



**PHASE I ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION  
OF THE INTERSECTION REVISION OF T. H. 2 AND T. H. 89,  
BELTRAMI COUNTY, MINNESOTA**

**S.P. 0406-59  
Mn/DOT Contract No. 04183  
OSA License No. 13-029**

**Authorized and Sponsored by:  
Minnesota Department of Transportation  
and the Federal Highway Administration**

**Final Report Prepared by:  
Stephen L. Mulholland, Principal Investigator,  
Susan C. Mulholland, co-PI, and  
Kevin J. Schneider  
Duluth Archaeology Center  
5910 Fremont Street, Suite 1, Duluth, MN 55807  
Duluth Archaeology Center Report No. 14-29**

**August 2014**

**Level K**

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**Consultant's Report**





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## **MANAGEMENT SUMMARY**

Phase I archaeological survey was conducted for S.P. 0406-59, the proposed reconstruction of the intersection of US TH 2 and MN TH 89 west of the city of Bemidji in Beltrami County, Minnesota. The project APE is under ownership of the State of Minnesota and private individuals. No previously reported sites were recorded within or immediately adjacent to the project area. Walkover and shovel testing of the project APE identified one post-Contact site, 21BL0326, and one architectural feature, BL-ECK-007. The post-Contact site is a homestead dating to the late 1940s. All of the structural elements except for foundations and depressions have been removed. The site is recommended as not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The structural feature identified during the Phase I survey is a stretch of the Jefferson Highway and it is suggested that it be avoided if possible. Based on the Phase I survey results it is recommended that no additional archaeological work is needed for this project.

## **PERSONNEL**

Stephen L. Mulholland - Principal Investigator and Project Director  
Susan C. Mulholland - co-Principal Investigator  
Jennifer Shafer - GIS Specialist  
Kevin J. Schneider - crew, computer graphics technician

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

Many people assisted with this project. Elizabeth Abel (MnDOT Project Manager) provided direct assistance and direction in the implementation of the project, including providing maps and the definition of the project Area of Potential Effects (APE). Scott Anfinson (State Archaeologist) provided the Minnesota archaeology license. In addition, Tom Cinadr of the SHPO conducted a search of the site file database.

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# BACKGROUND INFORMATION

## INTRODUCTION: PHASE I SURVEY

A Phase I archaeological survey was conducted for the proposed reconstruction of the intersection of US TH 2 and MN TH 89 west of the city of Bemidji in Beltrami County, Minnesota (Figure 1). The project (S.P. 0406-59) Area of Potential Effects (APE) consists of approximately 1.5 miles of road corridor of which about 0.75 miles are not on existing roadways. Phase I archaeological survey was conducted for this project under MnDOT Contract No. 04183. The legal description for the survey area is T147N, R34W, SW1/4 of Section 27. The APE of the project was defined on maps provided by Elizabeth Abel (MnDOT Project Manager).

The presence of pre-Contact sites associated with the upland terrain in the area, especially those overlooking waterways and wetlands, suggests the possibility that additional sites may exist within the proposed APE. In Minnesota, sites are frequently located near water resources (Hudak et al. 2002). Therefore, the proximity of water resources to the project area, primarily the Rainy River and wetlands, suggests a potential for pre-Contact sites.

The Phase I archaeological survey was conducted from September 9 through 12, 2013 under Minnesota State License 13-029 (Appendix I). The Phase I survey was conducted to satisfy State of Minnesota regulations including the Field Archaeology Act (MnST 138) and the Private Cemeteries Act (MnST 307.08). The Guidelines for Archaeological Projects in Minnesota (Anfinson 2011) set by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) were followed. In addition, the CRU Guidelines for archaeological survey were followed (MnDOT 2004).

A Gopher State One Call buried utility locate was requested prior to the Phase I archaeological survey. The locate number issued by Gopher State One call was 132481882.

## LOCATION AND SETTING

The project area consists of a corridor approximately 1.5 miles long for the proposed reconstruction of the TH 2 and TH 89 intersection just west of Bemidji in Beltrami County, Minnesota (Figure 1). Approximately one half of the APE was former farm fields or pasture that have now become partially overgrown with brush and grasses. The remainder of the APE is wooded with oak, pines, aspen, and fir. The legal description of the project parcel and the UTM coordinates for the parcel corners are listed in Table 1.

