



*Archaeology Services, Inc.*

*Tracking the Footsteps of the Ancestors*

## REPORTS OF INVESTIGATIONS

Phase I Archaeological Investigation for a proposed public water supply well  
Fire Island National Seashore, Suffolk County, New York

December 2010

Prepared for:

Land Use Ecological Services, Inc., Medford, New York

Suffolk County Water Authority, Oakdale, New York

National Park Service, Fire Island National Seashore

Prepared by:

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Report #: 694

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## MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

PR#:

No project review number

Involved agencies:

US National Park Service

Phase:

Phase IA & IB

Location:

Watch Hill

Fire Island National Seashore

Suffolk County

Survey Area:

Length: about 150 feet (46 meters) northeast-southwest

Width: about 60 feet (18 m) southeast-northwest at its maximum

Acres Surveyed: about .5 acre (.2 hectares)

USGS:

Howells Point, NY

Survey overview:

ST no. & interval: 12 ST's at 25 ft (7.5 m) intervals.

Size of freshly plowed area: na

Surface survey transect interval: na

Results:

No prehistoric or historic remains.

Results of Architectural Survey:

No. Of buildings/structures/cemeteries in project area: none

No. Of buildings/structures/cemeteries adjacent to project area: 3 (sub station buildings)

No. Of previously determined NR listed or eligible buildings/structures/cemeteries/districts: none

No. Of identified eligible buildings/structures/cemeteries/districts: none

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Date of Report:

Report completed December, 2010

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## INTRODUCTION

Between November 25 and December 3, 2010, TRACKER-Archaeology Services, Inc. conducted a Phase IA documentary study and Phase IB archaeological survey for a proposed public water supply well at Watch Hill in Fire Island National Seashore, Suffolk County, New York.

The purpose of the documentary study was to determine the prehistoric and historic potential of the project area for the recovery of archaeological remains. This was implemented by a review of the original and current environmental data, archaeological site files, other archival literature, maps, documents and informant interviews.

A prehistoric and historic site file search was conducted utilizing the resources of the New York State Historic Preservation Office in Waterford, New York. Various historic web sites were visited to review any pertinent site information.

The project area is about .5 acres in size. The project area (APE) consists of a proposed well and access drive with accompanying water main and electric line to connect to an existing sub-station. The project area is situated just west of the Watch Hill facilities and just north of Burma Road (2 track road).

The work was performed by TRACKER-Archaeology Services, Inc. of Monroe, New York. Field work was conducted by field director, Alexander Padilla, B.A. Report preparation by Alfred Cammisa, M.A., Felicia Cammisa, B.A, and Alexander Padilla, B.A.

The work was performed for Land Use Ecological Services, Inc., Medford, New York, Suffolk County Water Authority, Oakdale, New York, National Park Service, Fire Island National Seashore

## ENVIRONMENT

### Geology

The project area is located in the southeast portion of New York State in the south central part of Suffolk County. This portion of New York lies in the Atlantic Coastal Plains Physiographic Province. The coastal plain slopes gently eastward and is actually a strip of recently submerged sea bottom. The soils in this region consist largely of sand, clay and marl (a mixture of clay, finely fragmented shell and calcite). This region of Suffolk County lies on a barrier island south of the Long island proper. Dune zones consist of beach, foredunes, interdune meadow, or swale, and backdunes. Barrier island are persistently being remolded and significantly altered (Schuberth 1968: cover map, 9,201; Sirkin: 1995: 1, 80, 170).

### Soils and Topography

Soils on the property consist of:

NAME	SOIL HORIZON DEPTH (In(cm)	COLOR	TEXTURE & INCLUSION	SLOPE %	DRAINAGE	LANDFORM
Dune land	no soil horizons	na	Sa	1-35	excellent	mounds or small hills of wind blown sand

NAME	SOIL HORIZON DEPTH (in(cm))	COLOR	TEXTURE & INCLUSION	SLOPE %	DRAINAGE	LANDFORM
Tidal Marsh	no typical layers of sand and organic mat	na	organic mat	level	poor	wet areas around calmer embayments & tidal creeks

(Warner et al 1975: Map #95 pgs. 69, 87).

Elevations range from approximately 5 feet above mean sea level. The project area is located in back dunes and wetlands.

