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Office of Archaeological Research

July 27, 2009

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Mr. J. Rich Weaver
Birmingham Coal and Coke Co., Inc.
1400 Viking Drive
P.O. Box 690
Jasper, Alabama 35502-0690

OAR PROJECT NUMBER: 09-186

Dear Mr. Weaver:

Please find enclosed for your company a copy of our recent report entitled "A Phase I Archaeological Survey of 1505 Acres for the Proposed Old Union Mine #2 in Winston and Walker Counties, Alabama", by Samuel D. Mizelle, II of our staff. Please note that SHPO has 30 days to comment on our findings.

It has been a pleasure to be of service to Birmingham Coal and Coke Co., Inc.. Please feel free to call for further information or services.

Sincerely,



Robert A. Clouse, Ph.D./Director
The University of Alabama
Office of Archaeological Research

RAC:tkw
FILE:2008-09SURVEY.FCL/1

Enclosures: Survey Report
Invoice for Professional Services

Copy of Survey Report to:

Alabama Historical Commission
Attn: Stacye Hathorn

University of Alabama Museums

Office of Archaeological Research

THE UNIVERSITY OF
ALABAMA
M U S E U M S

July 27, 2009

A Phase I Archaeological Survey of 1505 Acres for the Proposed Old
Union Mine #2 in Winston and Walker Counties, Alabama

OAR PROJECT NUMBER: 09-186

PERFORMED FOR: Birmingham Coal and Coke Company, Inc.
P.O. Box 690
Jasper, Alabama 35502
Attn: J. Rich Weaver

PERFORMED BY: Samuel D. Mizelle, II, Cultural Resources Investigator
The University of Alabama
Office of Archaeological Research
13075 Moundville Archaeological Park
Moundville, Alabama 35474

DATE PERFORMED: June 19 – July 10, 2009



Samuel D. Mizelle, II
Cultural Resources Investigator
Office of Archaeological Research



Robert A. Clouse, Ph.D./Director
The University of Alabama
Office of Archaeological Research

*A Phase I Archaeological Survey of 1505 Acres
for the Proposed Old Union Mine #2 in Winston and Walker Counties, Alabama*

Samuel D. Mizelle, II

Introduction

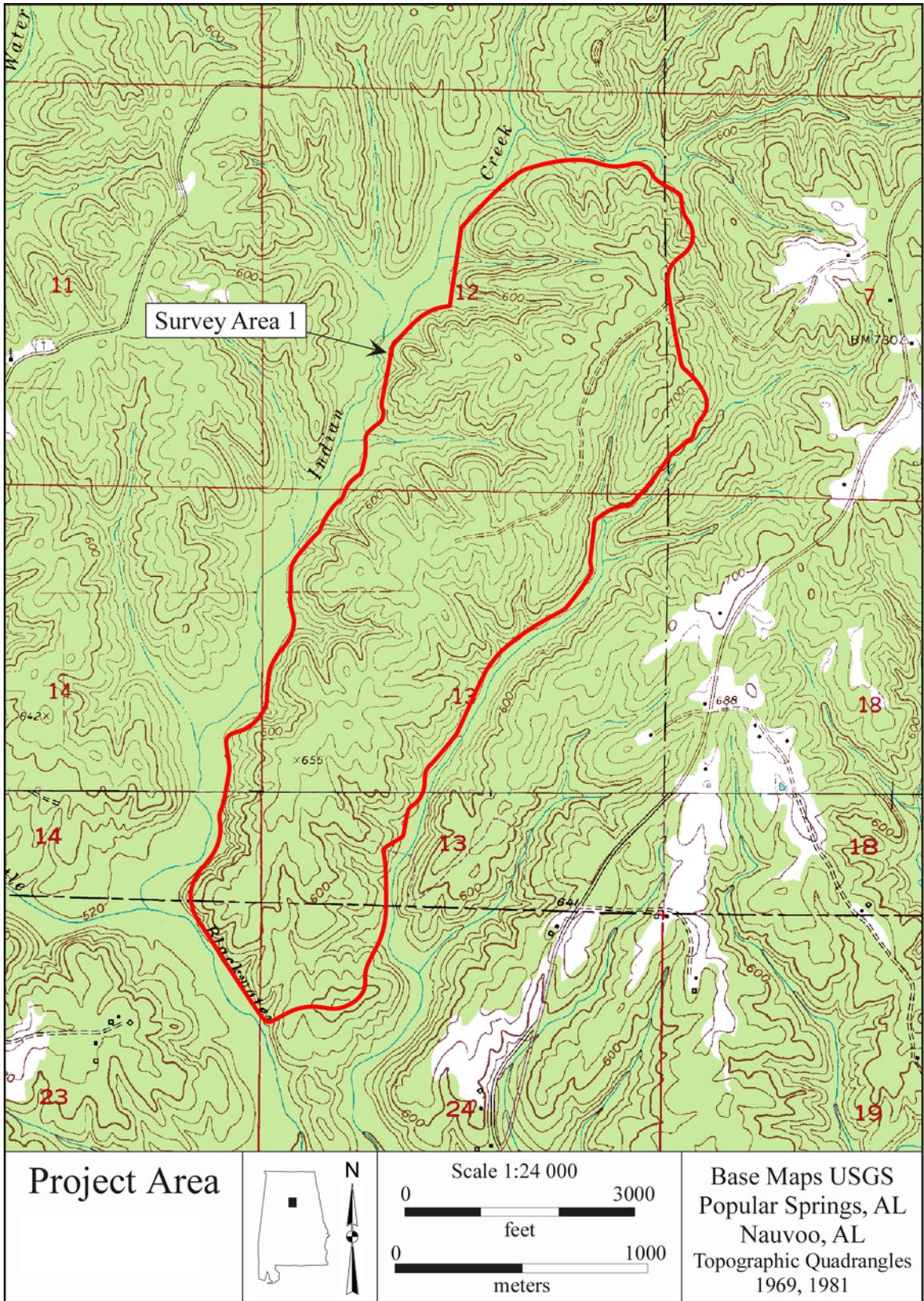
The University of Alabama, Office of Archaeological Research (OAR) was contracted by DSM Design Group, LLC to perform a cultural resources reconnaissance survey of five parcels totaling approximately 1505 acres for the proposed in Old Union Mine #2 project in Winston and Walker Counties, Alabama. Samuel D. Mizelle, II (Cultural Resources Investigator) and John Lieb (Cultural Resources Assistant) conducted the survey, and Mr. Mizelle and Dr. Robert Clouse served as Co-Principal Investigators for the project. The pedestrian survey was conducted during the period of June 19 – July 10, 2009, to locate and identify any archaeological sites or historic standing structures within the survey boundaries, assess their archeological significance, and provide eligibility recommendations based on the guidelines set forth by the National Historic Preservation Act and the Alabama Historical Commission.

