

## **ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY/TESTING SHORT REPORT**

Illinois State Historic Preservation Office  
One Natural Resources Way, Springfield, IL 62702  
(217) 785-4997

**SHPO Log #:** 003110424

### **LOCATIONAL INFORMATION AND SURVEY CONDITIONS**

**County:** Rock Island

**Quadrangle:** Milan, IL (2000)

**Project type/title:** Phase I Survey of Approximately 9.33 Acres for Proposed New Construction in the City of Rock Island, Blackhawk Township, Rock Island County, Illinois

**Funding and/or permitting Federal/State agencies:** IEPA

**Legal location: Township:** 17N **Range:** 2W **Section(s):** 16

**Natural Division:** Illinois River and Mississippi River Sand Areas

**Project description:** The proposed project includes the construction of a large gas station, cannabis dispensary, and attached restaurant within the project area parcel across from Bally's Casino in Rock Island, Illinois. A Phase I archaeological survey was conducted by Wapsi Valley Archaeology, Inc. in order to locate any potentially significant archaeological resources within the project area boundaries.

**Topography:** Terrace.

**Soils:** Dickinson sandy loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes (87A), 56.5%; Sparta loamy sand, Illinois till plain, 0 to 2 percent slopes (88A), 34.9%; Sawmill silty clay loam, undrained, 0 to 2 percent slopes, frequently flooded (1107A), 7.5%; Waukee loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes (727A), 0.6%; Orthents, loamy, undulating (802B), 0.4%.

**Drainage:** Kickapoo Slu/Slough, to the Mississippi River.

**Land use/ground cover (include % visibility):** Grassy field, with some bare patches, as well as paved walkways, gravel drives, and concrete pads. Surface visibility varied greatly, from 0 to 90 percent, with the majority of the project area featuring visibility below 25 percent.

**Survey limitations:** Marked and unmarked utility corridors in portions of the project area, as well as extensive construction disturbance across the entire parcel, including construction debris and extremely compacted soils, which impeded subsurface survey.

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL INFORMATION

**Historic plats/atlasses/sources:** Thompson and Everts (1868); North West Publishing Co. (1894); Iowa Publishing Co. (1905); Fuller (1915); W.W. Hixson & Co. (1926); Rockford Map Publishers (1950, 1959).

**Previously reported sites:** No previously recorded sites within the project area. Within 1 mile of the project area: Sites 11RI19, 11RI77, 11RI88, 11RI134, 11RI153, 11RI844.

**Previous surveys:** No previous surveys have overlapped with the project area. Within 1 mile of the project area: Survey IDs 464, 764, 5568, 18211, 24763.

**Regional archaeologist contacted:** None. Consulted the Illinois Inventory of Archaeological Sites GIS Database (IDNR 2025).

**Investigation techniques:** Pedestrian survey, shovel testing (supplemented by use of a bucket auger), and metal detector survey.

**Time expended:** 24 person hours.

**Sites located:** None.

**Cultural material:** No historical material was located. Material less than 50 years old was found during metal detector survey, including late 1970s and early 1980s pennies, lighting system components, fencing, and other assorted metal pieces, all of which were left in place.

**Curated at:** N/A

**Collection techniques:** N/A

**Area surveyed (acres/m<sup>2</sup>):** 9.33 acres/37, 766 m<sup>2</sup>

## RESULTS OF INVESTIGATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- X Phase I archaeological reconnaissance has located no archaeological material;
- Phase I archaeological reconnaissance has located archaeological materials; site(s) does (do) not meet requirements for National Register eligibility; Project clearance is recommended.
- Phase I archaeological reconnaissance has located archaeological materials; site(s) may meet requirements for National Register eligibility; Phase II testing is recommended.

— Phase II archaeological investigation has indicated that site(s) does (do) not meet requirements for National Register eligibility; Project clearance is recommended.

— Phase II archaeological investigation has indicated that site(s) meet requirements for National Register eligibility; Determination of eligibility is recommended.

**COMMENTS:** See Attachment A.

**CONTRACTOR INFORMATION**

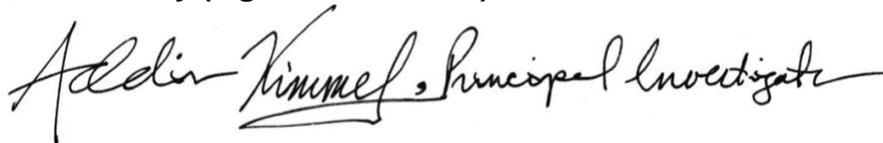
**Archaeological Contractor:** Wapsi Valley Archaeology, Inc.

**Address/phone:** 126 East Main St, Anamosa, IA 52205

**Surveyor(s):** Addison P. Kimmel, Claire E. Cook, Joel Martin      **Date:** 2/5/2025

**Report completed by:** Addison P. Kimmel      **Date:** 2/18/2025

**Submitted by (signature and title):**



**ATTACHMENT CHECK LIST (#1 through #4 are MANDATORY)**

- X      1) Relevant portion of USGS 7.5' topographic quadrangle map(s) showing project location and any recorded sites;
- X      2) project map(s) depicting survey limits and, when applicable, approximate site limits and concentrations of cultural materials;
- N/A    3) site form(s);
- X      4) all relevant project correspondence;
- X      5) additional information sheets as necessary.

**Address of contracting agency to whom SHPO comment should be mailed:**  
Townsend Engineering, 2224 East 12th Street, Davenport, IA 52803

**Contact Person:** Helene Roberts **Phone Number:** (563) 386-4236

**E-mail:** [helene@townsendengineering.net](mailto:helene@townsendengineering.net)

## LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

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## ATTACHMENT A: COMMENTS

In December 2024, Townsend Engineering contacted Wapsi Valley Archaeology, Inc. to conduct a Phase I survey of a proposed gas station and cannabis dispensary site in Rock Island, Illinois. This short report presents the results of the archaeological and historical study of the proposed project area, including a review of relevant soil data, information from past archaeological surveys and reported sites nearby, and historical maps, aerial photographs, and other historical sources related to the area. Brian Dockery, Vice President of Community and Governmental Relations at the RiverStone Group, the owners of the project area property from the late 1950s to 2022, was also briefly interviewed by phone to ascertain information about past land use. Fieldwork was conducted on February 5, 2025, once the ground had thawed adequately to allow hand excavation and soil screening.

The current project area (street address: 3809 60th Ave W) is located on a floodplain terrace remnant in the city of Rock Island, Blackhawk Township, Rock Island County, Illinois (Figures 1 through 3). Much of the surrounding area has been terraformed as part of the construction of the two highways that intersect just to the north and the excavation of numerous detention ponds and mining pits in the general vicinity. The project area and its environs are situated on a landform historically referred to as “Big Island” because, prior to the great public works projects of the mid-twentieth century, it was fully separated from the mainland by three waterways; bordered to the west by the Mississippi, to the east by the Rock River (and the Hennepin Canal), and to the south by Kickapoo Slough, sometimes spelled “Slu” on local maps.

The majority of the project area sits on part of what Bettis et al. (1996:5) refer to as the Kingston Terrace Landform Sediment Assemblage (LSA) unit, one of a number of “discontinuous geologic units that define the Late Wisconsinan and Holocene alluvial fills of the Upper Mississippi Valley.” The Kingston Terrace LSA unit “consists of streamlined, sandy terrace remnants elevated 3-5 m above the Mississippi floodplain,” and this sandy, generally dry landform has a high potential for archaeological deposits from the Paleoindian to the present at or near the current ground surface (Bettis et al. 1996:6-7). NRCS maps show the project area as containing mostly Dickinson and Sparta series soils, extremely well-drained soils of eolian and glaciofluvial origin (NRCS 2025; USDA 2008, 2017; Figure 4). However, as will be discussed later in this report, based on recent soil coring results, it appears that the project area may no longer feature any natural soils that are not presently covered by between 1.5 and 6.5 feet (0.46 to 1.98 meters) of recently deposited fill material (IMEG 2024).

