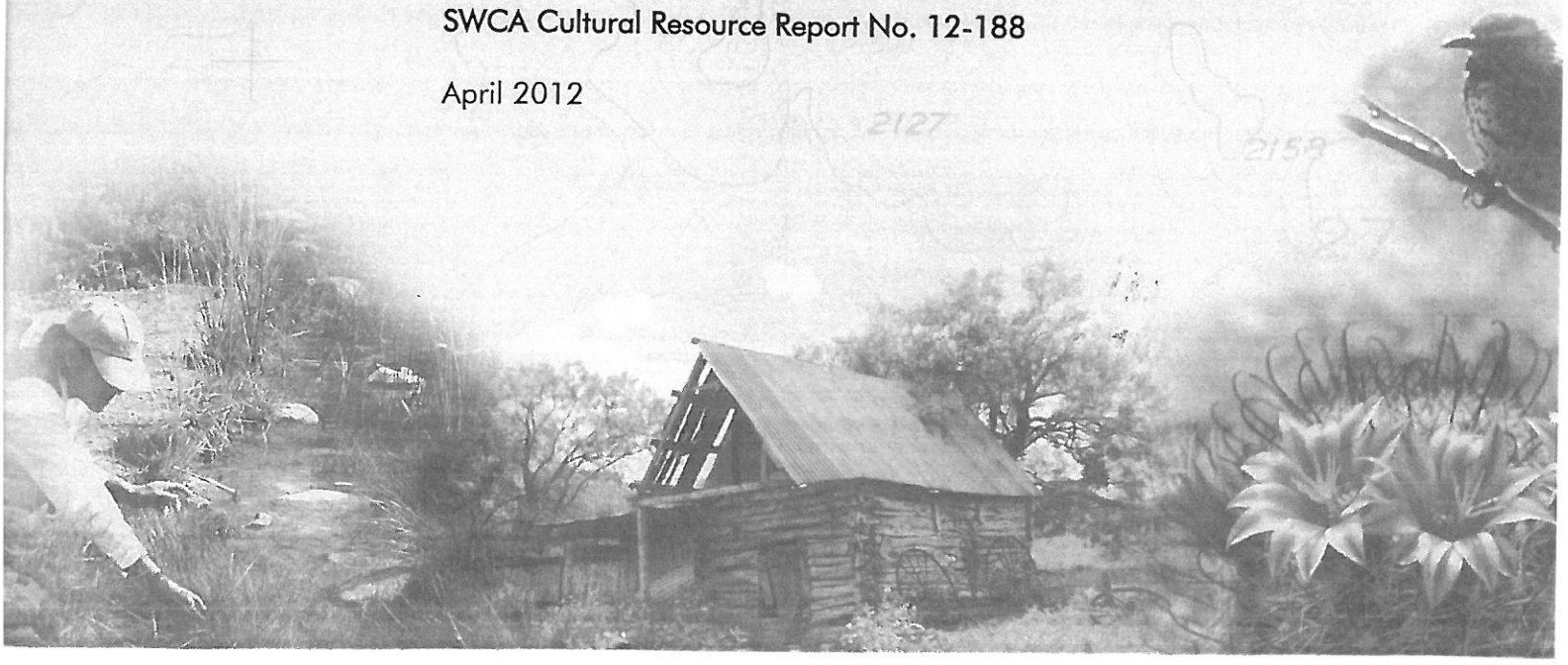
Pape-Dawson Engineers, Inc.

Prepared by

Laura I. Acuna and Julie D. McGilvray

SWCA Cultural Resource Report No. 12-188

April 2012



CULTURAL RESOURCES INVESTIGATIONS OF THE 150-ACRE FALLBROOK MDP PROJECT IN BEXAR COUNTY, TEXAS

Prepared for

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SWCA Project Number 23439-AUS
SWCA Cultural Resources Report No. 12-188

April 20, 2012

ABSTRACT

On behalf of Pape-Dawson Engineers, Inc., SWCA Environmental Consultants (SWCA) conducted an intensive cultural resource survey for the proposed 150-acre Fallbrook MDP Project in Bexar County, Texas. The investigations were done to satisfy requirements of the San Antonio Historic Preservation Office (HPO) per the City of San Antonio's Historic Preservation and Design Section of the Unified Development Code (Article 6 35-360 to 35-634). These investigations included a thorough background review and an intensive pedestrian survey with subsurface investigations. The background review determined that the project area has not been previously surveyed and that no previously recorded sites are within the project area. However, the project area is east of Old Fredericksberg Road, part of the greater Old Spanish Trail system.