### Table 1. Project Location Data

T147N, R34W, Section 27

Northern Extent: UTM\*: 350520E/5264693N

Eastern Extent: UTM\*: 350832E/5264207N

Southern Extent: UTM\*: 350338E/5263998N

Western Extent: UTM\*: 350197E/5264178N

\*Universal Transverse Mercator coordinates, Zone 14, 1983 North American Datum (NAD)

The project area is located in both the Guthrie and Bemidji Till Plains geomorphic areas (University of Minnesota 1980:48-51) and the Bemidji Area physiographic province (Wright 1972:570-571). The Guthrie Till Plain geomorphic area is dominated by gently rolling terrain that often becomes more pronounced in the area of lakes. It has irregular short slopes with numerous small depressions. The Bemidji Till Plain geomorphic area is primarily level to very gently sloping

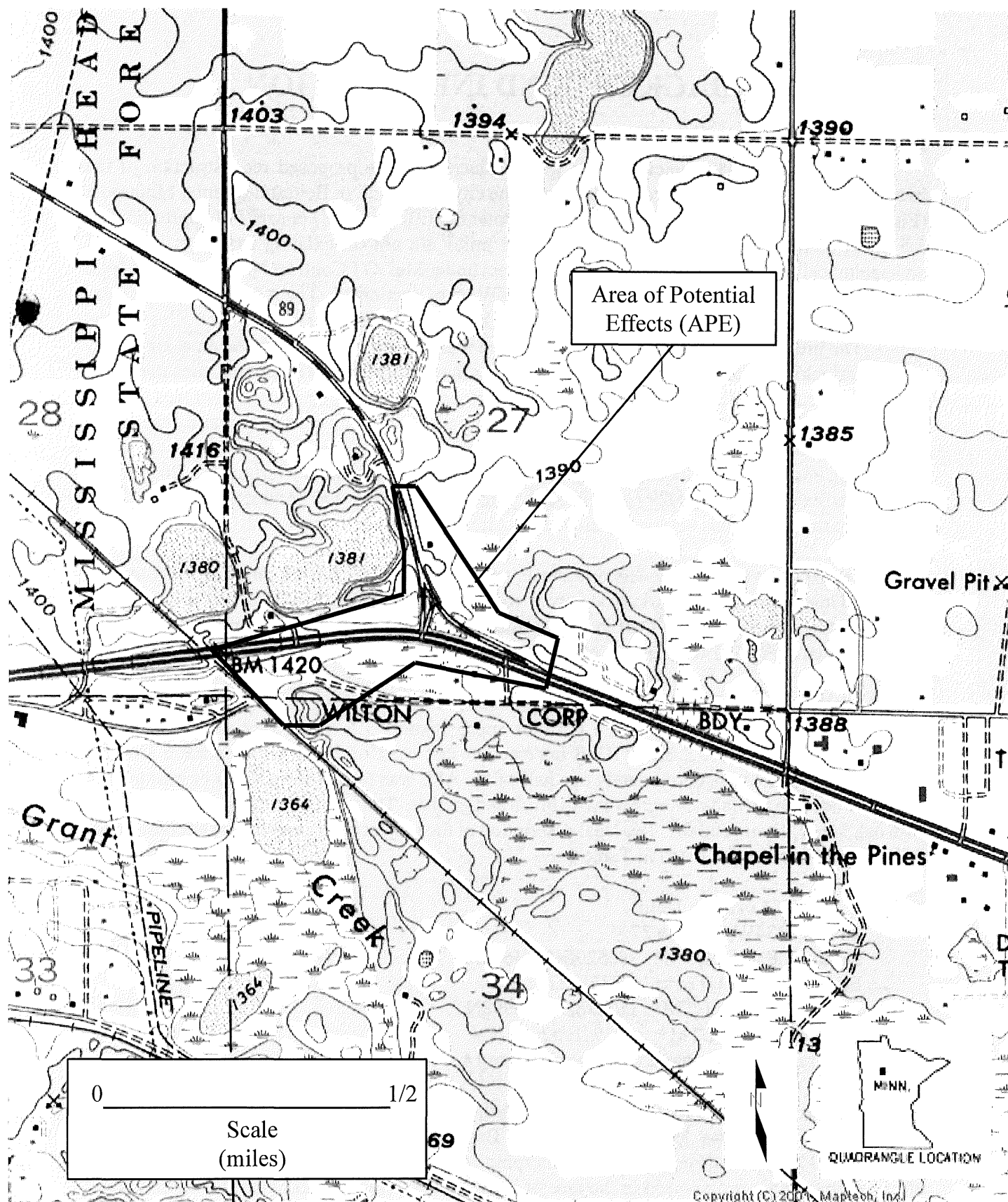


Figure 1. Location of the Area of Potential Effects (APE). Peterson Lake, Minn. 1972 (Revised 1994). 1:24,000 USGS topographic map.



topography. The terrain in both geomorphic regions was formed by glacial ice and outwash from the Wadena ice lobe with the later incursion of the St. Louis sub-lobe of the Late Wisconsin glaciation (Wright 1972:571).

