January 5th, 2012

Alabama Historical Commission
Attention: Elizabeth Ann Brown
468 South Perry Street
Montgomery, Alabama 36130-0900

RE: **AHC 08-0961**
Southland Resources, Inc.
Searles Mine No. 7 – Revision R-5 Mining Project
ASMC Permit No. P-3927

County: **Tuscaloosa** ***Latitude:*** **33.3508** ***Longitude:*** **-87.3055**

Dear Ms. Brown,

We are in the process of applying for coal mining permit revision through the Alabama Surface Mining Commission for the area described and would like to request comments from your office in order to proceed with this project.

Southland Resources, Inc. has existing mining operations in Tuscaloosa County, Alabama. In order to accommodate its business expansion in Tuscaloosa County, Southland Resources wants to permit one hundred twenty eight (128) acres at the project site as located in Section 31 & 32, Township 19 South, Range 7 West, all on the Brookwood, Alabama U.S.G.S Quadrangle as found in Tuscaloosa County, Alabama. The proposed site location is shown on the attached 2000' scale project area map attachment "B".

The proposed project area consists of 128 acres all of which received a cultural resource study in December of 2011. In the study it states that the proposed Searles Mine No. 7 project will have no effect on any historic properties. I have attached this study in attachment "C".

Therefore, based on the information provided in the attached cultural resource study would you concur that the project activities will have no adverse effect on cultural resources eligible for or listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Post Office Box 3431 • 450 19th Street • Jasper, Alabama 35502-3431 • 205-221-0686 • Fax 205-221-7721 • kaylen@mcgehee.org

However, should artifacts or archaeological features be encountered during the project activities, work will cease and you will be consulted immediately.

I would like to thank you for your co-operation concerning this matter and would appreciate your comments at your earliest convenience. If you should have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact our office.

Sincerely,

McGehee Engineering Corp.

Kaylen DeFoor

Kaylen DeFoor
Project Manager,

Enclosure:
(A) *Project Notification Summary*
(B) *Project Area Map 2000 Scale*
(C) *Cultural Resource Study – University of Alabama Museums 2011*

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Attachment "A"

Project Notification Summary

PROJECT NOTIFICATION & PROJECT SUMMARY

Date: ____ January 5th, 2012

Mining Company Name: __Southland Resources, Inc. ___

Return Address: ___P. O. Box 3431, Jasper, Alabama 35502-3431___

Return Fax Number: __(205) 221-7721__

Contact Person: __McGehee Engineering Corp., L. Stephen Blankenship_____

Mine Name: ___Searles Mine No. 7 – Revision R-5

Number of Acres: ___128 Acres __

USGS Quad Sheet(s) on which the Mine occurs: Brookwood_

County: __Tuscaloosa____

See Attached Map

Current Landuse of Permit and Adjacent Areas:

Undeveloped/Existing mining operations

Dominant Vegetation Communities of Permit and Adjacent Areas:

