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"WHITEWATER: A MINNESOTA STATE PARK DEVELOPMENT  
PROJECT RECONNAISSANCE SURVEY"

BY

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Prepared for the  
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources  
Division of State Parks

Principal Investigator

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June 1981

## Abstract

An archaeological reconnaissance survey was undertaken in December 1979 at the proposed location of a new sanitation building in the new campground at Whitewater State Park in the area just west of highway 74 and east of the Whitewater River, Winona County. No archaeological material was recovered. However, the building location was moved the day after the survey was completed and the survey had to be repeated. The survey was repeated in October 1980. At that time additional projects were also checked: 4 pit toilets, a drain field, water and sewer lines. All were negative. The area of the proposed demolition of a farmstead was checked and found to have an archaeological site.

## WHITEWATER STATE PARK

The 1979 development project for Whitewater State Park was listed in the Scope of Work as "New Campground Sanitation Building". The building was to be located in the middle of the second campground loop on the second terrace above the Whitewater river.

### Background

The first visit to Whitewater State Park by a professional archaeologist occurred in May of 1953. Professor Lloyd Wilford of the University of Minnesota climbed to a cave overlooking Trout Run after reports appeared in a local newspaper that Boy Scouts, the previous winter, had located a cave full of Indian pottery. The boys had spent some time digging in the cave and brought out potsherds which were erroneously identified by park officials as "Chippewa". Wilford found only one sherd on his first visit in May, and when he returned with a crew in June to conduct additional work, he discovered the cave had been visited since his May trip and the site destroyed. He and his crew sifted through the disturbed deposits to bedrock, but found no additional cultural material. Dr. Wilford did examine the pottery recovered by the Scouts and described it as being from one vessel and similar to the one found in La Moille Cave by Wilford in 1939.

In the mid 1970's Thomas Neumann, graduate student at the University of Minnesota, went to Whitewater to check for a possible cave site to excavate for his dissertation research.

In 1978 Robert Vernon of the Historical Society conducted a survey to determine if cultural resources were present at a location chosen for a new solar residence for the manager. This survey was negative, but while in the park the crew also checked three additional areas. Two were areas where park visitors

### The 1979 Survey

The 1979 survey was conducted on 3 December 1979 by field director Jan E. Streiff. Assistant Park Manager Mark White took the author to the new campground which was nearly complete. The roads and camp pads were in and gravelled as well as the walk-in campground parking lot. Mr. White informed the author that approximately 4" of top soil had been removed from the area to level it and that an archaeological survey HAD NOT been conducted before work began. Department of Natural Resources personnel stated that the campground was constructed under emergency flood funds and that the project was not surveyed because DNR was between contracts with MHS and the U of M.

### Location

The new campground is in the NW $\frac{1}{4}$  NE $\frac{1}{4}$  Section 20 Township 107N Range 10 W (Winona County) on the west side of County Highway 74, between the road and the Whitewater River. It lies on the second terrace from the Whitewater River (6 meters above and 60 meters back from the river.)

The Whitewater River runs through a narrow valley some 300' below the surrounding hills. The valley, at  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile, is at its widest until it reaches the town of Elba 2+ miles to the northeast. The valley has been heavily cultivated in the past (Vernon 79) and except for isolated stands and along riverways, the flat valley is devoid of trees. The surrounding hills, however, are covered with hardwoods, primarily oak.

### The Methodology

The methodology, conforming to Council for Minnesota Standards, consisted of simply placing tests in the area of the proposed structure, with additional tests placed between the proposed structure location and the edge of the terrace toward the river as a second check. The shovel tests (approximately 50cm x 50cm) were excavated to a depth of 50cm at 5cm levels. All material was screened through a 1 inch mesh screen. If the first 50cm proved sterile

## The Results

Four tests were placed within campground loops #2; one on the northeast corner of the proposed building, one on the southwest corner and two running west from the building location toward the river. All tests were negative, with a definite plow zone appearing in the top 20-40cms.

A fifth test was excavated, more out of curiosity than need, on the edge of the terrace, within the tree zone and the end of camp loop 3. As suspected, this area is undisturbed, has no plow zone but also yielded no archaeological material.