The current project area has never been surveyed, but several large and small-scale archaeological surveys have been conducted wholly or in part within a one-mile radius, including surveys for the Milan-Big Island Flood Control Project in the 1970s (Weichman 1975) and parts of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ cultural resources assessment of Navigation Pool 16 of the Mississippi River (Barnhardt et al. 1982). Six previously

recorded archaeological sites are located within a one-mile radius of the project area. Most notably, Sites 11RI19 and 11RI88 are located slightly less than a kilometer north of the project area, and Site 11RI77 is located approximately 350 meters to the northeast. Before extensive gravel mining, highway, and flood control projects significantly altered the surrounding landscape, these sites would have shared a portion of the roughly 12,000-year-old Kingston Terrace with the current project area (Bettis et al. 1996). The Heber site (11RI19) is a Woodland period habitation site (Wilder and Duncan 1933), while Site 11RI88, based on the artifacts reported on the site form, is a multi-component site with Archaic, Woodland, Late Prehistoric, and late nineteenth-century components (Bareis 1959). Site 11RI77 (previous site number 11RI4) was reported in 1957 as a “village,” without any additional information given (McGregor 1957). It is unclear if this site was related to a pre- or postcontact Native occupation of the area. This is an important distinction to make because this locality would have been part of the Sauk and Meskwaki settlement of Saukenuk during the late 1700s and early 1800s, one of the largest Native villages in North America, consisting of a residential core—likely along what is now 11th Street in Rock Island—surrounded by satellite encampments and farmsteads (Mansberger 2013). A handful of nearby archaeological sites, mostly to the east in Milan, including Sites 11RI81 and 11RI179, represent the archaeological traces of an early iteration of this hugely important postcontact Native American settlement.

On the 1839 GLO plat, based on surveys from the 1820s, Big Island is shown as a mix of forest and bottomland prairie, with several farm fields noted. The project area appears to have been mapped as floodplain forest at this time (GLO 1839; Figure 5). Until the late 1950s, land use seems to have been largely agricultural, and no buildings or other structures are shown on any of the examined historical maps or aerial photographs from this period (Iowa Publishing Co. 1905; IGDC 2025; North West Publishing Co. 1894; Rockford Map Publishers 1950; W.W. Hixson & Co. 1926; Figures 6 through 8).

The first evidence of gravel and sand mining in this locality can be seen on aerial photographs from 1958, which show what appears to be a small open pit in the southwestern corner of the current project area (IGDC 2025; Figure 9). On the 1959 plat map, Moline Consumers Co. is shown as the owner of the parcel (Rockford Map Publishers 1959; Figure 10). Moline Consumers Company (MCC) was established in 1917 when the Moline Channel Ice Company and the Moline Sand Company merged (RiverStone Group 2025). The company operated a diverse array of businesses over the years (RiverStone Group 2025), but by the 1950s, their primary focus was on the operation of several sand, gravel, and concrete batch plants, mostly around the Quad Cities. A sand and gravel plant can be seen on aerial photographs of the project area from 1975, but the company had been mining on the property since it obtained the parcel in the 1950s (Historic Aerials 2025; Brian Dockery, personal communication 2025; Figure 11). Construction of the facility would have likely involved grading and topsoil removal across the entirety of the project area parcel (Brian Dockery, personal

communication 2025). Sediments excavated from the pit still evident on LiDAR hillshade images immediately to the west of the project area would have been washed and separated into sand and gravel and then stored in piles around the site.

In the early 1960s, the adjacent frontage road and the Illinois Route 92-Interstate 280 interchange were constructed near the project area. Disturbance from the construction of the near-adjacent stretch of Illinois Route 92 can be seen bleeding into the current project area in aerial photographs from 1964 (IGDC 2025; Figure 12). Sand and gravel production continued on the site until sometime in the late 1970s or early 1980s, when Moline Consumers Company removed the plant and began leasing the project area to a Bobcat dealership (Brian Dockery, personal communication 2025). Two buildings, as well as a variety of paved and/or gravel pads, paths, and drives associated with this business can first be seen in aerial photographs from 1984 (Historic Aerials 2025; Figure 13). These buildings were demolished sometime in 2004 or 2005 (NAIP 2005; Figure 14). A large, approximately 25-centimeter-deep indentation associated with one of these buildings and a concrete pad and several piles of construction debris related to them are still present in the project area (Figure 15). The property has not been used since this time, and in 2022, the RiverStone Group, formerly the Moline Consumers Company, transferred ownership of the project area, along with 23 additional parcels, to the city of Rock Island for one dollar (Kinnicutt 2022).

Archaeological fieldwork for this project was conducted on February 5, 2025, following a period of significant rainfall and unseasonably high temperatures. Surface inspection showed clear evidence of prior disturbance, including the borrow/excavation pit just outside the project area to the west, the aforementioned indentation related to the previous business located on the site, debris piles, and several extant and partially extant gravel and asphalt drives and paths. Metal detector survey resulted only in the recovery of modern trash, including Pepsi cans from the mid-1990s, as well late 1970s and early 1980s pennies, lighting system components, aluminum fencing, and other assorted metal pieces, all of which appear to be related to the Bobcat dealership/storage lot that was located there in the 1980s and 1990s. Eleven shovel test units were conducted across the project area (see Figure 3). Due to significant soil compaction across the project area starting around 20 centimeters beneath the ground surface, bucket augers were used to excavate several of these tests below that point, as shovel digging was prohibitively difficult. Even so, four tests (#2, #9, #7, and #10) reached impasses due to soil compaction between 25 and 33 centimeters beneath the ground surface. All other tests were excavated to over one meter in depth. Only one test (#11) appeared to possibly feature some natural soil development; the remaining ten featured a thin veneer of darker organic material over successive layers of sand and gravel fill.

These results align with those reported in a geotechnical study conducted by IMEG in late 2024 (IMEG 2024). Twenty-seven soil borings were conducted across the entirety of the current project area to depths between 30 and 40 feet below the current ground surface (IMEG 2024:1; Figure 16). Existing fill was identified in all borings, underneath a

thin layer of organic “topsoil-like” material (IMEG 2024:8). Fill depth averaged 3.89 feet (1.19 meters) beneath the ground surface across all 27 boring locations, with fill extending as deep as 2 meters in some places. Based on the descriptions given in the report, the underlying natural soils beneath this fill layer do not appear to consist of a buried A horizon but align more closely with descriptions of the subsoils of the mapped Dickinson and Sparta soil series. One of the civil engineers who conducted the geotechnical survey suggested to the principal investigator in an e-mail that this fill was likely construction waste dumped there during the construction of the nearby interstate (Noah Anderson, personal communication 2025). Another possibility is that it is excess sand and gravel from the no longer extant plant, which was redistributed across the ground surface of the site when the plant was demolished.

Taken together, the soil boring data from IMEG, the historical evidence showing intensive industrial usage and past construction in and adjacent to the project area, and the current archaeological survey results all suggest that the entirety of the project area has been severely disturbed. Given that the original ground surface was likely graded during the construction of the sand and gravel plant and nearby highways, it is unlikely that any original topsoil remains under the existing fill. Even if some intact buried surfaces do remain, they will likely not be affected by the proposed construction due to the current amount of fill material present. Based on these findings, it is the opinion of Wapsi Valley Archaeology, Inc. that the project area has negligible archaeological potential, and no further archaeological investigation is necessary. Project clearance is recommended.