Literature and Document Search

The Alabama State Site File (ASSF), housed at OAR, contains no previously recorded sites within the project area or immediate vicinity. The National Archaeological Database lists one previous survey conducted within a portion of the project area (Lolley 2006a) and The National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) does not list any properties within the vicinity of the project area.

Environmental Setting

As seen on the Poplar Springs and Nauvoo, Alabama USGS 7.5 minute topographic maps, the study areas are located in Section 33 of T11S, R9W, Sections 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 23 and 24 of T12S, R9W and Section 7 of T12S R8W (Figures 1 and 2). The project area lies within the Warrior Basin district of the Cumberland Plateau physiographic section. This district is a “synclinal submaturely to maturely dissected sandstone and shale plateau of moderate relief” (Sapp and Emplaincourt 1975). Topographically, the five areas proposed for the project are of varying relief, with elevation ranging from approximately 520 to 720 feet AMSL.



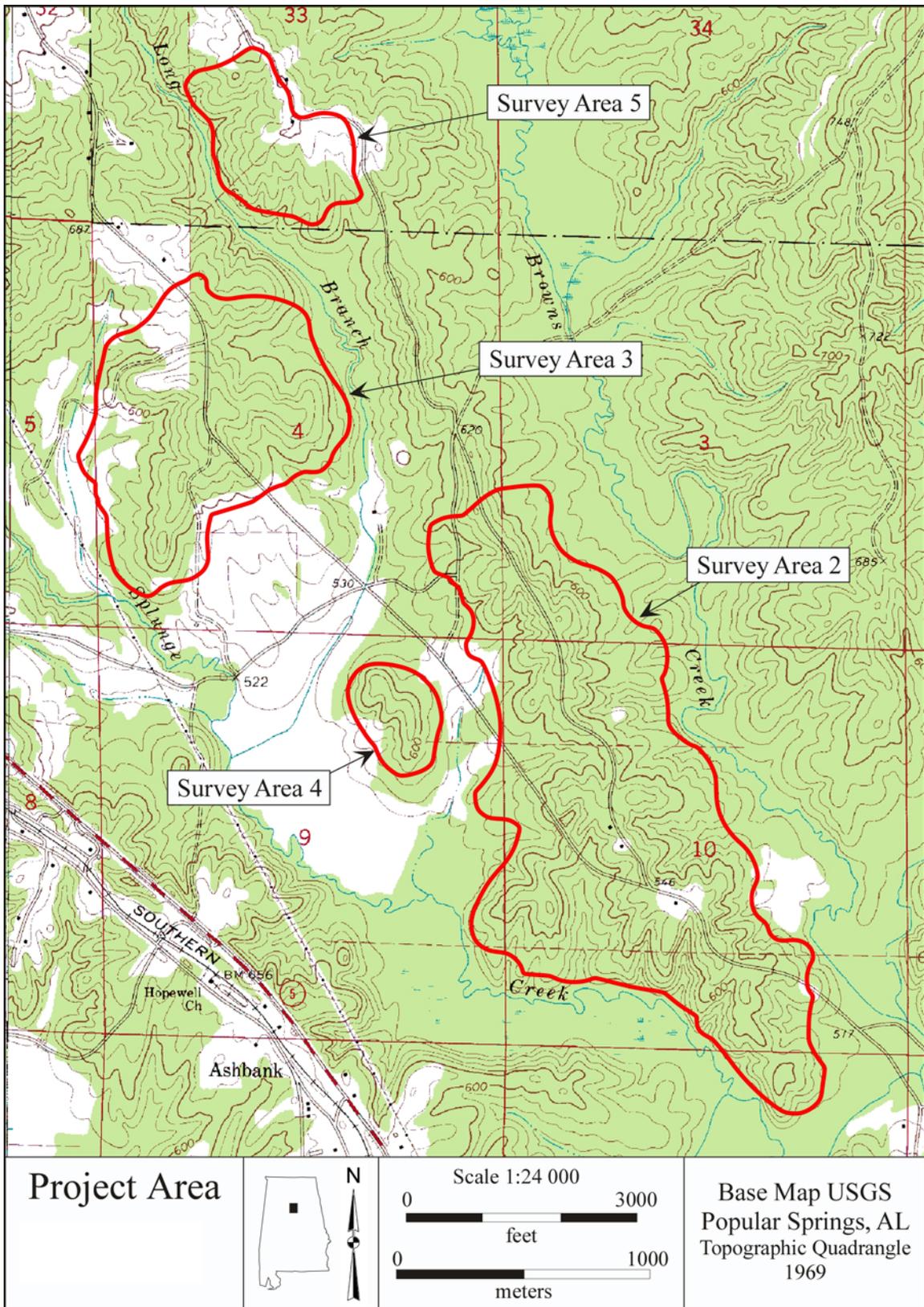


Figure 2. Old Union Mine #2 survey areas 2 through 5.

The 1932 Winston County Soil Map shows five soil types found within the project area (Figures 3 and 4). They are described as follows:

Guin soils, undifferentiated – Guin soils, undifferentiated, represent a class of soil materials rather than any specific soil series. They are an intricate mixture of many classes and types of soil. As most of this land is so rough and broken that it is of little or no agricultural value, no soil separations have been attempted. Mixed with Savannah and Atwood soil materials, which predominate, are spots of Hartsells and Hanceville very fine sandy loams... With the exception of rough stony land, the relief of the Guin soils, undifferentiated, is the roughest in the county. Areas included in this classification comprise long winding ridges, sharp knolls, peaks, and hills, and deep intervening V-shaped valleys. Much of the land is steeply rolling, hilly and semi-mountainous. The streams have cut deeply, from 50 to 200 feet below the tops of the hills...If this land were cleared, erosion would be extremely active and damage would result, not only to this land, but to the bottom lands, which are now good agricultural soils, but which would be ruined by the deposits of sand, gravel, and rock brought down by the unchecked waters... The land was originally heavily forested, but practically all the merchantable timber has been cut.

Hartsells very fine sandy loam, rolling phase – Hartsells very fine sandy loam, rolling phase, has the same color, texture, and structure as typical Hartsells very fine sandy loam. It is classified separately because of its rolling relief, thickness of surface soil and subsoil, and susceptibility to destructive erosion when cultivated. Soil of this phase occupies positions having a greater degree of slope than any other marginal soils.

Holston very fine sandy loam – The surface layer of Holston very fine sandy loam is gray to a depth ranging from 3 to 6 inches. It is underlain by a 4 or 6 inch subsurface layer of yellowish-gray friable very fine sandy clay or clay loam. The subsoil consists of brownish-yellow slightly heavy very fine sandy clay which, at a depth ranging from 30 to 40 inches, grades into yellowish-gray very fine sandy clay material mottled with shades of brown, yellow and bluish gray.

