CULTURAL RESOURCE SURVEY: FAUCHER PROPERTY, THOMAS TOWNSHIP, SAGINAW COUNTY, MICHIGAN

A CULTURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT STUDY
PREPARED UNDER CONTRACT WITH THOMAS TOWNSHIP,
SAGINAW COUNTY, MICHIGAN, FOR SUBMISSION TO THE
MICHIGAN STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

GREAT LAKES RESEARCH, INC.
ARCHAEOLOGY / CULTURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

CULTURAL RESOURCE SURVEY: FAUCHER PROPERTY, THOMAS TOWNSHIP, SAGINAW COUNTY, MICHIGAN

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GLR Report No. 2009-051

SUBMITTED TO:

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The opinions, findings, and conclusions expressed in this document are those of the authors, Great Lakes Research, Inc., and are not necessarily those of our client, Thomas Township.

ABSTRACT / MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

In late October 2009, Great Lakes Research, Inc. (GLR) was contracted by Saginaw County's Thomas Township to perform a Phase I cultural resource survey and evaluation of the so-called Faucher Property, an approximately 240-acre parcel of active farmland located in Thomas Township, Saginaw County, Michigan (S1/2 SE1/4 Sec. 20 and NE1/4 Sec. 29, T12N R3E). The property is generally bounded on the south by West Gratiot Road (M-46) and on the east by North Graham Road (M-52), with the north and west boundaries corresponding to the wooded margins of the cultivated fields that make up the project area. Current plans call for the development of limited portions of this property for industrial purposes, with the potential for the development of the entire parcel in the future.

This survey was requested by Thomas Township as part of their overall planning for the potential development of this property and the state and federal permitting process. The general environmental setting was considered of moderately increased prehistoric and historic period sensitivity due to its proximity to extensive wetlands to the north and west and the field-verified presence of numerous archaeological properties within a one-mile radius of the project area.

Prefield archival research was supervised by the principal investigator, Mark C. Branstner (M.A. Anthropology, Wayne State University), with the assistance of Todd M. Branstner (M.A. Historic Preservation, Eastern Michigan University. All field work and report production tasks were undertaken by the principal investigator. The project was undertaken and completed between 7 – 30 November 2009.

Despite a Phase I survey program that combined archival research with pedestrian reconnaissance and shovel testing, no potentially significant prehistoric or historic period archaeological cultural resources were identified in direct association with the project area.

Based on these findings, GLR recommends that development activities associated with the development and long-term use of this project area will have no effect on archaeological cultural resources. It is therefore further recommended that project clearance be granted with no further investigation or evaluation of the project area per archaeological cultural resources.

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SECTION 1.0 - INTRODUCTION

In late October 2009, Great Lakes Research, Inc. (GLR) was contracted by Saginaw County's Thomas Township to perform a Phase I cultural resource survey and evaluation of the so-called Faucher Property, an approximately 240-acre parcel of active farmland located in Thomas Township, Saginaw County, Michigan (Figure 1; S1/2 SE1/4 Sec. 20 and NE1/4 Sec. 29, T12N R3E). The property is generally bounded on the south by West Gratiot Road (M-46) and on the east by North Graham Road (M-52), with the north and west boundaries corresponding to the wooded margins of the cultivated fields that make up the project area. Current plans call for the development of limited portions of this property for industrial purposes, with the potential for the development of the entire parcel in the future.

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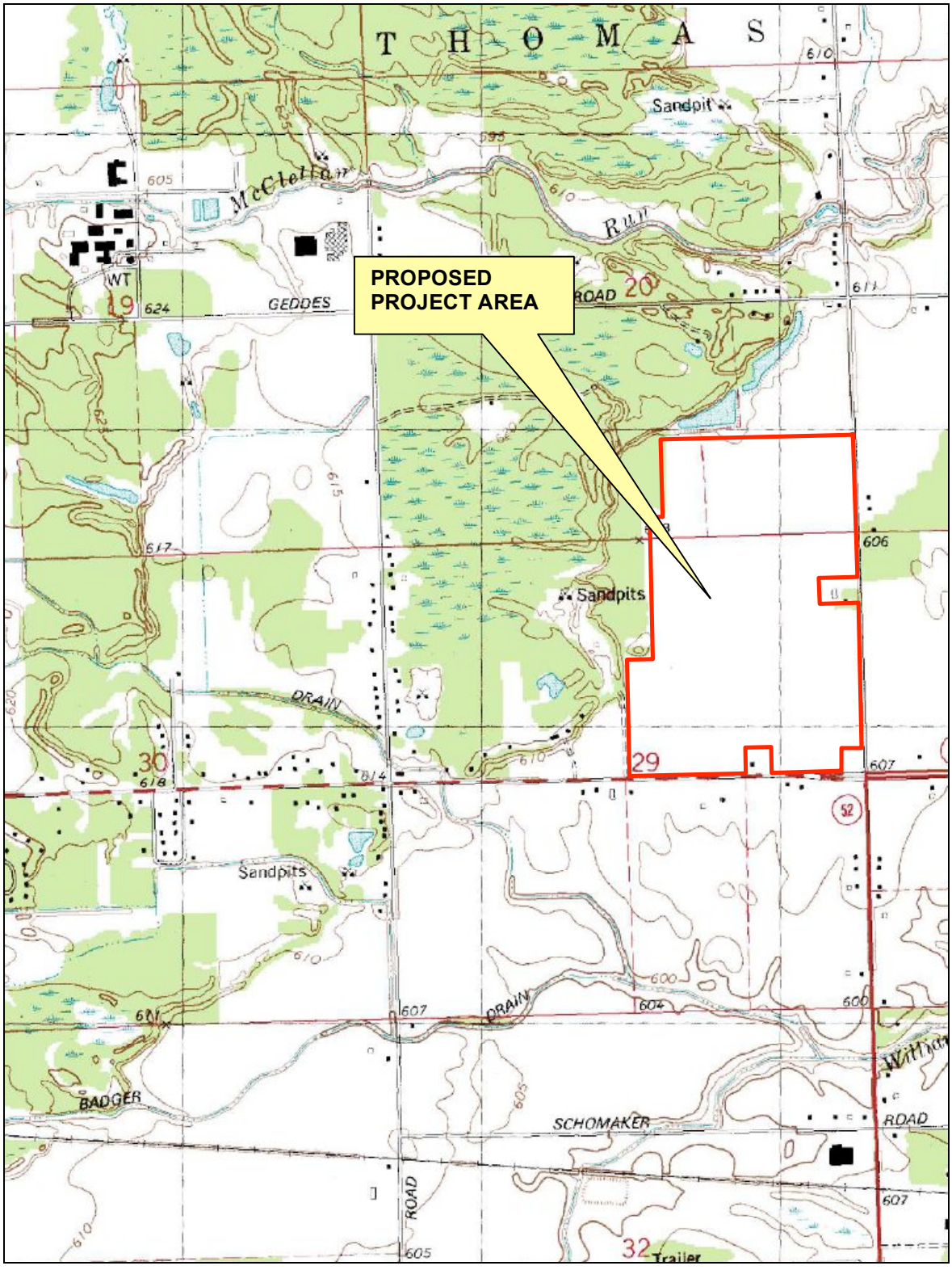

