

**Archaeological Resources Assessment for the
Reading Snowmobile Trail and South Reading Road Moose Viewing Area in the Arthur
Davis WMA, Town of Reading, Windsor County, Vermont.**

Submitted to:

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Project Description

The Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife, subsumed under the Agency of Natural Resources, proposes the construction of a snowmobile trail and a moose viewing area within the Arthur Davis Wildlife Management Area (WMA), Reading Township, Windsor County, Vermont (Figure 1). The proposed snowmobile trail is located east of Browns School Road, following the southern terrace of Bailey Brook. At one point the trail also borders a wetland and associated pond. The proposed moose viewing area is located on the north side of South Reading Road, at the pass in the mountain range known as The Alps, at the main southward bend in the road between Tattle Street in the east, and Twenty Mile Stream Road in the west (see Figure 1).

The University of Vermont Consulting Archaeology Program (UVM CAP) conducted an Archaeological Resources Assessment (ARA) of the Area of Potential Effects (APE) for the proposed projects, as part of Title 22 VSA Chapter 14 of the Vermont Historic Preservation Act, and the Section 106 permitting process. Within the proposed snowmobile trail, much of the proposed trail along an ancient terrace of the Bailey Brook is sensitive, while the proposed moose viewing area will be contained within the existing right-of-way and drainage ditch, and therefore will not disturb archaeologically sensitive areas.

Study Goal

The goal of an ARA (or "review") is to identify portions of a specific project's APE that have the potential for containing prehistoric and/or historic sites. An ARA is to be accomplished through a "background search" and a "field inspection" of the project area. For this study, reference materials were reviewed following established guidelines. Resources examined included the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) files; the Historic Sites and Structures Survey; and the USGS master archaeological maps that accompany the Vermont Archaeological Inventory. Relevant town histories and nineteenth-century maps also were consulted. Based on the background research, general contexts were derived for prehistoric and historic resources in the vicinity of the study area.

Prehistoric Archaeological Site Potential

No prehistoric Native American or historic Euroamerican archaeological sites are known from within the proposed project's APE. The closest archaeological survey work to the proposed project area was undertaken as part of the regulatory archaeology studies for the Black River Hydroelectric Project in the late 1970s. The portion of the hydroelectric project closest to the currently proposed project was in an area located approximately 8 km to the southeast of the moose viewing area, along the Black River approximately 500 ft upstream from the "Upper Falls Covered Bridge", near the town of Downers (Thomas and Bayreuther 1979). During the survey, no prehistoric Native American sites were identified within that portion of the project. One historic site was identified, which may represent the wall remains of the Dunbar Mill (Thomas and Bayreuther 1929:64-7).

A second survey project was carried out in the general vicinity of Arthur Davis WMA by Louis Berger and Associates as part of the Phase I site Identification survey of the Cavendish-Ludlow F-025-1(30) Project, in 1994 (Berger & Associates 1997). Their Phase I testing followed Vermont Route 103 between Cavendish and Ludlow, Vermont. In total, three prehistoric Native American sites were identified from isolated finds of quartz debitage (VT-WN-199 and 201), and smaller scatters of quartz debitage (VT-WN-207). None of these prehistoric sites were determined to be potentially significant. Six historic sites also were identified (VT-WN-200, 202, 203, 204, 205, and 206), all of which are potentially significant (Berger & Associates 1997).

Historic Archaeological Site Potential

There are no historic properties within the Arthur Davis WMA that have been listed on either the National or State Registers of Historic Places, although the Calvin Coolidge State Park, which may border the Arthur Davis WMA in the northwest, was submitted for listing on the National Register in April, 2001. In addition, the Syndicate Farm is listed on the State Register, located along Syndicate Road bordering the Arthur Davis WMA in the south. This is the closest historic property on either registers to the proposed moose viewing area.

Three historic sites, recorded in the Vermont Archaeological Inventory (VAI), are located along Reading Pond Road, approximately 2 km (1.2 mi) west of the proposed moose viewing area (Figure 3). Historic sites VT-WN-298, 299, 300, and 301 were identified by the Archaeology Consulting Team, Inc., in 2000 as part of a field inspection for the management plan of the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife (Frink and Boulanger 2001). Site VT-WN-298 consisted of a stone wall and multiple stone foundations, suggestive of a residence with associated barn (Frink and Boulanger 2001). Site VT-WN-299 consisted of several cellar holes, a standing stone wall and remnant plantings of Snowberry bushes (Frink and Boulanger 2001). Site VT-WN-300 consists of stone foundations larger than the previous two sites. A remnant apple orchard also was associated with the site (Frink and Boulanger 2001). The integrity of

these three historic sites is good. Finally, site VT-WN-301 consisted of three or four stone foundations. No other remains were identified, which may be due to historic activities such as logging and off-roading in the vicinity of the site (Frink and Boulanger 2001). As a result of these historic activities, the integrity of site VT-WN-301 is poor.