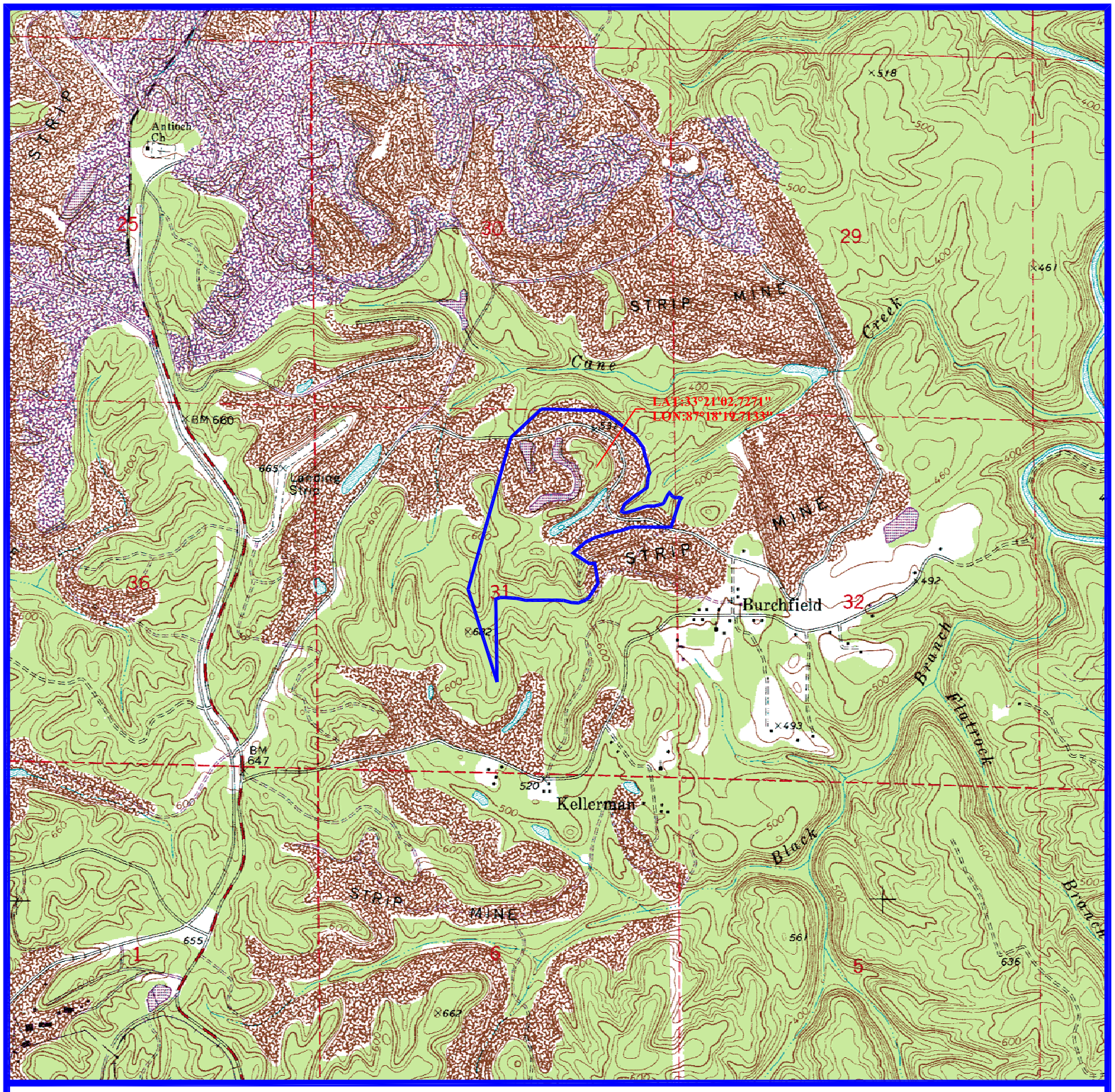
Loblolly Pine, American Beech, Red maple, various grasses, weeds &_briars.

Project:

_____Southland Resources, Inc. – Searles Mine No. 7 – Revision R-5

Attachment "B"

Project Area Map



SCALE: 1" = 2000'
October 6th, 2011

SOUTHLAND RESOURCES, INC.
SEARLES MINE NO. 7
(APPROXIMATELY 128 ACRES TOTAL)

N
W E
S

REVISION R-5
PROJECT AREA MAP

SECTION 31 & 32, TOWNSHIP 19 SOUTH, RANGE 7 WEST
ALL IN TUSCALOOSA COUNTY, ALABAMA
AS FOUND ON THE BROOKWOOD, AL. USGS QUAD.

REVISION R-5 BOUNDARY

mcgehee engineering corp
post office box 3431
jasper, alabama 35502-3431
telephone: (205) 221-0686 fax: 221-7721
email: staff@mcgehee.org

Latitude: 33°21"02" N
Longitude: 87°18"19" W

Attachment "C"

Cultural Resource Study

A Cultural Resources Reconnaissance Survey for the Proposed Searles Mine No. 7 Located near Kellerman in Tuscaloosa County, Alabama

R. Lance Richardson

PERFORMED FOR:
Southland Resources
P.O. Box 3431
Jasper, Alabama 35502

PERFORMED BY:
The University of Alabama
Office of Archaeological Research
13075 Moundville Archaeological Park
Moundville, Alabama 35474

January 2012

OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH
The University of Alabama
University of Alabama Museums
13075 Mound State Parkway
Moundville, Alabama 35474