Overall, the survey revealed the project area to be moderately disturbed by previous land clearing activities and two-track roads. Twenty shovel tests were excavated within the 150-acre project area targeting areas with the highest potential for containing buried cultural deposits. All were negative for cultural material. The THC standards suggest 50 shovel tests within the 150-acre project area. The current survey did not meet this standard due to extensive areas of high ground surface visibility, exposed bedrock, and slopes exceeding 20 percent.

An isolated push-pile consisting of brick and mortar was encountered near the center of the project area and a cluster of structures was found at the northeastern corner of the project area. No diagnostic materials or features were encountered around the remains. The structures consist of a water tank, a stock tank, and windmill remains, likely dating to the mid-twentieth century. The structures and debris were determined to contain little to no integrity or significance. Based on the results of the historic overlay map review, there are no associated historic-age resources within the project area.

The proposed undertaking will have no effects on any significant cultural resources and SWCA recommends no further archaeological investigations within the APE. No artifacts were collected; thus, nothing was curated.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Kevin Miller served as Principal Investigator and Laura I. Acuña served as Project Manager, and Lead Surveyor for the duration of the project, ably overseeing overall logistics and organization, and managing reporting and coordination. Julie McGilvray served as the architectural historian and surveyor, admirably performing field investigations on April 11, 2012. Carole Carpenter expertly produced all report maps for the project.

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INTRODUCTION

On behalf of Pape-Dawson Engineers Inc. (Pape-Dawson), SWCA Environmental Consultants (SWCA) conducted an intensive cultural resources survey for the 150-acre Fallbrook MDP Project located in northern Bexar County, Texas (Figure 1). The investigations included a background and archival review and an intensive pedestrian survey with subsurface investigations. The investigations were done to satisfy requirements of the San Antonio Historic Preservation Office (HPO) per the City of San Antonio's Historic Preservation and Design Section of the Unified Development Code (Article 6 35-360 to 35-634).

The purpose of the work was to locate and identify all prehistoric and historic archaeological sites in the project area, establish vertical and horizontal site boundaries as appropriate with regard to the project area, and evaluate the significance of any site recorded within the property. SWCA archaeologists Laura I. Acuña and Julie McGilvray conducted the field work on April 11, 2012.

DEFINITION OF STUDY AREA

The project area is located in north-central San Antonio, Texas, north of Old Fredericksburg Road and east of Interstate Highway (IH) 10. The western boundary of the project area is Woodland Green Road. The northern boundary is Bowmans Lane and the southern and eastern boundaries consist of property fence lines. Residential subdivisions surround the vicinity and an undeveloped rural property is located south of the project area.

The project area is approximately 150 acres in size with estimated vertical impacts from construction to average 2 to 3 feet in depth. It is anticipated that the project area will be cleared and bulldozed for the proposed construction of a residential development.

Entirely within an upland setting, the project area consists of two prominent ridge tops. There are no drainages within the property, but a small ephemeral stream is located west of the project area and Woodland Green Road. Vegetation is moderate within the entire project area, consisting primarily of juniper/oak trees and shrub/cacti. Based on a general review of aerial photography, the project area is dissected by several two-track roads.

SOILS

The soils of the project area are mapped as Brackett-Eckrant association, Crawford-Bexar stony soils, and Krum clay. The majority of the project area is mapped as Brackett-Eckrant association, 20 to 60 percent slopes which consist of shallow gravelly clay loam to very cobbly clay. The northeastern and southern portions of the project area along the slopes of the ridges consist of Crawford-Bexar stony soils, which are typically shallow silty clay to cobbly clay loam. The soils along the northwestern corner and edge of the project area are mapped as Krum clay, which consists of moderately deep silty clay (NRCS 2012).

GEOLOGY

The project area is mapped as Cretaceous-age Glen Rose Limestone. The formation consists of limestone, clay, and sand alternating with some sandstone approximately 400 feet thick (Barnes 1974).