The vegetation of the area has likely changed several times during the time of possible human occupation. The pre-settlement vegetation in the project area from the General Land Office Survey records indicate that the APE is located in an area of jack pine barrens with openings. The vegetation is primarily jack pine with oak, aspen, hazel brush, and occasional Norway pine. In the immediate vicinity are areas of aspen and birch (Marschner 1974).

The project area is located within the drainage area of the upper part of Mississippi (Waters 1977:195-215). This waterway formed a major transportation route during the Contact and post-Contact periods. It is likely to have served a similar function during the pre-Contact period.

## **ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

The project area is located within the eastern part of the Central Coniferous Lake archaeological region of Minnesota as defined by Anfinson (1990). Anfinson bases the archaeological regions on lake/water types and vegetation differences. The central part of this archaeological region is designated as Region 5c in the SHPO system. This region includes most of the upper Mississippi River drainage area. The Minnesota pre-Contact (prehistoric) contexts are based on a somewhat different system of districts (Dobbs 1988a:19-24). This system uses geomorphic data with some county borders to define boundaries. In this system the project area is in the Mississippi Headwaters District (3). In general, the two classifications fit reasonably well in terms of archaeological districts.

### *Literature Review*

Just prior to and during the Phase I field survey, an examination was conducted of the literature and other documents pertaining to the project area. Prior to the field work the SHPO site databases (Cinadr, personal communication 2013) were consulted for the presence of known sites in the area.

### *Historic Contexts*

The major stages in which the pre-Contact historic contexts are grouped are most commonly considered to be Paleoindian, Archaic, and Woodland although later, more complex contexts are recognized as well (Minnesota Historical Society 1999:24). Dobbs (1988a) splits the Paleoindian into Fluted (Early) and Lanceolate (Late) segments, as well as dividing the Woodland into Ceramic/Mound and Late Prehistoric. Individual historic contexts are considered in relation to the regional differences in the archaeological record. District 3 contains evidence of the three major stages but not all historic contexts within those stages.

No projectile points indicative of Early Paleoindian (Fluted) occupation have been reported in Beltrami County (Higgenbottom 1996, Buhta et al. 2011). The Late Paleoindian (or Lanceolate) historic context is only slightly better documented in Beltrami County with one point. However, the surrounding counties offer much more extensive evidence with 5 from Lake of the Woods, 31 from Koochiching, 29 from Roseau, 8 from Marshall, and 3 each from Clearwater and Cass Counties (Florin 1996:191). The Archaic Tradition is represented by Lake-Forest and Prairie Archaic to the south (Dobbs 1988a:91, 96). The Woodland Tradition (Ceramic/Mound) is well represented in the general area, especially in the Mississippi River trench. This includes both Laurel and Brainerd ware

ceramics (Anfinson 1979). The Late Prehistoric includes Blackduck, Selkirk, and Sandy Lake.

Most or all of the Contact period contexts are likely represented in the project area (Dobbs 1988b). Both Dakota and Ojibwe were in Northern Minnesota during Contact times. Euro-American contexts could include French, British, and Initial United States since the major water route in the area, the Mississippi River, was a heavily used travel route. Explorers and traders commonly passed along the Mississippi River in travels recorded in journals, diaries, and other documents.

Post-Contact contexts include both period and thematic contexts (Minnesota Historical Society 1999). Northern Minnesota Logging (1870-1930s) is directly applicable to this area. Other historic contexts include the Tourism, Civilian Conservation Corps, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century Railroads, and Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Agriculture.

#### *Area Archaeology*

Review of the SHPO database did not identify any previously recorded archaeological sites in the township (T147N, R34W) in or near the project area location (Cinadr, personal communication 2013).

# ARCHAEOLOGICAL PHASE I SURVEY

## METHODOLOGY

Prior to the start of the archaeological field survey, pertinent data from topographic and historic maps, geologic, and soil information sources were reviewed to better acquaint the field supervisor with the area under investigation. From the APE information provided by the MnDOT Project Manager, a pre-field determination of survey strategies and methodologies was formulated. These pre-field determinations were then either confirmed or modified as warranted by actual conditions observed during the initial field visit.