University of Alabama Museums

Office of Archaeological Research

THE UNIVERSITY OF
ALABAMA
MUSEUMS

January 5, 2012

A CULTURAL RESOURCES RECONNAISSANCE SURVEY FOR THE PROPOSED SEARLES MINE NO. 7 LOCATED NEAR KELLERMAN IN TUSCALOOSA COUNTY, ALABAMA

OAR PROJECT NUMBER: 12-136
AHC TRACKING NUMBER: 08-0961

PERFORMED FOR: Southland Resources
P.O. Box 3431
Jasper, Alabama 35502
Attn: Ms. Kaylen Jones

PERFORMED BY: R. Lance Richardson, Cultural Resources Analyst
The University of Alabama
Office of Archaeological Research
13075 Moundville Archaeological Park
Moundville, Alabama 35474

DATE PERFORMED: November 30, 2011

R. Lance Richardson
Cultural Resources Analyst
Office of Archaeological Research

Matthew D. Gage, RPA/Director
The University of Alabama
Office of Archaeological Research

13075 Moundville
Archaeological Park
Moundville, Alabama 35474
(205) 371-2266
FAX (205) 371-2494

A Cultural Resources Reconnaissance Survey for the Proposed Searles Mine No. 7 Located near Kellerman in Tuscaloosa County, Alabama

R. Lance Richardson

Management Summary

The University of Alabama, Office of Archaeological Research was contracted by Southland Resources to perform a Phase I cultural resources reconnaissance survey for the proposed Searles Mine No. 7, located near the community of Kellerman in Tuscaloosa County, Alabama. The proposed project area is approximately 51.8 ha (128 acres) in size. Field investigations for the project were undertaken on November 30, 2011. R. Lance Richardson, Cultural Resources Analyst serves as the Project Director and Matthew D. Gage RPA, Director is the Principal Investigator. State oversight for adherence to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act for this project is led by the Alabama Surface Mining Commission. The Alabama Historical Commission tracking number for this project is 08-0961.

As a result of this cultural resources reconnaissance survey, no standing structures or archaeological sites were identified or added to the Alabama State Site File. Based on these findings, it is the opinion of this office that the proposed Searles Mine No. 7 will have no effect on any historic properties.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Contents Page

Management Summary i
List of Figures ii
Introduction 1
Environmental Setting 1
Laboratory Methods and Collection Curation 13
Recommendations 13
References Cited 14
Appendix A 15

LIST OF FIGURES

Page

Figure 1. General location of the survey area and previous survey areas. 2
Figure 2. Soils within the survey area. 4
Figure 3. Photograph, shovel test, and site locations and environmental conditions 6
Figure 4. View of the previously mined portion of the survey area. View to the west. 7
Figure 5. Previously mined area in the northern portion of the survey area. View to the east. 7
Figure 6. Planted pines in the southwestern corner of the survey area. View to the south. 8
Figure 7. Steep slopes located in drainage. 8
Figure 8. Push piles in mixed secondary growth near the southern boundary 9
Figure 9. Recent timbering activities and slope in the center of the survey area. 9
Figure 10. Access road along the southern boundary of the survey area 10
Figure 11. Access roadway in the central portion of the survey area 10
Figure 12. Access roadway on the easternmost landform 11
Figure 13. View of the highwall along the edge of the easternmost landform. 12
Figure 14. Soil profile of Shovel Test #21. 12
Figure 15. Shallow depth to subsoil in the bottom of Shovel Test #6. 13

A Cultural Resources Reconnaissance Survey for the Proposed Searles Mine No. 7 Located near Kellerman in Tuscaloosa County, Alabama

R. Lance Richardson

Introduction

The University of Alabama, Office of Archaeological Research (OAR) was contracted by Southland Resources to perform a cultural resources reconnaissance survey for the proposed Searles Mine No. 7, located near the community of Kellerman in Tuscaloosa County, Alabama. The proposed project area is approximately 51.8 ha (128 acres) in size. R. Lance Richardson, Cultural Resources Analyst, assisted by Daryll R. Berryman, Cultural Resources Assistant, conducted the survey on November 30, 2011. The Principal Investigator for the project is Matthew D. Gage RPA, Director of OAR. State oversight for adherence to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act for this project is led by the Alabama Surface Mining Commission. The Alabama Historical Commission (AHC) tracking number for this project is 08-0961.

