

PUBLIC REPORT SUMMARY

The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) has completed a Phase IA archaeological assessment and geoarchaeological investigation for the Foundry Branch Trestle Bridge Demolition in Washington, DC. The trestle bridge is owned by WMATA and encompassed by Glover-Archbold Park, parkland managed by the National Park Service (NPS). Glover-Archbold Park is listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and the Foundry Branch Trestle Bridge is one of four contributing resources. The project includes the demolition of the bridge and support structures. The planned demolition will require authorization from the National Park Service (NPS) to access certain parts of the bridge; NPS maintains the adjacent parkland. This authorization requirement meets the definition of an undertaking under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, as amended.

The project area consists of the temporary access and staging areas and the removal of the bridge, support structures, and remains of existing rails. The depth of disturbance is not expected to exceed 3 feet in depth. The project area measures 1.35 acres and is bounded to the south by Canal Road NW, west by Foxhall Road NW, and forested areas to the north and east. Effects to the stream valley, as proposed, will be limited to use as an access road and construction staging area.

The following report assessed the potential effect to prehistoric and historic archaeological resources within the project area. The report references previously conducted archaeological studies, histories, known prehistory, primary and secondary documentary resources, geoarchaeological investigations, and a Geographic Information System (GIS) cut and fill analysis.

The project area is located on portions of two early land patents: Whitehaven and Alliance. Whitehaven was established in 1688 and Alliance was established in the mid-eighteenth century. The project area was a frontier for Europeans until the 1690s when a fort was commissioned in the vicinity resulting in expanded European settlement. The majority of the project area is located on the Alliance tract that was owned by Henry Trelkeld, who maintained a home north and east outside of the project area. In 1751, Georgetown was established east of the project area and became a major port in the MidAtlantic. Following the close of the Revolutionary War, an Act of Congress created Washington, DC in 1790. Ten years later the Foxall Foundry was established by Henry Foxall. The foundry operated south of the project area from 1800 through 1854. The foundry mill converted to a grist mill and the project area was mapped as the "Green Spring Scheutzen Park" in 1878. No battles of the Civil War were fought within the project area, but there were two batteries north and west of the project area. Following the Civil War, the transportation network in Northwest DC expanded and brought residential suburban growth. In 1892, Congress established the Washington and Great Falls Electric Railway Company. The historic route began south of the Georgetown Reservoir, ran through the Potomac Palisades and along Sherrier Place, and past Chain Bridge. The Foundry Branch Trestle Bridge and eastern and western approaches were constructed to support this line and cross the stream valley. By 1895, the line was extended to Maryland.

The cut/fill analysis indicated that most areas within the project area have experienced significant elevation gain and loss. The geomorphological study of the project area identified fill within the level stream valley floor and truncated soils within the eastern and western portion of the project area. Erosion, cut, and fill activities have affected nearly the entirety of the project area. The landscape has been graded and areas within the project area have been severely eroded.

The stream valley floor contains deep fill associated with previous construction and there is no potential for encountering archaeological resources within the stream valley portion of the project area. The eastern and western portions of the project area contain steeply sloped, eroded, or truncated soils and there is no potential for encountering prehistoric or historic archaeological resources pre-dating the construction of the trolley line. As a result of substantial disturbance caused by grading, infilling, construction, and erosion throughout the project area, RK&K finds that there is no potential to encounter prehistoric or historic archaeological resources pre-dating the trolley railway built in 1896 within the project area. RK&K recommends no further archaeological investigations within the project area.