The preliminary field report was submitted to DNR, the State Archaeologist and SHPO on 10 December 1979. The State Archaeologist approved the report and determined no effect. The SHPO replied in April of 1980 with a no effect.

NOTE: The above report is submitted to comply with Council for Minnesota and SA guidelines, which require that any archaeological survey undertaken in the State of Minnesota shall be followed by a report submitted to the State Archaeologist, whether the survey was positive or negative. However, it must be noted here that the day following the above survey, the field director was notified by DNR Engineering that the building location had been moved. The survey was thus irrelevant as far as the DNR project was concerned, but not, of course, as far as archaeological research was concerned. When the final location of the shifting sanitation building is decided and another survey is conducted, another report will be submitted.

## WHITEWATER SURVEY ADDENDUM

In early October 1980, the field director was notified by DNR that a final location had been decided on for the campground sanitation building. DNR also informed the author that several other projects, not originally in the Scope of Work needed surveys done before construction could begin. They included four pit toilets, water and sewer lines and a drain field. An additional project, the demolition of a farmstead on the park, was brought to the field director's attention as she arrived to conduct the other surveys.

### The 1980 Survey

The survey of the above projects was conducted on 10 October 1980 by field director Jan E. Streiff in the same areas as the 1979 survey, NW $\frac{1}{4}$  NE $\frac{1}{4}$  S 20 T 107 N R10W.

### The Pit Toilets

Two of the toilets are to be placed on the first terrace above the Middle Fork Whitewater River. They are to sit up against the hill leading to the second terrace and just to the south of a small creek and ravine which separates the lower campground and the abandoned farmstead. A small concrete bridge spans the creek and a farm road runs along the base of the hill. Two tests dug at the toilet locations indicated a heavy disturbance from the farm era, (rusted metal machine parts), but no evidence of prehistoric activity.

The other two pit toilets are to be located on the extreme south side of the new upper terrace campground between it and the existing loops. They are to be under a current power line on a narrow strip of ground which has a small stand of trees and bushes. The area is partly the old farm field and it, like the 1979 survey showed, is disturbed from plowing. One test here showed no evidence of cultural resources.

### The Drainfield

The campground drainfield is to be in the centre of the walkin camping parking lot on the second terrace above the Whitewater River. The parking lot has already been constructed so damage has already been done to an already disturbed area. One test in the drainfield area showed plowing disturbance and was negative culturally.

### The Abandoned Farmstead

The farmstead, which lies in the NW and NE $\frac{1}{4}$  of the NE $\frac{1}{4}$  S. 20 and extends into the SE $\frac{1}{4}$  SE $\frac{1}{4}$  Section 17, consists of a standing house and garage. Previously removed were the barn and a chicken coop. Plans call for the burning of the house and garage and the removal of concrete foundations by the Highway Department for fill. The remaining excavations would be pushed in.

To the northeast of the house is the homestead garden and is currently being used by the park personnel as a garden. During the 1980 season, park employees, while tending the garden, found prehistoric lithic artifacts in the garden. They were concerned that possible future use of this area might disturb or destroy the site.

The garden was surface checked and tested, as well as the area near the house. Three shovel tests revealed that an early (so far preceramic) archaeological site exists on this first terrace above the Whitewater River.

The site was designated 21 WN 39. Park personnel and DNR were notified that plans to remove any buildings should first be reviewed with the State Archaeologist, Minnesota Historical Society and project archaeologist and any work which would in any way disturb the ground surface should be avoided.

It is recommended that additional archaeological work be undertaken, perhaps

Jan E. Streiff

Archaeology Lab  
University of Minnesota  
Minneapolis, Minnesota  
5 March 1980

APPENDIX A

Archaeological material from Whitewater State Park

<u>Year collected</u>	<u>Archaeologist</u>	<u>Accession #</u>	<u>Site #</u>
misc	Whitewater DRN Personnel	none	none given
1953	Robert Thaldorf	none	none given
1978	Robert Vernon, Minnesota Historical Society	143B	21 WN 32
1980	Jan E. Streiff, University of Minnesota	835	21 WN 39

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Johnson, Elden

1974 Prehistoric Archaeological Sites in Minnesota State Parks. Archaeology Lab. University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

Republican-Herald (Lefty Hymes)