Pope silt loam – Pope silt loam is developed from the finer materials washed down from the uplands and deposited along the banks of streams... Little of the land is well drained, and it is all subject to overflow. All the better drained areas of the Pope soil are under cultivation, and the more poorly drained areas are used for pastures or are in woods.

Savannah very fine sandy loam – The surface layer of Savannah very fine sandy loam consists of about 4 to 6 inches of pale-yellow or grayish-yellow loam, the darker color depending on the quantity of organic matter present. The color of the surface soil gradually becomes more brown or yellowish brown to a depth ranging from 8 to 12 inches, where the material grades into brownish-yellow heavy loam or friable very fine sandy clay...Where the land has been subjected to sheet erosion the compact layer is reached at a slighter depth, and on the edges of some areas, where the level land breaks into a rolling phase, it is at the surface.

The project area is comprised of five separate tracts. While each of the five areas are uniquely shaped and vary greatly in acreage, they all have considerable relief within their boundaries, with even the smallest tract rising approximately 80 feet from its base to the hilltop. It is worth noting that approximately 90% of the total acreage is designated as Guin soils, undifferentiated and Hartsells very fine sandy loam, rolling phase. The Soil Survey descriptions match perfectly with what was encountered on the ground, and helps to explain why so little topsoil or evidence of cultural activity is present in these areas. Each of these areas and our investigations of them are described below.

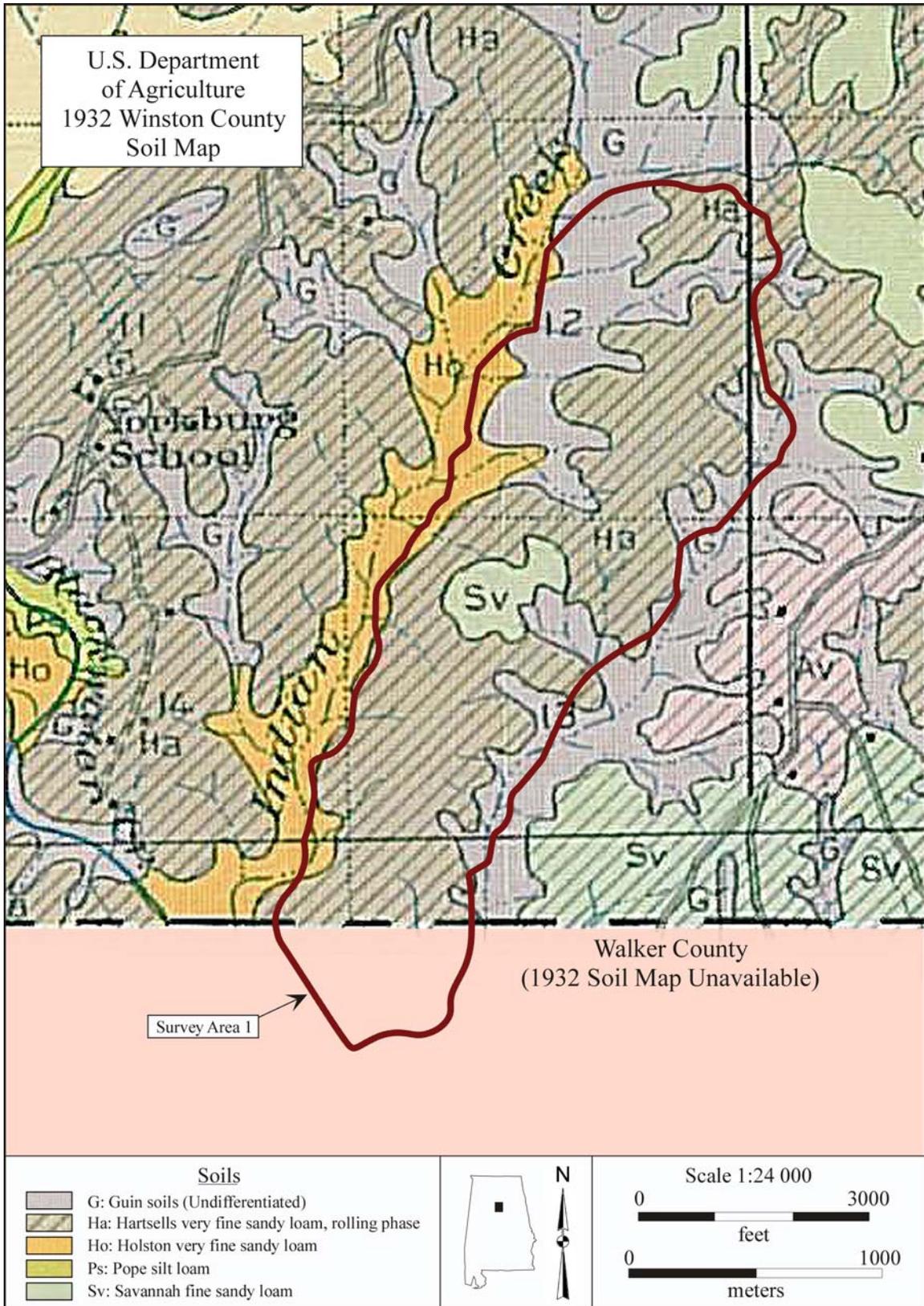
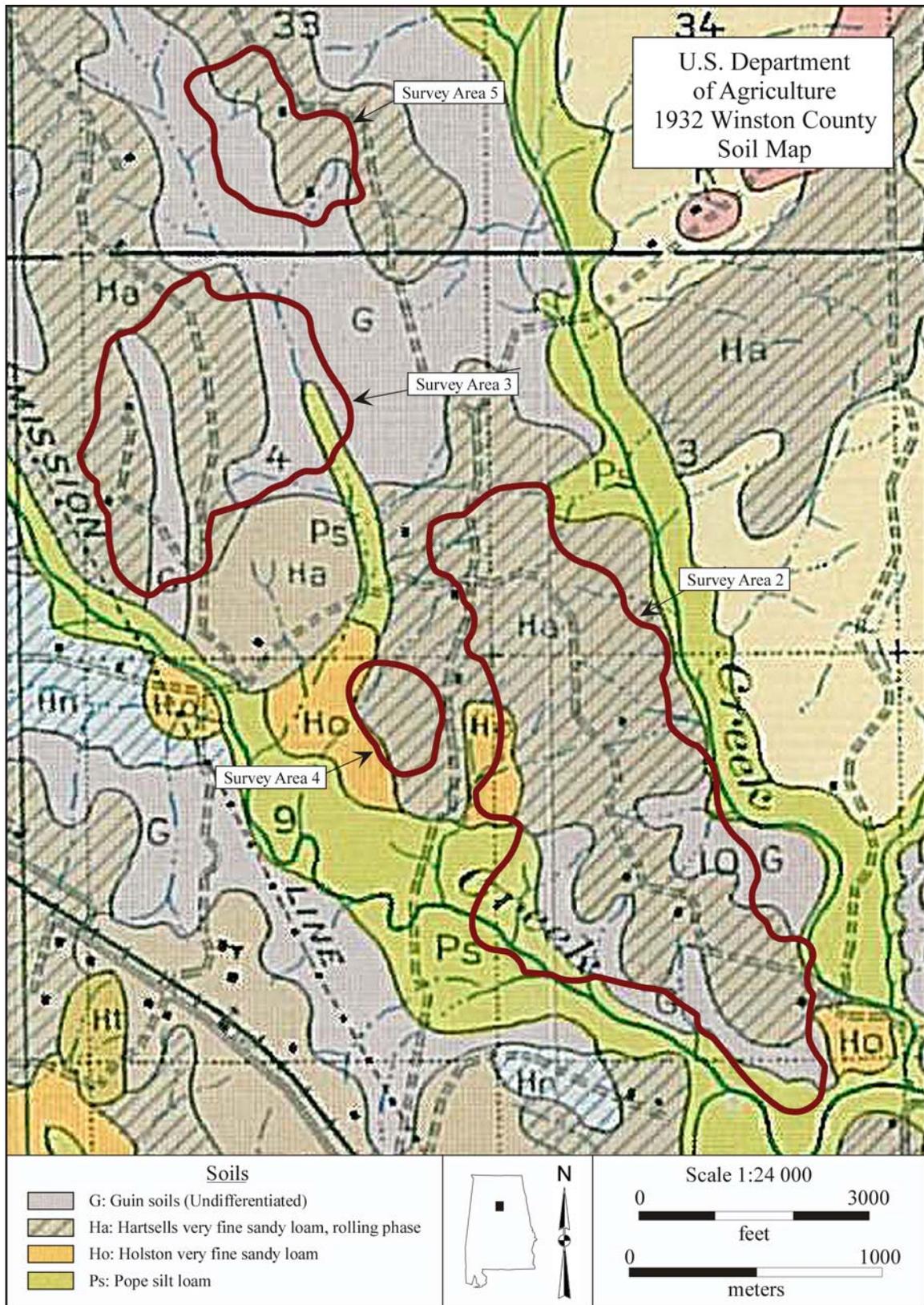


