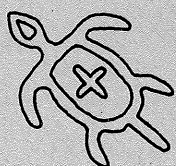


811667

ARCHAEOLOGY REPORTS

**Wilford Archaeology Laboratory
University of Minnesota**



**DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY
215 FORD HALL
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA 55455**

Consultant's Report for D N R

"BEAVER CREEK VALLEY: A MINNESOTA STATE PARK
DEVELOPMENT PROJECT RECONNAISSANCE SURVEY"

BY

JAN E. STREIFF

Prepared for the
MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
Division of State Parks

Principal Investigator

Elden Johnson

June 1981

LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE LIBRARY
STATE OF MINNESOTA

Abstract

An archaeological reconnaissance survey was undertaken in May of 1980 on a new contact station and a children's play area in Beaver Creek Valley State Park, Houston County. The contact station is to be built on a current road bed and the proposed new road route will follow an old road way. There was no evidence of cultural resources at any of the projects.

Beaver Creek Valley State Park

The 1979 development project for Beaver Creek Valley was listed in the Scope of Work as "New Contact Station/Office". Not included in the Scope, but added when field work began, was a play area near the shelter building at the picnic grounds.

Background

While a great deal of archaeological work has been done in Houston County, and in the vicinity of Beaver Creek Valley State Park, none has been carried out within the statutory boundaries of the park.

In 1939 Lloyd Wilford of the University of Minnesota, while conducting surveys in the county, visited a site on Beaver Creek which had been reported by a local game warden. The warden believed there were two large mounds in the river bottoms at the mill just below Sheldon (the mill was later to be known as Schechs Mill). Wilford examined the "mounds" and determined that they were only natural features.

Forty years later, Tom Trow of the State Historic Preservation Office, while in Houston County conducting an intensive survey of the Root River Valley, found two sites on Beaver Creek just outside the park. Both sites (21 HU25 and HU35) are prehistoric habitations, one possibly dating back to the Archaic Period (6000-1500BC). These sites are within the valley flood plain, but Trow found that sites can just as well be on any of the terraces above the river as well as on the bluff tops overlooking the valley.

The 1979 Survey

The survey was conducted on 14 May 1980 by field director Jan E. Streiff. Manager Larry Buchholz took the author to the proposed location for the new contact station. He also pointed out where they planned to build a children's play area near the shelter building in the picnic grounds.

Beaver Creek

The Contact Station

Location

The new contact station will be located in the NE 1/4 NW 1/4 of Section 16 Twp 102N R 6W in Houston County, Minnesota. It will lie on the current road which leads into the park from the east. (See map 1). The road winds down the narrow valley of an intermittent stream which empties into the East Branch of Beaver Creek at the picnic grounds. The valley was an unlikely place for prehistoric habitation as it is narrow, steep and susceptible to flash flooding. The valley and bluff tops are covered with a dense growth of hardwood trees and underbrush. Sharp rocks faces line the valley walls.

Methodology

Normal testing was not necessary as the contact station will be built on an existing roadway. The new road, which will have to be constructed adjacent to the station, will be placed on an old road bed which has been stripped of its top soil down to bedrock and gravel. Only one test was dug (in the only area which appeared to be undisturbed; an area less than two meters square). The test proved that this too was disturbed and was solid gravel. (See Map 2).

The Results

The single test was negative. A thorough surface check of the vicinity showed no evidence of any cultural resources. Virtually the entire narrow valley is taken up with the current roadway and the old, abandoned roadbed. There appears to be a rockshelter/overhang in the valley rock face in the extreme southwest corner of the valley as the highway turns from the southwest to a northwest direction. But it will not be affected by the current project. Due to the possibility of rattlesnakes it was not checked by the field director.

Play Area

Location

The play area is to be in the NE 1/4 NW 1/4 Section 17 Twp 102N R 6W. It will lie behind the picnic shelter on a gently sloping piece of ground at the base of a ravine. The area is currently in grasses and is a continuation of the moved lawn of the picnic ground.

Beaver Creek

Methodology

Since the area is small (less than ten meters square, only two tests were needed. Both were excavated to subsoil and appeared to have been previously disturbed.

The Results

Both shovel tests were negative. Additional surface checks of erosional spots near the shelter building and along paths produced no cultural material.

Summary

Both areas, the new Contact Station and the Children's Play area, exhibited no evidence of cultural resources. The preliminary field report was submitted to DNR, the State Archaeologist, and the SHPO on 14 May 1979.

Jan E. Streiff

Archaeology Laboratory
Department of Anthropology
University of Minnesota
15 May 1981

Bibliography

Department of Natural Resources

- 1979 "Beaver Creek Valley State Park State Park Management Plan Draft" Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, St. Paul.

State Archaeologist Site File

- 1980 Houston County. State Archaeologist office. Hamline University, St. Paul.

