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# An Archeological Reconnaissance of the Eagle Creek and Chandler Bridge Creek Channelization Project, Dorchester County, South Carolina

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EAGLE CREEK AND CHANDLER BRIDGE CREEK CHANNELIZATION PROJECT  
DORCHESTER COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA

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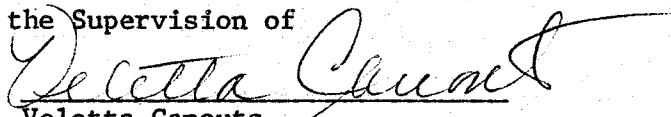
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P. O. Box 919  
Charleston, South Carolina 29402

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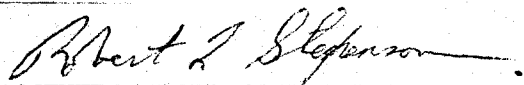
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Columbia, SC 29208

October 1, 1980

AN ARCHEOLOGICAL RECONNAISSANCE OF THE  
EAGLE CREEK AND CHANDLER BRIDGE CREEK CHANNELIZATION PROJECT  
DORCHESTER COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA

The Institute of Archeology and Anthropology at the University of South Carolina in Columbia contracted with the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers to provide an archeological reconnaissance of the proposed channelization project in the Eagle and Chandler Bridge Creek Basin near Summerville, South Carolina. Federally funded actions which result in environmental alterations are subject to review concerning the possible impacts to cultural or archeological resources (P. L. 89-665, P. L. 91-190, P. L. 93-291). The archeological investigation was conducted in accordance with federal, state, and local statutes (especially, 36CFR800, 36CFR63, 36CFR64) and in conformance with the professional standards cited by the Society for American Archaeology and the Society of Professional Archeologists.

Archeological and Historical Background

Prior to the field survey, the South Carolina Statewide Inventory of Archeological Sites' records, maintained by the Institute of Archeology and Anthropology, were checked to determine the presence of previously recorded sites within the project area. In addition, reference was made to properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places and to potentially identifiable historic features found in Mills' Atlas of South Carolina.

Although no prehistoric or historic sites were recorded within the project impact boundaries, several historic sites, two of which are in-

cluded on the National Register, are located in the immediate vicinity. One of these is the site of the Town of Dorchester which was one of the early settlements in the state. Included within the town are the remains of Fort Dorchester. The Fort was built during the late 1750s in response to hostilities arising from the French and Indian War. However, it was never a significant outpost in that war (Carillo 1973). The town and fort were ransacked and burned years later by the British during the Revolutionary War.

Another significant site, that of Middleton Place plantation, is located on the north side of the Ashley River approximately ten miles below present-day Summerville. Middleton Place was granted in 1675 and functioned as a rice plantation until the Civil War when the house was occupied and burned by Federal Troops (Lewis and Hardesty 1979).

Both Middleton Place plantation and Fort Dorchester have received extensive archeological testing (Carillo 1973, Lewis and Hardesty 1979). Even though neither of these sites are located within Eagle Creek and Chandler Bridge Creek Basin, they illustrate the early significance of the Ashley River to the settlement and economic development of South Carolina.

A two-day preliminary document search was conducted in order to determine the occurrence of early settlements within the project study area. Relevant documents were examined in the Cooper and South Caroliniana libraries at the University of South Carolina and in the South Carolina Department of Archives and History. A brief visit to the Dorchester County courthouse in St. George, South Carolina, confirmed the belief that no records earlier than the 1890s were housed there (William Monteith, personal communication). Due to time constraints, the background research