#### Hydrology

The project area is partially on, and adjacent to, fresh water wetlands. It is also approximately 550 feet south to the Atlantic Ocean and 650 feet north to the Great South Bay.

#### Vegetation

The predominant forest community inhabiting the Coastal Plain in this vicinity (Cape Cod to the Carolinas) was the Northern Pine-Oak Forest. These forests are maintained largely by the effects of frequent forest fires. Were it not for these fires which the pine species have adapted to, these forests would slowly change to Mesic, dominated by oak, hickory and red maple. Northern Pine-Oak forests occur on sandy or otherwise poor soils that are overly dry. All coastal plains of eastern North America are Xeric (dry forest). They generally have lower species diversity than bottomland forests (Kricher 1988: 16-17, 65-66). The reason the forest soils and surfaces are so dry in this most region is due to the excessive drainage of overly sandy soils on the Coastal Plain.

At the time of Phase I investigations the project area consisted of pitch pine and beach grass.

### **PREHISTORIC POTENTIAL**

A prehistoric site file search was conducted at the New York State Historic Preservation Office (NYSHPO) and included a 1 mile radius around the study area. The following sites were recorded:

-No sites reported.

An Indian trail was recorded near the coast along or near portions of current day Montauk Highway. Although recorded historically, the foot trail undoubtedly existed prior to European records (see Stone nd:map).

Assessing the known environmental and prehistoric data, we can summarize the following points:

-Soils on the property consist of well drained with level to steeply sloping terrain in the back dunes, as well as a poorly drained wetland area.

The project area is partially on, and adjacent to, fresh water wetlands. It is also approximately 550 feet south to the Atlantic Ocean and 650 feet north to the Great South Bay.

-No prehistoric sites were recorded in the vicinity of the property.

In our opinion, the project property has a moderate potential for the recovery of prehistoric remains relating to short term procurement stations.

## **HISTORIC POTENTIAL**

### Contact Period (Seventeenth Century)

At the time of European contact and settlement, the study area may have been utilized by the main branch of the large Pochoug (Patchogue) tribe which occupied the southern portion of Brookhaven Township. An Indian trail was recorded near the coast along or near portions of current day Montauk Highway. The Cupsage and the Pattersquash appear to have utilized Fire Island further to the east (Stone nd: map).

By the close of this century, the Patchogue tribe had lost all of their land to the Euro-American settlers. They were given a perpetual lease by Cornell William Smith. Only eight Indians were named on the lease. A portion of the reservation survives today as the Poospatuck Indian Reservation in Mastic (Shaw in Bailey 1949: 252).

### Eighteenth Century

Native American wigwams were still being used and reported during this time. Wigwams were recorded along the tidal inlets in the area and many visited in the 1740's by Reverend Horton. They were usually located along, or nearby, Indian foot trails (Stone 1980:170; 1982; 1993:6; Stone nd: map). The wigwams may have actually been hamlets of wigwams.

Pine was the predominate wood of the forest and cordwood a big business. By 1813 a license was needed to cut wood from the common-land. Much of the cordwood was shipped across the L.I. Sound to Connecticut. Other businesses included the manufacture of tar, off shore whaling, shipbuilding, and farming. A bounty was placed on wolves and foxes during this time (Bayles nd:14-16, 39, 46-47, Ross 1902:997; Thompson 1918:325 (Newsday 1998:H95). Farming was largely self-sufficient at first, only later (by 19th century) becoming commercial.

### Nineteenth Century

The 1836 Colton map depicts Watch Hill but no buildings near the project area (Figure 3).

Milling and manufacturing continued to be an important concern in Patchogue. Despite this however, most Patchogue inhabitants made their living by fishing and/ or shell fishing. Much of the fish and shellfish were sold in New York City. The oyster business alone in Patchogue employed 350 men. Shipbuilding was another commercial activity in the village (Bayles 1962:268, 269, 270).

The 1873 Beers atlas depicts Watch Hill again, but no buildings nearby the project area (Figure 4).

### Twentieth Century

The 1903 USGS depicts nearby Long Cove, but not Watch Hill. There are no buildings in the vicinity (Figure 5).

An historic site file search was conducted at the New York State Historic Preservation Office (NYSHPO) and included a 1 mile radius around the study area. The following historic sites were recorded:

NYMS SITES	NYSHPO SITES	DISTANCE TO APE ft(m)	SITE DESCRIPTION
	10302.001578	8366 (2550)	Blue Point Life Saving Station

Assessing the known historical data, the following points can be summarized:

-Soils on the property consist of well drained with level to steeply sloping terrain in the back dunes, as well as a poorly drained wetland area.