Information contained in this report relating to the nature and location of archaeological sites is considered private and confidential and not for public disclosure in accordance with Section 304 of the National Historic Preservation Act (54 U.S.C. § 307103); 36 CFR Part 800.6 (a)(5) of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation’s rules implementing Sections 106 and 110 of the Act; Section 9(a) of the Archaeological Resource Protection Act (54 U.S.C. § 100707); and the State of Illinois’ Archaeological and Paleontological Resources Protection Act Illinois (Illinois Revised Statutes 1989, ch. 127, 133c01 *et seq.*). Finally, it should be noted that all archaeological surveys involve sampling and are inherently limited. If cultural resources are unexpectedly found during construction, any involved federal agencies should be contacted immediately. If any human remains are encountered, it is required by Illinois law (Human Remains Protection Act, 20 ILCS 3440) that all work in the area of the remains be temporarily stopped, the remains be protected and secured in place, and the local coroner be promptly notified. The coroner must notify the Illinois Department of Natural Resources prior to their removal. Archaeologists with Wapsi Valley Archaeology, Inc. at (319) 462-4760 can also be called upon to offer advice on matters relating to unanticipated findings of cultural resources.

## ATTACHMENT B: REFERENCES CITED

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Barnhardt, Michael L., David C. Dycus, Edward B. Jelks, Frederick W. Lange, Floyd R. Mansberger, Joseph S. Phillippe, Frederick S. Thomas

1982 *Preliminary Cultural Resource Survey and Geomorphological Assessment of Selected Areas in Navigation Pool 16, Mississippi River*. Report prepared for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Rock Island District. Midwestern Archaeological Research Center, Illinois State University, Normal, Illinois.

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1996 *Hogs, Bogs, & Logs: Quaternary Deposits and Environmental Geology of the Des Moines Lobe*. Guidebook Series 18. Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Geological Survey Bureau, Iowa City, Iowa.

Fuller, T. W.

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Hixson, W. W.

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ILHMP (Illinois Height Modernization LiDAR Data)

2025 *Hillshade*. ArcGIS Web Map, <https://www.arcgis.com/home/item.html?id=47d5a2a1c6c740478f8cf5e0ff2230e6>, accessed February 2025.

IMEG

2024 *Geotechnical Exploration for New Site Development: Project Marley 3809 60<sup>th</sup> Avenue West, Rock Island, Illinois*. Report prepared for the City of Rock Island. Copies available from IMEG, Rock Island, Illinois.

- Iowa Publishing Company  
1905 *Atlas of Rock Island County, Illinois Containing Maps of Villages, Cities, and Townships of the County*. Iowa Publishing Company, Davenport, Iowa.
- Kinnicutt, Grace  
2022 Room To Grow. *The Rock Island Dispatch-Argus*, October 31, p. A1.
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2013 *Phase I Archaeological Survey of the Proposed 11th Street Commercial Park, Rock Island, Illinois*. City of Rock Island, Illinois.
- McGregor  
1957 *Ri-77*. Illinois Archeological Survey Site Form. Copy on file at the Illinois State Museum, Springfield, Illinois.
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2005 *Rock Island County, Illinois*. Orthophotograph, <https://nrsc.app.box.com/v/naip/folder/20105153462>, accessed February 2025.
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2025 *Web Soil Survey*. Electronic Database, <https://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/>, accessed February 2025.
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1950 *Farm Plat Book with Index to Land Owners, Rock Island County, Illinois*. Rockford, Illinois.  
1959 *Farm Plat Book with Index to Land Owners, Rock Island County, Illinois*. Rockford, Illinois.
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2008 *Sparta Series*. Electronic document, [https://soilseries.sc.egov.usda.gov/OSD\\_Docs/S/SPARTA.html](https://soilseries.sc.egov.usda.gov/OSD_Docs/S/SPARTA.html), accessed February 2025.  
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- USGS  
2000 *Milan, Illinois*. United States Geological Survey, U.S. Department of the Interior. Washington, D.C.
- Wilder and Duncan  
1933 *Ri-19: The Heber Site*. Illinois Archeological Survey Site Form. Copy on file at the Illinois State Museum, Springfield, Illinois.

# ATTACHMENT C: FIGURES

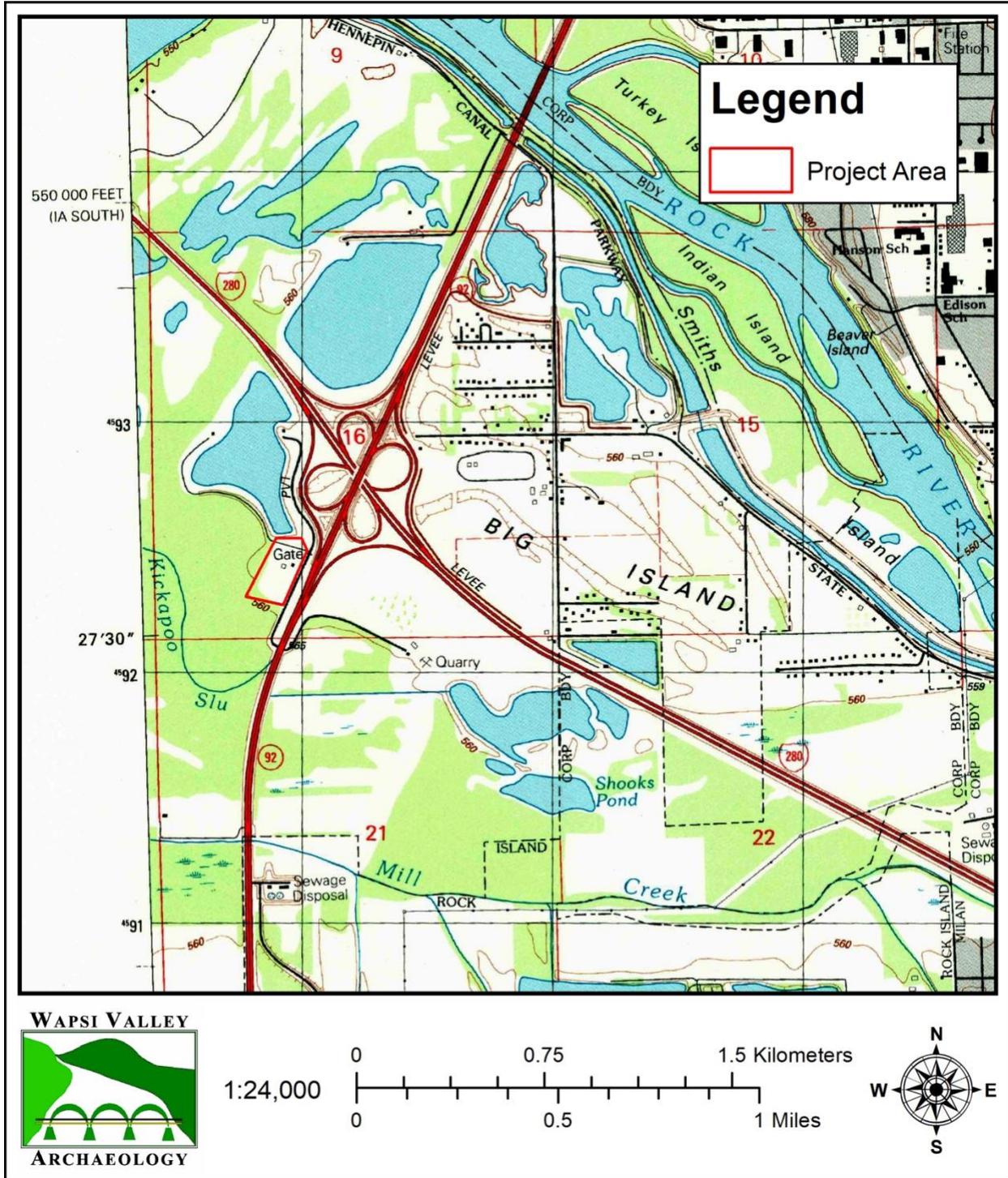


Figure 1. Topographic map showing the project area. Source: USGS (2000).