Figure 3. Survey area 1 as seen on 1932 Winston County Soil Map.



Area 1: Containing 762 acres, area 1 is the largest of the five tracts. It is bound on the east side by a tributary to Blackwater Creek, and to the west by Indian Creek. Elevations vary over 200 vertical feet across the landform, with moderate to sharply incised drainages leading to the lower elevations. Neither of the creeks had strong water flow, though the channels were as much as a meter deep in places. While the water flow in the creek to the west of area 1 may have been altered by mining activities to the west, the creek on the east side contained even less water, and the stream channel was completely dry in several areas. The eastern drainage could be described as intermittent at best. Portions of the main ridgeline are relatively broad, though many of the ridgespurs were considerably narrower than anticipated looking at the topographic map. The single road as printed by the USGS actually extends along the primary ridge all the way to the southern end of the tract, and has several similar field and / or logging roads that branch out onto many of the smaller ridges, with a few that extend down to the creek beds below (Figures 5 and 6).

Approximately 40% of area 1 (primarily the central, western portion) has been clearcut within the last 5-10 years (Figures 7, 8, and 9). The soils are heavily eroded in these areas, and the vegetation consists of immature pines and other scrub brush. There are several game plots and hunting blinds spread across this area (Figures 10 and 11). Even in these areas where grasses have been planted to attract wild game, the topsoil is nonexistent to minimal (Figure 12). The southern ½ of area 1 is planted pine, except for along the very edge of the property where the terrain was likely too steep to harvest timber previously (Figure 13). Most of the pines in the southern portion of area 1 are uniformly planted, and are approximately 15-25 years in age. Soil conditions were better in the southern and northern parts of area 1, with an average shovel test containing 5-10 centimeters of topsoil, underlain by a yellow brown clay loam (Figure 14). Gravel content within the subsoil, primarily sandstone and shale, varied across the project area from 10-30%. The average shovel test depth was 30 – 40 centimeters below surface in the older growth areas. The northern portion of area 1 was a mix of planted pine and some interspersed hardwoods, typically found on the steeper slopes of the drainages. Some of the eastern edge borders a conservation area, and the density of hardwoods was greater in relation to the pines in these areas.

Area 1 not only is the largest tract of the project, but also has the most vertical relief of the five areas. The drainages are generally steeply incised all the way to the intermittent creek beds bordering the east and west sides of the landform (Figures 15, 16, and 17). Pedestrian transects were conducted around the entire perimeter of area 1, following the creek beds and up each drainage in search of bluff shelters suitable for occupation. Several small bluff shelters were discovered and tested, but none were tall enough or deep enough for human habitation. No cultural materials were found at any of these locales (Figures 18 and 19).

There are no structures shown on the 1932 soil map or the 1969 USGS topographic map in area 1. However, a well was identified along the eastern side of the project area, as shown on Figure 5. The well has no stones lining it, and there is considerable erosion of the topsoil that has

widened the mouth to approximately 3 meters in diameter. Currently, it is roughly 1.5 meters deep, and the intact shaft is approximately 0.75 meters in diameter at the base (Figures 20 and 21). Multiple shovel tests were dug in this vicinity, which is planted in relatively uniform pines. No artifacts or structural remnants were found in the shovel testing or visual inspection of this location. This feature is considered an isolated find.

Three isolated finds were recovered from surface collection within survey area 1, as shown Figure 5. Isolated find 1 is a piece of Bangor chert debitage. Isolated find 2 is a piece of Ft. Payne chert debitage, and isolated find 3 is a glazed stoneware fragment. It is worth noting that there is an equally large tract of land that is actively being mined to the west of survey area 1, and multiple surveys (Hawsey 2005; Lolley 2006a; 2006b; Lolley 2006c) have been conducted in these areas, yielding no recorded sites. A portion of Lolley's 2006a survey actually overlaps into survey area 1.

One newly recorded site was identified in southern portion of area 1, a small cemetery with two grave markers. Mr. H. W. King and Mary Jane King were both born in 1846, and Mr. King died a week after his wife on June 30th, 1916. The headstones were found under a giant oak, which dwarfs the surrounding pine trees and hardwood saplings. The pines appear to be 20-30 years of age at this location, which likely corresponds with the age of the grave markers. There are several field stones on the ground surface surrounding the graves. Rather than a border set around Mr. and Mrs. King, it is likely that these stones were the original grave markers from 1916, which were set to the side when the newer headstones were placed (Figures 22, 23, and 24). The surrounding ridges and terraces were intensively surveyed in search of any remnant of a house where the Kings may have lived nearby, but none was found. Many pushpiles and field roads are interspersed with the planted pines in the southern part of area 1 (Figures 25 and 26). If there was ever a residence at this location before the 1932 soil map was produced, there is no evidence of it now.