February 26, 1953

State Archaeologist Site File

1979 Winona County, State Archaeologist Office, Hamline University, St. Paul.

University of Minnesota Site and County Files

1979 Winona County and Department of Natural Resources, Archaeology Lab, Anthropology Department, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

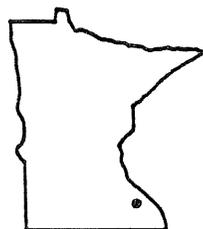
Vernon, Robert etal

1979 A Cultural Resources Survey for the Department of Natural Resources. Minnesota Historical Society. St. Paul.

Wilford, Lloyd

1953 Winona County Memo. May 19-20.

# WHITEWATER STATE PARK



21 WN 39

Project Area

Campground

Headquarters

21 WN 32

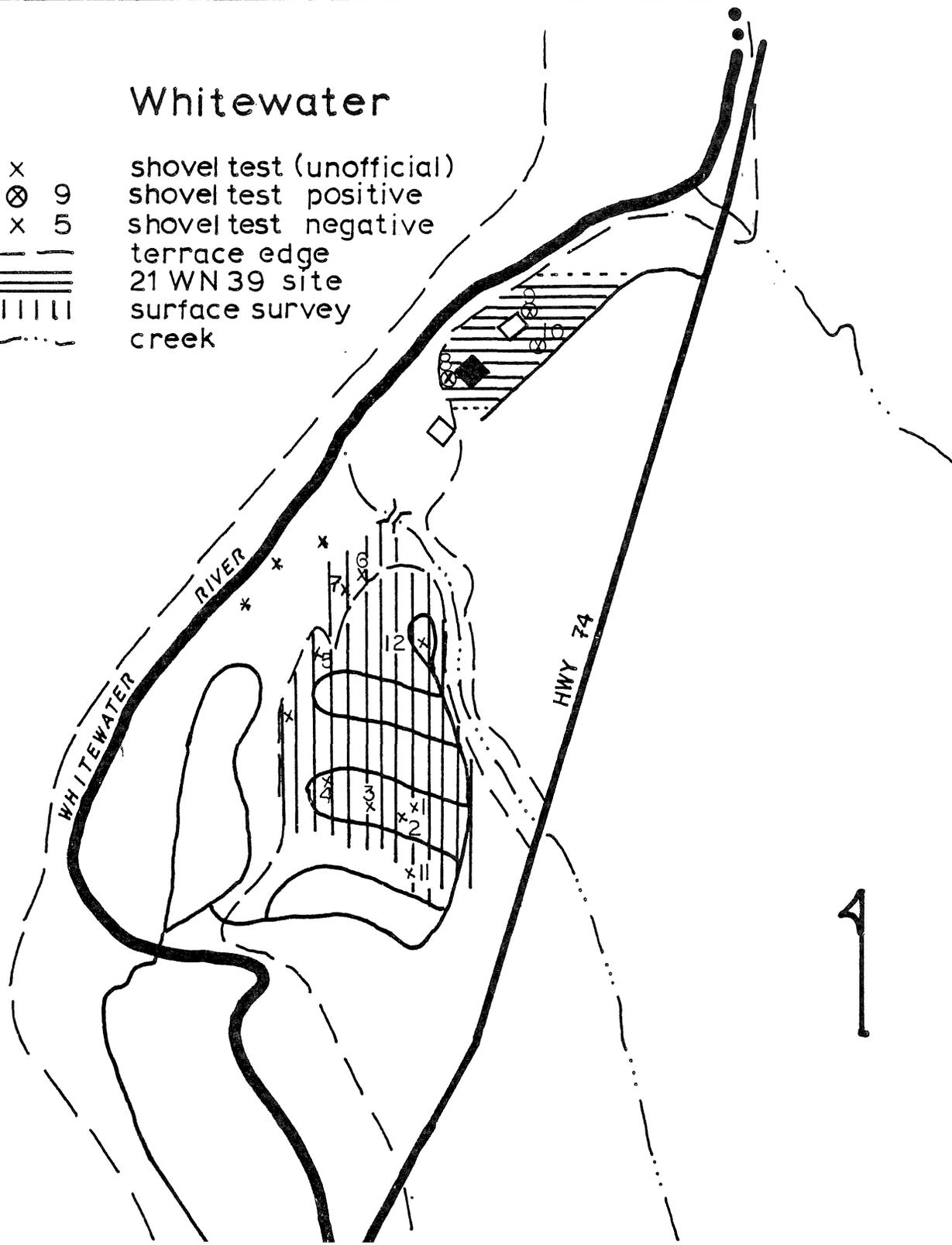
## Archaeological surveys

- /// 1978 MHS negative
- isolated artifacts
- |||| 1979 UM negative
- ≡ positive