The research design of the Phase I survey is to locate and identify any archaeological sites or historic standing structures within the proposed project area, assess their significance, and provide recommendation with regard to guidelines set forth by the National Park Service for NRHP eligibility criteria. Included in this report is a discussion of the environmental setting of the survey area, a literature search of any previously recorded sites or previously conducted surveys within or near the survey area, a description of field and laboratory methods, the results of the cultural resources reconnaissance, and conclusions and recommendations based on the findings of this survey.

Environmental Setting

The location of the irregularly shaped survey area can be seen on the 1974, USGS 7.5' Brookwood, AL topographic quadrangle located in the central portion and NE ¼ of Section 31 and a very small portion of the SW ¼ of the NW ¼ of Section 32, T19S, R7W (Figure 1). The survey area consists of moderate to steeply rolling upland with elevation ranging from a peak of 201 m (660 ft) AMSL along some of the ridge tops, to a low of 140 m (460 ft) AMSL along a drainage in the central portion. Much of the survey area has been previously impacted by strip mining as evidenced by the 1974 topographic map (Figure 1). Vegetation consists of secondary growth pine and hardwood, although the majority of the survey area consists of large tracts of linear planted pine, particularly in the areas of reclaimed strip mine.

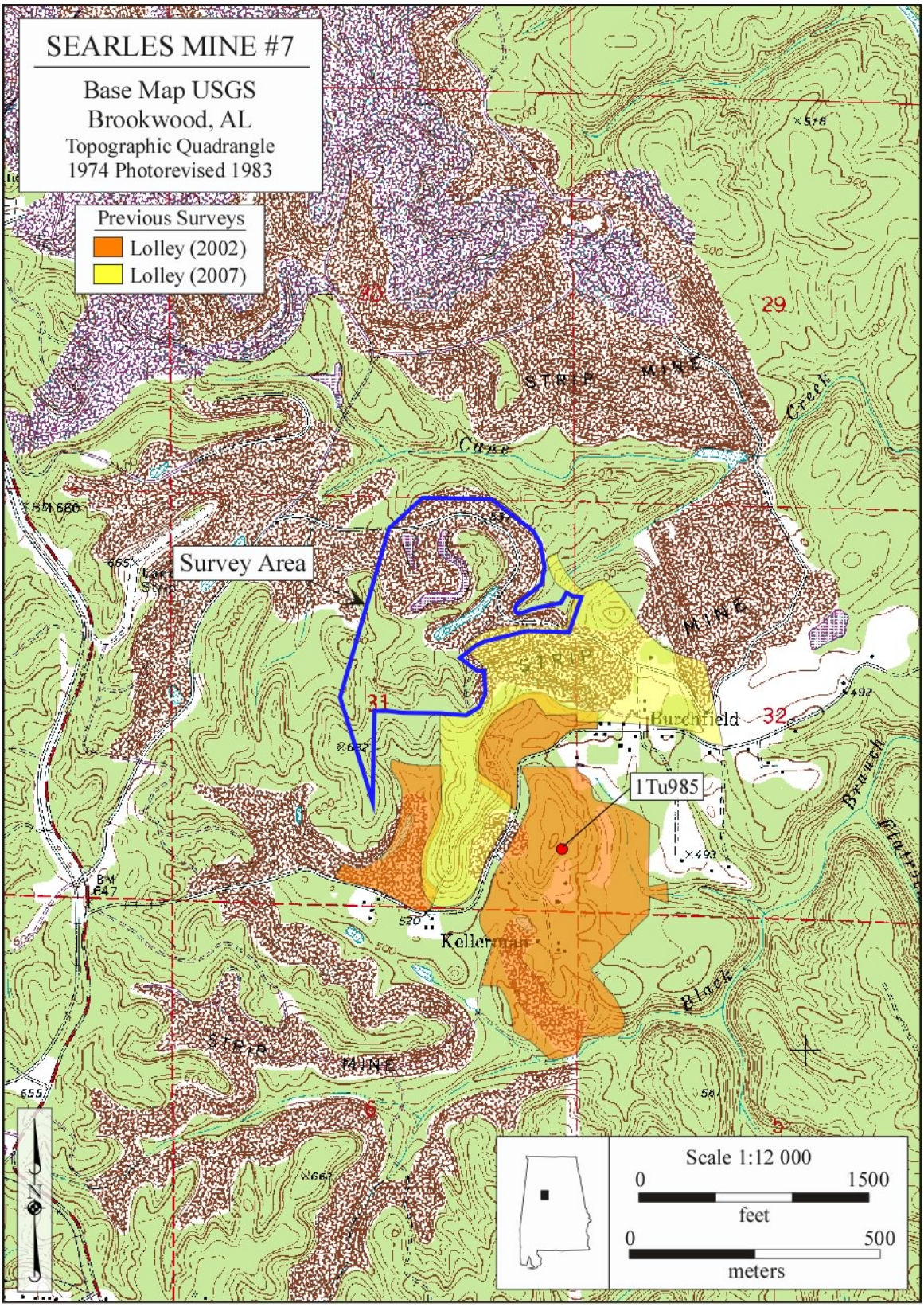


Figure 1. General location of the survey area and previous survey areas.

The survey area lies within the Warrior Basin district of the Cumberland Plateau physiographic section of Alabama. The Warrior Basin district is described as a "homoclinal limestone valley of low relief. Synclinal submaturely to maturely dissected sandstone and shale plateau of moderate relief" (Sapp and Emplaincourt 1975).

The National Cooperative Soil Survey (Soil Survey Staff 2011) for Tuscaloosa County, Alabama shows two soil types/associations present within the survey area (Figure 2). A brief description of each soil, along with a representative soil profile follows.