The pre-field analysis of the project data provided by the MnDOT Project Manager indicated that a standard Phase I survey methodology would be appropriate for this archaeological investigation based on proximity to two small lakes (Figure 1). The project area consists of a corridor approximately 1.5 miles long for the proposed reconstruction of the TH 2 and TH 89 intersection just west of Bemidji in Beltrami County, Minnesota (Figure 1). The standard survey methodology examines the entire area using either walkover or shovel testing methodologies. Any variations to the standard survey methodology would be made in the field by the project PI in consultation with the MnDOT Project Manager.

### *Phase I Field Survey*

The initial field visit by personnel from the Duluth Archaeology Center (DAC) took place on September 9 to 12, 2013. Observations during the initial visit confirmed that both shovel test and walkover methodologies were appropriate for the entire project APE. Walkover survey methodology for the project area consisted of multiple transects with widths between transects dependent on the terrain and surface conditions. At a maximum, the interval between walkover transects was 10 meters.

The shovel testing methodology employed for this project consisted of placing approximately 30 to 40 cm (12 to 16 inch) wide test holes at 7.5 to 15 meter intervals where feasible. Sediment matrix removed from each hole was screened through one-quarter inch hardware cloth with the retained items examined for cultural materials. Testing in each hole continued until glacial deposits or an approximate one meter depth was attained. Once these depth parameters were attained, the testing ceased and measurements and observations on sediments and deposits within the test hole were recorded. These recorded data would also include information on the approximate depth(s) from which any cultural materials were recovered. Upon completion of the recorded data, the test was back-filled.

While the methodology outlined above works well to locate both pre- and post-Contact archaeological cultural materials, the determination that the items recovered represent a distinctive cultural entity or site is vital. Localities with any pre-Contact materials are for the most part assigned site status. However, post-Contact materials in some cases may represent isolated or random pieces of roadside or other scattered trash, traditionally not assigned site status, and need to be separated from those deposited during an occupation or from activities associated with special use areas. Though this may appear on the surface a simple task, in reality it may be more difficult than it first appears. In some instances the field survey is examining areas occupied or used historically for well over 150 years, including old farmsteads and roads that have had little alteration in their location or route over that time span. A broken glass fragment from a bottle discarded 100 years ago looks the same whether it is directly associated with a farmstead, is roadside trash, or some other type of

random garbage scatter. Therefore, the context and association in which the artifact(s) are recovered becomes vital.

The determination of whether or not post-Contact artifacts are part of a site or represent trash disposal is based on the presence of definable site boundaries, or by the association with either structural remains or a definable activity use area. Site determination based on artifacts (from the surface or shovel tests) requires that an association be made either with a visible structural remnant or with a definable artifact concentration. The logic to these stringent site determination criteria is based on the known fact that most areas have had extensive and continuous occupation during the recent post-Contact period, and that culturally derived materials from this general temporal period often litter a project area. These limitations were established to eliminate site designations based on post-Contact trash dispersal patterns, especially those from the more recent periods.

After determination that the post-Contact cultural materials represent a definable entity with boundaries outlined, a plan map of all pertinent features associated with the site is made. Items mapped include any structural remnants, physical features, debris determined to be associated with the function of the site (excluding recent roadside trash), and natural surface expressions, all plotted using compass readings with either paced or taped measurements. All site locations are placed on a USGS map using both physical landmarks and UTM readings obtained from a handheld GPS unit. The mapping of pre-Contact sites is similar but concentrates on site boundaries, artifact concentrations, associated shovel tests (both positive and negative), and the relationship of these items with the existing terrain.

No indications of human internment were observed or encountered during the survey. The absence of surface topographic expressions and lack of subsurface indications such as soil staining are the basis for this observation.

#### *Laboratory Analysis*

No artifacts were recovered during work on this project. Therefore, no laboratory methods were employed.

#### *Vegetation and Water*

Vegetation within the survey area is that commonly associated with a northern Minnesota forested environment and associated grasslands (University of Minnesota 1980). The area consists of sandy till plains situated on flat to slightly rolling terrain. The vegetation is primarily a deciduous forest in the southern part of the APE (south of TH 2) and mostly a grassland to the north of TH 2. The northern part is most likely the result of past agricultural activities. Upland species include oak, some maple, aspen, birch, fir, spruce, scattered pines, hazel, and various herbaceous plants. Lowland species near the lakes include willow, alder, cedar, grasses, and reeds. The primary water resource within and near the project APE are the two small lakes along with nearby wetlands.