IN  
Creek

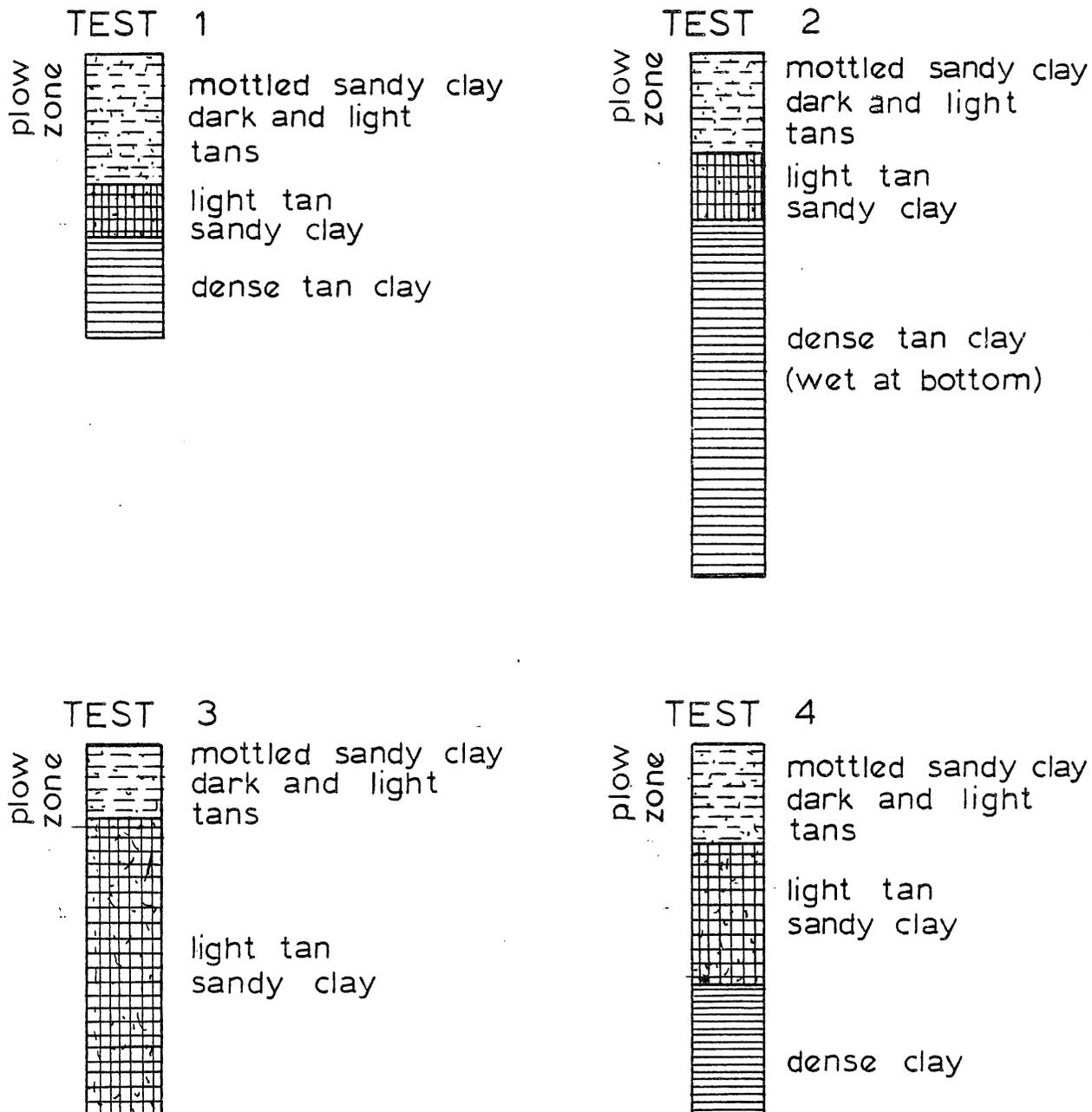
# Whitewater

- x shovel test (unofficial)
- ⊗ 9 shovel test positive
- x 5 shovel test negative
- - - terrace edge
- ==== 21 WN 39 site
- ||||| surface survey
- ..... creek