> *Montevallo-Nauvoo association, steep* (22): This map unit consists of soils on strongly dissected areas of sandstone and shale plateaus in the northern and western parts of the county. Montevallo soils have a surface layer of very dark gray shaley silt loam and dark grayish brown shaley silt loam about 6 inches thick. The subsoil is yellowish brown very shaley silt loam about 10 inches thick. Nauvoo soils are found on ridge tops and ridge sides. Typically, the surface layer is dark grayish brown fine sandy loam about 6 inches thick. The subsoil is about 36 inches thick. The upper 6 inches is yellowish brown fine sandy loam and the lower portion is about 30 inches of yellowish red clay loam.
>
> *Palmerdale complex, steep* (25): This complex consists of steep, somewhat excessively drained Palmerdale soils and other soils on surface mining spoil piles. Slope ranges from 15 to 60 percent in most areas. Present land use of these soils is oriented primarily towards reclamation and establishment of trees.

Literature and Document Search

For prior archaeological surveys conducted in the general area, the National Archaeological Database Bibliography, housed at OAR (2002), and the Alabama Phase I Surveys Website (OAR 2011) were reviewed. Four previous surveys have been performed within one mile of the current survey area. Three are related to other Searles mines (Hollis 1998; Lolley 2002a and 2002b). However, an additional survey was performed adjacent to the current proposed Searles Mine No. 7 project. A small portion of the present survey area was examined by Lolley in 2007 during that survey (Figure 1). The ASSF (OAR 2002) shows one site located within one mile of the survey area. Site 1Tu985 is listed as a small site with a 20th century component. The site was considered ineligible for nomination to the NRHP.

The NRHP and related supplements list no eligible properties located in the general vicinity of the proposed project area. A review of the 1911 Tuscaloosa County, Alabama Soil Map shows no structures within the survey area. Also, the 1937 and 1950 editions of the Tuscaloosa County, Alabama Highway Maps reveal no standing structures located within of the proposed project boundaries. Finally, the *Historical Atlas of Alabama, Vol. 2* lists no historic cemeteries located within the current survey area (Remington 1999).