#### *Soils and Geomorphology*

The project area is located in both the Guthrie and Bemidji Till Plains geomorphic areas (University of Minnesota 1980:48-51) and the Bemidji Area physiographic province (Wright 1972:570-571). The project area is dominated by nearly flat plain north of TH 2 and more rolling terrain south of the highway. The soils in both parts of the APE are dominated by medium grained sands with widely varying gravel and rock content.

## RESULTS

The focus of the Phase I survey was the examination of the APE for the proposed reconstruction of the Trunk Highway 2 and 89 intersection in Beltrami County, Minnesota (Figure 1). The APE consists of approximately 1.5 miles of proposed road corridor. The project APE received both walkover and shovel test examination where feasible. A total of 21 shovel tests were dug during the Phase I survey (Figure 2). Transect intervals during the walkover ranged in width up to 10 meters depending on surface conditions. Shovel testing was concentrated on hilltop overlooks on the southern end of the APE and in the northern agricultural field area. Shovel tests were placed on an approximate 15 m grid where feasible. All test holes were negative. One site, the remains of a farmstead (21BL0326) and one structural feature, a segment of the pre-1920s Jefferson Road (BL-ECK-007), were identified during the Phase I walkover examination (Figures 3, 4). The Phase I survey was conducted from September 9 through 12, 2013.

### *Site 21BL0326*

Site 21BL0326 is located on the east side of TH 89 approximately 0.2 miles north of the intersection with TH 2 (Figure 3). It consists of the foundation remnants of an old homestead with outbuildings and a more recent dwelling dating to the late 1940s, possibly early 1950s. All super-structural elements have been removed leaving only surface expressions, such as depressions, of past buildings and the more recent cement block and concrete floor of the dwelling (Figure 4). A possible residential trailer may have been located to the north, near the dwelling. The remainder of the features recorded appear to pre-date the dwelling but are more ephemeral in their surface expressions. Based on the removal of most of the structural elements associated with the homestead it is recommended that the site be considered not eligible for the NRHP.

### *Structural Feature BL-ECK-007*

Feature BL-ECK-007 is the remains of an early segment of road located within the wooded area south of TH 2 (Figure 3). Based on the evidence from the *Jefferson County Declaration* (1916 a, b, c) and a 1949 aerial photograph, this segment of road probably represents an undisturbed portion of that early highway. The road section most likely dates to before 1920 when most segments of the Jefferson Highway System were constructed. No earlier aerial photographs were available for confirmation purposes. Portions of the highway to the east were most likely incorporated as part of TH 2. Just west of the APE the Jefferson road apparently turned to the north and was again consumed by the construction of TH 2. It continued on the north side of TH 2 and it appears that Nature Road is built on the old Jefferson Road. Most of the proposed construction activity associated with the proposed reconstruction activity will most likely avoid the extant portions of undisturbed segment of the Jefferson Highway.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A standard Phase I archaeological walkover survey was conducted within the project APE from September 9 through 12, 2013. A total of 21 shovel tests were placed within the APE, where possible. The survey identified one previously unknown post-Contact archaeological site within the APE, 21BL0326, and one structural feature probably associated with a pre-1920 vintage Jefferson Highway BL-ECK-007 (Figures 3, 4).

Based on the results of the Phase I survey it was recommended that site 21BL0326 be determined not eligible for the NRHP. Most of the structural feature is outside of the project APE



and will probably be avoided. It is suggested that avoidance of feature if possible be considered. Based on the Phase I survey results it is recommended that no additional archaeological work is needed for this project.