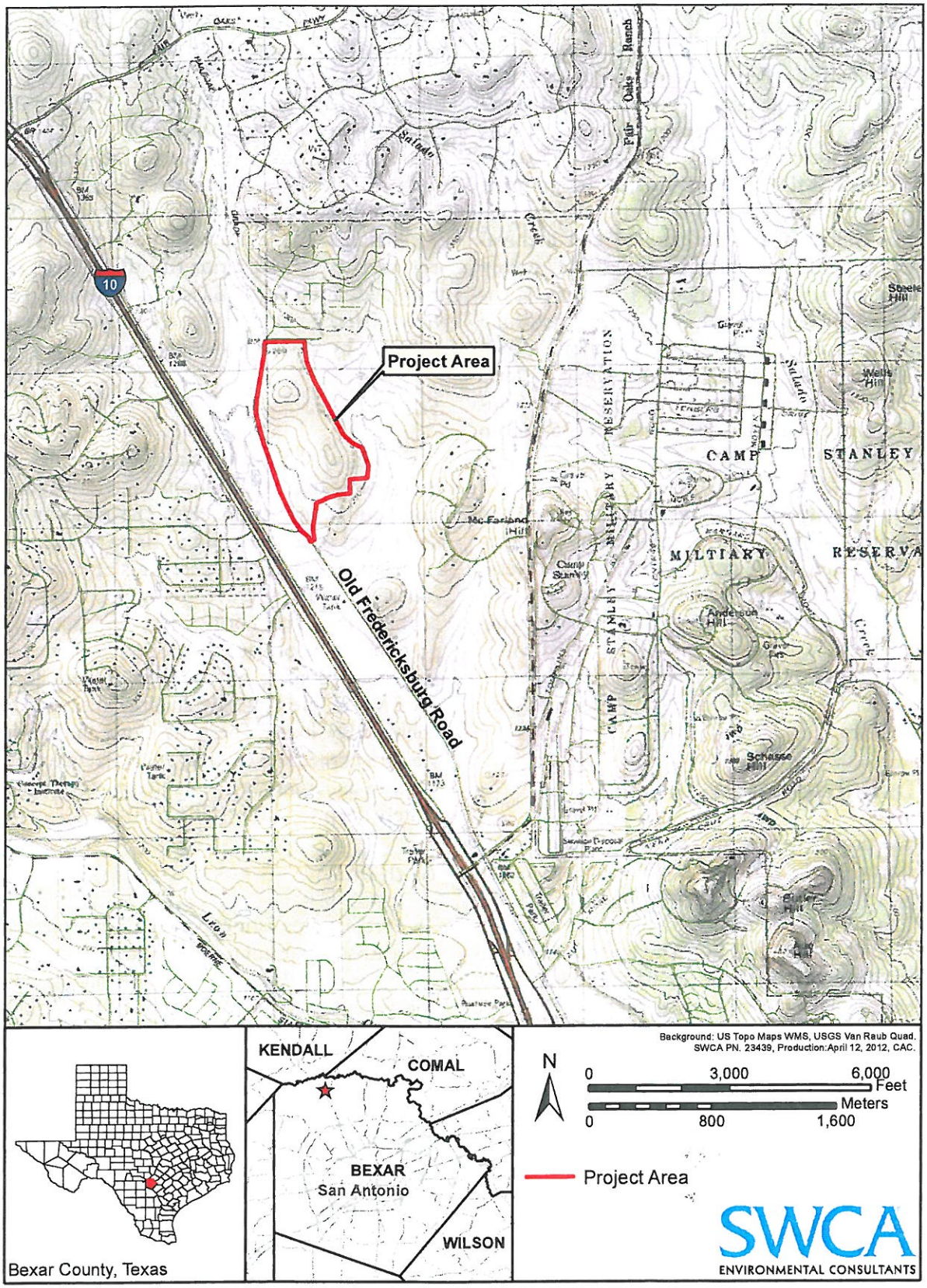

Figure 1. Project location map.

METHODS

BACKGROUND REVIEW

SWCA conducted a thorough background cultural resources and environmental literature search of the project area. An SWCA archaeologist reviewed the Van Raub USGS 7.5-minute topographic quadrangle maps at the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory (TARL) and searched the Texas Historical Commission's (THC) Texas Archeological Sites Atlas (Atlas) online database and the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) Historic Overlay maps for any previously recorded surveys and historic or prehistoric archaeological sites located in or near the project area. In addition to identifying recorded archaeological sites, the review included information on the following types of cultural resources: National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) properties, SALs, Official Texas Historical Markers (OTHM), Registered Texas Historic Landmarks (RTHLs), cemeteries, and local neighborhood surveys. The archaeologist also examined the NRCS Soil Survey database for Bexar County and the *Geologic Atlas of Texas, San Antonio Sheet* (Barnes 1983). Aerial photographs were reviewed to assist in identifying any disturbances. As part of the review, a SWCA archaeologist consulted the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) Historic Overy Maps, a mapping/GIS system with historic maps and resource information covering most portions of the state (Foster et al. 2006).