Figure 2. Recent orthophotograph showing the project area. Source: NAIP (2023).



Figure 3. Project area overview, facing southwest.

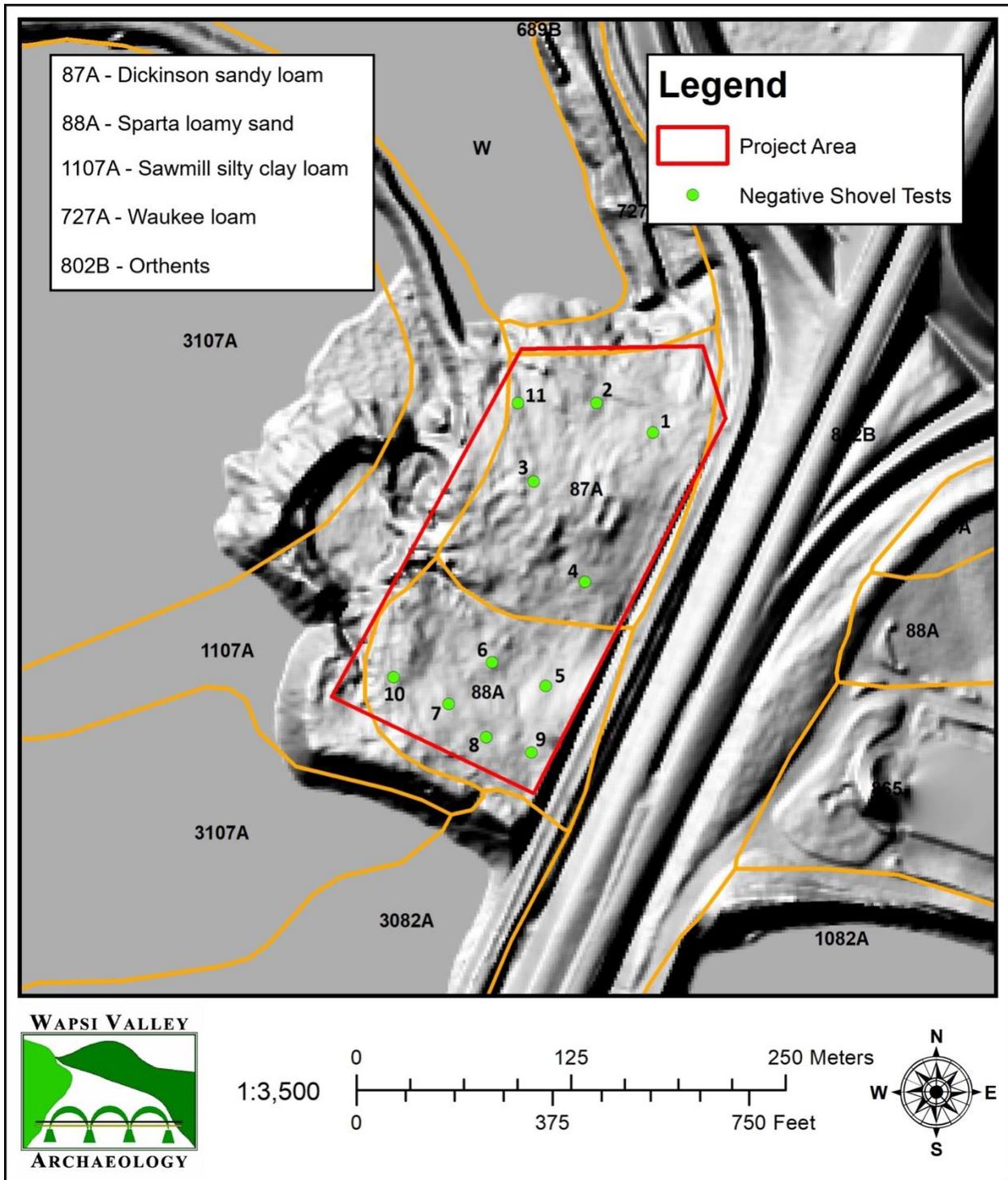


Figure 4. LiDAR-derived hillshade image showing the project area, mapped soils, and the location of negative shovel tests. *Source: ILHMP (2025).*



Figure 5. 1839 General Land Office map showing the project area. Source: GLO (1839).

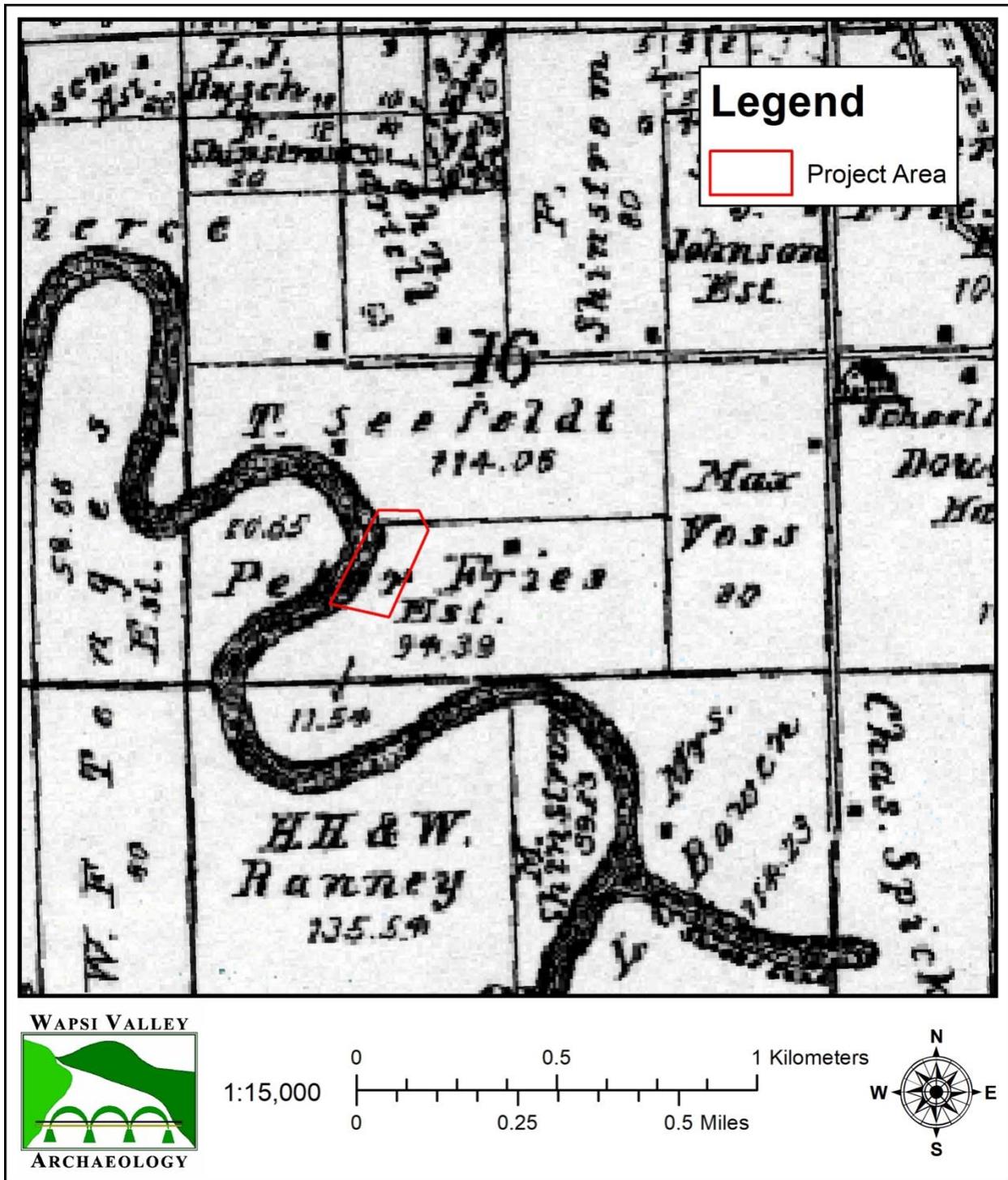


Figure 6. 1905 plat map showing the project area. Source: Iowa Publishing Co. (1905).

