Martin Luther King Jr. Park

Fairfax County, Virginia

WSSI# 32744.01

Phase I Cultural Resources Investigation
July 2023

Prepared for:
Pennoni
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On behalf of:
Fairfax County Park Authority
Resource Management Division
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ABSTRACT

Thunderbird Archeology, a division of Wetland Studies and Solutions, Inc., of Gainesville, Virginia, conducted a Phase I cultural resources investigation on a ±7-acre portion of the larger ±14-acre Martin Luther King Jr. Park property located at 8115 Fordson Road in Fairfax County, Virginia. The study described in this report for Pennoni Associates of Leesburg, Virginia on behalf of the Resource Management Division of the Fairfax County Park Authority.

Shovel testing was confined to the floodplain portion of the project area but avoided a large temporary encampment along the western side of the project area. A total of 60 shovel test pits (STPs) were excavated at 25-50-foot intervals within the remaining area subjected to shovel testing. This portion of the floodplain was mostly disturbed, as evidenced by a compact fill stratum. The fills were difficult to penetrate by hand excavation, as they contained apparent construction debris (medium sized fragments of concrete, asphalt, and cinderblock). Asphalt and concrete chunks were also scattered on the surface. The origin of the fill stratum is unknown but may be associated with the construction of a wastewater utility line that is mapped by the county in the floodplain paralleling Little Hunting Creek or may have originated from years of dumping in this area.

Artifacts recovered from the fill horizon included primarily post 1907/1910 automatic bottle machine glass sherds, several hard paste porcelain ceramic and tile sherds, and a few quartz and quartzite flakes. Only one post 1910 bottle glass sherd was recovered from an Ap horizon in STP 24, and one rhyolite flake from a buried Ap horizon (capped by fill) in STP 24c. No new archeological sites were recorded.

Four bucket auger tests were excavated within the delineated wetland portion of the project area. The USDA NRCS has mapped the very poorly drained Honga series soils in this area, which is characterized by three organic horizons extending two-feet below the surface that are capping a deeply buried gleyed A-E-Bt soil sequence. Auger testing was inconclusive; however, a black "loam" at approximately 3.5 feet below the surface in one test augur may be interpreted as the buried Ag. The auger test could not be excavated any deeper at this time, and no artifacts were observed.

We recommend additional archeological testing both within the untested portions of the floodplain and within the upland marshes along Little Hunting Creek once the construction design impacts have been finalized.