

**ARCHEOLOGICAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES SURVEY  
OF THE W. W. WHITE ROAD BRIDGE OVER ROSILLO CREEK,  
SAN ANTONIO, BEXAR COUNTY, TEXAS  
WBS Element: 40-00008-04-02  
Env. Code: 03-652F8-176CIPI**

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LETTER REPORT NO. 813

submitted to

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San Antonio, Texas

by

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Austin, Texas

PAI No. 209023

December 2009

TEXAS ANTIQUITIES PERMIT NO. 5390

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## **ABSTRACT**

In September 2009, Prewitt and Associates, Inc., conducted an archeological and historic resources survey of approximately 0.46 acres of existing bridge and road right of way along W. W. White Road over Rosillo Creek in San Antonio, Texas, for the proposed replacement of the existing bridge. The work was performed for the City of San Antonio and Adams Environmental, Inc., of San Antonio. No archeological sites were observed in the project area. The archeological resources project area is disturbed by bridge and road fill sections, drainage ditches, and buried utility lines, and it has no potential for buried prehistoric sites and features that would yield significant information. One historic-age bridge was documented in the historic resources study area. The bridge is recommended as not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places or for listing as a State Archeological Landmark, since it is not an excellent representative of its type, bears no sufficient design or engineering complexity, and has no known local historical associations. The proposed project will have no effect on significant archeological or historical resources, and no further work is recommended.

## **CURATION**

No artifacts needing curation were collected during the survey. Project records and photographs will be kept on file at Prewitt and Associates, Inc.

## **INTRODUCTION**

In September 2009, Prewitt and Associates, Inc., conducted an archeological and historic resources survey of approximately 0.46 acres of existing bridge and road right of way along W. W. White Road at Rosillo Creek in the City of San Antonio for the proposed replacement of the existing bridge (Figure 1). The survey was authorized by the State of Texas Antiquities Code (Texas Natural Resource Code of 1977, Title 9, Chapter 191, VTCS 6145-9) and conducted under Texas Antiquities Permit No. 5390. The work was also conducted under the City of San Antonio Historic Preservation and Section of the Unified Development Code (Article 6 35-630 to 35-634), Office of Historic Preservation (OHP). The survey was performed to identify, document, and evaluate archeological and historic resources to provide sufficient documentation for determining the presence of significant properties in compliance with the Texas Antiquities Code and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

The project area is east of Interstate Highway 410 along W. W. White Road. Bridge replacement impacts will consist of paving the southeastern and northwestern bridge approaches on W. W. White Road and constructing a concrete box culvert on the Rosillo Creek channel. This will impact an area approximately 175 m (570 ft) long and approximately 15 m (45 ft) at its widest point. The construction will permanently disturb 0.04 acres of the floodplain, though the depths of these impacts are currently not known. Paving the bridge approaches will permanently impact 0.42 acres. No new right of way or construction easements are needed or proposed for this project. For the archeological survey, the Area of Potential Effects is restricted to the footprint of the bridge itself and the adjacent approaches, since these are the only areas that will be disturbed. Since the proposed bridge replacement is along an existing transportation corridor, the historic resources study area consists of the existing roadway and bridge and 150 ft beyond the existing right of way.

Field records for the survey were kept in a standard format and consist of the project notes, digital photographs, and photograph log. No artifacts needing curation were collected during the survey. All project records and photographs will be kept on file at Prewitt and Associates, Inc.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING**

Bexar County is in south-central Texas and straddles the Balcones Fault Zone, which separates the Edwards Plateau from the Blackland Prairie of the Gulf Coastal Plain to the southeast (Arbingast et al. 1973:6; Bureau of Economic Geology 1983). The Edwards Plateau margin has been heavily dissected by stream downcutting and headward erosion, resulting in a rugged landscape of limestone hills and canyons, whereas the Blackland Prairie is typically rolling tall grasslands underlain by soft limestones, marls, and chalks.