The project area is partially on, and adjacent to, fresh water wetlands. It is also approximately 550 feet south to the Atlantic Ocean and 650 feet north to the Great South Bay.

--No historic MDS's were near the project area.

-An historic site was reported over a mile from the project area.

The project area in our opinion has a moderate potential for historic aboriginal remains, relating to gathering clams for wampum.

## FIELD METHODS

### Walkover

Any exposed ground surfaces were walked over at about 3 to 5 meter intervals to observe for artifacts. Covered ground terrain was reconnoitered at approximately 7.5 meter intervals to observe for any above ground features, such as berms, depressions, or rock configurations which might be evidence for historic or prehistoric features. Photographs were taken of the property.

### Shovel Testing

Shovel tests (ST's) were excavated at approximately 7.5 meter intervals across the project area. Each ST measured about 30 to 40 cm. in diameter and was dug down about 50 to 60 cm. when possible. All soils were screened through 1/4 inch wire mesh and observed for artifacts. Shovel test pits were flagged in the field.

Soil stratigraphy was recorded according to texture and color. Soil color was matched against the Munsell color chart for soils. Notes were transcribed in a notebook.

## FIELD RESULTS

Field testing of the project area included the excavation of 12 ST's. No prehistoric artifacts or features were encountered. No historic artifacts or features were encountered.

### Stratigraphy

Stratigraphy across the project area consisted of the following:

A/O horizon - 0 to 6 cm. thick of root mat and humus. At times this layer was absent.

Level 2 - 21 to 57 cm. thick of 10YR6/3 light yellow brown sand.

Level 3 - 10 to 61 cm. dug into of 10YR5/4 yellow brown sand. The water level was often encountered at this layer.

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based upon distance to prehistoric sites and a documented Indian trail, well drained soils, level to moderately sloped terrain, and distance to water, the property was seen as having a moderate potential for recovering prehistoric sites.

Based upon similar environmental conditions and distance to historic sites and map documented structures, Indian wigwams and trails, the property was assessed with a moderate potential for encountering historic sites.

During the course of the Phase IB survey, 12 ST's were excavated. No prehistoric artifacts or features were encountered. No historic artifacts or features were encountered. No further work is recommended.

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1967 *Howells Point, New York* quadrangle, 7.5 minute series.

1903 *Moriches, New York.* quadrangle, 15 minute series.