FIELD METHODS

SWCA's investigations consisted of an intensive pedestrian survey with subsurface investigations within the project area. Archaeologists examined the ground surface and extensive erosional profiles and exposures for cultural resources. Subsurface investigations involved shovel testing in settings with the potential to contain buried cultural materials. For project areas, the THC's survey standards require a minimum of one shovel test every three acres, when the project area is 101–200 acres in size. The current project area is 150 acres in size, thus requiring a minimum of 50 shovel tests within the property. The shovel tests were approximately 30 centimeters (cm) in diameter and excavated to culturally sterile deposits or impassible clays, whichever came first. The matrix from each shovel test was screened through ¼-inch mesh, and the location of each excavation was plotted using a hand-held GPS receiver. Each shovel test was recorded on a standardized form to document the excavations. As this was a non-collection survey, any artifacts discovered were to be tabulated, analyzed, and documented in the field, but not collected. Temporally diagnostic artifacts, if present, were to be described in detail and photographed in the field. Only especially rare artifacts or discoveries were to be collected.

RESULTS

BACKGROUND REVIEW

HISTORIC CONTEXT

The following context is focused on the history and evolution of the Old Fredericksberg Road and its role in the growth of San Antonio. The road is found directly west of the project area and was key in the development of region through several road building iterations.

After Texas entered the Union in 1845, San Antonio's already diverse population grew dramatically. The Irish came to Texas in the late 1830s to early 1840s and established Irish Flat. Germans settled in San Antonio in the 1850s introducing the Bier Halle to the area. French immigrants added artists and artisans to the culture of the city.

During this time, transportation and circulation routes in Texas generally remained rudimentary and fairly disconnected, however San Antonio acted as a nexus for several important roads and routes, leaving the Bexar County area with a surprisingly sophisticated road system in the early years of the Republic and Statehood. These transportation corridors were constructed on Spanish Colonial roads which had been built over existing Native American trails. Reports from explorers, military troops, and scientists to the area provide evidence for the origins of the Old Fredericksberg Road. These narratives reveal that it was in use prior to Spanish arrival. The extant corridor was later picked up by the Spanish and functioned as a route between San Antonio and the Santa Cruz de San Sabá Mission near Menard, Texas. During this time, the road was known as the Pinta Trail or the Road to San Sabá and was part of a larger network of trails heading west out of San Antonio. The system was later used extensively by German settlers, government troops, emigrants, and Forty-niners heading to California in search of gold (Nixon 2012). This expanded and evolving use was common to Texas transportation corridors during the early- to mid-nineteenth century as most roads were created by sustained use and ease of access rather than by design (Wallace 2008).

Official efforts to create a coherent transportation system began in the first years of the Republic of Texas. The young Republic of Texas created a Commissioner of Roads and Revenue along with the Texas Rail Road Navigation and Banking Company (Wallace 2008; Werner 2011). Lack of funds plagued both, leaving existing roads in poor condition with no hope for the establishment of new circulation systems. Road development and maintenance responsibility primarily fell to the counties, which appointed a local overseer and crew. This group of selected men, usually comprised of local land owners, rotated every few months. Therefore, road building in the early years of the Republic of Texas and through the rest of the nineteenth century, was primarily a local endeavor, shared by the community.

True progress for roads came about through the California Gold Rush (ca. 1850). During that time, Texas functioned as a staging ground for thousands heading west to California on the news of the discovery of gold. Routes also existed through Arkansas and Missouri but Texas offered warmer weather and thus an earlier start date. Texas also had an established trail system which was mapped during the Mexican American War, and a recently created military route running from San Antonio to El Paso (Wallace 2008). Due to the influx and movement of people across the state, new webs of connection were established linking town sites and settlements. The condition of these trails and roads would remain in poor condition for years to come with upkeep in the hands of local governments or private companies (Wallace 2008).

With the increased arrival of settlers, land speculators, and emigrants/gold speculators passing through the area, the establishment of stage coach roads to move mail, goods, and people became increasingly important. Several main roads into and out of the San Antonio area were used by San Antonio-San Diego Mail line, which ran west through El Paso. This was supplanted by the Butterfield Overland Mail Route which incorporated a southern route by late 1859 and took mail as far as San Francisco, taking advantage of the already established Fredericksberg Road running northwest out of Bexar County. Further, the established roads and watering holes, usually located every 20-30 miles, provided easier access for both people and the social and physical infrastructure that followed, establishing an important American presence across the southwest and along the west coast.