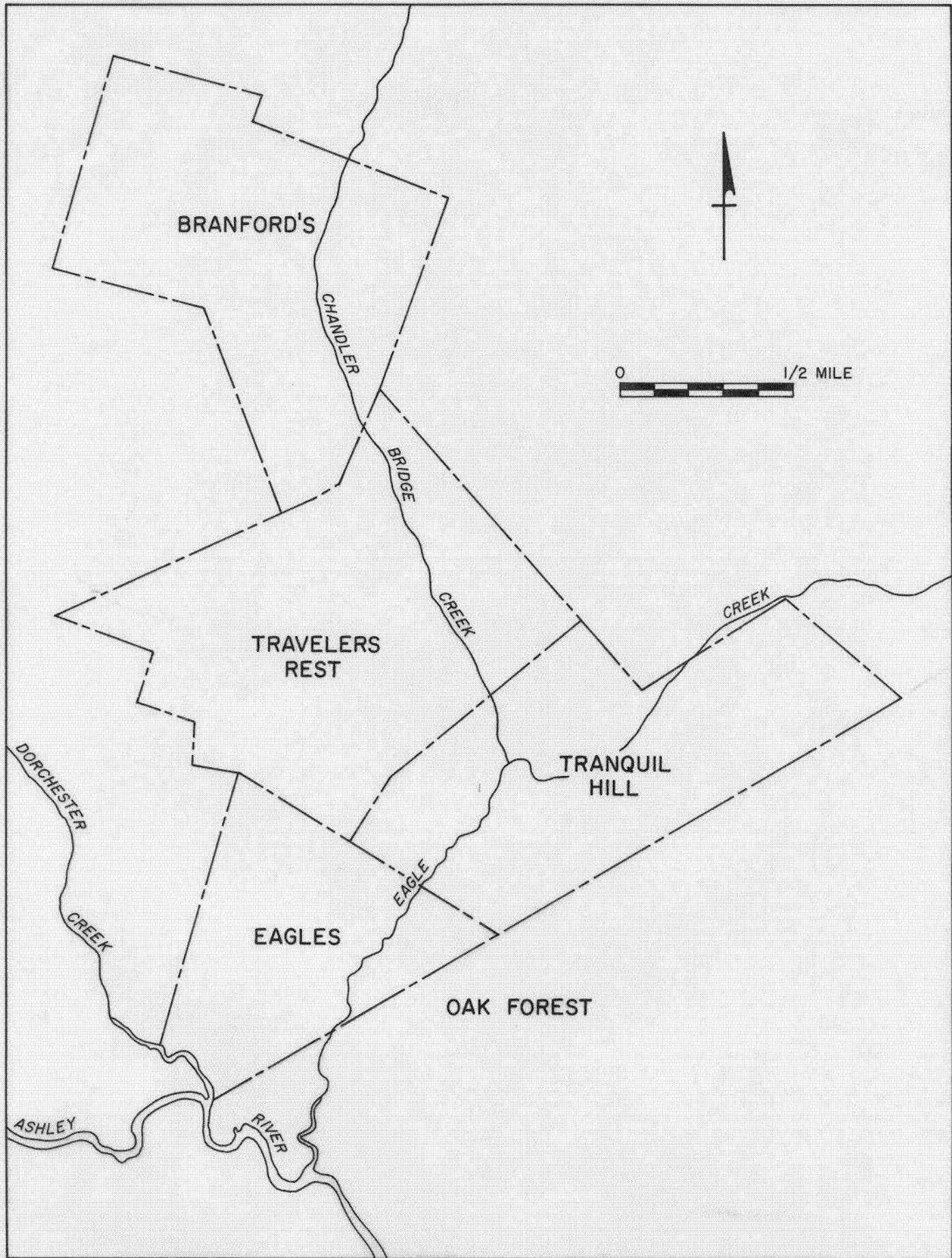
focused on plats and other documents which illustrated the location and arrangement of settlements and structures along the project corridor.

Six plantations circumscribed Eagle and Chandler Bridge Creeks: Oak Forest, Eagles, Tranquil Hill, Traveler's Rest, Barnaby Branford's and one unnamed (Smith 1919; Fig. 1). Available plats indicated that two of the plantations, Oak Forest and Tranquil Hill, contained extensive settlements which could be affected by the channelization project. Oak Forest plantation was originally granted to Robert Smith in 1682 and Tranquil Hill to James Varine in 1683 (Smith 1919). While the original function of these plantations is unknown, the plats suggest that each developed into a full-scale agricultural settlement by the mid to late eighteenth century (McCrary Plats C1389 #5088; C3188 #4888).