# WHITEWATER STATE PARK

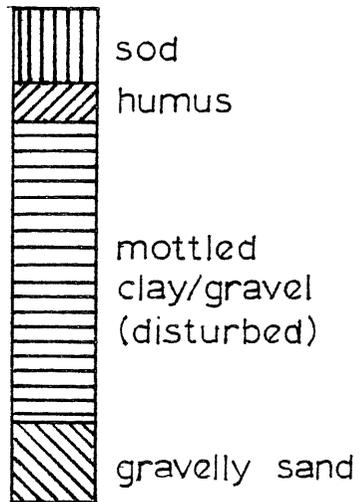
## TEST UNIT SOIL PROFILE



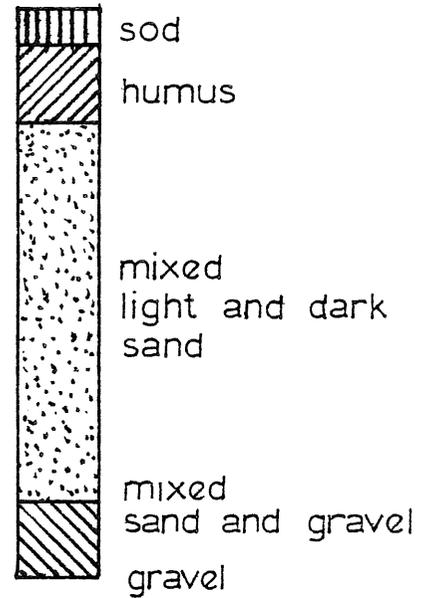
# WHITEWATER STATE PARK

## TEST UNIT SOIL PROFILE

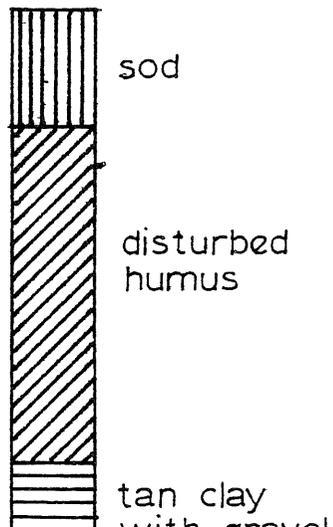
TEST 6



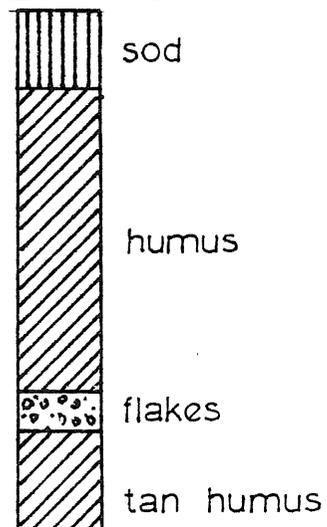
TEST 7



TEST 8



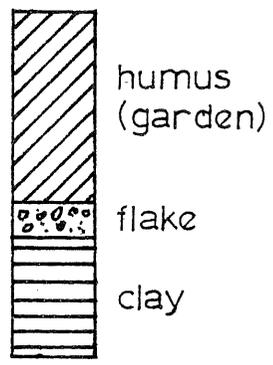
TEST 9



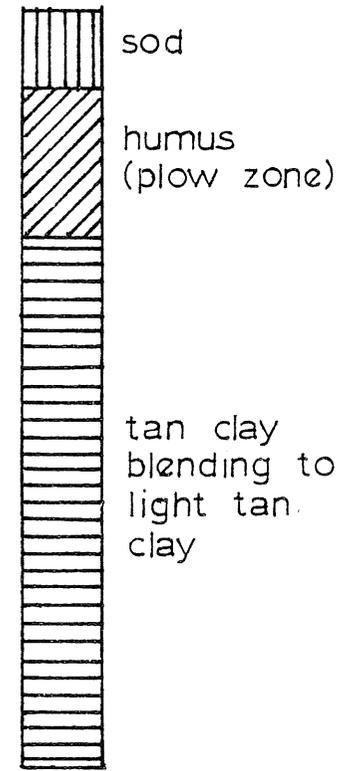
# WHITEWATER STATE PARK

## TEST UNIT SOIL PROFILE

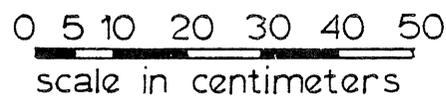
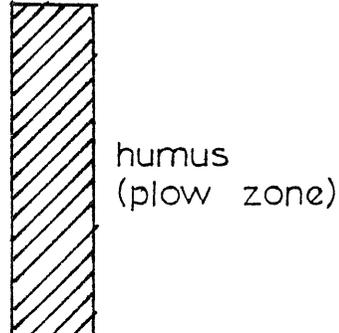
TEST 10



TEST 11



TEST 12





# MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

690 Cedar Street, St. Paul, Minnesota 55101 • 612-296-2747

April 23, 1980

Mr. John Winter  
Department of Natural Resources  
Parks & Recreation  
Box 39  
Centennial Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Mr. Winter:

RE: Review of the archaeological survey work  
conducted at Whitewater State Park, New  
Campground Sanitation Building - 1st  
location/Winona County.

MHS Referral File Number: J 908\*

This letter is to inform you that our office has received a statement regarding the above referenced project. Since the project location was changed after it was surveyed, we recommend that the new location be checked in the spring, prior to construction. Once we are in receipt of the results from this field check, our office will issue a final statement.

Thank you for your support in preserving Minnesota's cultural resources.

Sincerely,

Russell W. Fridley  
State Historic Preservation Officer

RWF/sl

cc: Ms. Jan Streiff  
Dept. of Anthropology



# MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

690 Cedar Street, St. Paul, Minnesota 55101 • 612-296-2747

October 27, 1980

Mr. John Winter  
Department of Natural Resources  
Parks and Recreation  
Box 39  
Centennial Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Mr. Winter:

RE: Review of the Archaeological  
Survey Work conducted at Whitewater  
State Park, new location of the  
Sanitation Building, Winona County, MN.

MHS Referral File Number: J 908

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the above project. It has been reviewed pursuant to responsibilities given the State Historic Preservation Officer by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and the Procedures of the National Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (36CFR800).