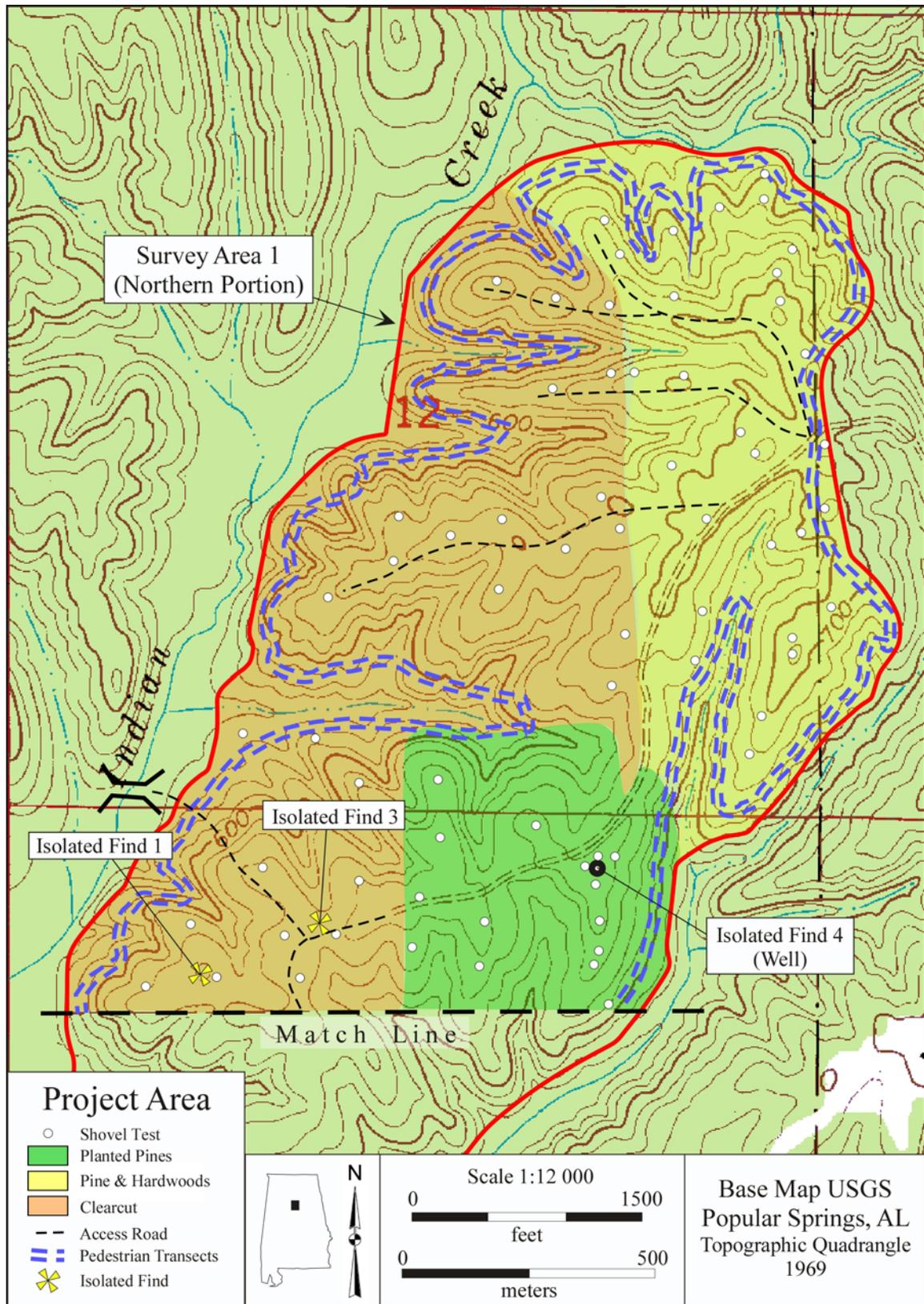


Figure 5. Northern half of survey area 1 with shovel tests, transects, and isolated finds.