The proposed project will not affect these historic sites, since they are located well outside of the proposed project's APE. No historic sites are known to exist from within either of the proposed project's APE.

Field Inspection

A field inspection of the project area was carried out on November 7, 2003 by Dr. Charles Knight, Assistant Director of the UVM CAP. During the field inspection, Knight was accompanied by Aaron Hurst, State Lands Forest Specialist, and Kim Royar, Wildlife Biologist. The project area of the proposed snowmobile trail was walked and received a sensitivity score of 44 based on the variables in the "Environmental Predictive Model for Locating Precontact Archaeological Sites," since the proposed project area is within 90 m (295 ft) of a permanent stream, and includes a major, ancient alluvial terrace. The project area of the proposed moose viewing location received a sensitivity score of -8 based on the variables in the "Environmental Predictive Model for Locating Precontact Archaeological Sites," since the proposed project area is within 90 m (295 ft) of a wetland and intermittent stream, but will be contained within the existing road's right-of-way and drainage ditch, which have been heavily disturbed in the past.

Reading Snowmobile Trail Area

One sensitive area was identified within the APE of the proposed Reading snowmobile trail area. Much of the proposed trail will be placed on top of an ancient river terrace that is located approximately 40-60 m south of the modern course of Bailey Brook, and at one point borders a pond and associated wetlands to the south. The sensitive area consists of the terraces, both upper and lower, on either side of Bailey Brook, east of Brown School Road, to a point on the southern terrace beyond the wooden wetland crossing and up the small hill, where the trail cut veers south and away from Bailey Brook. At this point the trail cut is approximately 80-100 m (262-328 ft) back from the edge of the terrace, in an area of undifferentiated, level topography.

Due to the potential for some mechanical grading along the proposed trail, and the potential for illegal use of motorized vehicles, such as ATVs, during times when the trail will not be covered with snow, thus tearing-up the top 20-30 inches of soil, potentially significant archaeological sites may be disturbed. As a result, a Phase I site identification survey for the proposed snowmobile trail is recommended in the sensitive portion, unless this sensitive portion can be avoided.

Moose Viewing Area

The moose viewing area is located adjacent to a large wetland that is the headwaters of one of the tributaries of Alder Meadow Brook, and is the location of very frequent moose crossing. The proposed moose viewing area will be a gravel fill construction, on the north side of the west bound lane of South Reading Road, within the existing right-of-way. It will be wide enough for one vehicle and long enough for two. A culvert will be placed in the existing ditch, before fill for the viewing area is deposited, to facilitate water flow within the ditch. No sensitive archaeological areas were identified within the proposed APE of the moose viewing area. The proposed project will have no effect on significant prehistoric or historic archaeological sites, and no further work is recommended.

Conclusions

The University of Vermont Consulting Archaeology Program (UVM CAP) conducted an Archaeological Resources Assessment (ARA) of the Area of Potential Effects (APE) for the proposed construction of a snowmobile trail and a moose viewing area within the Arthur Davis Wildlife Management Area (WMA), Reading Township, Windsor County, Vermont. The ARA was undertaken as part of Title 22 VSA Chapter 14 of the Vermont Historic Preservation Act, and the Section 106 permitting process. One area sensitive for prehistoric Native American sites was identified within the APE of the proposed Reading snowmobile trail.

The project area of the proposed moose viewing area received a sensitivity score of -8 based on the variables in the "Environmental Predictive Model for Locating Precontact Archaeological Sites," since the proposed project area is within 90 m (295 ft) of a wetland and intermittent stream, but will be contained within the existing road's right-of-way and drainage ditch, which has been heavily disturbed in the past. As a result, no intact prehistoric Native American or historic Euroamerican archaeological sites are expected to exist within the APE of this area. The proposed project will have no effect on significant cultural remains. No further work is recommended.

The APE of the proposed snowmobile trail received a sensitivity score of 44 based on the variables in the "Environmental Predictive Model for Locating Precontact Archaeological Sites," since the proposed project area is within 90 m (295 ft) of a permanent stream, and includes a major, ancient alluvial terrace. Proposed mechanical grading and possible trail use by illegal, motorized vehicles during the spring, summer, and fall may disturb potentially significant sites, which may exist within the proposed project's APE. As a result, a Phase I site identification survey is recommended for the sensitive portion of the proposed snowmobile trail APE, unless the area can be avoided.