Figure 1. **General location of project area (*Hemlock, Michigan* 7.5' quadrangle map [USGS 1975]).**

SECTION 2.0 – PROJECT SETTING

2.1 PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Located along the western margin of Saginaw County, the Faucher property is an approximately 240-acre parcel of active farmland located in Thomas Township, Saginaw County, Michigan (Figure 1; S1/2 SE1/4 Sec. 20 and NE1/4 Sec. 29, T12N R3E). The property is generally bounded on the south by West Gratiot Road (M-46) and on the east by North Graham Road (M-52), with the north and west boundaries corresponding to the wooded margins of the cultivated fields that make up the project area. Current plans call for the development of limited portions of this property for industrial purposes, with the potential for the development of the entire parcel in the future.

Topographically, the study area is situated on a glacial lake plain composed of both lacustrine silts and clays, and lacustrine sands, with small, interspersed dune sand features (Farrand and Bell 1982). In the most recent *Regional Landscape Ecosystem Model* (NPWRC 2006), this area has been identified as the *Saginaw Bay Lake Plain*, a sand and clay lake plain region lying adjacent to modern Saginaw Bay. Terrain in this general region area is largely without prominent features, broken only by a succession of poorly defined post-glacial beach and dune ridges. Although none of these features are apparent within the specific project area, a series of low sand features are situated to the immediate north and west of the project, dividing the cultivated lake plain to the east from the broken and poorly drained wetland complex that lies further to the west.

There are a number of soil types and associations noted within the project area (Figure 2; NRCS 2009). These can be divided into two major groups, which in turn reflect drainage patterns, elevations, and ultimately, the archaeological sensitivity of various portions of the parcel. The first group, which encompasses 72.2% of the project area, includes the Pella-Frankenmuth complex (61.7%), Pella silt loam (6.6%), and Lenawee silty clay loam (3.9%). All of these are relatively poorly drained soils typical of lacustrine origins and are not considered strong indicators of increased archaeological sensitivity. The remaining 27.8% of the project area is composed of lighter, better-drained soils, including Wixom sand (5.1%), Frankenmuth very fine sandy loam (4.4%), and Sanilac very fine sandy loam (18.2%). While the latter could be derived from lacustrine sources, they may also reflect relict dune activity, and are often considered indicators of increased archaeological sensitivity.

Presettlement vegetation in the region would have included beech, sugar maple, basswood, and other mesic species on well and moderately well drained sites. Poorly drained sites would have supported American elm, red ash, silver maple, and other deciduous swamp species (Veatch 1959). The current property owner indicates that much of this field complex was reclaimed from pine logging era “stump fields” during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Faucher, personal communication 2009).