On March 2, 1861, Texas seceded from the Union, and soon after the Civil War began. San Antonio was a Confederate storage area as well as a location to form military units; however, the city kept its distance from most of the fighting (Fehrenbach 2005). Texas involvement in the war also caused the U. S. Mail services provided by overland stagecoach lines to pull routes to the north, thus obliterating the stagecoach and overland mail route system in Texas.

After the Civil War, industries such as cattle, distribution, ranching, mercantile, gas and oil, and military centers in and around the city prospered. The arrival of a railway transportation system in San Antonio in 1877 spurred economic growth throughout the city (Fehrenbach 2005). Modernization increased dramatically between the 1880s-90s when compared to the rest of the United States. Civic government, utilities, electric lights and street railways, street paving and maintenance, water supply, telephones, hospitals, and a power plant were all established or planned around this time (Fehrenback 2005).

Land Use and Change in the Twentieth Century

Farming and ranching played an important role in the development of Bexar County in the early- to mid-twentieth century, with much of the land still under cultivation or used for ranching activities into the 1980s. Cotton became the dominant crop by the 1920s, and tenant farming rose in popularity from 1910-40. Small farms dotted the countryside as people took advantage of rich farmland in close proximity to a growing city. By 1930, over half of all farms were worked by tenants (Long 2011).

As railways continued to be built well into the twentieth century, new roads followed, creating a linked network. Rails functioned as the "main arteries of travel" and roads as "the veins" (Pratt 1910: 106). Railroad companies soon realized that a good road system could greatly aid their business and they became one of the most ardent supporters of the good roads movement (Wallace 2008). Road systems also benefitted from the arrival of post offices. The Rural Free Delivery of Mail system (RFD) brought mail to isolated ranches and farms. Postmen refused to use roads in poor conditions and consistently reported conditions to the proper authorities when they could not make their deliveries. This system united rural roads and post routes engaging federal and state government interests. This new level of involvement with roads and their development stretched significantly beyond the previous scope of county court control (Wallace 2008).

The fate of road improvement and system expansion was sealed with the introduction of the automobile and the Federal Highway Act of 1916 and 1917. The new acts provided matching funding to states and a regulatory partnership to assist with building plans (location, design, and cost estimates). In response to these Acts, the Texas Highway Department was established in 1917. Not soon after, the Highway Department would become the largest agency in the state (Wallace 2008). By 1917, Texas was well on its way to creating a new and complete highway system. The system included several national marked highway routes including the nascent Old Spanish Trail Transcontinental Highway (American Highway Association 1917; Luther 2010).

The Old Spanish Trail Transcontinental Highway (OST) had a starting point in St. Augustine, Florida and a terminus at San Diego, California. Named for the historic landscape that the road traversed, it was created by a committee in Mobile, Alabama in 1915. By 1919, it was headquartered in the Gunter Hotel in San Antonio and by the time the highly

publicized road was fully completed in 1929, it was touted as the finest transcontinental road in the United States, costing an unprecedented $80,000,000 (Luther 2010). The route was a major feat for the good roads movement and national travel at the time. Cornelius Vanderbilt, Jr. drove the OST in the late 1920s, stating that it was "the best overland route in the country" (Travers 1929: 24). It was also promoted as the "greatest way of travel" and the "way of the Nation" (National Headquarters Old Spanish Trail 1923). It was partially funded by the War Department, supported by the American Automobile Association, the United States Bureau of Education, and was one of the first highways to promote roadside beautification (National Headquarters Old Spanish Trail 1923). The portion of the OST within south central Texas ran through San Antonio, heading northwest along the Fredericksberg Road, to Kerrville. Traces of this road can still be seen alongside IH-10.

Agricultural mechanization changed farming and ranching activities when it was introduced in the 1920s. Success soon waned as the Great Depression, boll weevil infestation, and falling prices sent farmers to new occupations. Many sold their land and the few who remained moved away from cotton production to livestock feed production and other sources of income (Long 2011). This change in agriculture greatly altered the landscape of small farming and ranching communities and opened the door to later suburban growth and land use shifts.