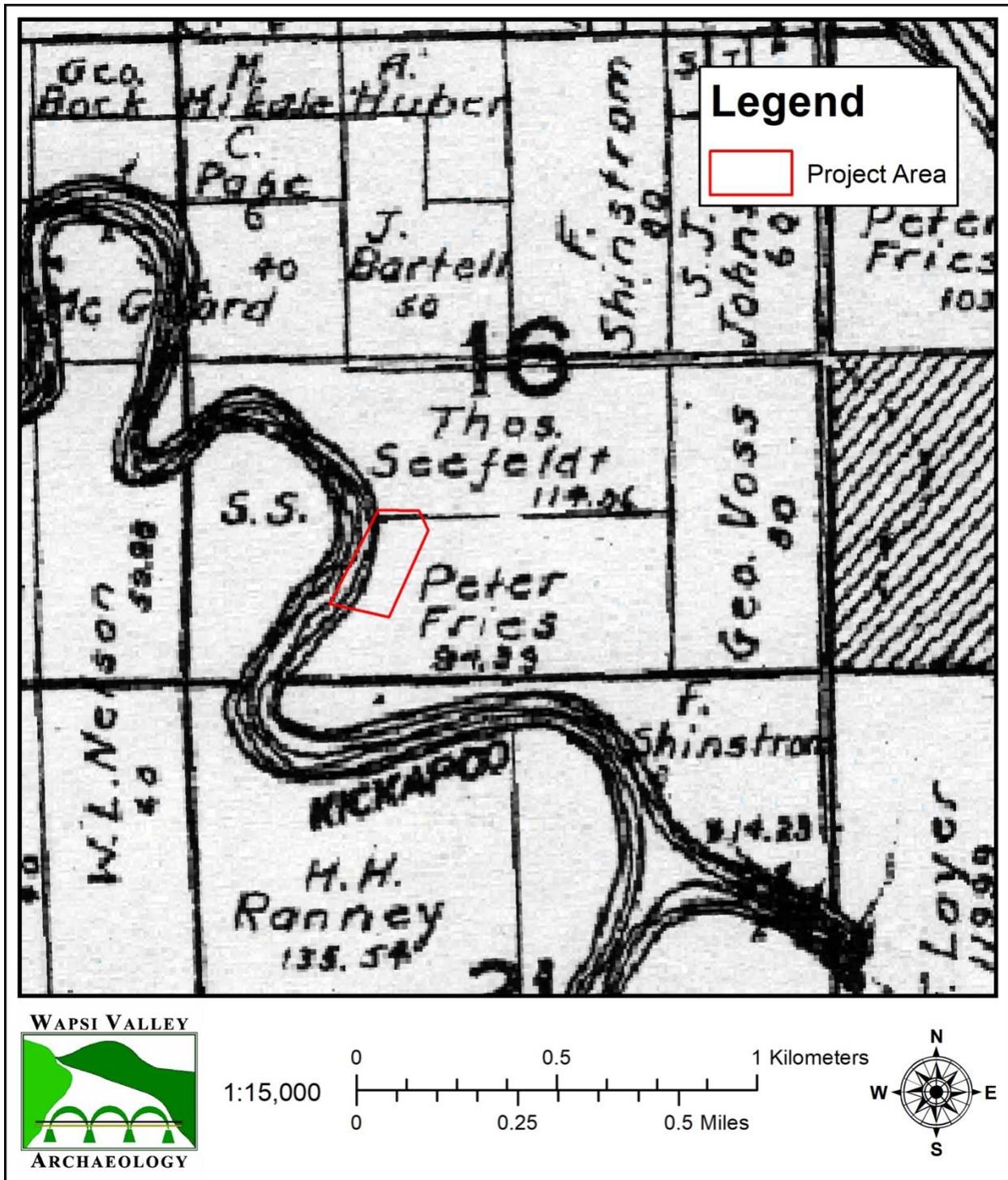


Figure 7. 1926 plat map showing the project area. Source: W. W. Hixson (1926).

