

**PHASE I ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY FOR  
COON RAPIDS DAM REGIONAL PARK IMPROVEMENTS,  
HENNEPIN COUNTY, MINNESOTA**

**MnDOT Contract No. 1027560  
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**Prepared for:  
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**FINAL  
June 2017**

## **MANAGEMENT SUMMARY**

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In June of 2017, Two Pines Resource Group, LLC (Two Pines) completed a Phase I archaeological survey for planned improvements within Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park within the city of Brooklyn Park in Hennepin County, Minnesota. This work was performed under contract with the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) and the Three Rivers Parks District. The proposed project will improve circulation within the park through the reconstruction and realignment of existing park roads, parking lots, sidewalks, and paved trails.

The purpose of the Phase I archaeological survey was to determine if the project's area of potential effects (APE) contains any intact archaeological resources that may be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The APE includes portions of the SW ¼ of Section 2 of Township 119N, Range 21W. While the project's location on terraces of the Mississippi River suggests moderate to high potential for precontact archaeological resources, due to past disturbance from agricultural activities, development of the hydroelectric dam, and construction of regional park facilities, the majority of the project APE has a low potential for containing intact archaeological resources. The project area is located within the Central Lakes Deciduous South archaeological sub-region. Dr. Michelle Terrell served as the Principal Investigator.

During the Phase I archaeological survey for the Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park Project, no archaeological sites were identified within the project APE. Based on these findings, Two Pines does not recommend any additional archaeological investigations prior to or during the improvement project.



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## **INTRODUCTION**

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In June of 2017, Two Pines Resource Group, LLC (Two Pines) completed a Phase I archaeological survey for planned improvements within Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park within the city of Brooklyn Park in Hennepin County, Minnesota. This work was performed under contract with the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) and the Three Rivers Parks District. The purpose of the Phase I archaeological survey was to determine if the project's area of potential effects (APE) contains any intact archaeological resources that may be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

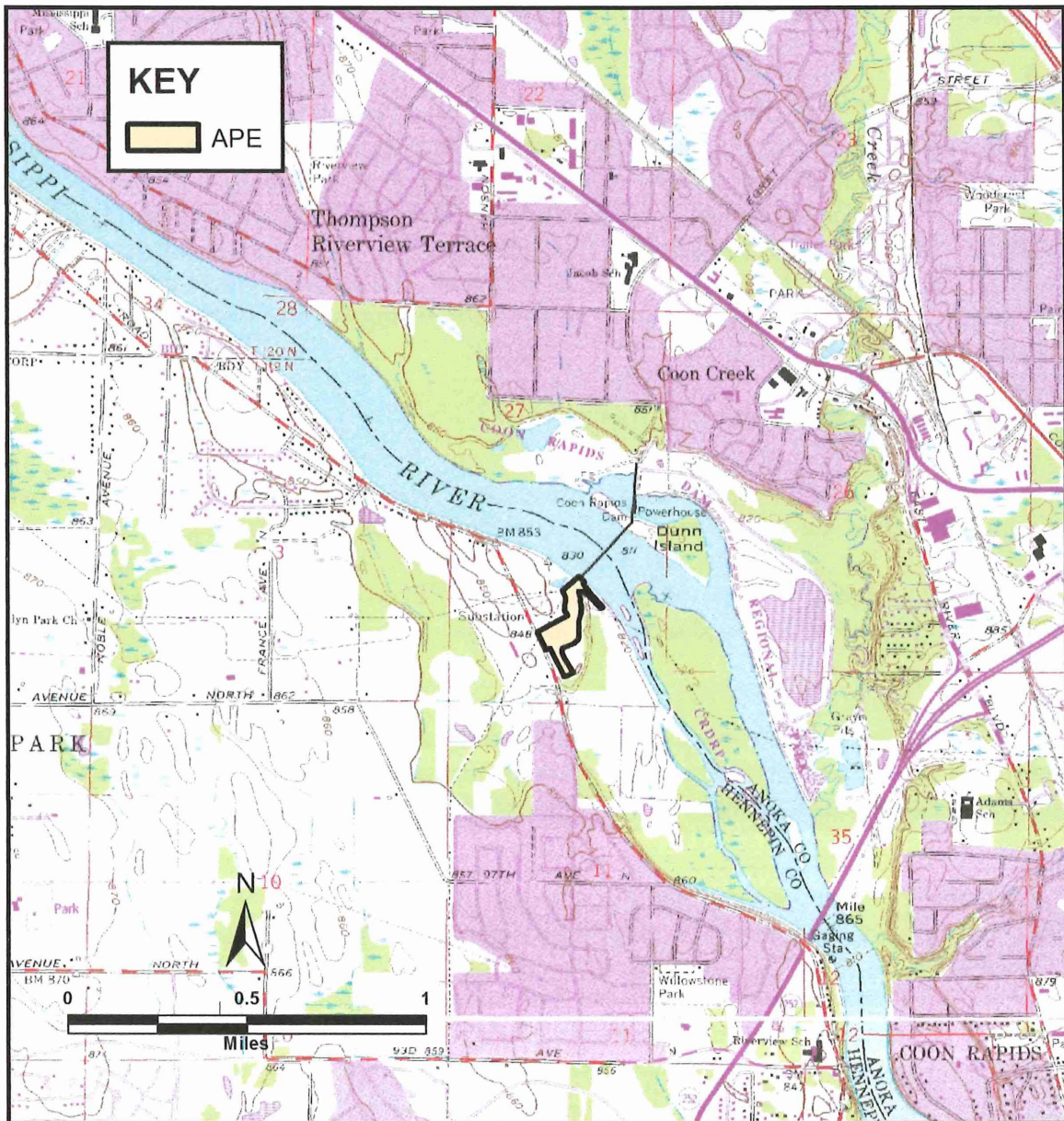
### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park Improvements Project is located within the city of Brooklyn Park in Hennepin County, Minnesota. The proposed project will improve circulation within the park through the reconstruction and realignment of existing park roads, parking lots, sidewalks, and paved trails. In particular, the park entrance will be shifted to the south, the two existing parking lots will be combined into a single lot, and additional sidewalks and paved trails will be added.