Charles Knight, Ph.D.
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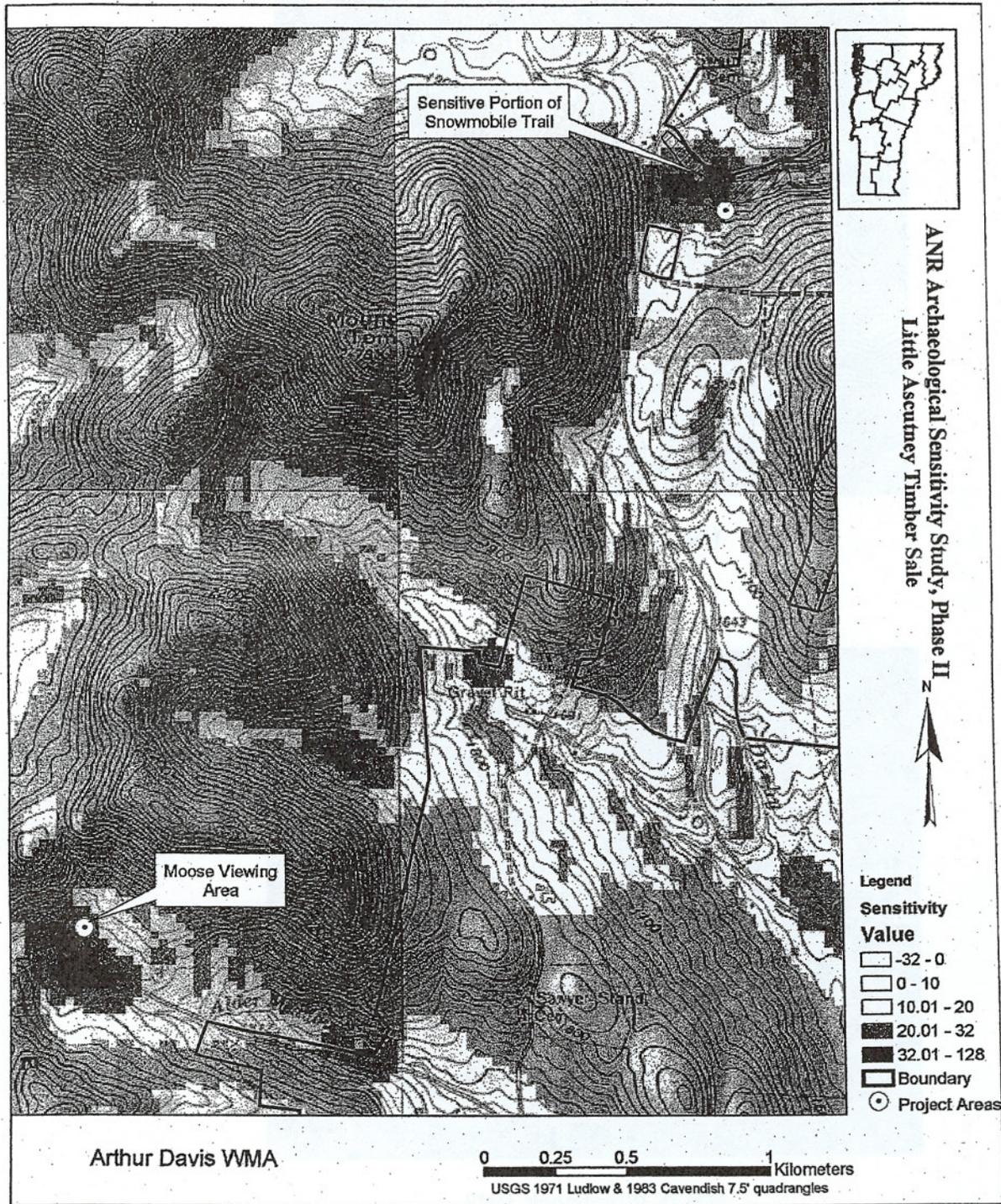
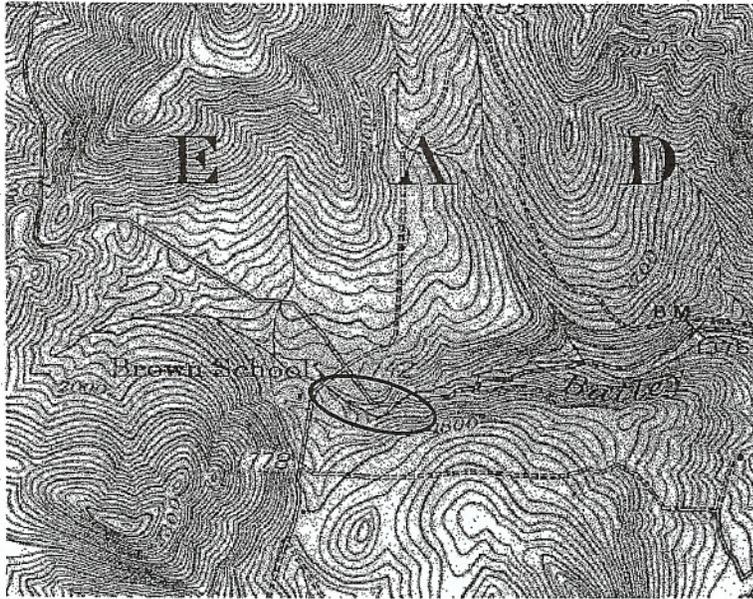


Figure 1. Map showing the location of the proposed Reading Snowmobile Trail and South Reading Road Moose Viewing Area in the Arthur Davis WMA, Town of Reading, Windsor County, Vermont.