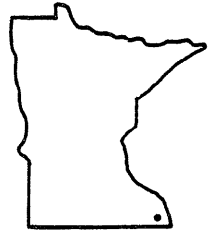
Trow, Tom SHPO/MHS Office - personal communication.

University of Minnesota

- 1980 Site and County Files; Houston County, Archaeology Laboratory, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE LIBRARY
STATE OF MINNESOTA

Beaver Creek Valley State Park



Hwy 10

Beaver
Creek

Project
Area

(Map 2)

Park
Hdqtrs

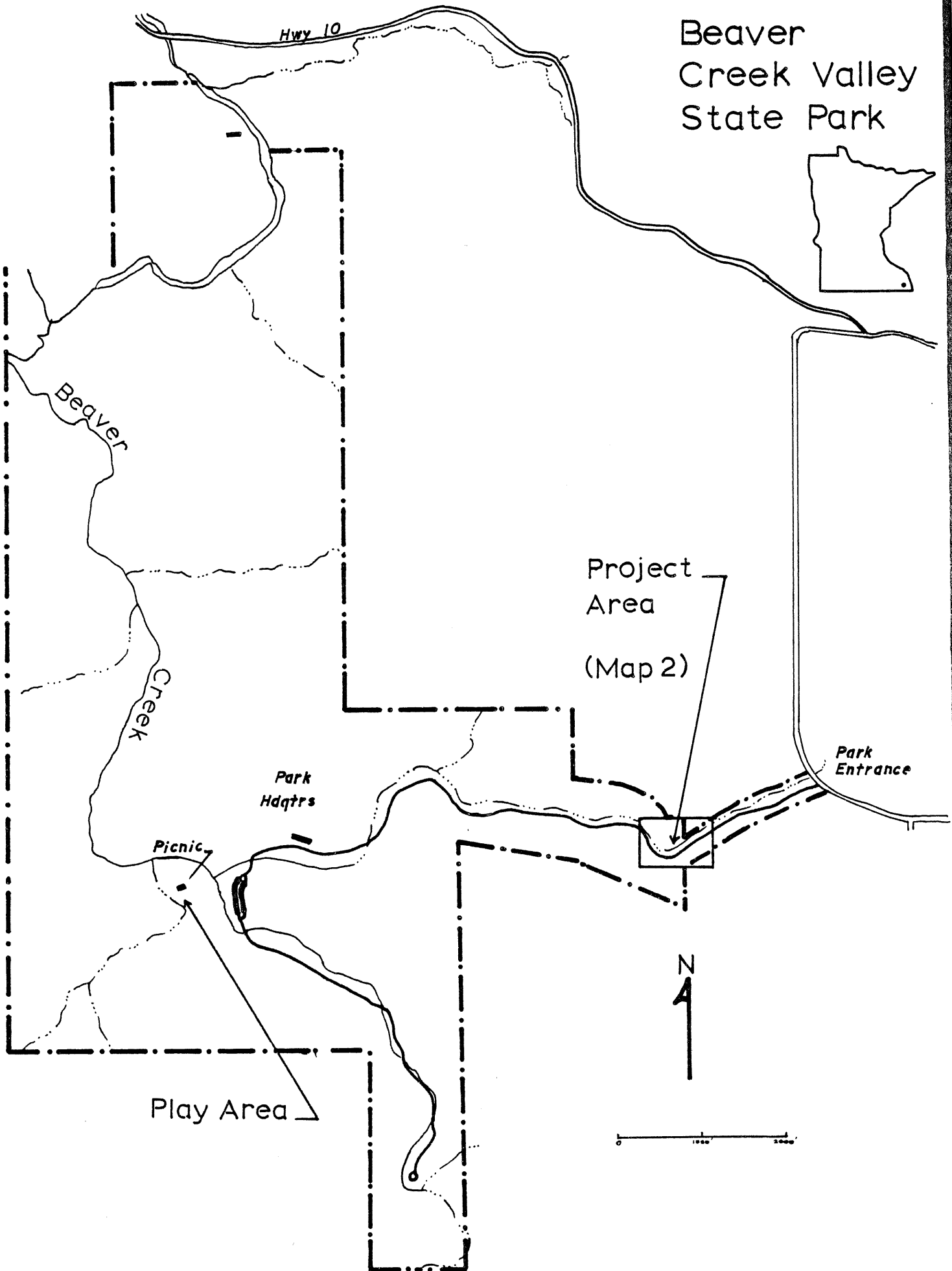
Picnic

Park
Entrance

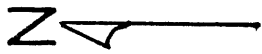
Play Area



0 1000 2000



scale
9" = 1 mile



Park Boundary

Proposed
Contact Station

Entrance Road

Test
1

New Road Route

Beaver Creek Valley

NE 1/4 NW 1/4 Sec. 16

Twp. 102 N, R 6 W

MAP 2