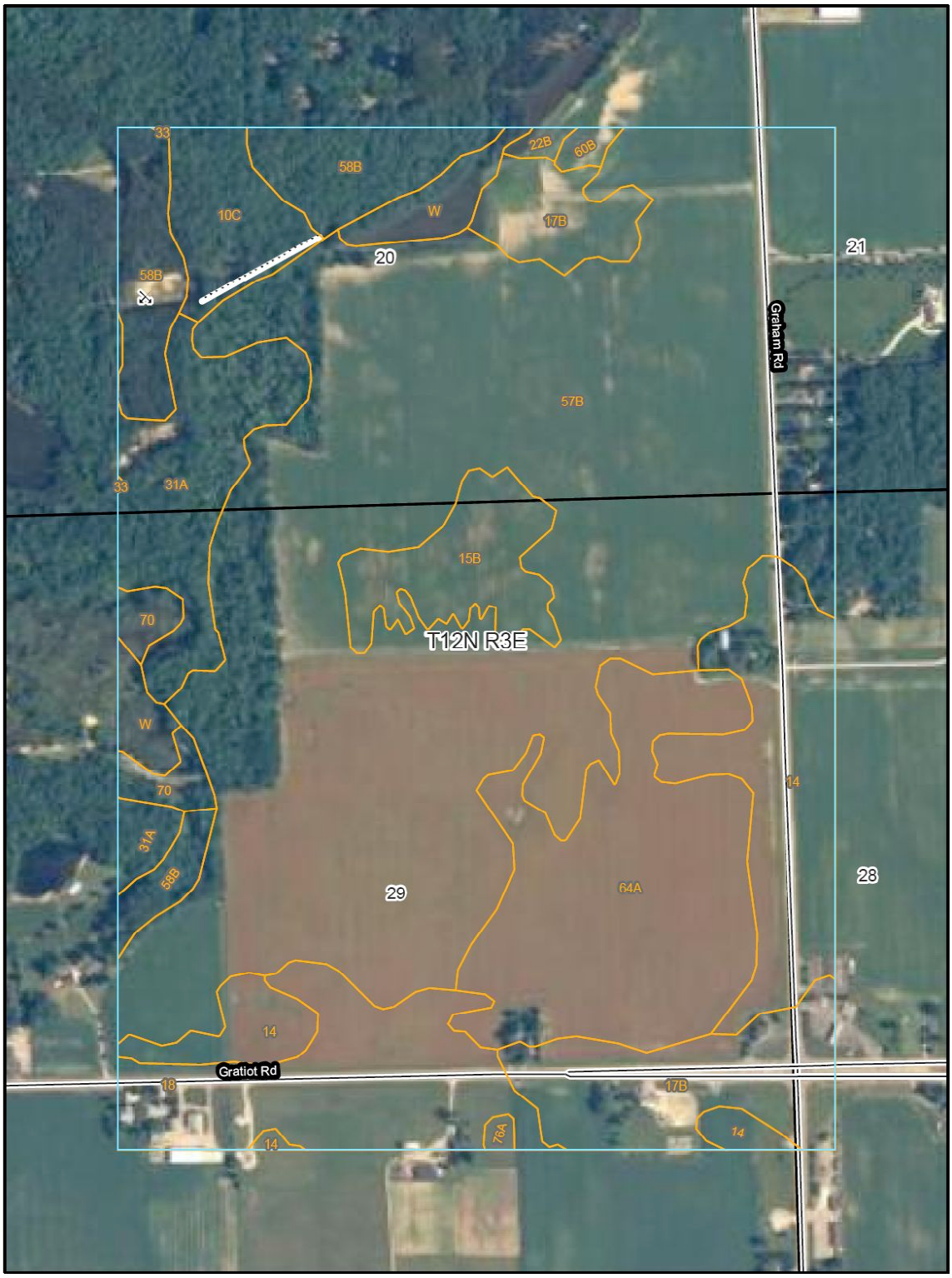

Figure 2. **Soil survey of project area (NRCS 2009).**

Current vegetation was difficult to discern during the leaf-off survey period, but includes species typical of relatively poorly drained areas - primarily deciduous - in those uncultivated areas bordering the western edge of the project area. The specific project area had been cultivated in soybeans during 2009.

Drainage within the general area is eastward via McLellan Run to Swan Creek, which joins the Shiawassee River, and then exits into Lake Huron via the Saginaw River.

Elevations within the project area range between 606-608 ft (184.7-185.3 m) above mean sea level (AMSL). In either case, it can be presumed that the project area would have been more-or-less continuously habitable since the initial retreat of the glacial ice, more than 12,000 years ago. The major exception would have occurred during the early Late Archaic period, when the Lake Nipissing transgression resulted in water levels within the modern Lakes Michigan and Huron basins to briefly rise to approximately 605 ft (184 m) AMSL or even higher, prior to their recession to more or less modern levels. It can be presumed, however, that the study area has been subject to periodic flooding throughout much of its existence.

2.2 CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT

NATIVE AMERICAN RESOURCES

As in other areas of central Michigan, Native American archaeological sensitivity is highly correlated to the preferred use of elevated, well-drained sandy ground adjacent to some aquatic resource as the idealized settlement and utilization pattern. As such, the site's general location on the margins of the Shiawassee River drainage basin is of particular concern.

A review of the Michigan SHPO's archeological site files revealed literally dozens of prehistoric and historic period Native American sites within a few miles of the project area. Limiting this review to those sites lying within an approximate one-mile radius of the center of the project area, at least eight sites have been recorded with either prehistoric or historic period Native American components (Table 1).

Three of the sites are non-field-verified locations derived from the *Archaeological Atlas of Michigan* (20SA138-139, 156; Hinsdale 1931); one is a site recorded by a local avocational archaeologist (20SA875); one is a site recorded during a 1963 survey by personnel from the University of Michigan (20SA238); and the remaining three sites were recorded as part of a cultural resource management survey (20SA456-458; Brunett 1978). While the non-field-verified sites were recorded only as prehistoric villages, the remainder are typically recorded as lithic scatters or FCR scatters. Only one of the sites appears to have contained temporally or culturally diagnostic materials, that being 20SA238, which was described as including a generalized Archaic component.

Based on an assessment of prehistoric and historic period Native American archaeological sensitivities and the general environmental setting of the project area, it is concluded that any elevated property lying adjacent to the Shiawassee River or its

tributaries is of increased sensitivity for the presence of prehistoric and historic period Native American archaeological resources. As portions of the current project area appear to include such landforms, it must also be considered an area of increased archaeological sensitivity. The presence of other sites in nearly identical settings within reasonable proximity to the current project area provides strong support for this conclusion.

Site No.	Township	Range	Section	Site Type	Cultural Period
20SA0138	12N	3E	20	Village	Prehistoric
20SA0139	12N	3E	20	Village	Prehistoric
20SA0156	12N	3E	33	Village	Prehistoric
20SA0238	12N	3E	30	Undetermined	Archaic
20SA0456	12N	3E	20	Camp	Prehistoric
20SA0457	12N	3E	21	Camp	Prehistoric
20SA0458	12N	3E	21	Camp	Prehistoric
20SA0875	12N	3E	16	Undetermined	Prehistoric

Table 1. Summary of archaeological sites within one-mile radius of the project area.