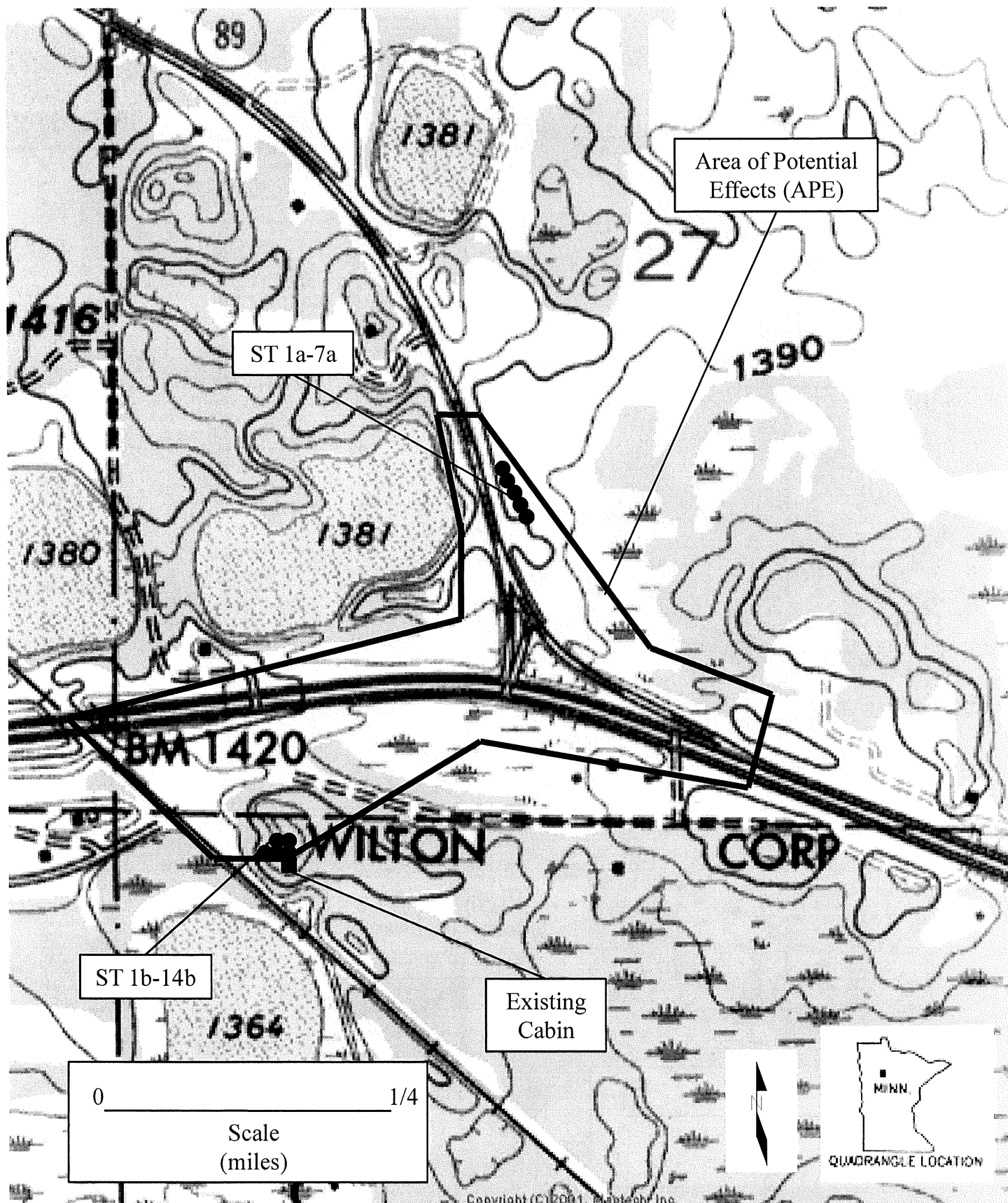


Figure 2. Location of shovel tests (ST) conducted. Peterson Lake, Minn. 1972 (Revised 1994). 1:24,000 USGS topographic map.