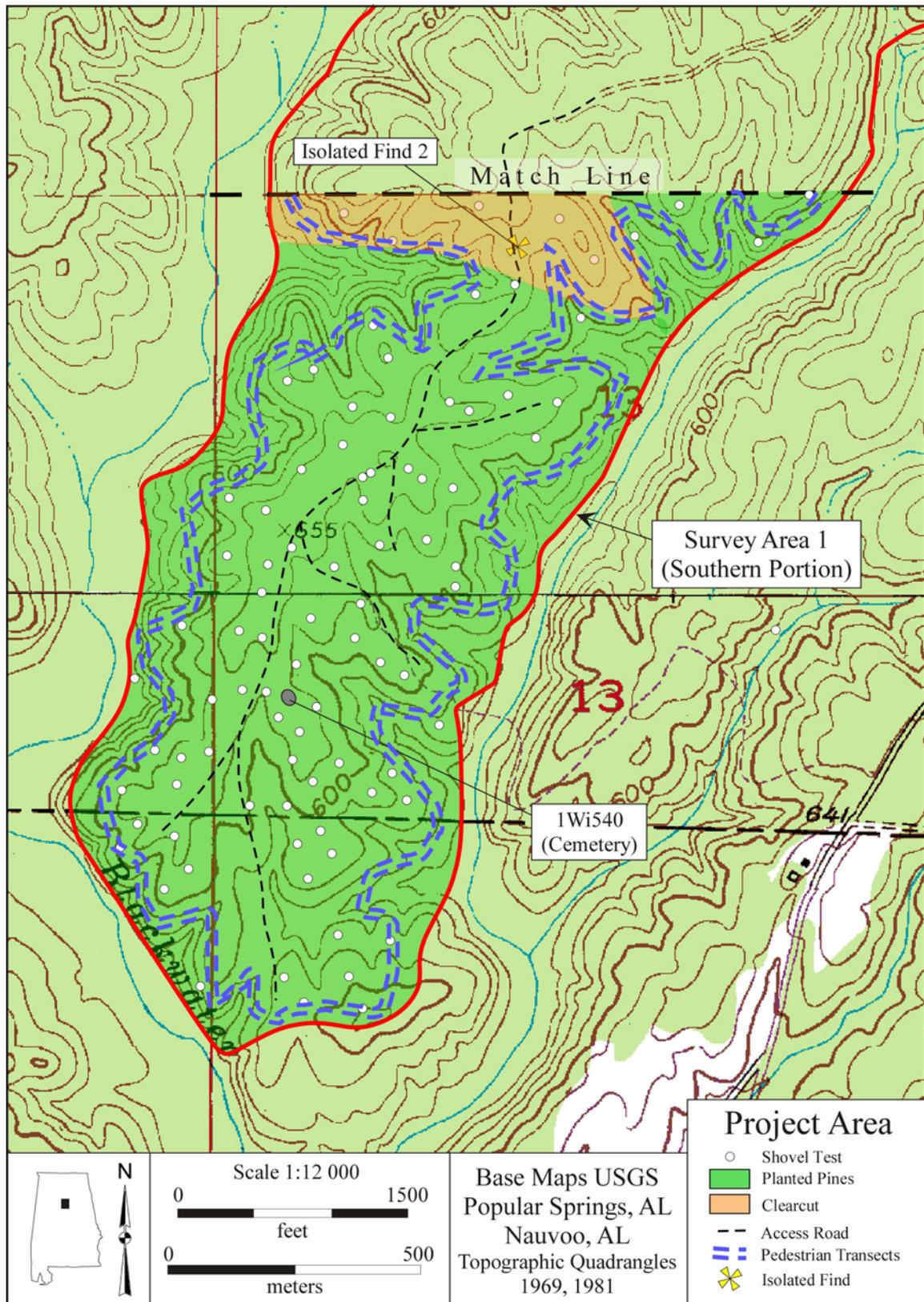


Figure 6. Southern half of survey area 1 with shovel tests, transects, and site 1Wi540.



Figure 7. View of recently clearcut area, roadbed, and ground visibility facing south.



Figure 8. View of edge of clearcut line and mixed pines and hardwoods, facing northeast.



Figure 9. View of clearcut and eroded soils on ridgespur, facing west.



Figure 10. View of game plot and hunting blind (in treeline) on western ridgespur, facing east.



Figure 11. View of game plot and hunting blind on eastern ridgespur, facing west.



Figure 12. View of shovel test in game plot area on ridgespur.



Figure 13. View of planted pines in the southern portion of survey area 1.



Figure 14. View of shovel test and soil conditions in wooded area.



Figure 15. View of steeply sloped terrain and drainage, facing north.



Figure 16. View of V-shaped drainage and vegetation, facing east.



Figure 17. View of dry creek bed on eastern side of survey area 1 (tributary to Blackwater Creek).



Figure 18. View of small bluff shelter found on south side of drainage leading to Blackwater Creek tributary.



Figure 19. View of small bluff shelter on south side of survey area 1.



Figure 20. View of well and eroded mouth at ground surface.



Figure 21. View of well shaft and fill.



Figure 22. View of 1Wi540, Mr. and Mrs. H.W. King's grave markers.



Figure 23. H.W. King's grave marker.



Figure 24. Mary Jane King's grave marker.



Figure 25. One of many pushpiles within the planted pines surrounding 1Wi540.



Figure 26. View of logging road leading toward southern end of survey area 1.

Area 2: This parcel contains 435 acres with County Road 37 (Rufus Mann Parkway) and County Road 385 traversing the primary ridgeline of the landform (Figure 27). Everything to the west and south of County Road 37 within area 2 is a reclaimed surface mine (Brown Creek Reclamation Project, Figure 28), as is much of the area east of County Road 385 within Section 10 (Figures 29-32). The northern portion of area 2 is in planted pines, much of which is severely eroded (Figure 33). Three houses appear within area 2 on the 1932 soil map, with one additional house shown on the very southeastern edge of area 2 as overlain on the soil map. The northernmost house does not appear on the 1969 USGS topographic map, though a clearing is still shown in this relative location. No visual evidence of this structure was identified on the ground, and no artifacts were recovered from shovel testing in this area.

The two structures shown on the west side of CR385 on the 1969 Poplar Springs, Alabama topographic map are still standing, but both are severely dilapidated and not considered eligible for listing on the NRHP (Figures 34-39). These structures appear to be in the approximate location of a structure on the 1932 soil map, but each is in such poor condition, it is difficult to tell whether either dates back that far. The southern structure (resource 1) is an abandoned, dilapidated bungalow set upon a loose stacked brick and concrete block foundation. It is covered by tar paper siding, and asphalt shingle roofing, which is collapsing to the interior of the structure. Several of the windows have been boarded over, and there is an addition to the rear of the structure covered with plywood. The partial width gable porch is also in a dilapidated state, and is covered with household refuse. The northern structure (resource 2) is a storage shed of relatively recent construction, and has been modified and patched many times through the years with a variety of materials. The original core of this structure is also set in part on concrete blocks, and the multiple additions and repairs include plywood, sheet metal, and corrugated metal roofing. The house shown to the southeast of the intersection of County Roads 37 and 385 has been demolished and a newly constructed house (resource 3) sits at this location (Figure 40). The house just outside of the project area (resource 4) to the southeast likely replaced the original structure at this location, and appears to be of relatively recent construction. It is built upon a concrete block foundation with vinyl siding, a metal roof, and six-over-six windows (Figure 41). One mobile home, not shown on the 1969 topographic map, is located on the west side of CR385 in the northern portion of the project area.