HISTORIC MAP ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Historic maps were reviewed to locate any historic-age resources or previous resource locations within the project area. The Stoner map system along with other historic maps (USGS topographic maps, road maps, etc.) did not reveal any historic-age resources of note. The lack of historic-age resources corresponds to information obtained from the THC Atlas review, which revealed no previously recorded archaeological sites or documented historic resources within the project area. Further, no data could be obtained from historic maps, which yielded information about the water tanks, windmill, and brick push pile found during survey efforts. Based on this information, it appears that the area was used primarily for agricultural practices and lacked a period(s) of residential or commercial building.

A thorough background review around the project area did not reveal any previously recorded archaeological sites. However, the general location of the project area in relation to the Old Fredericksberg Road is of importance. The project area is located just east of the historic road at the northwest edge of Bexar County, some 20 miles from the city center. The historic corridor functioned as one of the main routes heading west out of San Antonio and likely predates the city with origins as an Indian trail. The route was in use by the Spanish, followed by waves of European and American settlers, emigrants, Forty-niners, and military troops. As the City of San Antonio grew, the road evolved, becoming part of the OST in the early-twentieth century.

FIELD SURVEY

On April 11, 2012, two SWCA archaeologists conducted an intensive pedestrian survey with subsurface testing of the proposed Fallbrook MDP project. The entire property was examined and a total of 20 shovel tests were excavated in undisturbed areas with the potential to contain buried deposits (Figure 2; Table 1). The shovel test investigations were primarily along the edges of the project area boundaries on the slope base of the ridges. Most shovel tests encountered silt clay loam and clay loam, excavated to between 15 and 50 cm below surface. Shovel tests were terminated at compact soil and bedrock and all were negative for cultural material. Ground visibility was limited in areas with moderate vegetation and leaf litter, but some places with eroded surfaces and disturbances afforded greater visibility, which ranged from 50–90 percent.

The project area contains evidence of vegetation removal, consisting of push piles of juniper trees and shrubs scattered throughout the property. Narrow two track roads can be found on the property, primarily intersecting at ridge tops and along the eastern edge of the property boundary. Limestone cobbles and gravel outcroppings dominate the ridge tops and slopes.

A small push-pile of brick and mortar was encountered adjacent to a two-track road near the center of the project area (Figure 3). The brick pile lies in heavy vegetation along a fence line. Total dimensions of the site are approximately 10 m in length and 3 m in width. The brick ranges in size and color, lacking a clear manufacturer stamp (Figure 4). Mortar chunks with large, exposed aggregate are scattered throughout the site. As such, the debris was designated as an isolated push pile with no distinct cultural significance. No evidence of a building or structure could be found within the area. Shovel tests were not excavated as exposed limestone cobbles and bedrock were observed on the surface. It is not clear whether or not the pile is historic-age. However, based on the brick type and clay inclusions, they likely date to the mid-twentieth century.

A small concrete stock tank, a water tank, and remnants of a windmill were encountered at the northeastern corner of the project area approximately 2,362 feet (720 m) north of the brick and mortar debris pile (Figure 5 and Figure 6). The small concrete stock tank is approximately 5 feet in diameter and straddles the fence line. The water tank is approximately 12–15 feet high and 10 feet in diameter at the base. The windmill remnants consist of the tower frame and rod. A thorough examination of the structures determined they likely date from the mid-twentieth century. The structures appear to be associated with ranching activities in the area. While likely historic in age, the windmill is no longer in use and has been partially deconstructed. The small concrete stock tank currently holds water but does not appear to be attached to a pumping system. It is unclear if the larger water storage tank is still in use. Overall, it appears as if these structures, along with the larger agricultural landscape, are no longer in use. Due their overall condition, and lack of visibility and/or notation on historic maps, the structures lack significance and sufficient integrity to be considered eligible for NRHP listing.

The survey revealed the project area to be moderately disturbed by previous land clearing activities and two-track roads. The historic overlay did not reveal any evidence historic-age resources within the project area (Foster et al. 2006). Based on the investigations and results of the archival review, the structures and debris pile have little to no cultural significance or integrity and no further work is recommended.