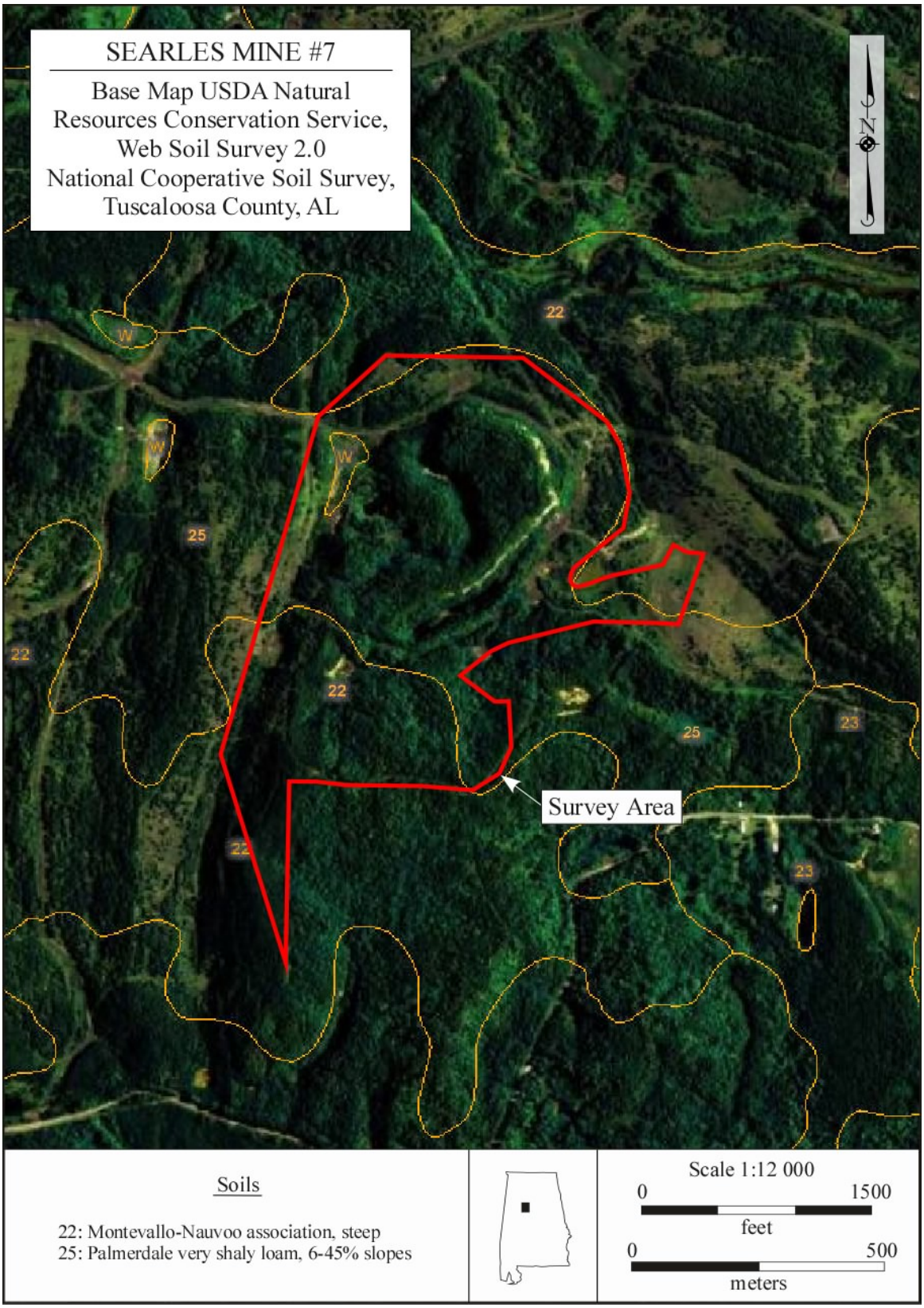


Figure 2. Soils within the survey area.

Field Methods

Field investigations consisted of a pedestrian walkover of the proposed project area employing visual inspection of exposed ground surface and subsurface testing. Investigations were conducted by a two person crew. Per AHC guidelines, all shovel tests had a minimum diameter of 30 cm and were excavated to recognizable, culturally sterile subsoil. All excavated soil was sieved through 6.35 mm (¼ in) hardware cloth in an effort to recover cultural materials. Soil profiles were recorded for each shovel test noting soil colors, textures, and depths of soil texture/color changes, and horizon boundaries. All shovel test locations were documented using global positioning systems units rated for 1-3 m accuracy. A total of 33 shovel tests was excavated in the course of this survey (Figure 3). The amount of sloping terrain, coupled with the extensive impact from prior strip mining and silviculture, has greatly reduced or even negated the potential for many areas of the tract to contain intact subsurface or even surficial evidence of prior aboriginal or historic occupation. Photographic documentation was undertaken to provide evidence of the varying environments and disposition of the proposed project area. These photographs (Figures 4-15) are keyed to the Figure 3 topographic map showing their locations and direction of capture.