The climate of the Blackland Prairie region can be classified as modified humid subtropical with Gulf-influenced hot summers and continental-influenced mild winters, while the Edwards Plateau region is subtropical steppe with low summer humidity (Natural Fibers Information Center 1987:10–12). Summer temperatures can exceed 100°F, and freezing temperatures can occur during the winter months, although such extremes are more frequent to the west on the Edwards Plateau. The mean annual precipitation for

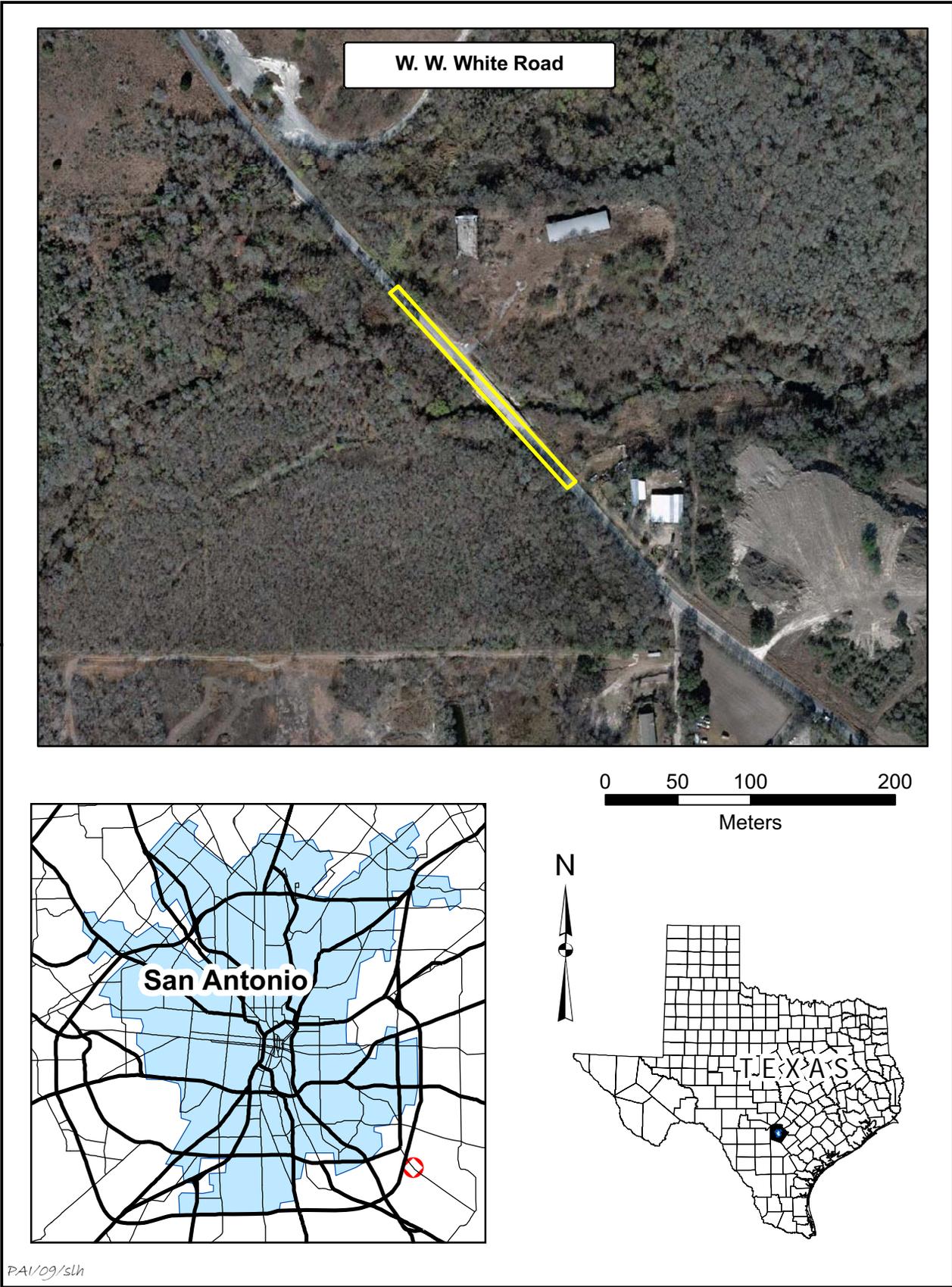


Figure 1. Project area map.

Bexar County is 29.1 inches (739 mm). Rains falls throughout the year, with slight peaks in the late spring and early fall months (Natural Fibers Information Center 1987:49).

Like the landscape and climate, the biota of Bexar County differs from east to west, though there is geographical overlap of some species. The flora and fauna of the Edwards Plateau are defined as Balconian, while those of the Blackland Prairie are characterized as Texan (Blair 1950).