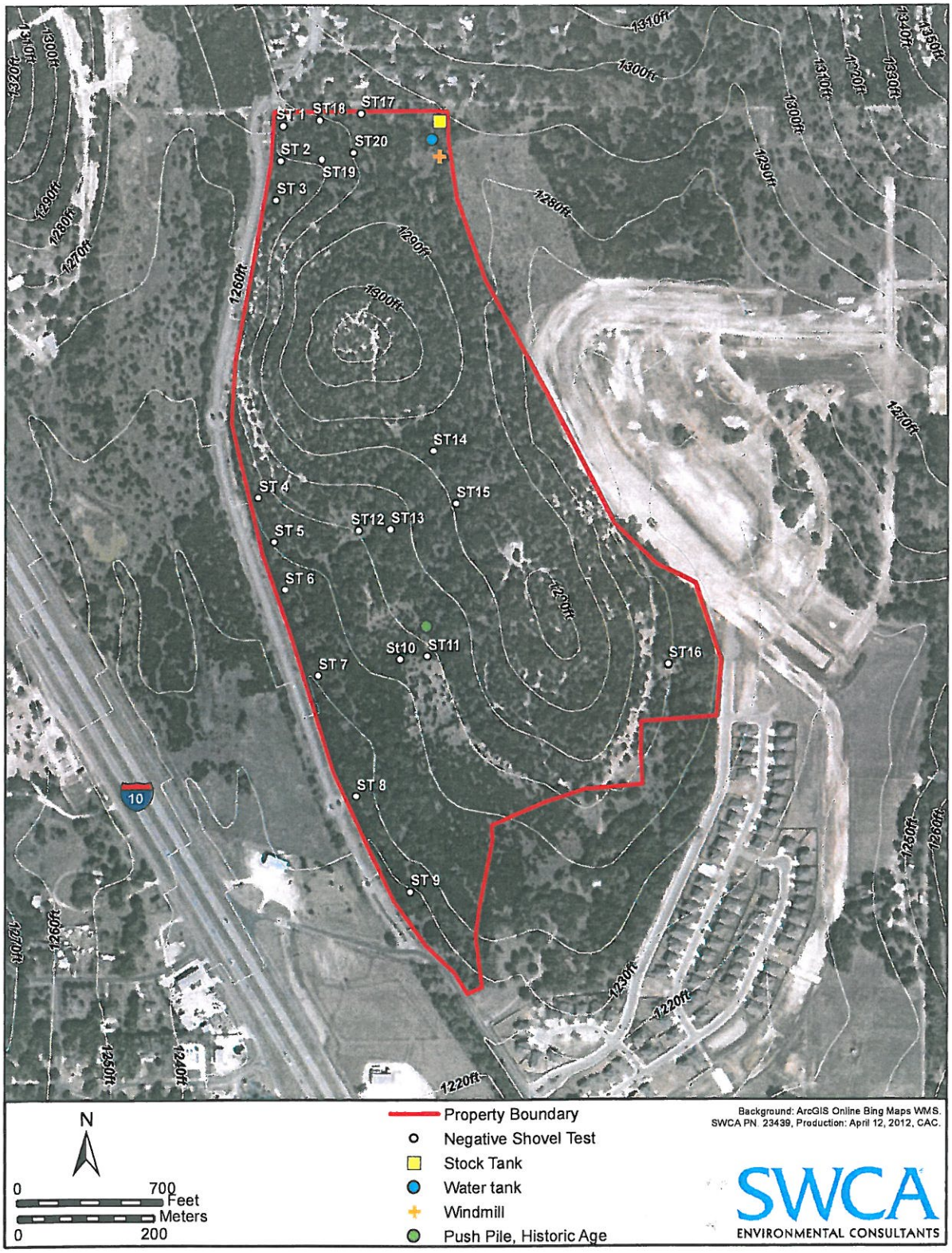

Figure 2. Project area survey data.