## APPENDIX 1

Figure 1

Portion of the Howells Point, NY USGS

N



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project  
area



Bayberry Dunes

Davis Park

Long Cove

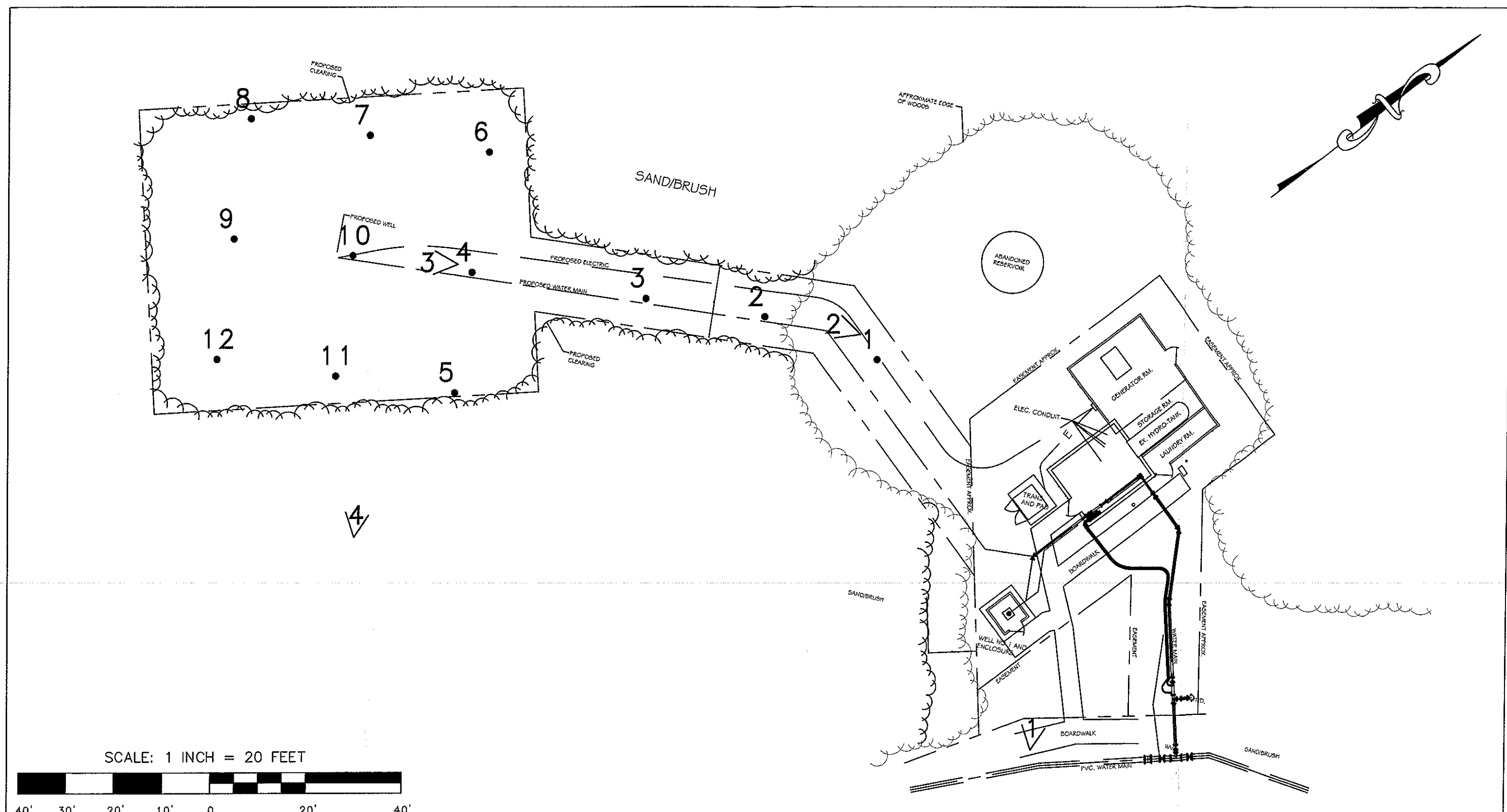
Robinson  
Cove

0

1000

2000

YARDS



**FIGURE 2: LOCATION OF SHOVEL TESTS**

V PHOTO ANGLE  
 ● NEGATIVE SHOVEL TEST

**PROJECT NAME: WATCH HILL**

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Figure 3

Portion of the 1836 Colton map

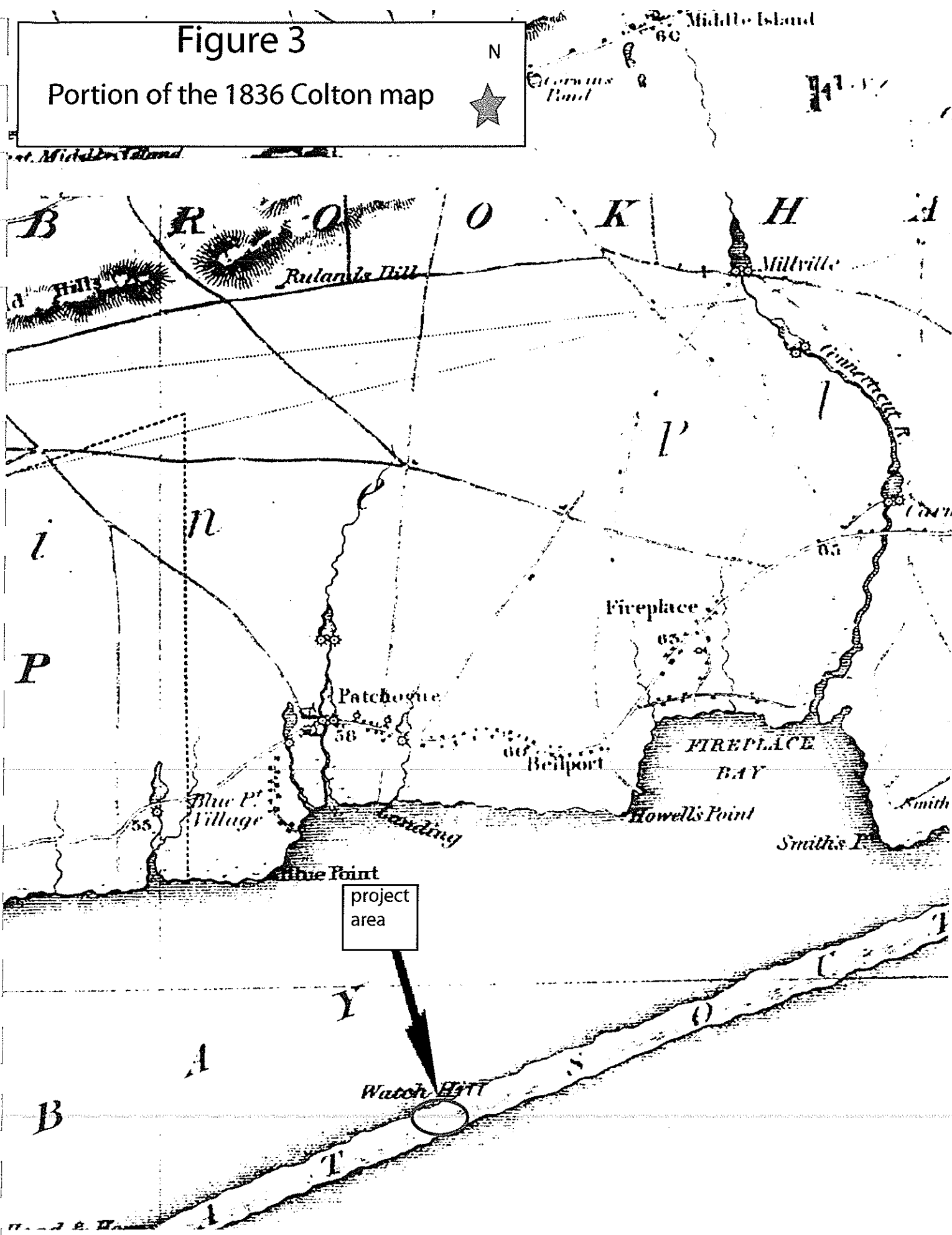


Figure 4

N



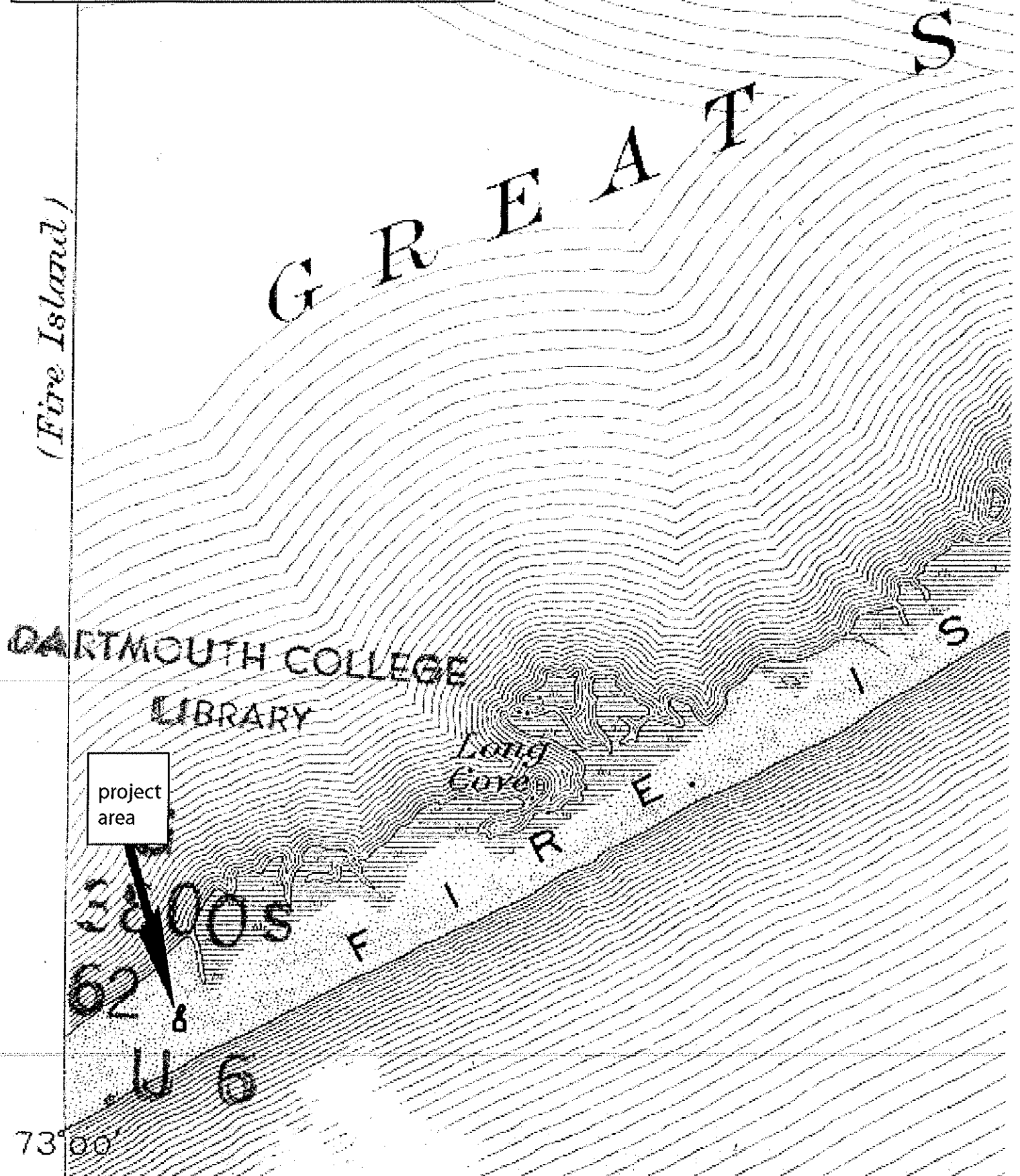
Portion of the 1873 Beers atlas



Figure 5

N