### **AREA OF POTENTIAL EFFECTS (APE)**

The APE for the archaeological survey are the highlighted project extents indicated on the plans attached to the State Aid for Local Transportation Historical/Archaeological Review Request dated January 5, 2017 and received in our office on February 8. The project APE is located in the SW ¼ of Section 2 of Township 119N, Range 21W (Figure 1).

The central UTM (NAD 83, Zone 15) coordinates for the project area are 4998583E 475330N. These coordinates were determined electronically using Acme Mapper.



**FIGURE 1. PROJECT LOCATION**

*COMPOSITE USGS 7.5 MINUTE TOPOGRAPHIC MAP SERIES*

## RESEARCH DESIGN

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All work was conducted in accordance with the *MnDOT's Cultural Resources Unit Project and Report Requirements* (MnDOT 2015), the *SHPO Manual for Archaeological Projects in Minnesota* (Anfinson 2005), the *State Archaeologist's Manual for Archaeological Projects in Minnesota* (Anfinson 2011), and the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation* (National Park Service 2002).

### OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the Phase I archaeological survey was to determine whether the project's APE contains any intact archaeological resources that may be potentially eligible for listing on the NRHP. The NRHP criteria, summarized below, were used to assess the significance of documented archaeological sites. While all four criteria are considered, archaeological sites are typically eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion A or D.

- Criterion A – association with events that have made a significant contribution in our past;
- Criterion B – association with the lives of persons significant in our past;
- Criterion C – embodiment of the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or artistic values; or representation of the work of a master; possession of high artistic values; or representation of a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- Criterion D – potential to yield information important to prehistory or history (National Park Service 2002).

### LITERATURE SEARCH

Prior to fieldwork, staff from Two Pines conducted background research in the holdings of the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and Minnesota Historical Society (MNHS). Sources examined during this research included files of previously identified archaeological sites within a one-mile (1.6 km) radius of the project area, reports documenting previous surveys, and historical maps of the study area. Additional historical maps, as well as historical aerial photographs and current topographic maps were reviewed online. This research was conducted in order to identify those portions of the project area that have a higher potential for containing intact archaeological resources.