Table 1. Fallbrook MDP Shovel Test Data

ST #	County	Depth (cmbs)	Munsell	Soil Texture	Inclusions	Positive/ Negative	Comments
1	Bexar	0-10	10YR 4/3	Sandy Loam	20% pebbles	N	Terminated due to bedrock.
2	Bexar	0-40	10YR 3/1	Clay Loam	none	N	Terminated due to compact clay.
3	Bexar	0-30	10YR 4/3	Silty Loam	None	N	
		30-50	7.5YR 5/2	Clay Loam	10% Calcium Carbonate	N	Terminated due to compact clay.
4	Bexar	0-20	7.5YR 4/3	Clay Loam	Snails/Calcium Carbonate	N	Terminated due to bedrock.
5	Bexar	0-10	10YR 4/3	Silty Loam	10% roots	N	
		10-25	7.5YR 5/2	Clay Loam	10% gravels	N	Terminated due to bedrock.
6	Bexar	0-40	7.5YR 4/3	Clay Loam	Large roots/Calcium Carbonate	N	Terminated due to compact clay.
7	Bexar	0-10	10YR 3/2	Clay Loam	80% cobbles	N	Terminated due to bedrock.
8	Bexar	0-5	10YR 4/4	Silty Clay Loam	On Bedrock	N	Terminated due to bedrock.
9	Bexar	0-10	10YR 3/2	Clay Loam	50% caliche	N	Terminated due to bedrock.
10	Bexar	0-50	10YR 3/2	Clay Loam	5% snails and roots	N	Terminated due to compact clay.
11	Bexar	0-10	10YR 5/3	Silty Loam	10% Calcium Carbonate	N	
		10-25	7.5YR 5/2	Clay Loam	20% gravels and 10% Calcium Carbonate	N	Terminated due to bedrock.
12	Bexar	0-40	7.5YR 3/4	Clay Loam	5% limestone pebbles	N	
		40-50	7.5YR 3/2	Clay	none	N	Terminated due to compact clay.
13	Bexar	0-10	10YR 3/2	Silty Loam	10% gravels	N	
		10-25	7.5YR 4/3	Clay Loam	20% gravels	N	Terminated due to bedrock.
14	Bexar	0-10	10YR 4/2	Clay Loam	10% roots	N	
		10-15	7.5YR 3/4	Clay		N	Terminated due to compact clay.
15	Bexar	0-10	10YR 3/2	Silty Loam	10% gravels	N	
		10-25	7.5YR 4/3	Clay Loam	20% gravels	N	Terminated due to compact clay.
16	Bexar	0-30	7.5YR 4/4	Silty Loam		N	
		30-35	7.5YR 4/3	Clay Loam	Mottles and Calcium Carbonate	N	Terminated due to compact clay.
17	Bexar	0-5	10YR 5/2	Silty Loam	20% gravels	N	
		5-10	10YR 3/2	Clay Loam	10% Calcium Carbonate; 10% gravels	N	
		10-30	10YR 5/3	Clay Loam	40% Calcium Carbonate	N	Terminated due to compact clay.
18	Bexar	0-30	10YR 4/3	Clay Loam	10% roots	N	
		30-35	10YR 5/1	Clay Loam		N	Terminated due to compact clay.
19	Bexar	0-20	10YR 3/2	Silty Loam	Roots; 10% Calcium Carbonate	N	
		20-30	7.5YR 4/3	Clay Loam	20% Calcium Carbonate; Gravels at base.	N	Terminated due to compact clay.
20	Bexar	0-10	10YR 3/1	Clay Loam	none	N	Terminated due to bedrock.

Figure 3. Isolated push-pile of brick, mortar, and limestone fragments.

Figure 4. Brick fragment sample from debris pile.

Figure 5. Facing northeast, water tank with pump connections in northeastern portion of project.

Figure 6. Facing northeast, concrete stock tank along fence line in northeastern corner of project area south of Bowmans Lane.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

On behalf of Pape-Dawson, SWCA conducted an intensive cultural resource survey of the proposed 150-acre Fallbrook MDP Project in Bexar County, Texas. The investigations were done to satisfy requirements of the San Antonio Historic Preservation Office (HPO) per the City of San Antonio's Historic Preservation and Design Section of the Unified Development Code (Article 6 35-360 to 35-634). These investigations included a thorough background review and an intensive pedestrian survey with subsurface investigations.

The background review determined that the project area has not been previously surveyed and that no previously recorded sites are within the project area. However, the project area is east of the Old Fredericksberg Road, part of the greater OST system.

An isolated push-pile consisting of brick and mortar, likely dating to the mid-twentieth century, was encountered near the center of the project area. Three structures were found in the northeastern corner of project area, consisting of a water tank, a stock tank, and a deconstructed windmill, also likely dating from the mid-twentieth century. The structures do not contain any architectural detail or features of significance. The structures and debris were determined to contain little to no integrity or cultural significance. Based on the results of the historic overlay map review, there are no associated historic-age resources within the project area.

Overall, the survey revealed the project area to be moderately disturbed by previous land clearing activities and two-track roads. Twenty shovel tests excavated within the 150-acre project area were targeted in areas with the highest potential for containing buried cultural deposits. All were negative for cultural material. The THC standards require 50 shovel tests within the 150-acre project area. The current survey did not meet this requirement due to extensive areas of high ground surface visibility, bedrock surface exposures, and slopes exceeding 20 percent.

The proposed undertaking will have no effects on any significant cultural resources and SWCA recommends no further archaeological investigations within the APE. No artifacts were collected; thus, nothing was curated.

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