

USACE ARRA Savannah Section 110 Cultural Resources Survey

Georgia and South Carolina



Brockington archaeologist conducts shoreline survey at Lake Hartwell, Georgia and South Carolina.

CLIENT

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Louis District

ELEMENT

Archaeological survey

In 2009, the St. Louis District, US Army Corps of Engineers worked with Corps headquarters to develop an American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) program to provide employment and accomplish survey as required by Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act. All US Corps districts were included in this program. The St. Louis District worked with the Savannah District to design an intensive cultural resources survey project at two Savannah District reservoirs in northeast Georgia and northwest South Carolina. These surveys included 3,728 acres within 79 fee-owned tracts at Lake Hartwell and 2,465 acres from five fee-owned tracts at Richard B. Russell Lake.

ISSUES

The project's CRM goals were to identify and document all archaeological and historical resources within the Corps tracts and to assess site eligibility for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), according to the criteria set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. The focus of all work under this contract was compliance with Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), and was therefore not subject to State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) review. Accordingly, standardized report guidelines that meet the Secretary of the Interior's "Professional Qualifications Standards" (48 FR44738-9) were developed and followed in the preparation of this report. Wherever possible, specific guidelines issued by the Georgia and South Carolina SHPOs, and under the direction of Savannah District Corps archaeologists, were also followed. Field and laboratory methods adhered to both state and federal standards for intensive cultural resources survey.

DISCOVERY

The most frequent archaeological sites encountered during our survey were nineteenth-to-twentieth-century historic homesteads. A few contemporaneous historic cemeteries were also identified along ridge tops. Almost all of the prehistoric sites examined during this survey are small and have a low density of artifacts. Most of the prehistoric sites are interpreted as lithic

workshops, resource extraction locales, or in rare cases, base camps. Although there are a high number of sites recorded within the vicinity of both the Lake Hartwell and Richard B. Russell tracts, it appears that the focus of prehistoric occupation was low lying areas near and along the river flood-plains that are currently inundated. Prior regional research demonstrated that larger, village-size occupations were concentrated in these areas, at elevations below the current survey tracts. The areas examined during this investigation were utilized for upland hunting and foraging, and not for semi-permanent or permanent settlement.

We found a higher site density for the Richard B. Russell reservoir compared to the Lake Hartwell reservoir. Prior surveys at both reservoirs supports this evaluation, as 346 previously recorded sites are in the vicinity of the Richard B. Russell tracts, compared to 92 in the vicinity of the Lake Hartwell tracts. The Richard B. Russell reservoir was more intensively occupied throughout prehistory compared to the Lake Hartwell area to the north; this may be due to Richard B. Russell having a closer location to the fall line than Lake Hartwell, which may have been a preferred location for past settlement.

RESULTS

With the information recorded during surveys of these tracts, the Savannah District can plan more efficiently for future projects in these areas. Further, the findings allows the District to develop scopes of work more effectively for future surveys of their reservoir lands.

At Lake Hartwell, the field survey resulted in the identification of 47 previously unidentified archaeological sites, one previously recorded archaeological site, and 45 isolated archaeological finds. At Richard B. Russell Lake, we identified 31 previously unidentified sites, 11 previously recorded archaeological sites, and 37 isolated finds. We recommended 84 sites identified during our survey to be ineligible for listing on the NRHP. Five archeological sites identified during this investigation are recommended potentially eligible for the NRHP.