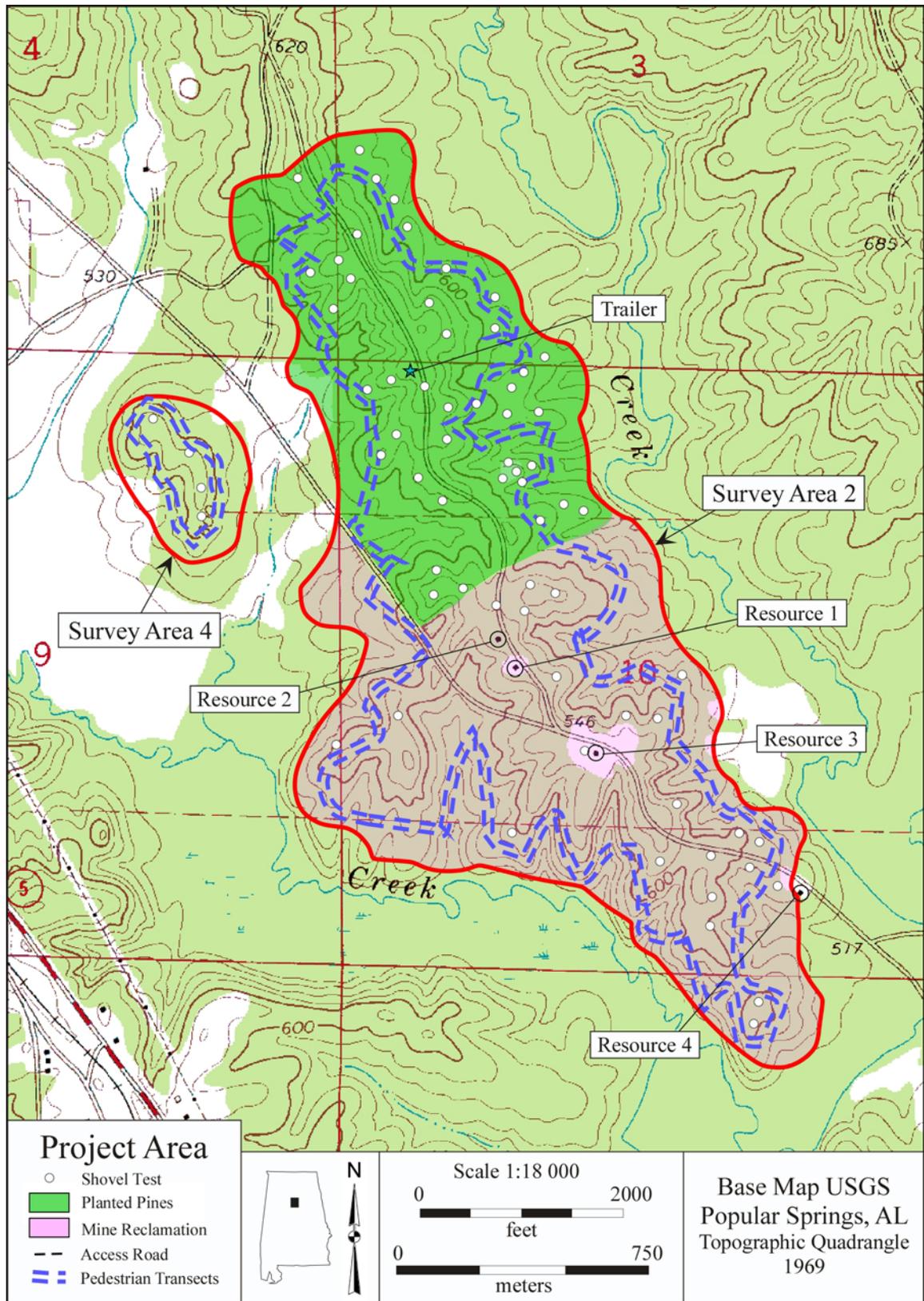


Figure 27. Survey areas 2 and 4 with shovel test locations and areas of disturbance.



Figure 28. Brown Creek Mine Reclamation Project sign in survey area 2.



Figure 29. View of mine reclamation on west side of County Road 37 in survey area 2, facing north.



Figure 30. View of mine reclamation on west side of County Road 37 in survey area 2, facing east.



Figure 31. View of erosion in survey area 2, west of County Road 37.



Figure 32. View of pine and erosion in northern part of survey area 2, west of CR37.



Figure 33. View of planted pines on east side of CR385 in northern part of survey area 2, facing east.



Figure 34. South side of resource 1 in survey area 2, west side of CR385.



Figure 35. View of dilapidated state of resource 1 (abandoned).



Figure 36. View of front porch and household refuse, facing west.



Figure 37. Front of storage shed, facing west from CR385 (resource 2).



Figure 38. North side of storage shed, showing multiple additions and use of materials.



Figure 39. View of sheet metal siding, windows, and roof of storage shed.



Figure 40. Newly constructed home on west side of CR37 (resource 3)



Figure 41. Resource 4, located on southeastern edge of survey area 2.

Area 3: This tract is 206 acres, and is bisected by County Road 37. It is unclear if this location is also part of the Brown Creek Reclamation Project, but much of the area to the west of CR37 has certainly been mined in the past (Figure 42). This is evident by the high-wall found in the northwestern portion of area 3 as well as the shale found within 2-3 cmbs in several of the shovel tests or at the surface on the west side of the road (Figure 43). The eastern half of area 3 has been clear cut within the last few years, with pine tree saplings only a few feet tall (Figures 44 and 45). This area is virtually void of any topsoil, with reddish subsoil and gravel exposed on the ground surface (Figures 46 and 47). The southern part of area 3 has a mixed pine and secondary hardwood vegetative cover, but the topsoil in these areas measures only a few centimeters deep with a yellowish brown subsoil with high gravel content below. Two structures are shown on the 1932 soil map along the western edge of area 3, but are not present on the 1969 USGS topographic map. The approximate area where the two structures are shown is currently in pasture and game plots with very little topsoil present (Figures 48 and 49). Shovel testing and visual inspection of this area yielded no evidence of these structures. The only cultural materials found in area 3 were two pieces of clear bottle glass, shown as isolated find 5 on Figure 42.