EURO-AMERICAN RESOURCES

With the exception of a few traders and government agents serving the Native American community, a more expansive settlement of the future site of Saginaw and surrounding Saginaw County was entirely a product of the post-1830 period. The earliest General Land Office (GLO) sales in this area appear to date to about 1835, concurrent with the setting off of Saginaw County from Oakland County.

The settlement of western Thomas Township appears to have been even later, with many of the local residents not arriving until the late 1840s and early 1850s, or even later. A review of the GLO transactions for the specific project area failed to note any recorded sales for Section 20, but two sales were recorded for Section 29. The N1/2 NE1/4 Section 29 was first sold to Daniel L. Eaton in 1852 and the S1/2 NE1/4 Section 29 was first sold in 1853 to Eber B. Ward on a military warrant issued to James P. Bell.

The earliest structurally annotated map of the project area was the *Atlas of Saginaw County, Michigan*, published in 1877 (Figure 3; Beers 1877). At that date, the project area was divided between three owners: the S1/2 SW1/4 Section 20 was part of a larger holding owned by N. Barnard, the N1/2 NE1/4 Section 29 was owned by A. Williamson, and the S1/2 NE1/4 Section 29 was owned by Augustine Faucher. The only structural improvement noted on the three parcels was the A. Faucher residence fronting on modern West Gratiot Avenue (M-46). According to an abstract of title retained by the Faucher family, the S1/2 NE1/4 was purchased as two 40-acre parcels by Faucher in 1873 and that a log cabin was present until razed concurrent with the construction of the extant residence (Mark Faucher, personal communication 2009).

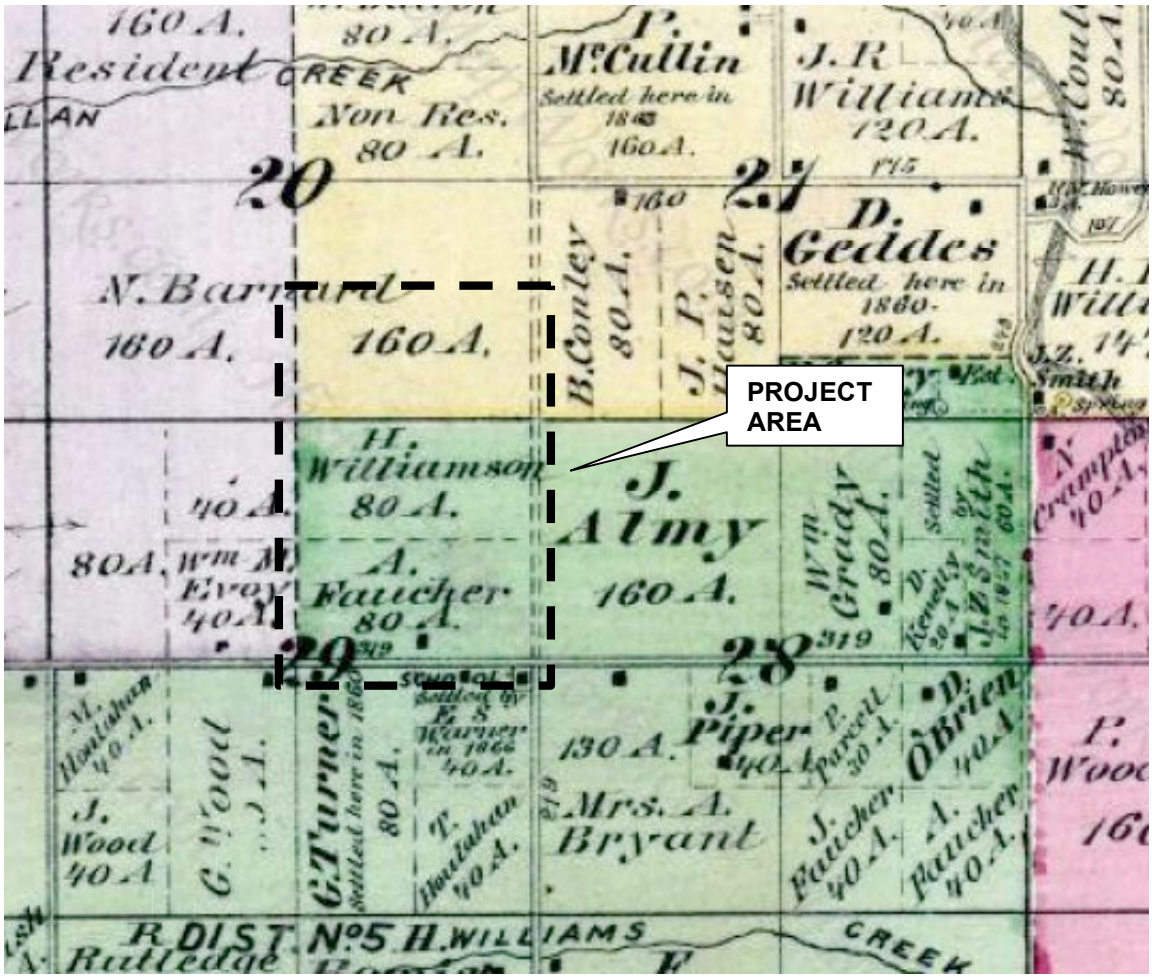

Figure 3. Project area ca. 1877 (Beers 1877).