#### Survey Methodology

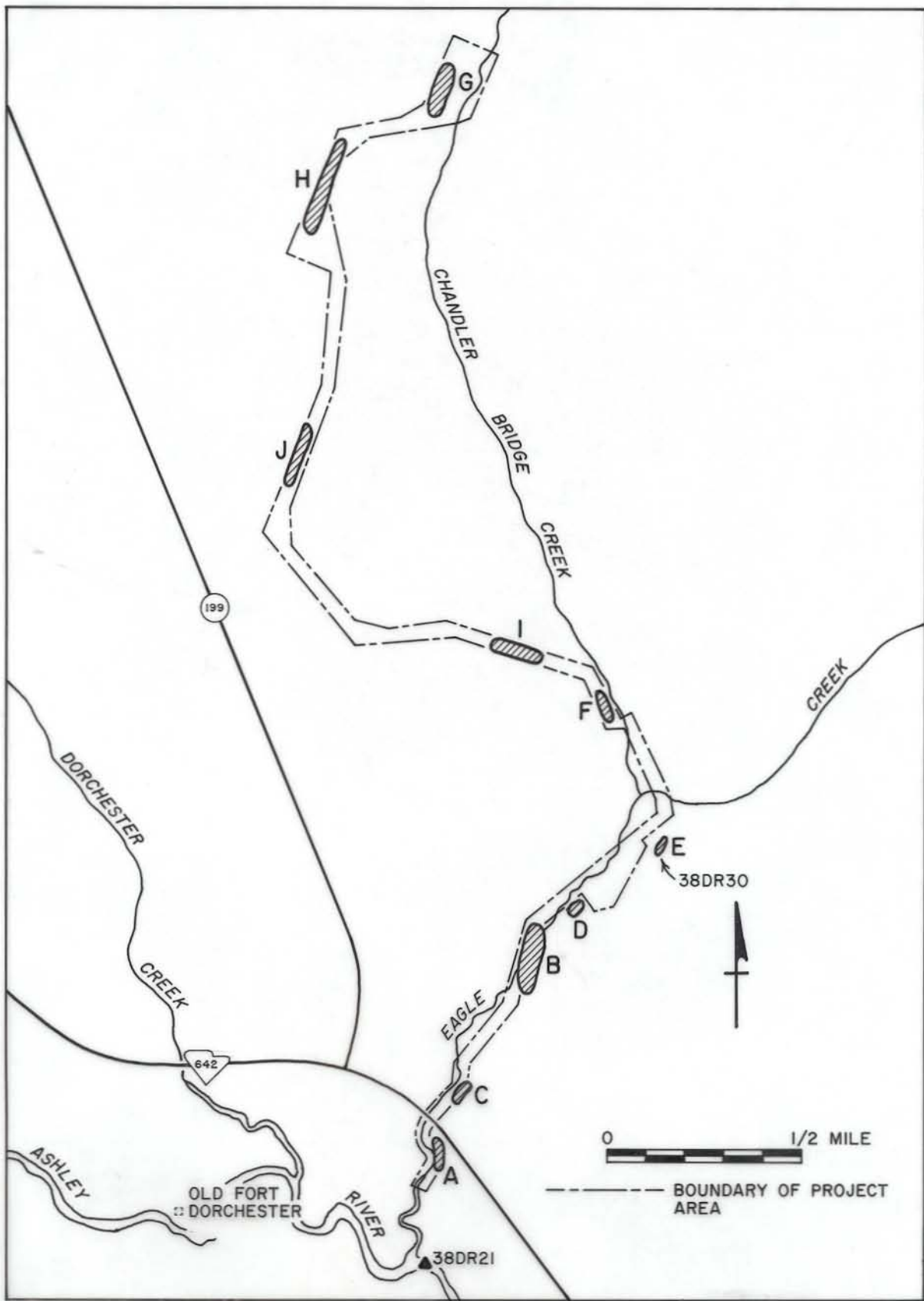
The purpose of the Eagle Creek and Chandler Bridge Creek field reconnaissance survey was to assess the potential for as yet undiscovered archaeological components which might be located in the project area. A one-day field inspection, which would allow examination of at least 15% of the project corridor, was proposed. The major survey focus was to assess the physiographic and environmental conditions existing in the project area, with reference to locational and historical data from known sites in the surrounding area, in order to predict the potential occurrence of archaeological sites.