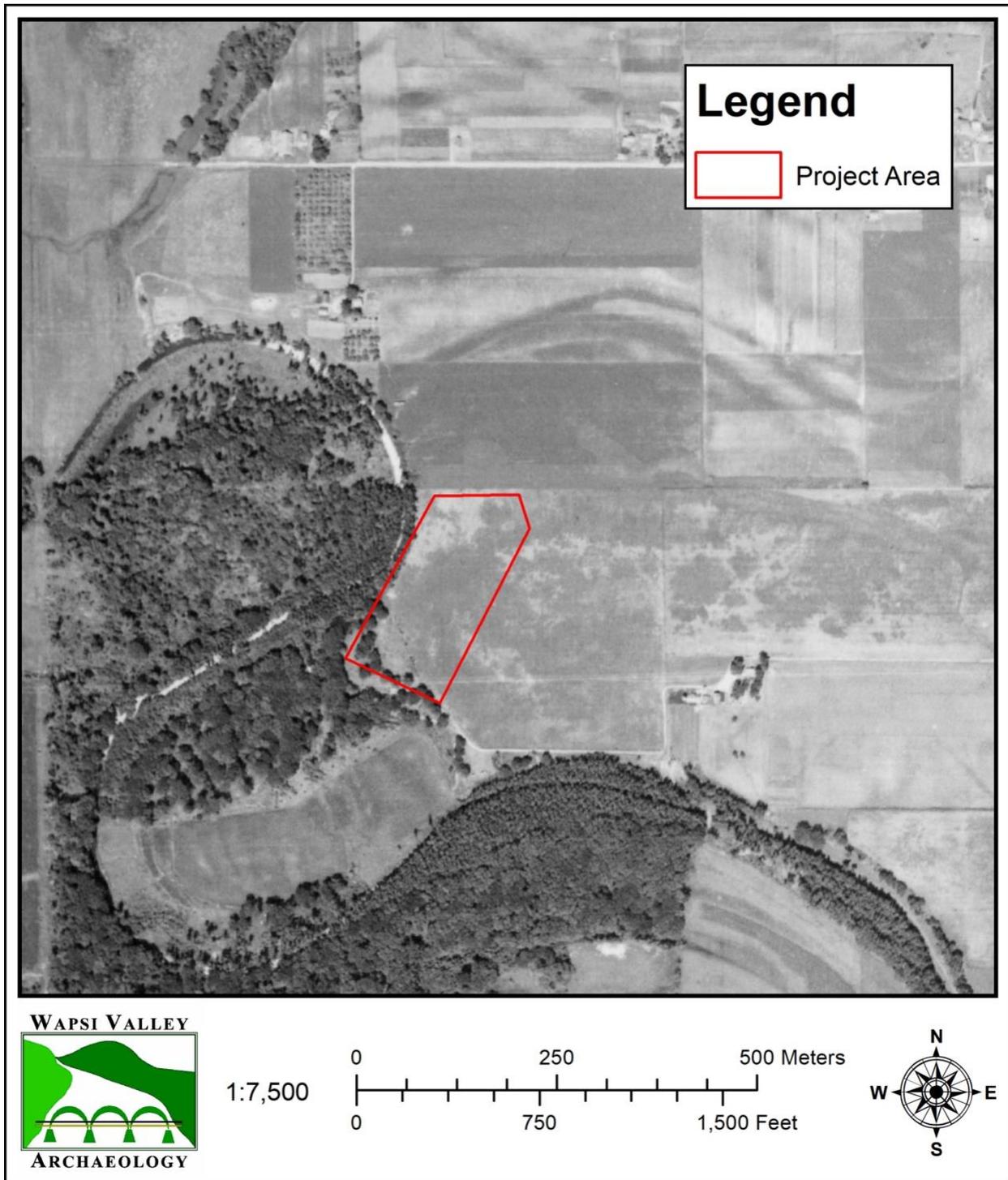


Figure 8: 1938 aerial photograph showing the project area. *Source: IGDC (2025).*

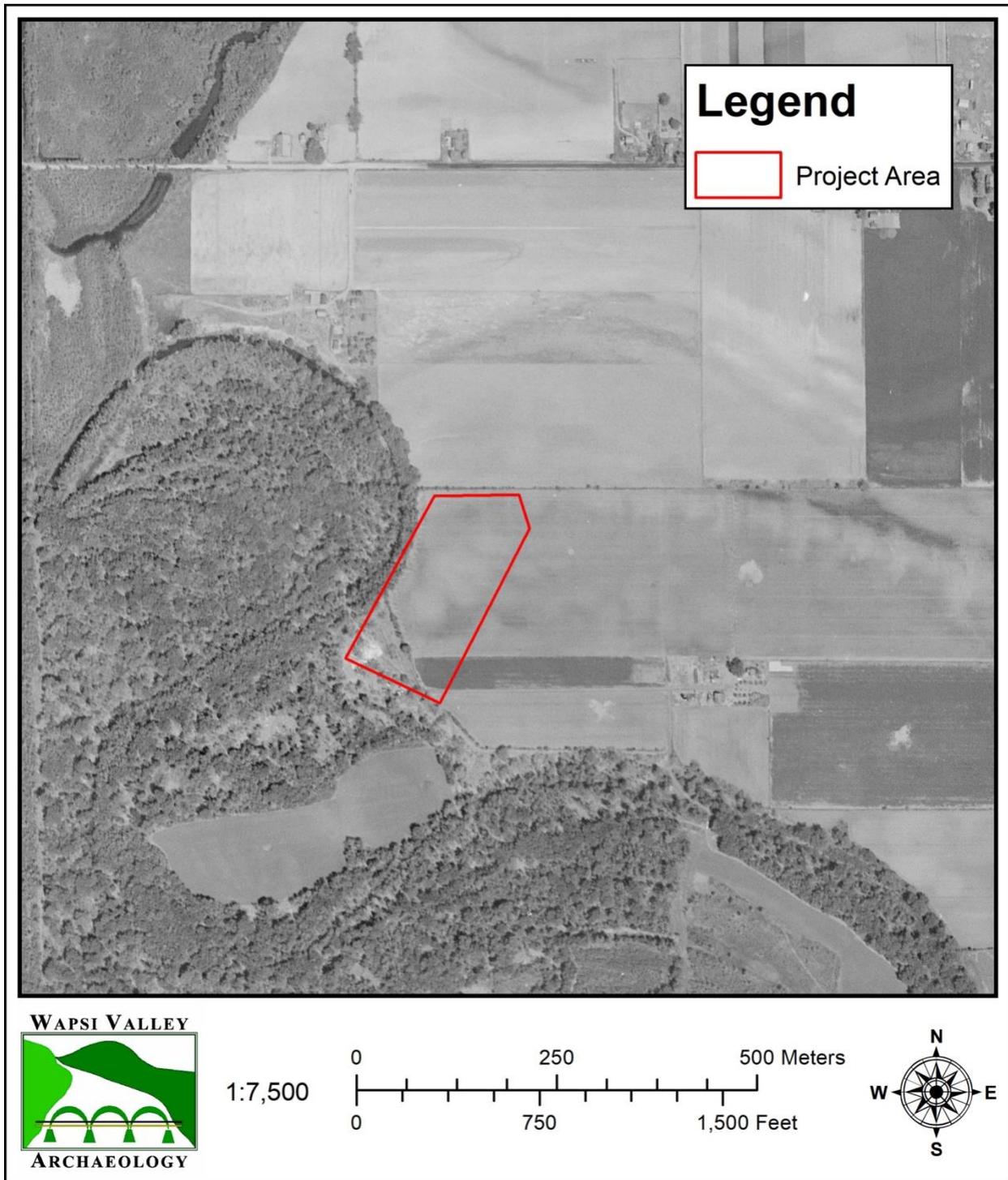


Figure 9. 1958 aerial photograph showing the project area. *Source: IGDC (2025).*

