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A CULTURAL RESOURCES SURVEY OF THE KNOWLTON UPSTREAM REVETMENT EXTENSION;
PHILLIPS COUNTY, ARKANSAS - A NEGATIVE FINDING

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Memphis District

Jimmy D. McNeil
Staff Archeologist

August 1989

ABSTRACT

On 26 July 89, an intensive cultural resources survey was conducted by the Environmental Analysis Branch of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Memphis District, Staff Archeologist, Mr. Jimmy McNeil and Civil Engineer, Mr. David McNutt.

The Knowlton Revetment Extension area is located in Township 6S, Range 1E, Section 36 SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of the Melwood, Arkansas-Mississippi Quadrangle Map, Phillips County, Arkansas. The area covers approximately 3.2 acres adjacent to the Mississippi River. This area was planted in soybeans.

The proposed work for the area includes repair and maintenance of the existing revetment. Maintenance may include grading, replacing the concrete skirt, and riprapping the top bank.

A literature search and a pedestrian survey failed to locate any prehistoric, historic and architectural sites within the project right-of-way.

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Map 1	Overall view of Knowlton Project area
Map 2	Enlarged view of Knowlton Project area

Introduction

An intensive survey for cultural resources was conducted by Memphis District Archeologist, Mr. Jimmy McNeil and Civil Engineer, Mr. David McNutt, on 26 July 1989 within the revetment right-of-way as directed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Memphis District. This study was performed as required by the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (Public Law 91-190), Protection and Enhancement of Cultural Historic and Cultural Properties (36 CFR 800), and the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 898-665).

Project Description

The Knowlton Revetment is located in Phillips County, Arkansas, Township 6S, Range 1E, Section 36 SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of the Melwood, Arkansas-Mississippi Quadrangle. The project will affect only the proposed revetment maintenance and repair area (Maps 1 and 2). Equipment will be brought in by boat.

Environmental Setting

The project lies within the Mississippi River meander belt where alluvial deposits are more than 200 feet thick over unconsolidated material (Hogan and Gray 1974: 2). Elevations range from 148 feet to 175 feet with a slope ranging from one to three percent. The higher elevations are mainly natural levees along present or old streams (Hogan and Gray 1974: 2). The elevations and slopes do not apply to the man-made levees. Drainage is by bayous, sloughs and man-made ditches. The climate is generally warm during the summer and mild during the winter. Occasionally, there will be extremes in heat and cold temperatures. A great deal of the woodlands area in the county has been cleared. However, small areas of trees may be found near the edge of bayous. Primarily, the trees are willow, oak, cottonwood, hackberry and sycamore. Underbrush consists of cane, honeysuckle, blackberry and wild grape. Fauna in the area are not plentiful. Mammals include: rabbit, squirrel, raccoon, deer, possibly mink, muskrat and beaver. Numerous cottonmouth, rattlesnake and other reptiles are reported in the area.

Previous Research

Enough work has been conducted in the general area of the project, by such researchers as Phillips, Ford and Griffin (1951), to isolate and date major cultural periods. However, little survey research has been conducted in the immediate vicinity of the project. The most recent intensive survey work in this area was conducted by Soil Systems, Incorporated (1977) for the Memphis District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and Jimmy McNeil (1982) Memphis District Staff Archeologist.

Results of the Records Search

The National Register of Historic Places were consulted and no indications of prehistoric, historic or architectural cultural remains were on record within the project area.

Survey Methodology and Results

The Knowlton Revetment project area is approximately 3.2 acres in size. The area is used for cultivation and was planted in soybeans. The survey area was approximately 700 feet (213.41 meters) long and 200 feet (60.96 meters) wide. Small soybeans covered 95% of the project area. All cleared areas were visually checked for artifacts - none were found. Shovel test units (approximately 30 x 30 x 30 cms) were dug every 30 meters over the length and width of the project area. No artifacts or features were found in the shovel tests.

Walking along the eroding revetment revealed no artifacts, features, nor soil discoloration that would indicate archeological sites. The profile revealed approximately 3.5 feet (1.07 meters) of yellow-brown, sandy clay over approximately 10 feet (3.05 meters) of dark brown, clayey silt (gumbo).

Recommendations

Based on an infield cultural resources survey and a background records search, no evidence of prehistoric, historic or architectural resources exist within the direct impact zones of the projects. It is recommended that repairs within the projects rights-of-way proceed as planned.

The survey methodology used does not eliminate the possibility of encountering deeply buried sites. Therefore, it is recommended that any site encountered during construction be protected from further damage by stopping construction until its significance can be determined by the Environmental Analysis Branch, Memphis District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, in conjunction with the Arkansas Office of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program.

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