Where exposed ground surface was present, initial investigations consisted of visual inspection. These locations included bare soil exposures along natural slopes, drainages, road cutbanks, road surfaces, and erosional surfaces. Where visibility was limited, shovel tests were excavated at 30 m intervals. Such areas were very limited in extent and consisted of landforms with relatively level settings (areas of less than15 percent slope). The 30 m interval subsurface testing method was also limited to those settings exhibiting an absence of deep disturbance from prior silviculture activities where subsequent erosion has removed near surface soil horizons. Lower probability areas were sampled at greater intervals ranging from 60 m to 100 m and included gently sloped and disturbed settings. Slopes greater than 15 percent were visually inspected. Shovel test intervals in these areas exceeded the 60 m spacing and in some cases was curtailed altogether due to the lack of intact near surface soil horizons.

The survey area consists of undulating upland crests and slopes located north of the community of Kellerman and south of Cane Creek. Much of the northern and eastern portions of the survey area have been previously surface mined and are greatly altered from their original topography (Figures 4-5). To the south and west, the parcel has not been surface mined but the majority has been previously timbered and is presently planted in mature pines (Figure 6). The drainages in the southern portion of the survey area were examined for rockshelters but no viable rock outcrops were found (Figure 7). A small area located in the southern portion of the project area is vegetated in mature hardwoods and pine growth. However, this area was previously timbered and contains numerous push piles (Figure 8). In the eastern portion of the survey area, recent clear-cutting has taken place (Figure 9). A recently improved access road has been completed along the southern and western boundaries (Figures 10-11).