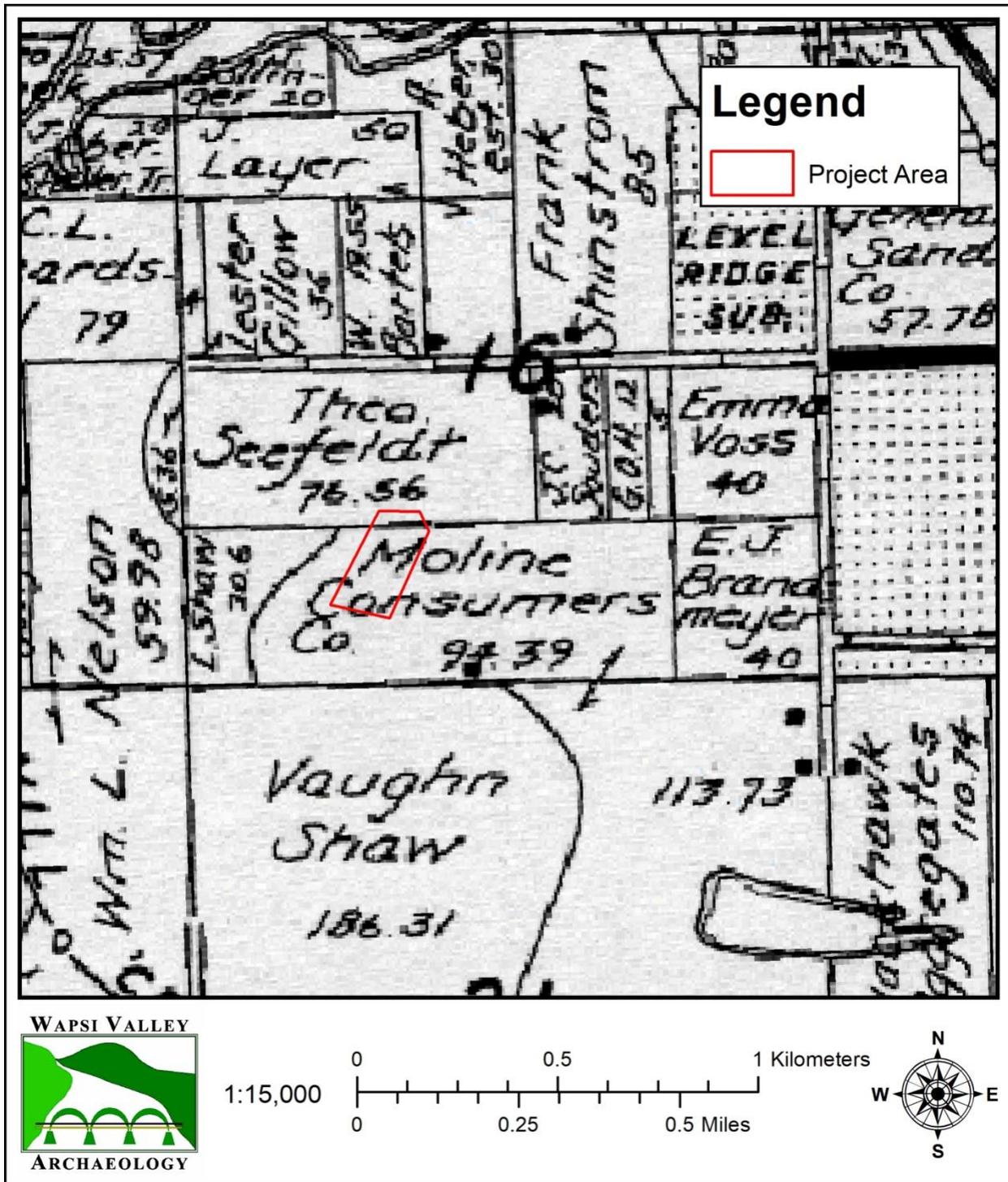


Figure 10. 1959 plat map showing the project area. Source: Rockford Map Publishers (1959).

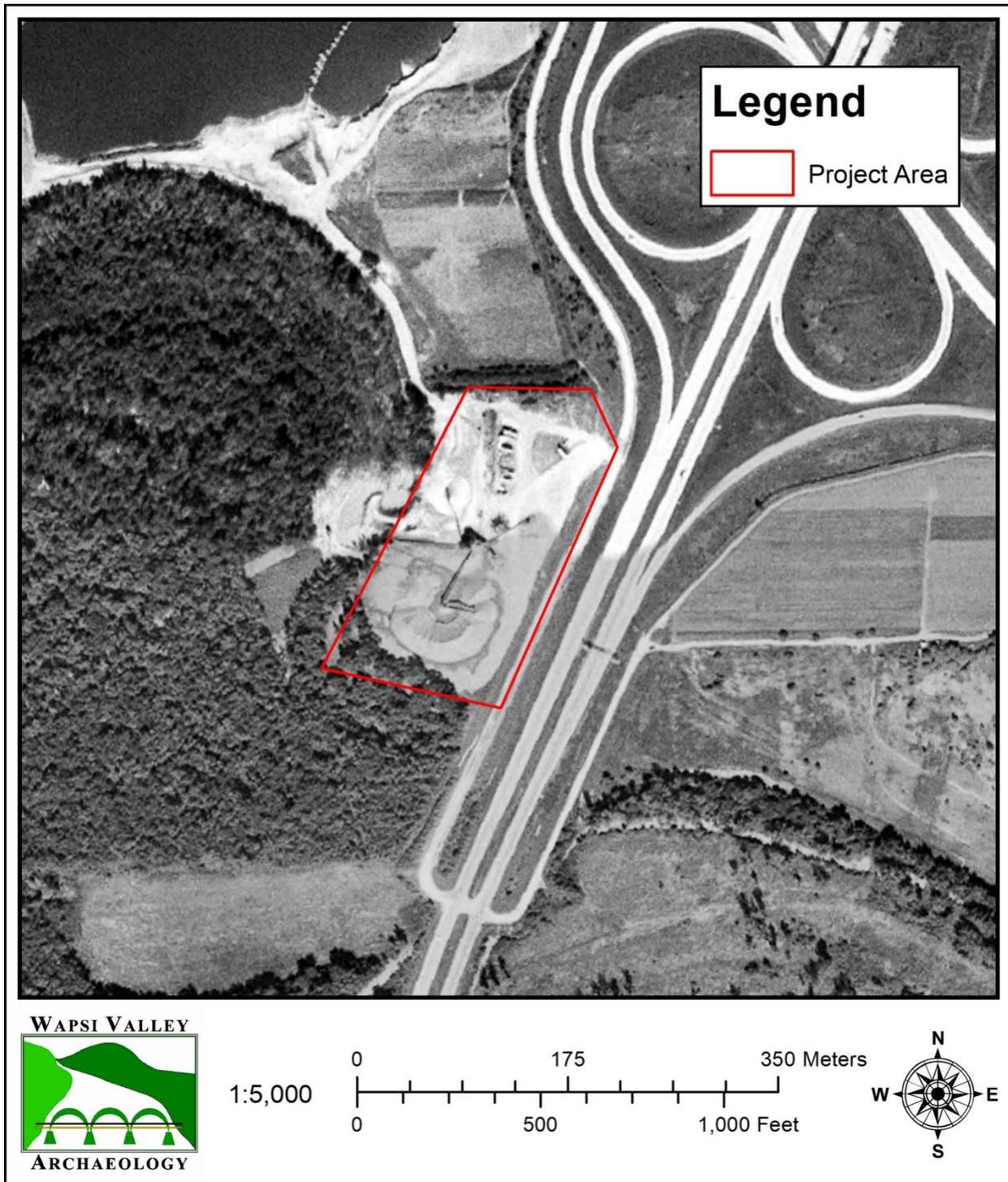


Figure 11: 1975 aerial photograph showing the project area. *Source: Historic Aerials (2025).*