The next structurally annotated map of the project area was another atlas, *The County of Saginaw, Michigan*, published in 1896 (Figure 4; Imperial 1896). Again, the project area was divided into three parcels. The S1/2 SW1/4 Section 20 was an 80-acre farm owned by Frank Faucher, the N1/2 NE1/4 Section 29 was owned by A. Williamson, and the S1/2 NE1/4 Section 29 was owned by A. Faucher. According to the above-referenced abstract of title, the Brugge property had been purchased in 1886, presumably from Williamson. However, following Brugge's early death, his widow married Frank Faucher, and the entire 240-acre property came under the control of the Faucher family. It should be noted that the 1896 atlas indicates that two structure complexes had been added to the project area in the period between 1877-1896. These include presumed farmsteads for both the Frank Faucher and Herman Brugge properties (Figure 4).

The unified Faucher property is first depicted in 1916, in the *Standard Atlas of Saginaw County, Michigan* (Figure 5; Ogle 1916). At that date, the northernmost 160 acres were depicted as owned by Frank Faucher and the southernmost 80 acres were owned by James Faucher. Only two structures were apparently present at that date, the original Faucher (now James Faucher) residence along the south edge of the property, and the

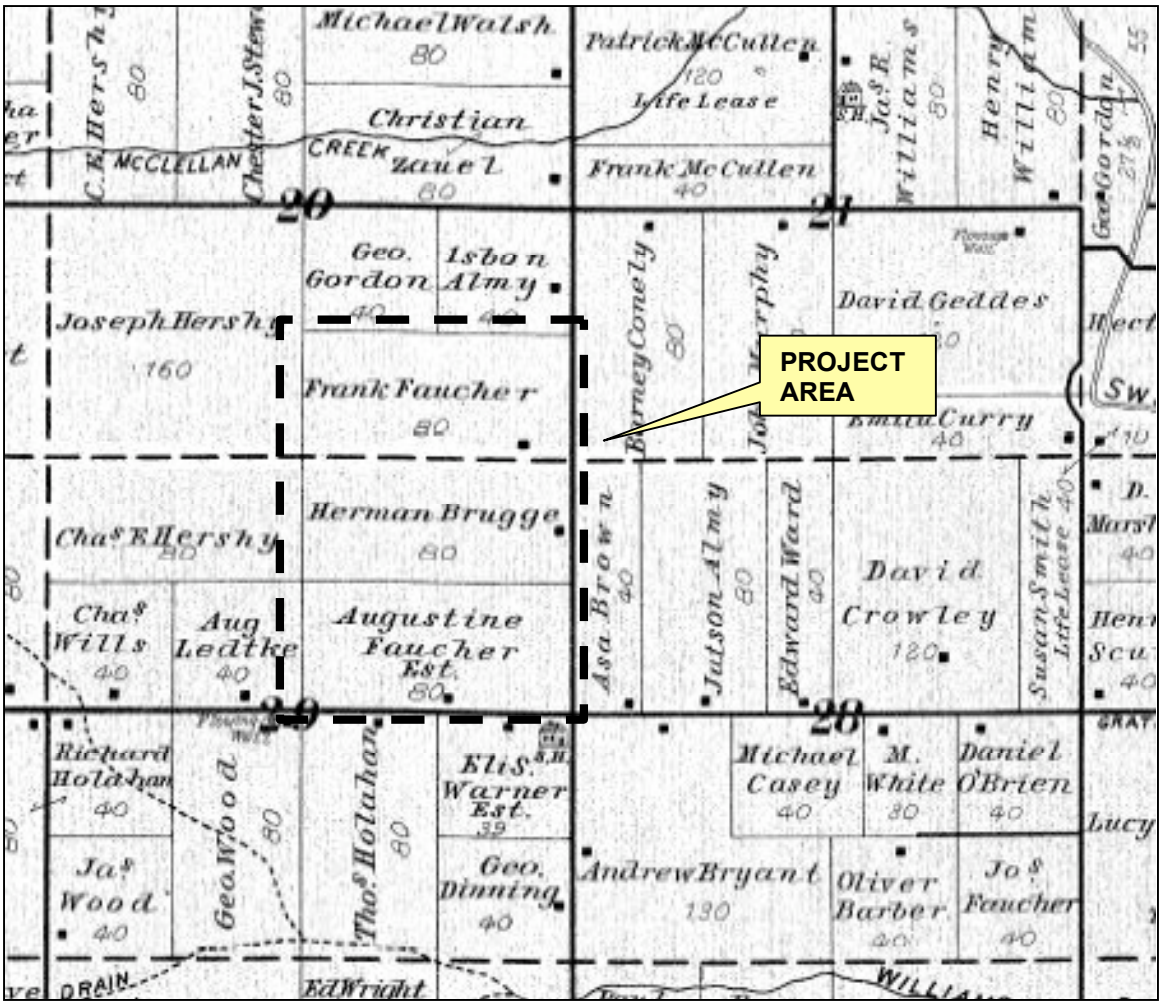

Figure 4. Project area ca. 1896 (Imperial 1896).

former Brugge (now Frank Faucher) residence along the eastern edge. The earlier Frank Faucher residence depicted in 1896 was no longer indicated, and it appears likely that he moved to the Brugge residence following his marriage to Brugge's widow.

The property has remained in Faucher family ownership until the present day and land use has remained agricultural with no additional structural development other than a recent cut-out on the extreme southeast corner of the property for a small commercial development. It can be presumed that this general level of rural development remained relatively constant throughout the twentieth century and the setting remains largely rural to the present day. Currently, the immediately surrounding property remains is in mixed use, with agricultural, residential, and small commercial developments apparent.

As presented above, the project area is included within a nearly level, and largely poorly drained area that has likely been used for agriculture-related purposes since at least the latter half of the nineteenth century, although some areas may not have been put into production until well into the twentieth century.