UVM CAP Report No. 385



USGS Woodstock 1911



USGS Woodstock 1943

Figure 2. Historic maps showing the location of the proposed Reading Snowmobile Trail in the Arthur Davis WMA, Town of Reading, Windsor County, Vermont.

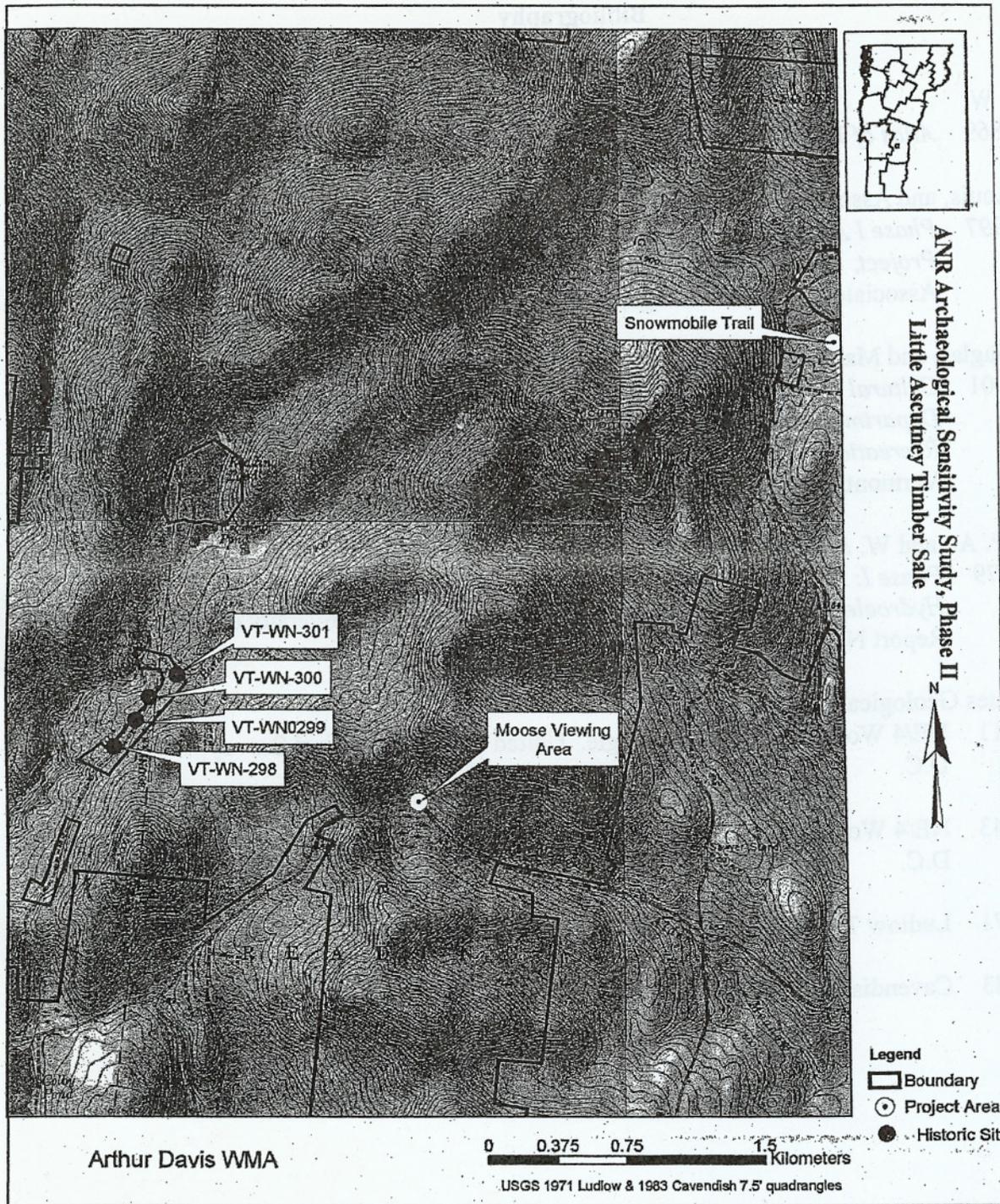


Figure 3. Map showing the location of Euroamerican historic sites near to the proposed Reading Snowmobile Trail and South Reading Road Moose Viewing Area in the Arthur Davis WMA, Town of Reading, Windsor County, Vermont.

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