### PHASE I ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY

The Phase I archaeological survey commenced with visual inspection of the project area. The purpose of this inspection was to identify any surface features, such as extant foundations within the project area, as well as to assess those portions of the project area that have a moderate to high potential for containing intact archaeological sites. In

general, areas considered to have moderate to high archaeological potential include any undisturbed portions of the project area that are:

- within 500 feet (ft.) (150 meters [m]) of an existing or former body of water of 40 acres (19 hectares) or greater in size;
- within 500 feet (ft.) (150 meters [m]) of an existing or former perennial stream;
- located on a topographically prominent landscape feature; or
- located within 300 ft. (100 m) of a previously reported site or a former or existing historic structure or feature.

Portions of the project area that are considered to have low archaeological potential include soils that are inundated, slopes of greater than 20 degrees, previously disturbed areas, and areas where the naturally occurring post-glacial soils and sediments have been removed (Anfinson 2005:29).

Those portions of the project area that were assessed as having the potential to contain intact archaeological sites but which afforded less than 25 percent surface visibility underwent systematic shovel testing. Shovel tests are 30 to 40 centimeter (cm) (12 to 15 inch) in diameter holes manually excavated at regular intervals along evenly spaced transects in order to identify subsurface archaeological resources. During this project, a 15-meter (m) shovel-testing interval was used. All soils removed from excavated shovel tests were screened through ¼-inch mesh. Shovel tests were excavated through all post-glacial soils and sediments to culturally sterile subsoil or to a maximum depth of 100 centimeters below the surface (cmbs) depending on which condition was first encountered.

Data gathered during the survey were recorded on shovel test forms and in the field notebook of the Principal Investigator. Items noted included: the location of survey areas; the location of individual shovel tests; the depth of each shovel test and its associated soil profile; the presence or absence of cultural materials within each test; and the excavated soil texture, inclusions, and Munsell color.

#### **GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM DATA**

A geographic information system (GIS) data layer was created during the course of the archaeological investigations. The locations of all individual shovel tests were recorded using a Trimble GeoXT<sup>®</sup> GPS Unit. The data were differentially corrected using a National Geodetic Survey (NGS) continuously operating reference station (CORS).

#### **LABORATORY ANALYSIS AND CURATION**

No artifacts were recovered from within intact deposits during this survey.

## LITERATURE SEARCH RESULTS

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Prior to fieldwork, staff from Two Pines conducted background research during which resources examined included files of previously identified archaeological sites and survey reports within a one-mile (1.6 km) radius of the project area, and aerial photographs and historical maps of the study area. This research was conducted in order to identify those portions of the project area that have a higher potential for containing intact archaeological sites.

### PREVIOUS ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS

Background research revealed that a portion of the project area had undergone a previous Phase I archaeological survey in conjunction with proposed plans to reactivate the Coon Rapids Dam's usage as a source of hydroelectric power (Harrison 2012). This previous survey encompassed an area to the south and west of the dam between West River Road and the river. The 2012 survey and shovel testing was negative for cultural resources.

### PREVIOUSLY RECORDED ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

Background research conducted at the SHPO revealed that there are no archaeological sites that have been previously recorded within the project APE, while three previously recorded sites are located within a mile (1.6 km) of the project APE (Table 1). All three of the previously reported sites are located on the east bank of the Mississippi River. One site (21AN134) consisted of the base of a single projectile point, while sites 21AN175 and 21AN176 were both non-diagnostic precontact lithic scatters.

TABLE 1. PREVIOUSLY RECORDED ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES WITHIN ONE-MILE OF THE APE

Site No.	T	R	S	¼ Section	Site Type
21AN134	31N	24W	26	E-SE-SW-SW	Findspot (projectile point base)
21AN175	31N	24W	2227	N-NW-NW	Lithic scatter
21AN176	31N	24W	27	NW-NW-NW	Lithic scatter

### ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE POTENTIAL

The assessment of an area's potential to contain archaeological resources consists of an analysis of terrain, water sources, and other environmental and landscape conditions in and adjacent to that area as they were historically. Areas that were occupied by water, permanently or frequently inundated (e.g., wetlands, floodplains), poorly drained, or exhibit slopes of greater than 20 percent would have been inhospitable to human occupation and are therefore considered to have low potential for containing archaeological resources.