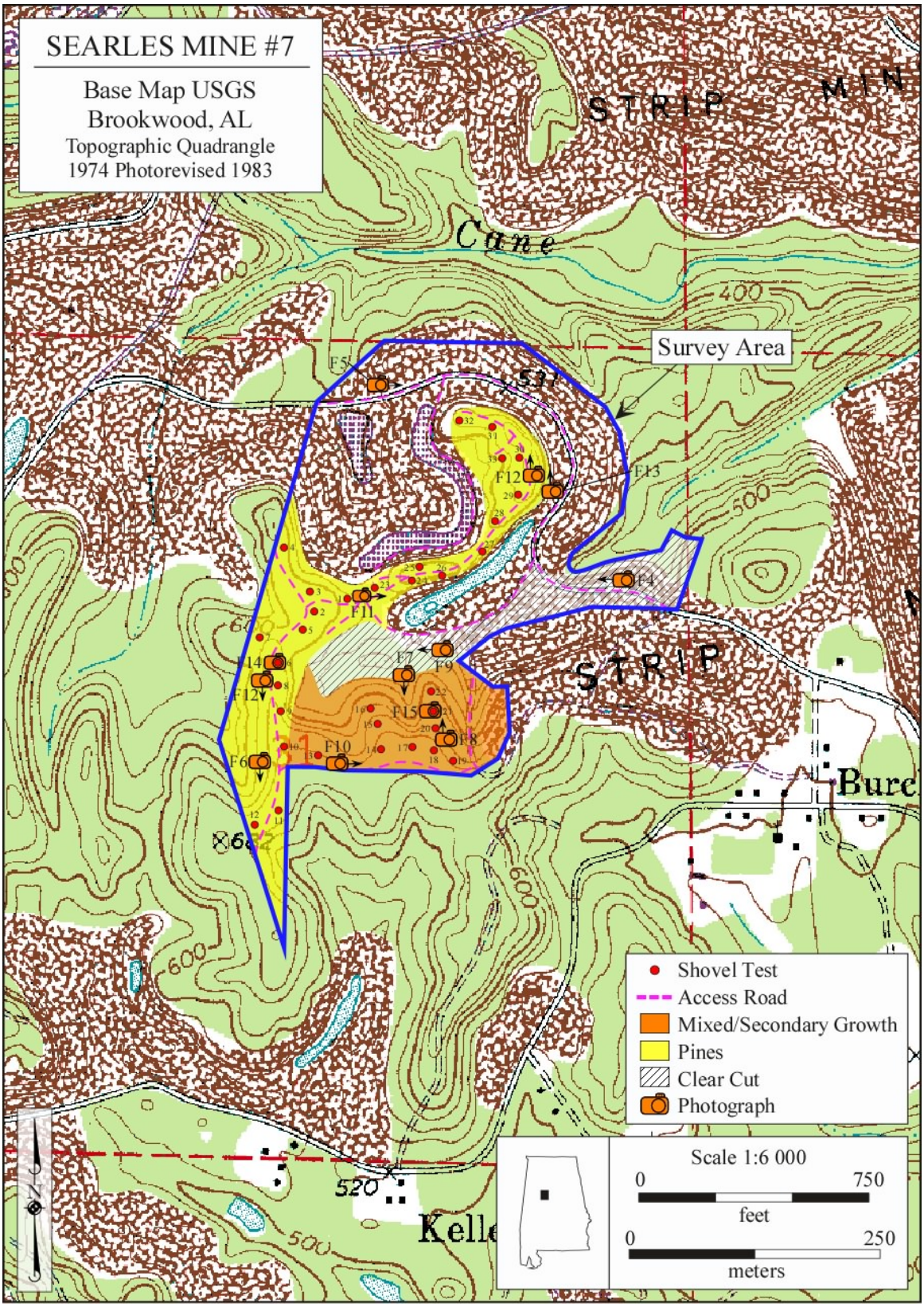


Figure 3. Photograph and shovel test locations and environmental conditions within the survey area.

Figure 4. View of the previously mined portion of the survey area. View to the west. The landform in the background is the easternmost extension of the survey area.

Figure 5. Previously mined area in the northern portion of the survey area. View to the east.

Figure 6. Planted pines in the southwestern corner of the survey area. View to the south.

Figure 7. Steep slopes located in drainage examined for possible rock outcrops or anthropogenic features. View to the south.

Figure 8. Push piles in mixed secondary growth near the southern boundary of the survey area. View to the north.

Figure 9. Recent timbering activities and slope in the center of the survey area. View to the west.

Figure 10. Access road along the southern boundary of the survey area with subsoil visible at the surface. View to the east.

Figure 11. Access roadway in the central portion of the survey area with subsoil visible at the surface. View to the east.

This road extends into the central and northern portion of the survey area before terminating at a cut created by previous surface mining activities (Figure 12). The areas to the east, north, and west of this landform have been previously mined, as evidenced by the highwall which surrounds the remaining landform (Figure 13).

Shovel testing, particularly in the portion of the survey area vegetated in hardwoods and scattered pine trees, revealed fine sandy loam up to 10 cm in depth, (Figure 14). However, most shovel tests revealed topsoils of less than 2 cm in depth. These were consistent along the ridge crests which are vegetated in planted pines (Figure 15). Disturbed and eroded soils were common throughout the survey area, with no intact soils identified via shovel testing. Subsoil is visible at the surface along the access road located on the upland slopes and crests.

Figure 12. Access roadway on the easternmost landform which was not previously mined. View to the north.

Figure 13. View of the highwall along the edge of the easternmost landform.

Figure 14. Soil profile of Shovel Test #21 showing 10 cm of topsoil.

Figure 15. Shallow depth to subsoil in the bottom of Shovel Test #6.

Laboratory Methods and Collection Curation

All photographs, field notes, maps, and documentation pertinent to the survey will be curated at the Erskine Ramsay Archaeological Repository located at Moundville Archaeological Park. This repository meets Department of the Interior curation standards as defined in 36 CFR Part 79 and required by Chapter 460 x 9 of the Administrative Code of Alabama. A letter of agreement for curation has been included as Appendix A.

Recommendations

During the course of this survey, no new archaeological sites were discovered within the boundaries of the proposed project area. Portions of the survey area have been greatly altered from previous mining activities. In the portion of the survey area that was not previously mined, the landform is highly eroded and contains no intact soils. Based on these findings, it is the opinion of this office that the proposed Searles Mine No. 7 will have no effect on any historic properties.

References Cited

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APPENDIX A