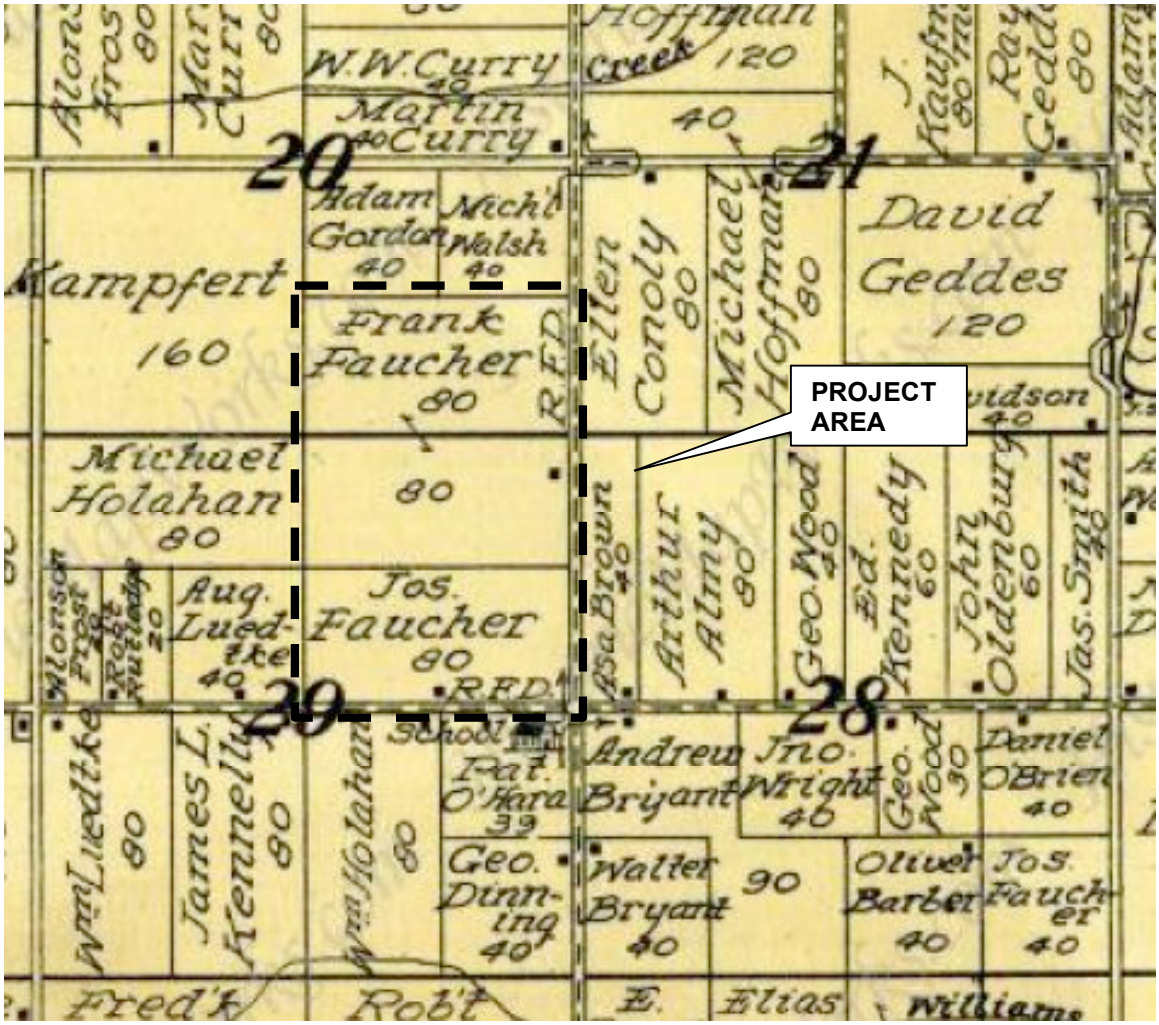

Figure 5. Project area ca. 1916 (Ogle 1916).

A series of historical maps document the presence of at least three homestead/farmstead locations within or immediately adjacent to the project area. Two of these sites remain extant and are excluded from the project area as cut-outs; the third location is clearly within the project area, but is no longer extant, and would appear to represent the former site of the Frank Faucher residence in the SE1/4 SE1/4 Section 20, founded between 1877-1896. As such, the specific project area appears to have only very limited sensitivity for either nineteenth and early twentieth century Euro-American archaeological resources.

A review of the Michigan SHPO's archeological site files revealed the presence of no previously recorded Euro-American archaeological resources within a one-mile radius of the project area (Table 1).

SECTION 3.0 - RESULTS OF INVESTIGATIONS

3.1 ARCHIVAL RESEARCH

Field investigations were preceded by a period of archival research to determine what, if anything could be predictively said per prehistoric or historic archaeological sensitivities prior to the onset of fieldwork. To assess prehistoric potentials, the Michigan SHPO site files and holdings were reviewed. To assess historic period archaeological potentials, various historic documents were also examined, including maps, atlases, plat books, and county records. The results of this research have been presented in the preceding section.

3.2 FIELD RESEARCH

Field investigations at this location were conducted by the principal investigator on 7-8 November 2009. Standard archaeological field equipment included shovels, trowels, and Silva compasses. The preferred field survey technique for such surveys is typically a combination of walkover reconnaissance at appropriate intervals and/or shovel-testing at 15-m intervals, with a standard shovel test unit consisted of a hand-excavated hole, approximately 35-cm in diameter and deep enough to reach culturally sterile subsoils.