### ***Precontact Site Potential***

Generally, areas with greater potential for containing precontact archaeological resources are in proximity, typically less than 500 ft., to a water source or wetland, though the applicability of this condition varies depending on the nature of the water source (perennial versus intermittent), the size of the body of water, the extent of the floodplain, and the availability of other water sources in the vicinity (i.e., proximity to a small pond may be less indicative of archaeological potential if a large lake is nearby). Topographic prominence is also frequently indicative of high precontact archaeological potential, though relative topographic prominence as a gauge of archaeological potential often is tied to other conditions, such as proximity to water. Proximity to previously recorded precontact archaeological sites often suggests high potential for precontact resources, inasmuch as previously recorded sites may not have been fully defined or as the areas around previously recorded sites often have similar environmental/landscape conditions. The absence, however, of precontact archaeological sites in an area does not necessarily point to low archaeological potential, given that that area may not have been previously surveyed.

The previous identification of precontact archaeological sites within a one-mile (1.6 km) radius of the project area together with the project's location on terraces of the Mississippi River indicates that undisturbed portions of the project APE have moderate to high potential to contain precontact archaeological resources.

### ***Historical-Period Site Potential***

Areas nearest to former and/or existing historical-period buildings, structures, or other features are generally considered to have higher potential for containing historical-archaeological resources. These areas are not limited to the locations of buildings, as often the most important information comes from deposits within associated features, such as privies, cisterns, or middens, which were located away from primary buildings, usually to the rear of the dwelling or business structures.

No historical-archaeological sites have been previously recorded in, or within one mile of, the project area. A review of historical maps and aerial photographs did indicate the presence of historical-period resources within or near the project area including a hotel, farmstead, and the hydroelectric dam. However, due to more recent park development, the potential for the project area to contain intact archaeological deposits related to these resources is low.

#### ***Hotel***

At the time of the original land survey completed in 1856, the "Rum & Crow River Road," precursor to West River Road / Dayton River Road, passed about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile to the southwest of the project area. However, by 1860 it had been adjusted eastward and followed the general current alignment of West River Road past the project area (Cook 1860). On the 1873 plat map, a "Hotel" is indicated to the east of the road near the center of the SE  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the SW  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 2 on the land of James Weaver (Wright 1873). The

approximate location of this building may be in the vicinity of the park's "Sumac" shelter and outside the current project area. No additional historical information is available on this structure. During this speculative period, the townsite of Harrisburg, which included another hotel as well as stores and dwellings, was platted just a mile to the south of the project area in the SE  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 11 near the Coon Creek Boom (Wright 1873; Warner and Foote 1881:288). That townsite failed and the buildings were alternately torn down, burned, or relocated. It is possible that the hotel on Section 2 had a similar fate or during this boom period the Weavers operated a hotel out of their home. While features associated with this hotel may be preserved within the park, no related artifacts or deposits were encountered during the survey.

#### *Weaver Farmstead*

According to his obituary James Weaver, who was born in Canada, pre-empted land in Brooklyn Township in 1847 (*St. Paul Globe*, September 9, 1900). In 1857 he made a formal claim on 156 acres in Sections 2 and 11 of Township 119N, Range 21W, which encompasses the entirety of the project area (BLM Acc No. MN0030.342; Cook 1860). As previously mentioned, on the 1873 plat map, a "Hotel" is indicated in the SE  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the SW  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 2 on the land of James Weaver (Wright 1873). It is possible that this hotel was being operated out of the Weaver home. By 1898, the dot indicating the presence of a structure (or structures) on the Weaver parcel was located in the NE  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the SW  $\frac{1}{4}$  (Dahl 1898). This is the site of a farmstead as it is documented on historical aerial photographs. After the death of James Weaver in 1900, his son Baldwin O. Weaver took over the farm (Westby 1913; Hixson 1925). The farm continued in operation until the creation of the regional park at which time the farmstead buildings were removed.

The archaeological potential of the Weaver farmstead was assessed through application of the Minnesota farmstead historic context (Terrell 2006). The park is located along the south edge of the East Central Dairy and Potatoes farming region and the former farmstead was associated with multiple agricultural periods from Early Settlement (1820-1870) through World War II and the Postwar Period (1940-1960). A review of historical aerial photographs indicates that between 1945 and 1956 the original barn was removed and other modifications were made to the structures within the farmstead. With the development of the park, the area of the former farmhouse and the original barn location were extensively graded and modified to create the north parking lot and access road. Due to this level of disturbance, the Weaver farmstead is considered to have low research potential.