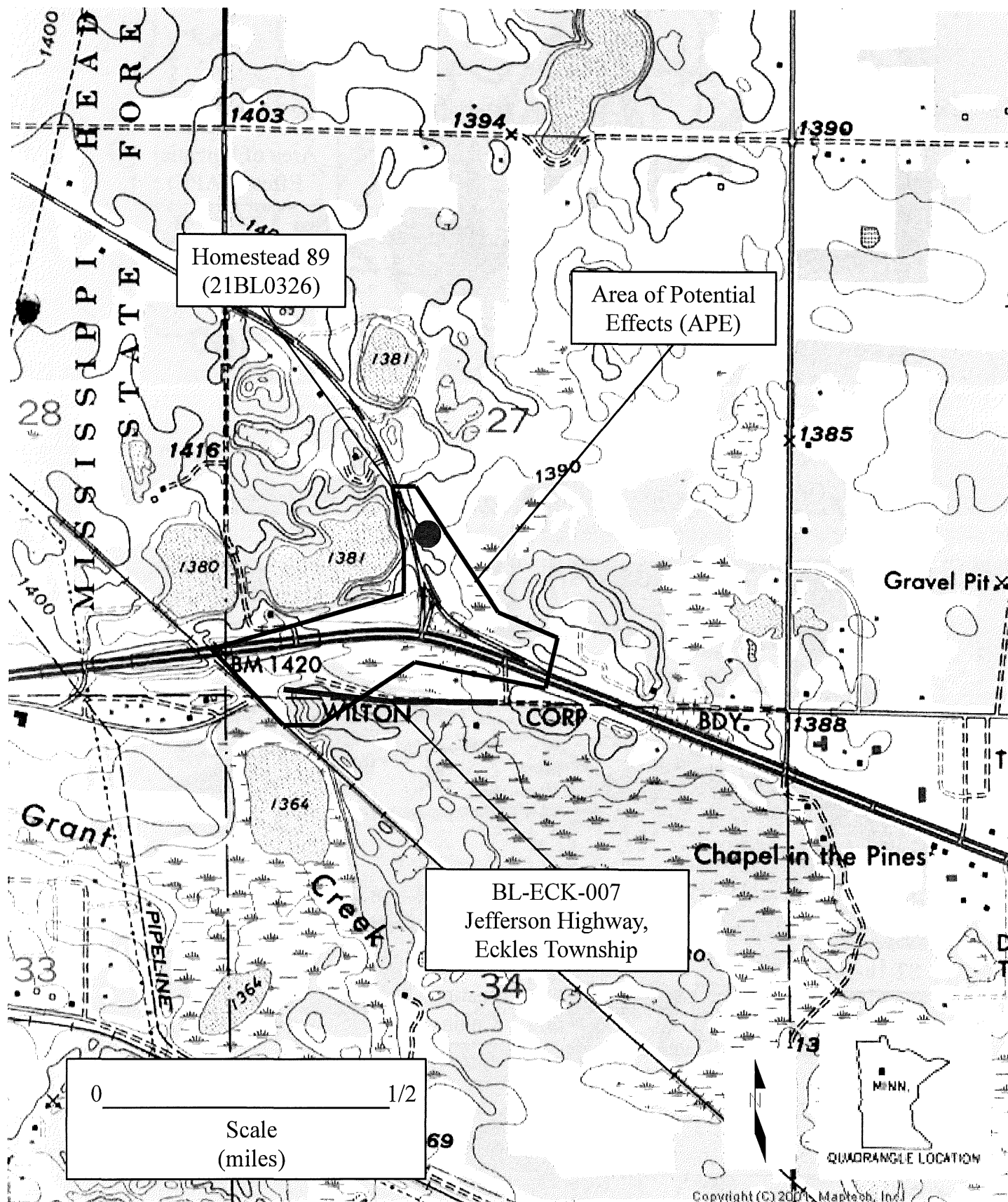


Figure 3. Location of features recorded within the APE. Peterson Lake, Minn. 1972 (Revised 1994). 1:24,000 USGS topographic map.