Portion of the 1903 USGS





# Figure 6

N

Portion of the County Soil Survey





Photo 1

Looking west at existing sub station



Photo 2  
Looking from ST 1



Photo 3  
Looking from ST 4





Photo 4

Looking west at project area



**APPENDIX 2**

# SHOVEL TESTS

STP	LV	DEPTH(CM)	TEXTURE	COLOR	HOR	COMMENT
1	1	0-3	rootmat,humus		A/O	NCM
	2	3-60	Sa	10YR6/3	na	NCM
	3	60-70	Sa	10YR5/4	na	NCM
2	1	0-5	rootmat,humus		A/O	NCM
	2	5-27	Sa	10YR6/3	na	NCM
	3	27-roots	Sa	10YR5/4	na	NCM
3	1	0-5	rootmat,humus		A/O	NCM
	2	5-19	Sa	10YR6/3	na	NCM
	3	19-water	Sa	10YR5/4	na	NCM
4	1	0-3	rootmat,humus		A/O	NCM
	2	3-50	Sa	10YR6/3	na	NCM
	3	50-63,water	Sa	10YR5/4	na	NCM
5	1	0-4	rootmat,humus		A/O	NCM
	2	4-58	Sa	10YR6/3	na	NCM
	3	58-63,water	Sa	10YR5/4	na	NCM
6	2	0-53	Sa	10YR6/3	na	NCM
	3	53-70,wet	Sa	10YR5/4	na	NCM
7	2	0-47	Sa	10YR6/3	na	NCM
	3	47-water				
8	1	0-4	rootmat,humus		A/O	NCM
	2	4-53	Sa	10YR6/3	na	NCM
	3	53-water.				
9	1	0-3	rootmat,humus		A/O	NCM
	2	3-52	Sa	10YR6/3	na	NCM
	3	52-61,water	Sa	10YR5/4	na	NCM
10	1	0-6	rootmat,humus		A/O	NCM
	2	6-48	Sa	10YR6/3	na	NCM
	3	48-water.				
11	1	0-3	rootmat,humus		A/O	NCM
	2	3-24	Sa	10YR6/3	na	NCM
	3	24-61,water	Sa	10YR5/4	na	NCM
12	1	0-3	rootmat,humus		A/O	NCM
	2	3-49	Sa	10YR6/3	na	NCM
	3	49-63,water	Sa	10YR5/4	na	NCM