#### *Coon Rapids Hyrdroelectric Dam*

Construction of the Coon Rapids Hydroelectric Power Dam commenced in January of 1913 and was completed in March of 1914. The powerhouse was constructed on the east bank of the river and a temporary townsite of worker housing and support structures were also built on that side of the river. Impacts on the west side of the river were limited to a borrow area and a few support structures immediate to the west end of the dam and the construction of a substation. The dam continued to generate power through 1966 when it

was decommissioned in December of that year. The support buildings located at the west end of the dam were removed and the area graded for an access road and trail approach to the dam.

### *Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park*

In 1969, the land and dam were transferred to the Hennepin County Park Reserve District. The dam became the centerpiece of the 360-acre Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park which opened in September of 1978 (City of Coon Rapids 2017). Park development included the removal of farmstead and auxiliary dam buildings and the construction of roads, trails, parking lots and a visitor center.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY**

The Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park Improvement Project is located within the Central Lakes Deciduous South archaeological sub-region. The following environmental history of this sub-region is based largely on information contained in Borchert and Gustafson's *Atlas of Minnesota Resources and Settlement* (1980) and an overview entitled "Minnesota's Environment and Native American Culture History" (Gibbon et al. 2002).

The Central Lakes Deciduous South archaeological sub-region includes much of central Minnesota. This area contains numerous lakes, streams, and wetlands. The sub-region is located directly west of the Mississippi River and includes portions of Benton, Carver, Hennepin, Kandiyohi, Meeker, Morrison, Pope, Stearns, Todd, and Wright counties.

The climate within this sub-region has an average annual precipitation range from 20 to 28 inches. Average January highs range from 12 to 24 degrees Fahrenheit (F), while average July highs range from 78 to 82 degrees F. The frost-free season lasts up to 160 days in the south and up to 140 days in the north.

The topography of the Central Lakes Deciduous South sub-region consists of glacial moraines, till plains, and outwash plains. As implied by the region's name, during the contact period much of the vegetation of the Central Lakes Deciduous South archaeological sub-region consisted of hardwood forests with a mix of deciduous-coniferous forest dominated by pine in the northern portion of the sub-region.

During the Late Holocene period, subsistence resources in this sub-region would have included white-tailed deer, small herds of bison and elk, beaver, bear, and some moose. Fish and waterfowl would also have been plentiful. Wild rice beds were also present throughout most of the sub-region.

## **PHASE I ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY RESULTS**

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The Phase I archaeological fieldwork for the Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park Improvement project was conducted in June of 2017. The following archaeological work summary consists of a description of the fieldwork results by survey area.