The project area traverses the Rosillo Creek valley, which is incised in late Quaternary fluvial terrace deposits (Bureau of Economic Geology 1983). Rosillo Creek is a tributary of Salado Creek and part of the San Antonio River basin. The valley itself probably contains some Holocene alluvium but not enough to be mapped as a discrete unit on the 1:250,000-scale *Geologic Atlas of Texas–San Antonio Sheet*. Mollisols of the Frio series are mapped on the floodplain of Rosillo Creek, and Mollisols of the Venus and Patrick series are mapped on the adjacent uplands (Taylor et al. 1991).

## **METHODS AND RESULTS OF THE SURVEY**

Prior to field investigations, a search for previously recorded archeological sites within or near the project area was conducted using the Texas Historical Commission's Archeological Sites Atlas. Although no previously recorded archeological sites occur within the immediate project area, two sites have been recorded about 1.25 km west-northwest of the project area. Site 41BX176 is a disturbed prehistoric human burial consisting of at least three individuals with grave goods. Site 41BX596 is a small prehistoric lithic scatter. No previously identified historic properties are in or near the historic resources study area. A Texas Centennial Marker noting the March 29, 1813, Battle of Rosillo (Rosalis), is located about 1-km southeast of the project area.

Field investigations consisted of a 100 percent pedestrian survey and surface examination across the 0.46-acre project area. Surface visibility was poor to fair due to vegetation and paved road surfaces. Construction-related impacts and other disturbances were observed throughout the project area.

The floodplain surface of Rosillo Creek is ca. 3 m below the upland surface. Alluvial deposits below the floodplain surface consist of a 1–2-m-thick mix of fine-grained sediment and gravels apparent where the channel bank is exposed. A buried utility line is present along the outer margin of the existing right of way south and southwest of W. W. White Road. Power poles with overhead lines are present within the right of way on the opposite side of the road. A chain-link fence with support posts set in concrete also parallels the outer margin of the right of way north and northeast of the road and north of Rosillo Creek. Concrete-lined drainage ditches are along the base of the fill sections and extend 20–30 m away from the creek channel in all corners of the bridge. These drainage structures encompass the remaining portions of the right of way that are not impacted by the fill sections and travel lanes.

Due to the extensive nature of these disturbances, no shovel tests or trenches were excavated. No archeological sites were observed in the project area, and given the extensive impacts and disturbances, it has no potential for buried prehistoric sites or features that would yield significant information.

A concrete box culvert bridge was identified in the study area (Figures 2–6). The bridge’s construction date is not known, but it is likely to have been constructed before 1965. A series of concrete box culverts support the existing asphalt-paved concrete bridge deck. These culverts may be precast, but more likely were cast in place. The approaches to the bridge consist of two travel lanes that extend across most of the existing right of way save for 2–3 m on either side. The travel lanes are built on fill sections, present at each end of the bridge, that are 2–3 m thick, extend away from the bridge 20–30 m, and are mantled by concrete aprons along their sides.

To be considered eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, a bridge should either be an excellent example of its type to be considered significant as a representative example, or it should exhibit exemplary design or engineering complexity to be considered significant as unusual or distinctive. A bridge may also be considered significant for its associations with community development, transportation, or prominent individuals. Although this bridge retains its integrity of location and setting, it is in poor condition. Portions of the deck are compromised. Its original concrete supports remain in place, but the historic guardrail has been removed. Modern metal guardrails, in disrepair in some areas, have been installed. The removal of historic attributes and the introduction of modern materials infringe on the bridge’s integrity of materials, design, workmanship, and feeling. Because of these infractions, the bridge is not an excellent example of its type. This is a very common bridge type and exhibits neither design nor engineering complexity. The bridge has no known historical associations and consequently lacks associative integrity. For these reasons, the bridge is recommended as not eligible for both the National Register of Historic Places and State Archeological Landmark designation.



**Figure 2.** Bridge deck, looking northwest.



**Figure 3.** Bridge deck, looking northwest.



**Figure 4.** Bridge deck, looking southeast.



**Figure 5.** Bridge deck, looking southeast.



**Figure 6.** Box culvert bridge over Rosillo Creek, looking north.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The archeological and historic resources survey of 0.46 acres at the W. W. White Road bridge over Rosillo Creek consisted of 100 percent pedestrian survey. No archeological sites were observed or recorded. Because of impacts and disturbances related to construction of the existing bridge and utility lines, the archeological project area has no potential for intact buried prehistoric features or components and does not contain important information. One historic-age bridge identified in the study area is recommended as not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places or for listing as a State Archeological Landmark. Thus, construction of the proposed bridge and pavement of the existing travel lanes will have no effect on any significant archeological or historical resources. No further work is recommended.

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