This review reveals the location of no sites of historic, architectural, cultural, or archaeological significance within the area of the proposed project. There are no sites in the area which are on the National Register or eligible for inclusion on the National Register, and, therefore, none which may be affected by your proposal.

Again, thank you for your participation in this important effort to preserve Minnesota's heritage.

Sincerely,



# MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

690 Cedar Street, St. Paul, Minnesota 55101 • 612-296-2747

October 27, 1980

Mr. John Winter  
Department of Natural Resources  
Parks and Recreation  
Box 39  
Centennial Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Mr. Winter:

RE: Review of the Archaeological Survey  
Work in Whitewater State Park, Removal  
of Abandoned Farmstead Within the Park,  
Winona County, MN.

MHS Referral File Number: L 838

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the above project. It has been reviewed pursuant to responsibilities given the State Historic Preservation Officer by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and the Procedures of the National Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (36CFR800).

This review reveals that lithic artifacts were uncovered during the course of a survey, in the area of the house and shed. We concur with the recommendation of the archaeologist, which states that there is no objection to the removal of the buildings, as long as care is taken with the treatment of the foundations. The basements and foundations should not be bulldozed, or removed in a manner that would disturb the surrounding land. We recommend that the basement's depressions be filled with commercial fill, or from a source that has been tested for archaeological resources and determined to be sterile.

If you have any problems implementing these recommendations, please do not hesitate to contact Ms. Susan Hedin, Environmental Assessment Officer, State Historic Preservation Office, James J. Hill House, 240 Summit Avenue, St. Paul, MN, 55102, (612) 296-0103.