### **OVERVIEW**

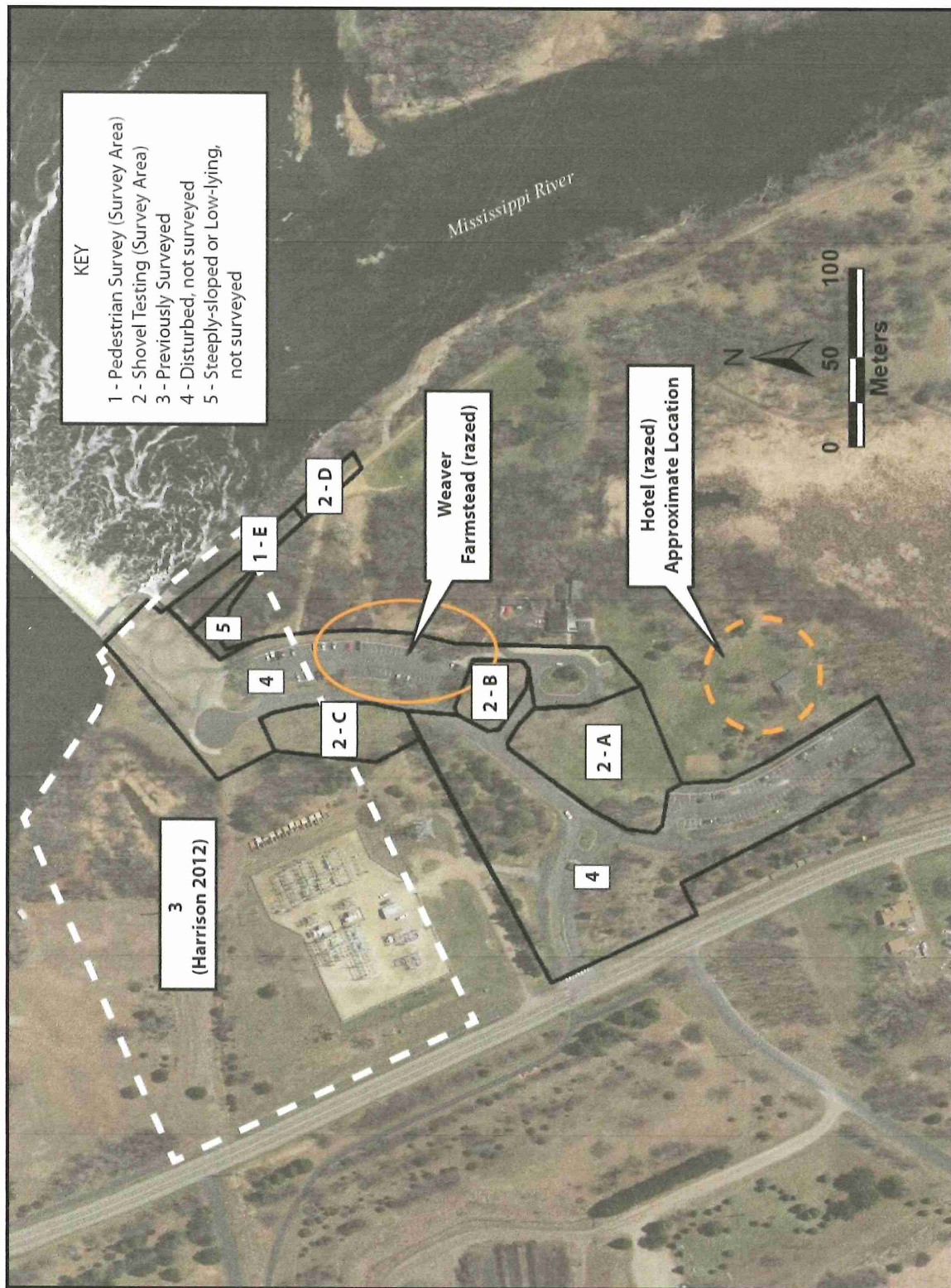
The proposed Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park Improvements Project will reconfigure existing park roads, parking lots, sidewalks, and paved trails. Historical aerial photographs indicate that due to past disturbance from the construction of the dam, agricultural activities, utility installation, and park development, the majority of the proposed project APE has a low potential for containing intact archaeological resources (Figure 2). However five areas with the potential to contain intact archaeological resources underwent archaeological survey.

### **SURVEY AREAS**

#### ***Area A***

Area A is an open manicured lawn located to the northeast of the existing south parking lot and to the south of the park road. This location is the site of a proposed parking lot. Aerial photographs indicate that this area had been cultivated prior to being converted to parkland, but other than agricultural activities appeared to be undisturbed. Seven shovel tests were excavated at 15-m intervals within Area A. Four shovel tests were excavated along one east-west transect and three others along another transect 15 meters to the north. These two transects were placed in an open area bound to the north by a water line and to the south by gas line and stormwater catch basin.

The two westernmost shovel tests exhibited extensive disturbance and fill to a depth of more than 50 cm (20 in.) as a result of the construction of the nearby road and parking lot. The remaining five shovel tests exhibited a profile consisting of an average of 10 cm (4 in.) of a very dark grayish brown (10YR 3/2), silt loam topsoil overlying a horizon of introduced fill consisting of yellowish brown (10YR 5/4), silty sand with gravels. The fill gave way at an average depth of 22 cm (8.7 in.) to a buried plowzone consisting of a very dark gray (10YR 3/1), sand loam. This compact horizon had an average thickness of 15 cm (6 in.). While in three of the shovel tests a B horizon consisting of a dark brown (10YR 3/3) to brown (10YR 4/3) sand loam was present below the plowzone, in the easternmost tests of both transects, the plowzone was deflated and gave way directly to subsoil. Average depth to subsoil, which was a yellowish brown (10YR 5/6) sand, was 54 cm (21 in.). While modern materials were occasionally encountered in the fill, no artifacts were recovered from the intact soils. No further archaeological work is recommended at this location.