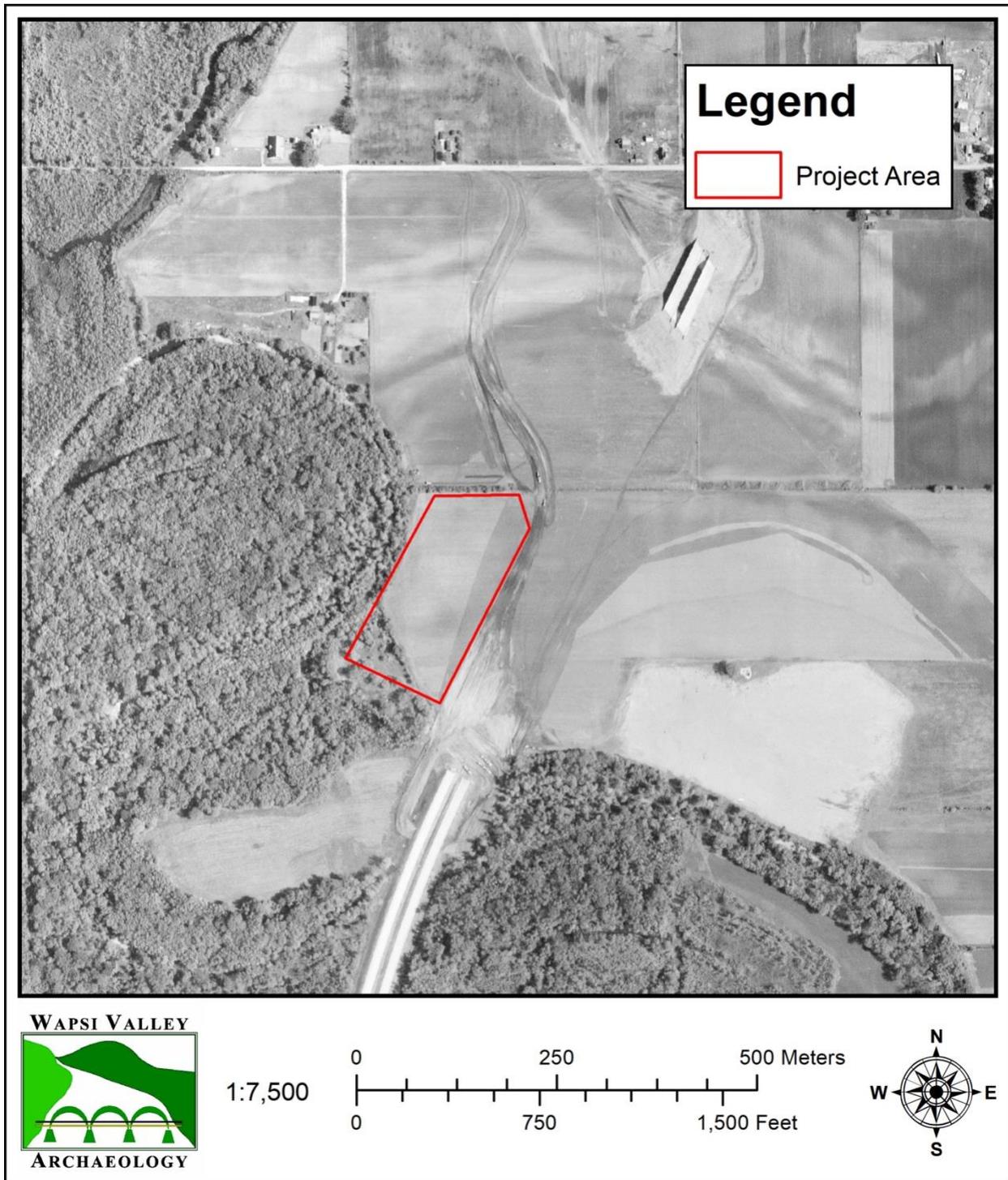


Figure 12. 1964 aerial photograph showing the project area. *Source: IGDC (2025).*



Figure 13. 1984 aerial photograph showing the project area. *Source: Historic Aerials (2025).*



Figure 14. 2005 aerial orthophotograph showing the project area. *Source: NAIP (2005).*



Figure 15. Photograph showing concrete pad and other construction debris in the center of the project area. Taken facing northwest.

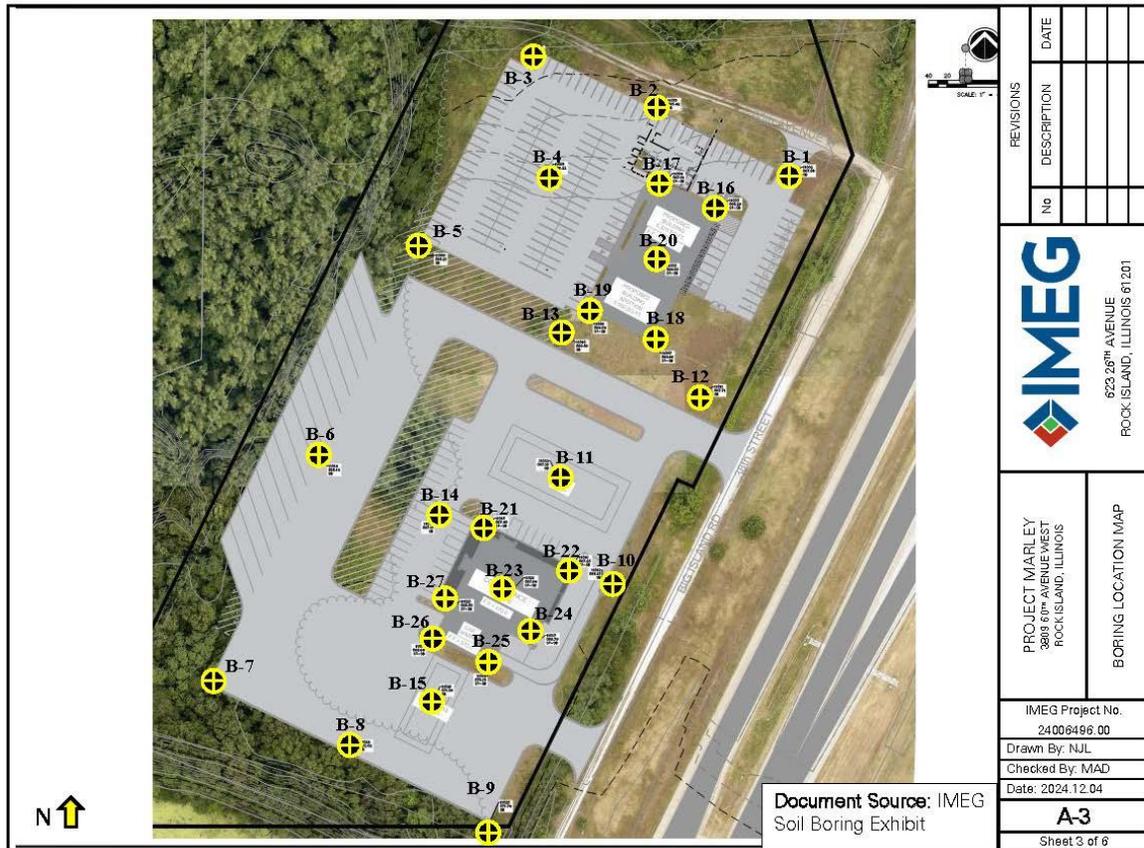


Figure 16. Engineering site plan and locations of soil borings conducted by IMEG in 2024. Source: IMEG (2024).

## ATTACHMENT D: RELEVANT PROJECT CORRESPONDENCE



Illinois  
Department of  
**Natural  
Resources**

JB Pritzker, Governor • Natalie Phelps Finnie, Director  
One Natural Resources Way • Springfield, Illinois 62702-1271

[www.dnr.illinois.gov](http://www.dnr.illinois.gov)

Rock Island County  
Rock Island  
3809 60th Avenue West  
Section:16-Township:17N-Range:2W  
IEPA  
New Construction, Gas Station and Commercial Retail Space

PLEASE REFER TO: SHPO LOG #003110424

November 21, 2024

### **SURVEY REQUEST**

Helene Roberts  
Townsend Engineering  
2224 East 12th Street  
Davenport, IA 52803

The Illinois State Historic Preservation Office is required by the Illinois State Agency Historic Resources Preservation Act (20 ILCS 3420, as amended, 17 IAC 4180) to review all state funded, permitted, or licensed undertakings for their effect on cultural resources. We have received information indicating that the referenced project will, pursuant to that law, require comments from our office and our comments follow. Should you have any contrary information, please contact our office at the number below.

According to the information provided there is no federal involvement in your project. Be aware that the state law is less restrictive than the federal cultural resource laws concerning archaeology. Therefore, if your project will use federal loans or grants, need federal agency permits, or is on federal property then your project must be reviewed by us pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended. Please notify us immediately if such is the case.

**The project area is within a zone adjacent to the Mississippi River and Kickapoo Slu with a high probability of containing significant archaeological resources.** Accordingly, a Phase I archaeological survey to locate, identify, and record all archaeological resources within the project area will be **required**. This decision is based upon our understanding that there has not been any large-scale disturbance of the ground surface (excluding agricultural activities) or major construction activity within the project area which would have destroyed existing cultural resources prior to your project. If the area has been disturbed, please contact our office with the appropriate written and/or photographic evidence. Our most recently updated list of archaeological contractors, maintained as a courtesy, is available on our website. A copy of our letter with the SHPO Log Number should be provided to the selected professional archaeological contractor to ensure that the survey results are connected to your project.

No architectural survey will be required, as we have determined that no historic architectural properties will be affected within the visual area of potential effect. If you have questions, please contact Jeff Kruchten, Principal Archaeologist, at 217/785-1279 or [jeff.kruchten@illinois.gov](mailto:jeff.kruchten@illinois.gov).

Sincerely,

Carey L. Mayer, AIA  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer