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ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF POWER LINE ROUTES
IN KERR AND KENDALL COUNTIES, TEXAS,
FOR THE BANDERA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

Michael C. Woerner

Center for Archaeological Research
The University of Texas at San Antonio
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ABSTRACT

In August 1981, the Center for Archaeological Research, The University of Texas at San Antonio, conducted an archaeological survey of power line right-of-ways in Kerr and Kendall Counties for the Bandera Electric Cooperative, Inc. One archaeological site (41 KE 79) was located at the proposed substation site south of Comfort, Texas, and is recommended for additional investigation.

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INTRODUCTION

In June 1981, Alexander Utility Engineering, Inc. contracted with the Center for Archaeological Research (CAR), The University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) to perform an archaeological survey in Kerr and Kendall Counties for the Bandera Electric Cooperative, Inc. (O. W. Schneider, letter dated June 16, 1981).

Field work was conducted on August 18, 1981 by Michael C. Woerner, CAR archaeologist, accompanied by Raymond Batto of Bandera Electric Cooperative.

The survey covered 4.3 miles of proposed power line easements and a 1.5 acre proposed substation construction site. No significant cultural resources were found along the power line easements; however, a prehistoric occupation site (41 KE 79) was found at the substation site.

ENVIRONMENTAL BACKGROUND

The survey areas lie within the southern portion of the Edwards Plateau, a subprovince of the Great Plains (Johnson 1931). Wide valleys separated by high hills of uniform altitude are characteristic of the topography (Reeves 1969). Surface exposures of Edwards Limestone are common along the hill slopes throughout the area (Anonymous n.d.:2). The major drainages of the area include the Guadalupe River, the Blanco River, and Cibolo Creek.

The Edwards Plateau is included in the Balconian Biotic Province (Blair 1950). The vegetation of the plateau tops is characterized by thick scrub cedar, live oak, and short grasses (Bass and Hester 1975). The mean temperature is 66°F and the average annual rainfall is 25 to 30 inches.

PREVIOUS ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH

Kendall County

A limited amount of professional archaeological research has been conducted in Kendall County. These investigations have focused on the Cibolo Creek watershed and minor drainages in the area. A total of 78 sites has been recorded in Kendall County.

In 1975 the CAR conducted an intensive archaeological survey of floodwater retarding structures along the Upper Cibolo Creek, recording a total of 33 prehistoric sites (Bass and Hester 1975).

In 1976 the CAR again conducted an intensive archaeological survey of the Upper Cibolo Creek Watershed. Nineteen prehistoric sites previously documented by Bass and Hester (*ibid.*) were reexamined and six additional sites were located. One site, 41 KE 49, was extensively mapped, surface collected, and tested. This site was recommended for placement on the National Register of Historic Places (Kelly and Hester 1976a).

Also in 1976, a survey by CAR of Boerne City Park recorded two prehistoric sites (Kelly and Hester 1976b).

In 1977 the CAR conducted archaeological test excavations at three sites (41 KE 46, 41 KE 54, and 41 KE 57) along Frederick Creek. These sites were in areas to be modified by construction of floodwater retarding structures in the Upper Cibolo Creek Watershed (Valdez and McGraw 1977).

Investigations by avocational archaeologists have also focused on the Upper Cibolo Creek Watershed. Patterson and Adams (1977) have documented nine sites in the area ranging from Late Paleo-Indian to Middle Archaic age.

Kerr County

More than 200 archaeological sites have been recorded in Kerr County. The earliest archaeological investigation was in 1934 when two burned rock middens, threatened by construction of State Highway 27, were excavated by W. Goldschmidt (1934).

An archaeological survey of the Ingram Reservoir in northwest Kerr County was conducted in 1970. A total of 63 prehistoric sites was recorded along Johnson Creek, a tributary of the Guadalupe River (Briggs 1971).

In 1971 and 1972 the Texas Archeological Society conducted field schools in the Turtle Creek area, south and west of Kerrville. The intensive survey and testing program recorded 165 archaeological sites. Several of the sites (41 KR 1, 41 KR 116, 41 KR 166) were chosen for intensive excavation. Of the 116 prehistoric sites recorded, 63 contained burned rock middens (Skinner 1974; 1979a,b,c).

Camp Verde (41 KR 111) has been placed on the National Register of Historic Places. The camp was used in 1856 to stable camels imported from North Africa. In 1857, General A. S. Johnston started his expedition against the Mormons in Utah from Camp Verde. The fort surrendered to the Confederates in 1861 and was abandoned in 1869 (Anonymous 1976; Webb 1952).

A brief summary of the cultural resources of Kerr, Kendall, and other counties has been compiled by Hester (1975).

METHODOLOGY

In order to document all cultural resources, the entire survey area was carefully examined and all types of archaeological sites were recorded. King (1978) describes this method as the "non-exclusive comprehensive survey." Areas of high site probability immediately outside the survey area were also examined. Sites were recorded on CAR site survey forms and plotted on USGS 7.5 minute topographic maps. Site record forms are on file at the CAR and at the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory, Austin. Collected artifacts were brought to the CAR laboratory for analysis and storage.

THE SURVEY

Area 1 (Fig. 1)

The area is located one mile west of Kreutzberg and consists of 1.5 miles of right-of-way 20 feet wide. No cultural resources other than modern trash were observed. No further work is recommended for this area.

Area 2 (Fig. 2)

41 KE 79

Location: 41 KE 79 is located in a plowed field, the proposed substation site, at the intersection of two unnamed county roads about 1/4-mile south of Comfort.

Description: 41 KE 79 is a prehistoric open site situated between Cypress Creek and the Guadalupe River. Lithic tools and debitage were observed throughout the field, particularly along the northwest fenceline in an area approximately 100 m NW-SE by 30 m NE-SW. No surface indications of burned rock, mussel shell, or snails were observed. Two small shovel tests (25 cm²) were excavated to a maximum depth of 30 cm. No material was recovered from the shovel tests.

Artifacts Collected: The artifacts listed below were typed according to definitions by Hester (1980) and Gibson (1981).

3 bifacially flaked cores	7 unifaces
3 bifaces	3 secondary flakes
1 biface fragment	5 interior flakes
3 bifacially utilized cobbles	1 fragment of mid-late 19th century "pearl ware" ceramic (Wayne Cox, personal communication)

Condition: The site has been disturbed by recent plowing. Undisturbed deposits, not detected by the shovel tests, may be present beneath the plow zone.

Recommendation: Limited subsurface testing should be conducted to determine if undisturbed deposits are present beneath the disturbed surface, and if so, estimate the significance. Substation construction should not proceed until the site has been evaluated.

Area 3 (Fig. 3)

The survey area is located four miles southeast of Center Point and consists of 2.8 miles of proposed power line easement. No archaeological sites were found, but a single isolated find was recovered.

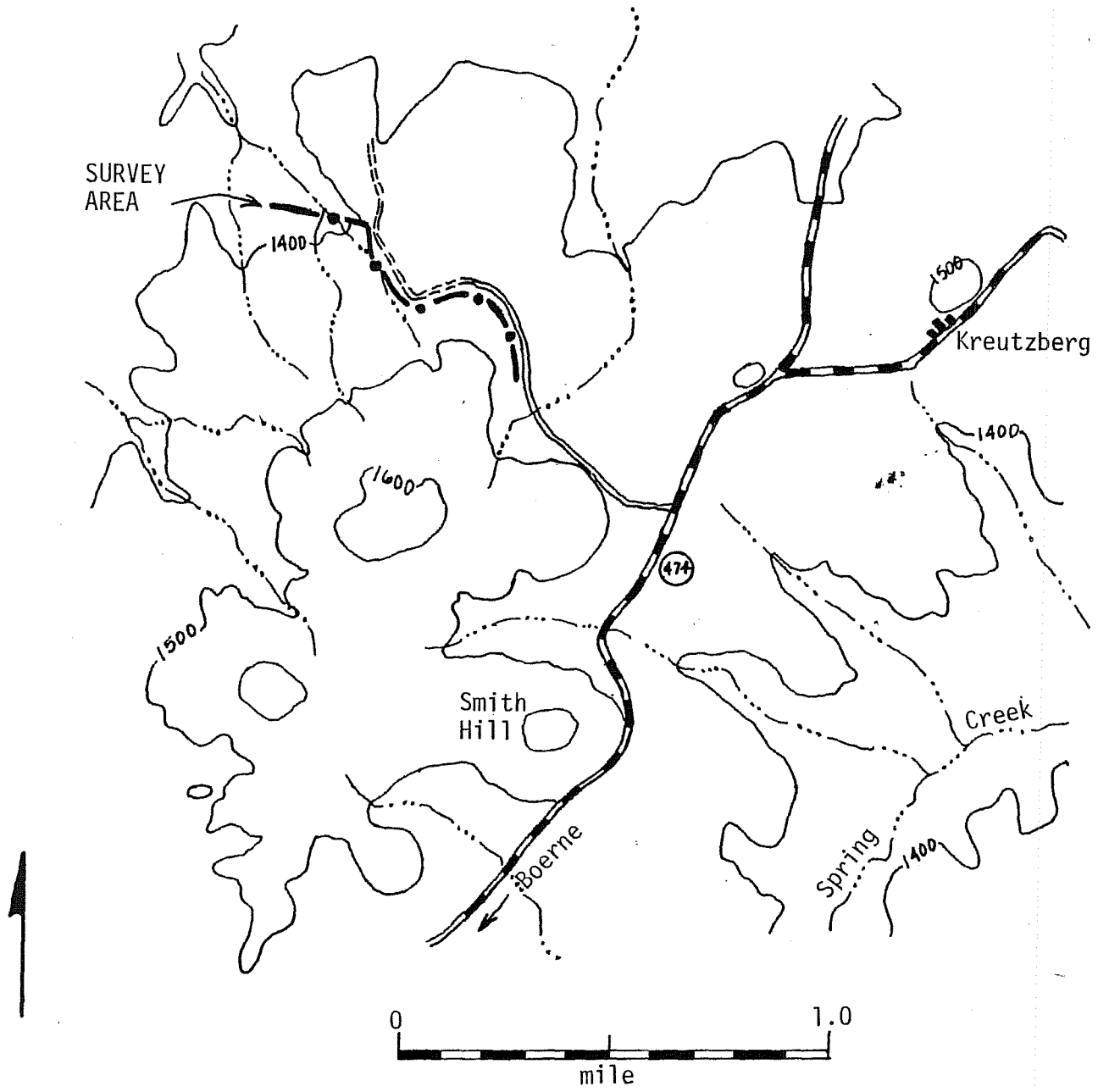


Figure 1. Area 1, Proposed Easement and Survey Route, Kendall County.