The channelization corridor begins on Eagle Creek approximately 600 feet above its juncture with the Ashley River (Fig. 2). The 200-foot right-of-way, varying between 50 and 150 feet either side of the present drainages, follows just over a four-mile stretch along Eagle Creek and Chandler Bridge Creek. Three oxidation ponds, two inside the project



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Figure 1: Early plantations in the Eagle Creek and Chandler Bridge Creek Study Area (after Smith 1919).



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Figure 2: Eagle Creek and Chandler Bridge Creek Study Area (Base Map U.S.G.S. 7 1/2" Quadrangle, Stallville, S.C. 1957).



boundaries and one of which may be designated for dredged materials, are included in the project design. Dredging and channelization of these creeks for recent residential developments has already occurred such that Chandler Bridge Creek no longer follows the drainage shown on the 1957 U.S.G.S. 7.5 minute quadrangle of Stallville, SC (Fig. 2; Jim Woody, personal communication).

The reconnaissance survey was performed on August 23, 1980, by James D. Scurry and Katherine R. Singley from the Institute of Archeology and Anthropology. Several factors guided the selection of the areas examined: 1) ease or availability of access; 2) dispersion over the entire project corridor; and 3) special consideration of sections where historic settlement had been documented. In all, ten areas, which comprised approximately 4,200 linear feet, were examined (Fig. 2). The survey consisted of an on-foot visual inspection of the ground surface with special attention paid to exposed surfaces including cultivated fields, uprooted trees, and cleared residential lots. In addition, the banks of several large drainage ditches were examined for the presence of artifacts and structural debris.

#### Survey Results and Evaluation

One archeological site and one underwater archeologically sensitive area were identified:

SITE 38DR30 This archeological site is situated on a slight rise overlooking Eagle Creek, approximately 500 feet to the north. The terrain slopes between three and five percent to the creek and is relatively flat to the south, east, and west. A light scatter of historic period artifacts cover an area measuring ca. 15x30 feet. Due to extremely dense pasture and crop cover, very few artifacts were recovered. Historic documents

indicate that this site represents the remains of Tranquil Hill plantation. The available historic documents and the presence of numerous scattered brick fragments suggest that the occupation of Tranquil Hill was more intensive and extensive than indicated by the few scattered ceramic and pipe stem fragments. Although the exact construction date of the house and nature of the settlement is unknown, the plats indicate that a full-scale plantation with a main house, outbuildings, and agricultural fields was in operation by 1775 (McCrary Plats C3188 #4888).

The Tranquil Hill plantation site is situated outside of the primary impact area. However, it is located adjacent to the oxidation pond presently being considered as a dredge disposal area. While it is not expected that use of this pond would affect the site, the possibility of secondary impacts due to the movement or storage of construction or dredging equipment exists.

SITE 38DR21 This is an underwater site discovered when docking facilities were constructed at Kings Grant Subdivision on the Ashley River. Several eighteenth and nineteenth century bottles were observed. The Oak Forest plantation was located in this vicinity at the juncture of Eagle Creek with the Ashley. These materials may be derived from this early settlement. If the channel of Eagle Creek located between Dorchester Road and the Ashley River has not been dredged (and the area does appear less disturbed), underwater archeological deposits could very likely occur in that area.