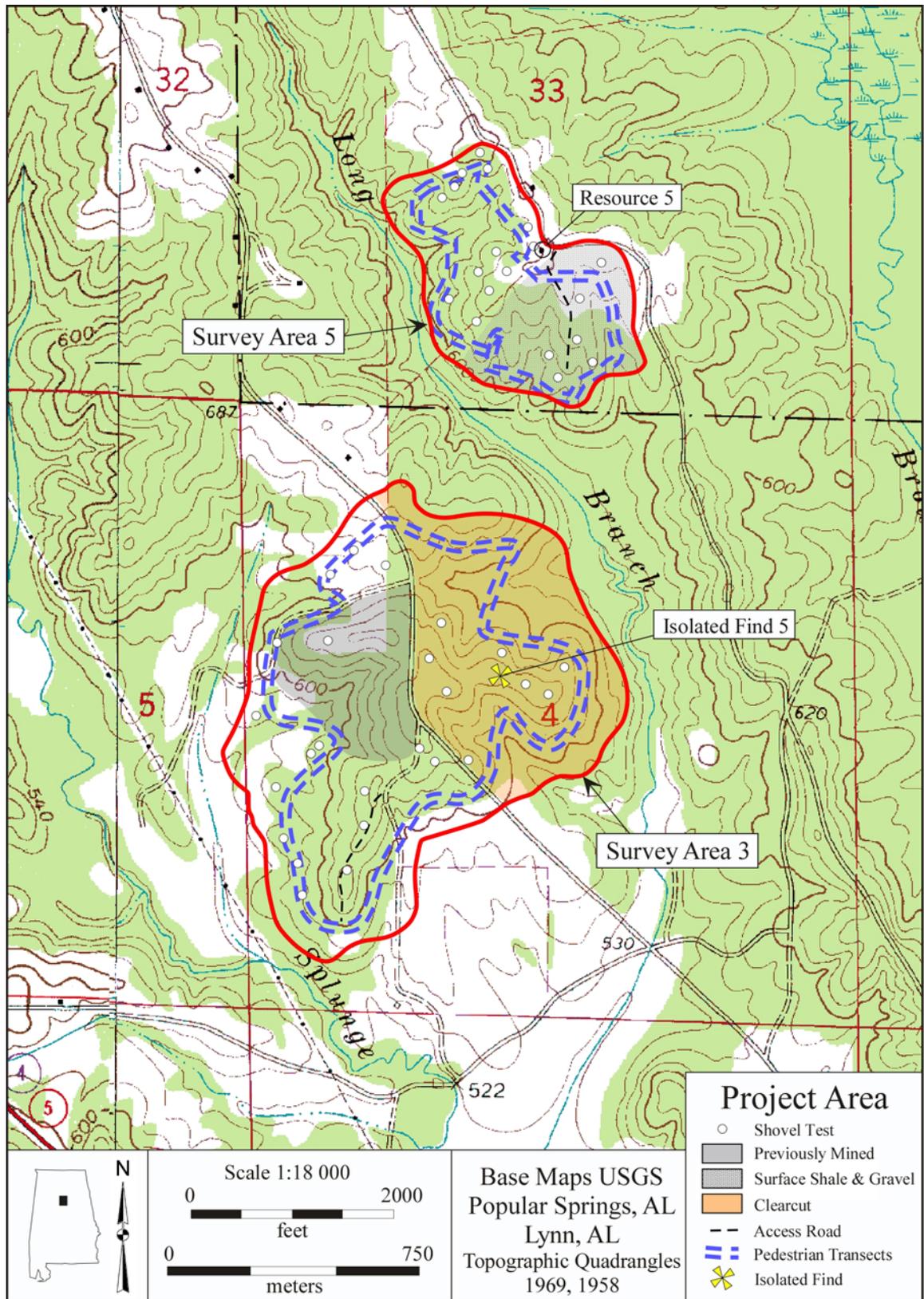


Figure 42. Survey areas 3 and 5 with shovel test locations, resources, and areas of disturbance.



Figure 43. View of scrub vegetation and mining highwall in northwest part of survey area 3.



Figure 44. East side of CR37 in survey area 3, facing north. Treeline is the northern survey boundary.



Figure 45. View from southeast corner of survey area 3, facing northwest toward CR37.



Figure 46. View of ground surface visibility and soil erosion on east side of survey area 3.



Figure 47. Shovel test in survey area 3.



Figure 48. Grassy ridgespur on western edge of survey area 3, facing east.



Figure 49. Diked game plot on side of ridgespur, offering excellent surface visibility.

Area 4: A single knoll west of County Road 37 comprises area 4, which is approximately 29 acres in size. The moderately steep slopes leading to the top of the hill were covered with grass on the south and east sides and secondary pines on the northern and western slopes (Figures 50 and 51). There were several older hardwoods at the northern crest of the hill. Several shovel tests were excavated on the top of this landform, and the area of hardwoods was closely examined for remnants of a structure or cemetery (Figure 52). There is no evidence of a house or cemetery at this location, either on the ground or on the 1932 soil map or 1969 topographic map. No cultural materials were found in area 4.



Figure 50. View of southern slope of survey area 4, facing east.



Figure 51. View of planted pines on northern slope from top of knoll, facing northeast.



Figure 52. View of shovel test in survey area 4.

Area 5: Area 5 is roughly 70 acres, located along the west side of CR385 in Section 33. This area has been heavily disturbed, with bedrock shale material found on the ground surface in the southern part of the tract (Figures 53 and 54). The western and northern parts of the tract are relatively steep slopes that eventually lead down to Long Branch Creek. These slopes are covered in planted pines that are 10-25 years old and the ridgelines all have eroded dirt roads running across them (Figures 55 and 56). There was minimal topsoil found in area 5 (Figure 57).

One small house is located within this tract. A structure actually is on the 1932 soil map at or near this location, as well as the 1969 topographic map. This structure is approximately 12 x 20 feet, containing two rooms of roughly equal dimension. It was not deemed safe to enter, as the floor was visibly rotted and it was full of old paint cans and other refuse. Mud daubers appear to be the only residents of the structure for some time, as their nests covered the walls and rafters. The house is almost completely overtaken by vegetation, to the point where it is obscured by anything other than close-up photography. The wooden siding was covered with asphalt shingles. Some of the foundation piers were large field stones, some cinder blocks, and others were stacked brick. The windows were four-over-four and six-over-six. The entrance on the south end of the building was open, allowing a few photographs of the inside. It appears that the south room was added later, as the interior wall is covered with the same shingles as the exterior. The roof is corrugated metal (Figures 58-64). The structure is missing its porch, a door, and several windows, and has been used for shotgun target practice. In all, this structure is in a very dilapidated state and not considered eligible for NRHP listing. One other structure is shown to the south on the 1932 soil map, but this area has been completely denuded of all vegetation and soil at some point in time, and there is no evidence of this structure on the ground.

The remnants of the structure on the east side of the road across from area 5 were viewed from the road. The house has all but fallen completely down, and is outside of the project area. Therefore, no further investigation was deemed necessary.



Figure 53. View of ground cover in southern part of survey area 5.



Figure 54. View of ground surface in southern part of survey area 5.



Figure 55. Planted pines in northern part of survey area 5.



Figure 56. Eroded dirt road in northern part of survey area 5.



Figure 57. Eroded soil conditions in northern part of survey area 5.



Figure 58. West side of resource 5, just west CR385 in survey area 5.



Figure 59. Tar paper siding, window, and shotgun blast on west side of resource 5.



Figure 60. Fieldstone and brick foundation pier, metal cookware at resource 5.



Figure 61. South entrance of resource 5 and interior view of two rooms.



Figure 62. Interior shot of resource 5.



Figure 63. Interior of east wall of resource 5.



Figure 64. Interior view of corrugated metal roof and rafters.

Field Methods

The field survey implemented standard survey techniques. Field investigations were conducted by a pedestrian reconnaissance using visual inspection of exposed ground surfaces, as well as subsurface testing. All shovel tests measured 30 cm in diameter and were excavated to a depth of at least 30 cm or until sterile subsoil or bedrock was encountered. All excavated soils were screened through 6 mm wire mesh to recover cultural materials. Much of the project area had moderate to good surface visibility, and exposed subsoil found at the ground surface in at least portions of each of the five tracts. Each of the five areas was walked over in those areas with potential to contain archaeological sites, including the steep slopes and drainages to ensure no bluff shelters were missed.

Laboratory Methods and Collection Curation

All artifacts, 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 under 36 CFR Part 79.

Results and Recommendations

During the course of the survey, no prehistoric archaeological sites were identified. Two prehistoric isolated finds (chert debitage) were found in area 1, as well as one piece of stoneware. Two pieces of clear bottle glass were found on the ground surface in area 3. Previous clearcutting, timber and mining activities have heavily disturbed most of the areas with even a moderate potential to contain archaeological resources. Much of the land in each of the 5 tracts has suffered severe erosion or complete stripping of the topsoil as well. Therefore, based on the absence of any significant cultural materials or standing structures within the vicinity, this office recommends a finding of no properties for tracts 2, 3, 4, and 5. Area 1 contains one newly recorded site, 1Wi540, a small cemetery with two grave markers. While 1Wi540 is not eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, the Office of Archaeological Research recommends avoidance or relocation of this cemetery.

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