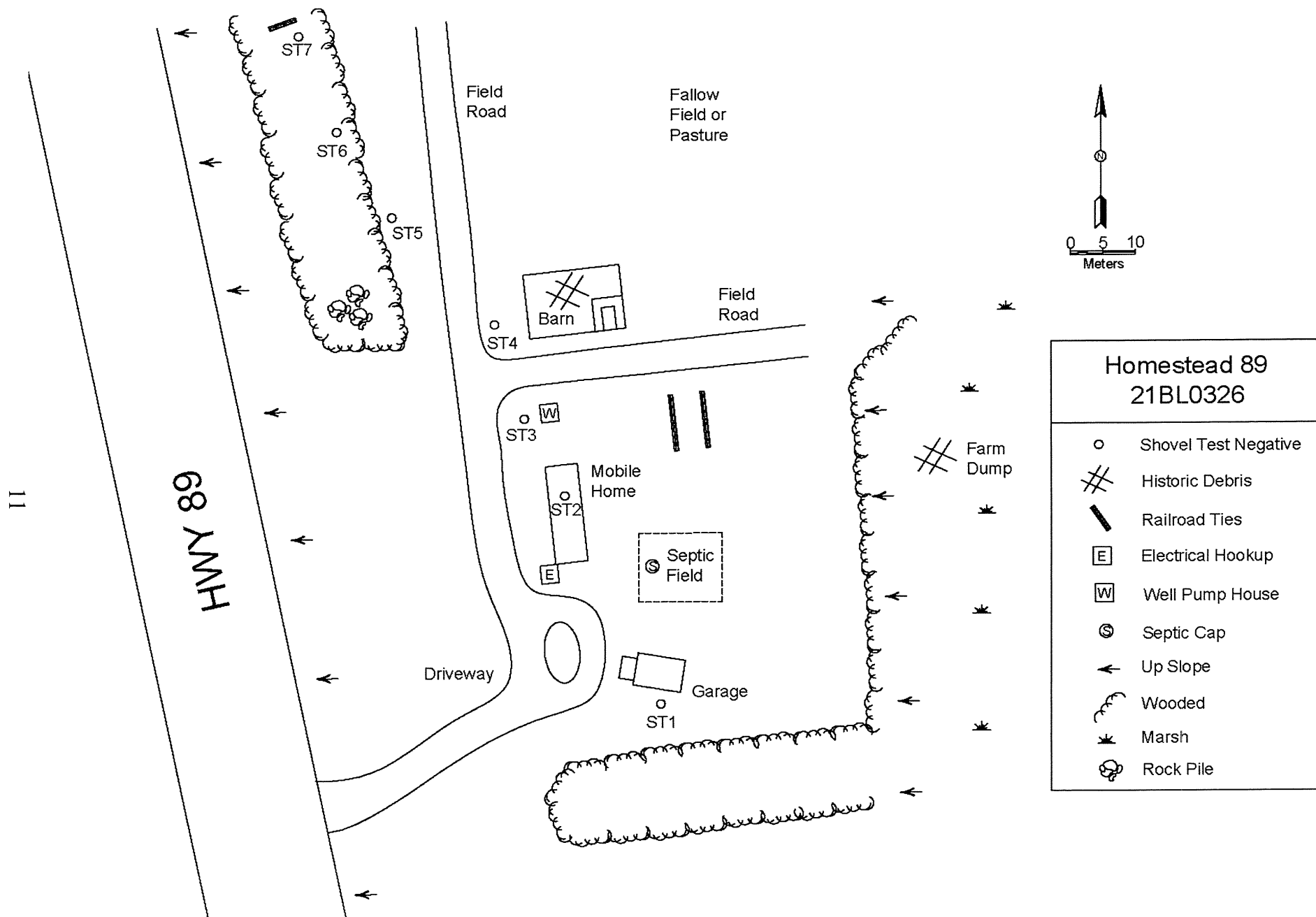


Figure 4. Sketch map of the Homestead 89 (21BL0326) site.

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**APPENDIX I. Phase I Survey State Archaeology License:**

**APPLICATION FOR MINNESOTA  
ANNUAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECONNAISSANCE SURVEY LICENSE**

This license only applies to reconnaissance (Phase I) surveys conducted under Minnesota Statutes 138.31-.42 during calendar year 2013. Separate licenses must be obtained for site evaluation (Phase II) surveys, for major site investigations (Phase III), for burial site authentications under Minnesota statutes 307.08, and for survey work that will continue into another calendar year. Only the below listed individual is licensed as a Principal Investigator, not the institution/agency/company or others who work for that entity. The licensed individual is required to comply with all the conditions attached to this license form. Permission to enter land for the purposes of archaeological investigation must be obtained from the landowner or land manager.

Name: Stephen L Mulholland

Institution/Agency/Company Affiliation: Duluth Archaeology Center LLC

Title/Position: PI/Field Director/Co-Owner

Address: 5010 Fremont Street, Suite 1, Duluth, MN 55807

Work Phone: 218/624-5489 E-Mail: Archcenter@aol.com

Name of Advanced Degree Institution: University of Minnesota Year: 2003

Name of Department: Interdisciplinary Arch. Studies Degree: MA X MS PhD

Purpose: (check all that may apply)

CRM X Academic Research X Institutional Field School X

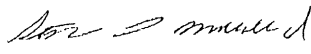
Type of Land: (check all that may apply)

State Owned X County Owned X Township/City Owned X

Other non-federal public X List: Public funded projects on private land

MHS Repository Agreement # 600 Other Approved Curation Facility: \_\_\_\_\_

Previous License: Year 2012 Type Annual Number 12-25

Signed (applicant):  Date: 2-12-12

Required Attachments: Curriculum Vita and Documentation of Appropriate Experience \_\_\_\_\_  
for previously unlicensed individuals.

Submit one copy of this form and attachments to:

Office of the State Archaeologist, Ft. Snelling History Center, St. Paul, MN 55111  
612-725-2411 612-725-2729 FAX 612-725-2427 email: mnosa@state.mn.us

Minnesota Historical Society Approval: 

Date: 2/18/17

State Archaeologist Approval: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: 2/12/12

License Number: 13-029

Form Date: 2/15/11