**FIGURE 2. SURVEY RESULTS**

*(Twin Cities Metropolitan Council, 2016 Aerial Photography)*

### ***Area B***

Area B is a segment of manicured lawn located between the circle approach to the visitor center on the south and a parking lot to the north. This location is the site of a proposed parking lot and visitor center approach. This area would have been on the edge of the former farm grove and a large oak tree within this area indicated its potential to contain intact soils. Three shovel tests were excavated at 15-m intervals along a single east-west transect across the central portion of this test area. The shovel tests exhibited a profile very similar to that of Area A. The average profile consisted of 10 cm (4 in.) of a very dark grayish brown (10YR 3/2), silt loam topsoil overlying layers of introduced fill and gravels. The fill gave way to a buried plowzone consisting of a very dark gray (10YR 3/1), sand loam at an average depth of 39 cm (15 in.). This compact horizon had an average thickness of 16 cm (6 in.). A remnant B horizon consisting of a dark brown (10YR 3/3) to brown (10YR 4/3) sand loam was present below the plowzone although it was quite thin having an average thickness of just 5 cm (2 in.). Average depth to subsoil, which was a yellowish brown (10YR 5/6) sand, was 60 cm (23.6 in.). While modern materials were occasionally encountered in the fill, no artifacts were recovered from the intact soils. No further archaeological work is recommended at this location.

### ***Area C***

Area C is a naturalized area between the substation to the west and the park road to the east. A new trail is planned through this location. Aerial photographs indicate that this area had been cultivated prior to being converted to parkland, but other than agricultural activities appeared to be undisturbed. Three shovel tests were excavated at 15-m intervals along a single north-south transect along the proposed trail alignment. Shovel tests revealed 10 cm (4 in.) of a very dark grayish brown (10YR 3/2), silt loam topsoil and fill overlying a truncated profile that lacked an intact A or B horizon. Fill and disturbed strata gave way to intact subsoil at an average depth of 26 cm (10 in.). These findings indicate the area was disturbed by past construction. Shovel tests were negative for cultural materials and no further archaeological work is recommended at this location.

### ***Area D***

Area D is a segment of manicured lawn between a gravel-surfaced access road and the wooded river edge. An improved trail is proposed along the riverfront at this location. Two shovel tests were excavated at a 15-m interval between the toe of the slope to the west and disturbance evident on the surface to the east. The shovel tests revealed an average of 16 cm (6 in.) of dark yellowish brown (10YR 4/4) to light yellowish brown (10YR 6/4), silty sand with gravels (fill) overlying an intact soil profile consisting of an average of 22 cm (8.6 in.) of very dark grayish brown (10YR 3/2) to dark brown (10YR 3/3), silty sand A horizon, overlying a brown (10YR 4/3) to dark yellowish brown (10YR 4/4), silty sand B horizon that transitioned to a yellowish brown (10YR 5/4) silty sand subsoil at an average depth of 55 cm (22 in.). Both shovel tests were negative for cultural materials. Examined cut banks and surface exposures along adjacent paths leading to the shore were also negative. No further archaeological work is recommended at this location.

***Area E***

Area E is a natural-surfaced path along the river's edge that will be improved. The path is currently approximately 10-ft. (3 m) wide and has a non-graveled surface offering excellent surface visibility. In places, the path was eroded through to the B horizon, with exposures of the A horizon visible along the path's edges. A close-interval pedestrian survey of the length of the path was conducted and adjoining cut banks and exposures were also examined. A few sherds of EuroAmerican pottery observed on the surface likely eroded downslope from the former farmstead that was located on the terrace above the trail. No additional cultural materials were encountered and no further archaeological work is recommended at this location.

## **SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

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In June of 2017, Two Pines Resource Group, LLC completed a Phase I archaeological survey for planned improvements within Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park within the city of Brooklyn Park in Hennepin County, Minnesota. This work was performed under contract with the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) and the Three Rivers Parks District. The proposed project will improve circulation within the park through the reconstruction and realignment of existing park roads, parking lots, sidewalks, and paved trails. The purpose of the Phase I archaeological survey was to determine if the project's area of potential effects (APE) contains any intact archaeological resources that may be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

During the Phase I archaeological survey for the Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park Project, no archaeological sites were identified within the project APE. Based on these findings, Two Pines does not recommend any additional archaeological investigations prior to or during the improvement project.



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