At the request of GLR, the entire project area was subjected to either plowing or disking immediately following the 2009 bean harvest and allowed to weather for several weeks prior to the archaeological survey. As such, upon our arrival at the site, ground surface conditions were considered adequate for pedestrian reconnaissance survey with no supplementary shovel testing.

For the purposes of this survey, the approximately 240-acre project area was divided into three distinct parcels for the survey effort (Figure 6). Parcel A consists of the approximate north half of the project area and is defined along its southern edge by an improved farm road that extends due west across the project area from a farmstead that fronts on North Graham Road (M-52). Parcel B corresponds to the approximate southeast quarter of the project area and is bounded on the south by West Gratiot Road (M-46), on the east by North Graham Road (M-52), on the north by the aforementioned east-west farm road, and on the west by an imaginary line extending due north from the existing farmstead fronting on West Gratiot Road. Parcel C includes the remainder of the project area and generally corresponds to the southwest quarter of the project area.

PARCEL A

Survey was initiated in the northeast corner of Parcel A. As the recent plowing of Parcel A had been implemented in a series of east-west transects, it was determined appropriate to walk pedestrian reconnaissance transects in a similar fashion, a decision that facilitated walking in the recently plowed field and provided a ready check on transect orientation and spacing. Although survey was initiated at 50-ft (15-m) transect intervals, it was

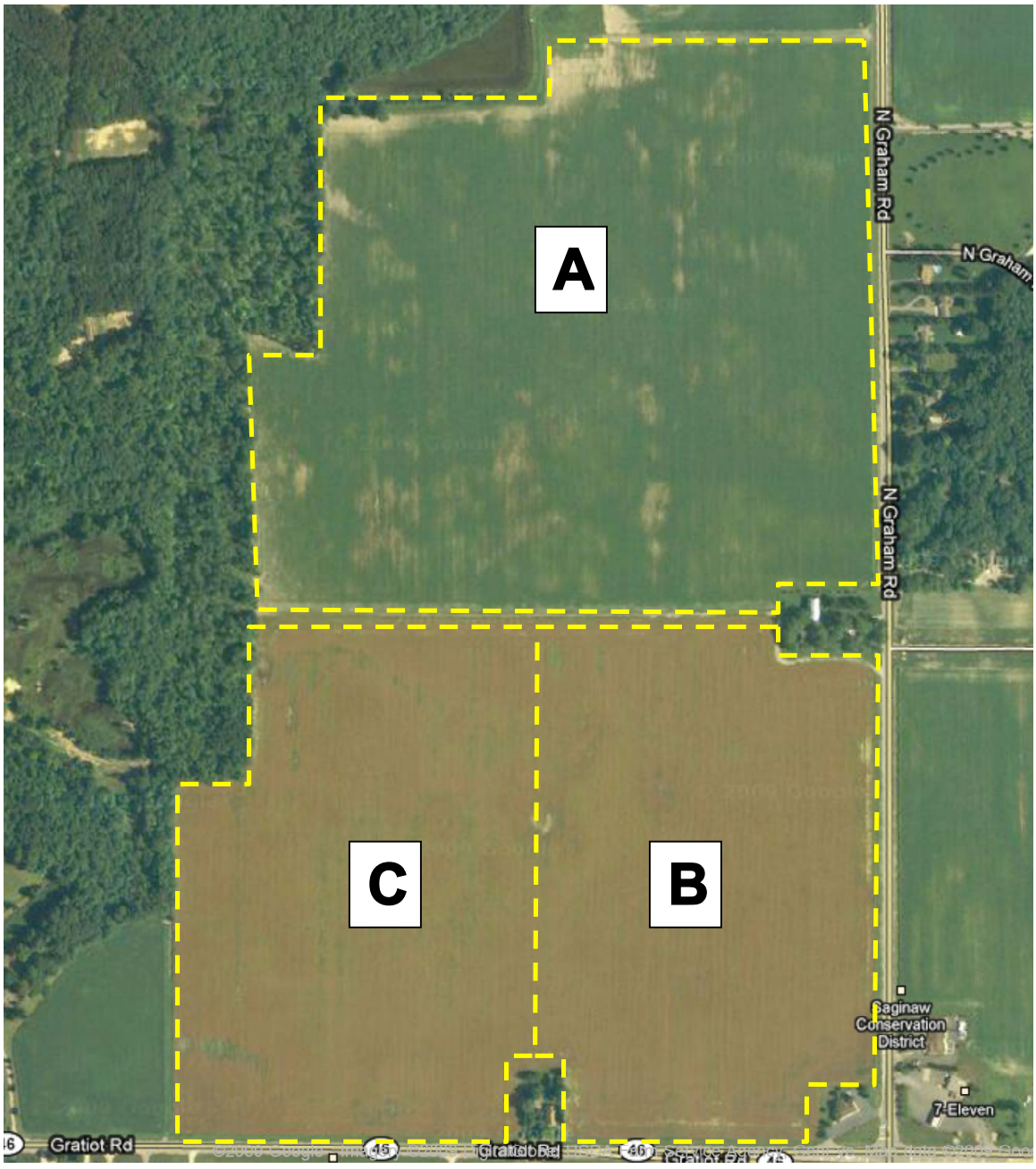

Figure 6. **Division of project area into survey parcels A-C.**

quickly realized that the majority of the Parcel A was composed of low, poorly drained Pella-Frankenmuth complex (57B) soils with extremely limited prehistoric or historic period archaeological sensitivity. However, interspersed within this larger area were isolated, nearly imperceptible, low ridges of sand and loamy sands that were not indicated on the published soil maps (Appendix A: Figure 7). These would appear to be an extension linking the Wixom sand (15B) deposits at the north end of Area A with the Frankenmuth very fine sandy loam (17B) in the southwest corner of Area A.