#### Archeological Recommendations

The archeological recommendations are based on a five-day study of the Eagle Creek and Chandler Bridge Creek project area: two days of background research; a one-day field reconnaissance; and two days of report

preparation. The background research indicated that historic sites would very likely occur in the general study area. While prehistoric sites probably occur there also, the absence of recorded sites in the area, which reflects no more than that systematic archeological investigations have not been conducted, made it difficult to predict their locations without more subsistence-settlement information.

However, the project boundaries encompass previously dredged drainages which have been heavily impacted by residential developments. The limited scope of work involved and the disturbed nature of the land suggest that the probability of archeological sites occurring within the project boundaries is limited. If sites exist on the ground, they probably have been disturbed to such an extent that no further archeological investigation is indicated.

One historic site, which may potentially merit listing on the National Register of Historic Places, was located outside of the developed area in the vicinity of a proposed oxidation pond. The site area is undoubtedly larger than the area which could be examined. It is recommended that project associated activities completely avoid an area surrounding the site (outlined on the accompanying project blueprint) in order to limit any adverse direct or indirect impacts. If Eagle Creek west of Dorchester Road to the Ashley River has not been channelized or dredged, a one-day reconnaissance by an underwater archeological team is recommended. In the event that the channel has been dredged, no further archeological investigation is warranted given the nature of the disturbance.

With the above provisions, archeological clearance is recommended for the project area. Should any significant archeological materials be unearthed during construction, a professional archeologist should be contacted.

### Archeological Summary

According to a letter received from the Charleston District Corps of Engineers on September 26, 1980, Site 38DR30 will not be affected by the project. As there was no documentation showing that Eagle Creek had been dredged below Dorchester Road, a team of underwater archeologists from the Institute surveyed the area on September 24, 1980. The results of the reconnaissance survey are appended to this report in letter form. The potential for locating significant archeological materials within the project corridor appears to be very slight based on evidence from the land and underwater reconnaissance surveys. No further archeological study is recommended, but in the event that channelization activities reveal buried archeological deposits, the Institute should be notified.

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ORIGINAL RECORD GROUP

MCCRADY PLATS

On file at the South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, South Carolina. (Microfilm)



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INSTITUTE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY

(803) 777-8170

September 30, 1980

Colonel William W. Brown  
Corps of Engineers  
Charleston District  
Department of the Army  
P. O. Box 919  
Charleston, South Carolina 29402

RE: Underwater Archeological  
Reconnaissance: Eagle Creek

Dear Colonel Brown:

On Wednesday, September 24, 1980, the Division of Underwater Archeology of the Institute of Archeology and Anthropology conducted a one day reconnaissance survey of Eagle Creek below the bridge on U.S. Highway 61. The crew included Ralph L. Wilbanks, assistant underwater archeologist, Rodney Warren, archeological assistant, and Mary W. Edwards, boat handler and records keeper. Wendy Oglesby of Information Services at the University also accompanied the survey crew.

Eagle Creek is approximately 1,100 feet long, seven feet wide, and six feet deep in the survey area. The corridor was divided into four survey units. Each unit was then surveyed with two divers swimming a zig-zag course upstream. The creek bottom was Cooper Marl with three to eighteen inches of sand and silt overburden. There was zero visibility underwater. All survey work was conducted by feel along the bottom.

No concentrations of cultural remains were encountered during the survey. A few brick fragments and several fossils were recovered. A local property owner indicated that water in Eagle Creek is, at times, very low. In our experience, when creeks are low or nearly dry, most artifacts are recovered by the local residents or fishermen. Children in the area have recovered fossilized sharks teeth according to the landowner.

It is our considered opinion that no further underwater investigations are warranted. We request that, if archeological materials surface during dredging operations, the Institute be notified so that a record can be made.

Sincerely yours,

Alan Albright

Underwater Archeologist

AA:klw

The University of South Carolina: USC Aiken; USC Salkehatchie, Allendale; USC Beaufort; USC Columbia; Coastal Carolina College; Conway; USC Lancaster; USC Spartanburg; USC Sumter; USC Union; and the Military Campus.