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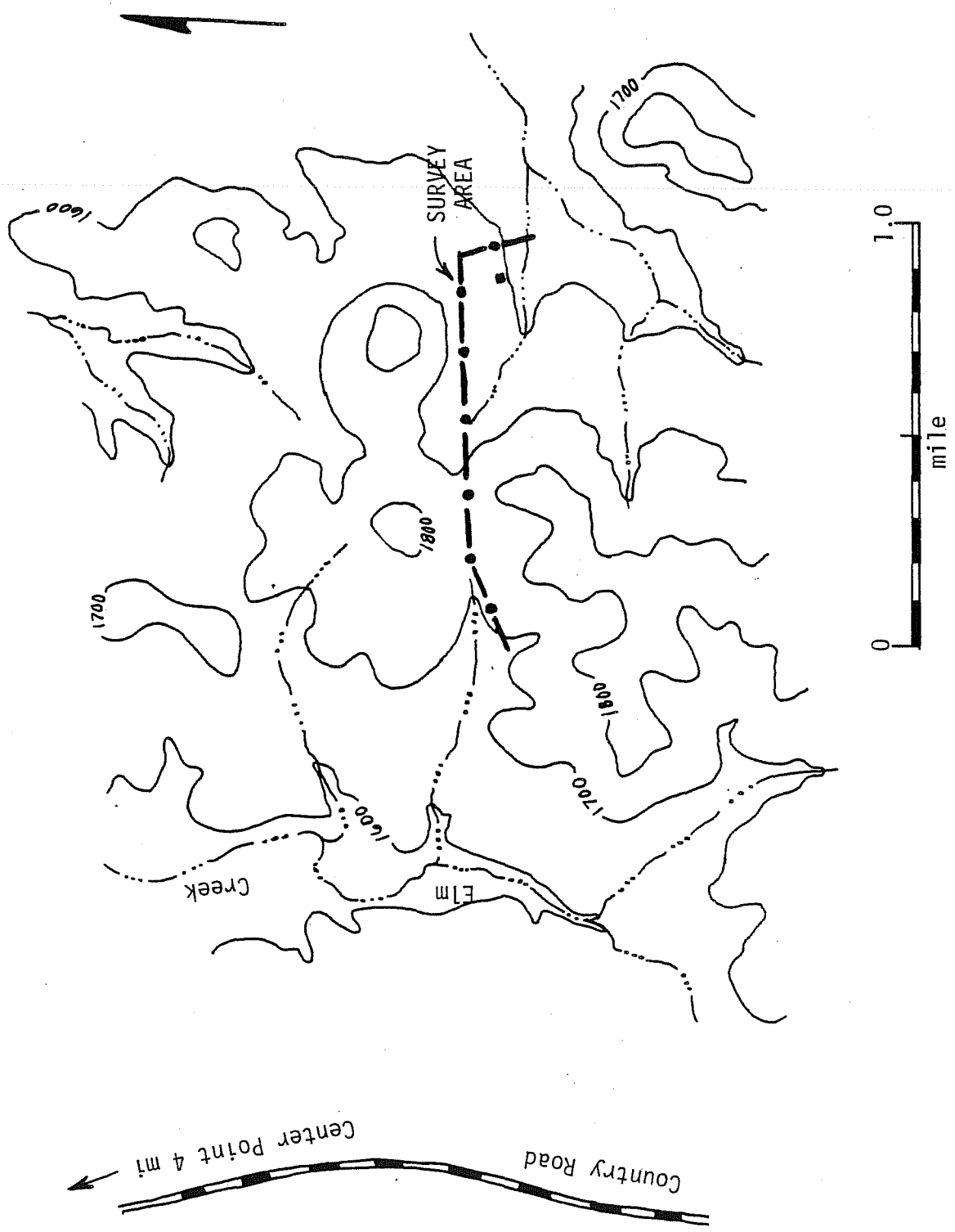


Figure 3. Survey Area 3, Kerr County.

Isolated Find

Location: The isolated find, an unidentified dart point fragment, was recovered from a sendero southeast of Bachelor Mountain.

Description: The point from the distal tip and a portion of the base is missing. The lateral edges are straight with prominent shoulders and expanding stem. This point is made from a medium gray chert and is moderately patinated.

Recommendation: Because the point is a surface find unassociated with any other archaeological material, no further investigation is indicated.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The project was a one-day archaeological survey in Kendall and Kerr Counties for the Bandera Electric Cooperative. Three areas, totaling 4.3 miles of proposed power line easement and a 1.5 acre proposed substation construction, were carefully examined for cultural resources.

Only one archaeological site, 41 KE 79, was recorded during the survey. This site is located in a plowed field south of Comfort where the substation is to be built. We recommend that, prior to construction, subsurface testing be conducted to determine if significant cultural deposits lie below the plow zone. This could be determined by a series of shovel tests (50 cm²) and, if necessary, one or more controlled, hand-excavated units (for example, 2 m² units).

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