As similar areas have often proved to be sensitive markers for the presence of archaeological sites, with particular reference to Native American sites, an altered survey strategy was implemented. In this case, primary survey transects were increased to 100-ft (30-m) with the intention of systematically identifying those areas of increased relief, and concomitant archaeological sensitivity, within the broader environmental setting. As these areas were encountered, the primary survey transect was interrupted and each of these elevated areas was subjected to intensive pedestrian reconnaissance, typically at 5-m to 10-m transect intervals. The areal limits of these elevated areas were typically defined in the field on the basis of a shift from lighter to heavier soils, which was usually very obvious due to their differential, post-plowing weathering (Appendix A: Figures 6-7). Thus, the survey methodology was altered to provide coverage that efficiently covered the entire project area and focused intensively on those areas of increased sensitivity.

Visibility within all areas approached 100 percent, yet survey of Area A failed to note to the presence of any evidence for Native American usage. This is entirely consistent with the recollections of the current property owner, who stated that to his knowledge no member of the Faucher family had ever recovered any evidence for Native American occupation of the farm in the more than one century of his family's tenure (M. Faucher, personal communication 2009). Survey did, however, note the presence of a small scatter of late nineteenth century historic debris in the SW1/4 SW¼ Section 29. Although this scatter would not appear to correspond to the location of the Frank Faucher farmstead, as mapped in 1896 (Figure 6), the apparent date of the assemblage would be consistent with either the Faucher farmstead or that of the contemporaneous Brugge/Faucher farmstead. As the assemblage appeared to be more characteristic of a dump, rather than an actual occupation site, the materials were not collected and no site designation has been requested. However, it should be noted that survey of presumably more sensitive portions of the farm failed to record any significant remains that might correspond to the 1896 Frank Faucher farmstead site.

PARCEL B

The survey of Parcel B commenced in the southeast corner of the property, near the intersection of M-46 and M-52. As the disking of this area had been in a north-south direction, survey transects were likewise oriented. As noted in Figure 2, this area was slightly more elevated than the surrounding areas and largely composed of Sanilac fine sandy loams (64A). Again, the ground surface was well weathered, with visibility ranging between 75-100 percent. Primary transect intervals were spaced at 100-ft (30-m) with intensive survey implemented in areas of increased elevation or drainage. The latter areas were again highlighted by their differential weathering.

No evidence for either Native American or Euro-American usage of this area was recorded in Parcel B.

PARCEL C

Based on an analysis of the soil maps, the final survey area, Parcel C, was located in the least sensitive portion of the project area. Soils were uniformly heavy and poorly drained, consisting of Pella-Frankenmuth complex (57B), Pella silt loam (14), and Lenawee silty clay loam (18). Based on our previous experience in Areas A and B, survey was limited to pedestrian transects of the perimeter and several quartering transects to identify any deposits of lighter, elevated soils that might be included within its confines. While several such areas were identified, intensive pedestrian reconnaissance of these failed to note the presence of any archaeological materials.

3.3 SUMMARY

Based on the results of the Phase I survey, it appears that Native American archaeological sensitivities within the project area are either extremely low or non-existent and it appears that the proposed development would have no effect on significant resources of this type. Similarly, archaeological survey has verified that two of the three documented nineteenth century farmsteads associated with the project area have been effectively excluded from the current project area; the third farmstead was not convincingly relocated, but the fact that it likely dates from the ca. 1880-1900 should preclude its eligibility to the National Register of Historic Places.

SECTION 4.0 - CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 CONCLUSIONS

Prefield archival research per prehistoric and historic period Native American archaeological potentials in relation to the project area indicated a moderately increased sensitivity concern. This increased concern was predicated on the project area's location and its association with minor tributaries to the Shiawassee River. Prefield archival research also indicated that the general project area had likely been developed as agricultural land at some point in the mid-late nineteenth century, and that at least three homestead/farmstead complexes had been located in close proximity to the project area prior to 1900, indicating a moderate sensitivity for Euro-American archaeological resources.

Despite a Phase I survey program that combined archival research with pedestrian reconnaissance and shovel testing, no potentially significant prehistoric or historic period archaeological cultural resources were identified in direct association with the project area.

4.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on these findings, GLR recommends that development activities associated with the development and long-term use of this project area will have no effect on archaeological cultural resources. It is therefore further recommended that project clearance be granted with no further investigation or evaluation of the project area per archaeological cultural resources.

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APPENDIX A: PROJECT AREA VIEWS

Figure 1. **View to northeast, from approximate centerpoint of Area A.**

Figure 2. **View to west along south edge of project area, from extreme southeast corner of project area at M-46 (Area B).**

Figure 3. **View to north along west edge of project area, from extreme southwest corner of project area at M-46 (Area C).**

Figure 4. **View to east along M-46 and south edge of project area (Area C).**

Figure 5. **View to east along farm road that forms north-south boundary between Area A to the north and Area B-C to the south.**

Figure 6. **Typical view of plowed field in Pella-Frankenmuth complex (57B) in Area A; note heavier presence of clods and distinct plow ridges, even after weathering.**

Figure 7. **Typical view of unmapped "islands" of lighter soil in surrounding Pella-Frankenmuth complex; note well-eroded sandy composition compared to Pella-Frankenmuth complex soils in Figure 6.**

Figure 8. **View of late 19th/early 20th century residence in cut-out along M-46, viewed to north.**

Figure 9. **Modern commercial structure in cut-out on northwest corner M-46 and M-52, viewed to north.**

Figure 10. **Twentieth century house and gambrel-roofed barn on North Graham Road (M-52) cut-out, viewed to west.**