

**An Archaeological Survey of the Boldt Tract,
Bexar County, Texas**

by

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**Submitted to
Frost GeoSciences
Helotes, Texas**

**Report No. 32
Abasolo Archaeological Consultants
San Antonio, Texas
2006**

Abstract

Abasolo Archaeological Consultants conducted a Phase I archeological survey of the 17-acre Boldt Tract for Frost Geosciences and Centex properties, at the request of the City of San Antonio. The assessment consisted of a 100% surface inspection and a revisit of archaeological site 41BX905, a prehistoric chert quarry site. The 41BX905 site area extends across the entire northern two-thirds of the property. The cultural material is confined to the surface and has been heavily collected by artifact hunters. Since previously investigated 41BX68 lies immediately to the north and is an extension of the same chipped stone quarry area, no further work is recommended for 41BX905

Introduction

On April 5, 2006, Abasolo Archaeological Consultants (AAC) conducted a Phase I archeological survey of 17 acres known as the Boldt Tract (Fig. 1). Located near the intersection of Jones-Maltsberger and Bulverde Roads, an assessment of archaeological resources was needed by Centex properties, in compliance with a request from the City of San Antonio. Under a contract with Frost Geosciences (Helotes), the field work was conducted by Harry J. Shafer and Thomas R. Hester (both of AAC), along with Steve Frost of Frost GeoSciences. The survey was carried out in accordance with the “Archeological Survey Standards for Texas,” and was designed to assess the eligibility of any cultural resources for nomination to National Register of Historic Places. The assessment consisted of a 100% surface inspection and a revisit of archaeological site 41BX905, a prehistoric chert quarry site.

Archaeological Background

Northern Bexar County: An Archaeological Overview

Hundreds of archaeological sites have been recorded in northern Bexar County. The time periods and functional types of these sites are briefly reviewed here.

The **Paleoindian** period, 9,200-6,800 B.C., has distinctive chipped stone spear points used in hunting mammoth and other late Ice Age mammals early in the period. Other spear types appear with a shift to bison, deer and other game after the Ice Age ended around 8000 B.C. Known site types in northern Bexar County are *campsites* with flint-chipping debris from stone-tool making and repair. One site of Clovis age (9,200 B.C.) was excavated near FM1604 and Leon Creek. A later site, dating around 7,500 B.C., was investigated on the grounds of St. Mary’s Hall on Salado Creek. Most recently, the Chandler site on Culebra Creek has been partially excavated, yielding artifacts between 7,500-6,800 B.C.

Sites of the following **Archaic** period are common. These peoples were hunters and gatherers as in the earlier Paleoindian period, but lived in an environment very similar to those of modern times. Projectile points used to tip spears (often erroneously called “arrowheads”) change in shape through time, from 6,800 B.C. to 500 A.D.

Archaeologists use these forms to distinguish more specific time frames within the Archaic (e.g., Early, Middle and Late Archaic). In northern Bexar County, the most distinctive Archaic site is the *burned rock midden*. These large accumulations of fire-cracked limestone result from the use of earth-oven cooking starting around 3,000 B.C. Such features were part of *larger campsites*, with large amounts of flint debris from tool-making; sometimes, animal bone (dietary remains) and charcoal that can be used for radiocarbon dating. Other Archaic site types include *lithic procurement* areas (where flint cobbles eroded out of the Edwards limestone and were processed), *lithic scatters* (lightly-used areas probably representing short-term hunting and gathering activities), and rarely, *sinkhole burials* (Archaic peoples often disposed of their dead by placing them in sinkholes and caverns).

By 700 A.D., there began to be some changes in the long hunter-gatherer lifeway. The **Late Prehistoric** is first seen with the introduction of the bow and arrow. The stone arrow points are very small (mistakenly called “bird points”), but could be used in hunting game of any size. By 1300 A.D., the economy emphasized buffalo-hunting. Most sites of this era include *campsites*, often in areas previously used by Archaic peoples, *lithic scatters* of this age; and the *lithic procurement areas* of earlier times continued to be used.

During the Historic period, the best known archaeological remains are *ranch and farm houses of cut stone*, dating from the 1840s through the 1880s. Stacked- stone fences also occur. Such sites, including those without surviving structures, are recognized from 19th century pottery fragments, artifacts of glass and metal, etc. Later Historic houses and farmsteads, through the early 1900s, are also found.

Sites in the Boldt Tract Area

Several archaeological sites have been previously recorded in the area around the Boldt Tract. They include several burned rock middens, all of which have been seriously damaged or destroyed by untrained digging for artifacts. These sites include 41BX903 and 41BX909 (Potter et al. 1992:7). They also note (ibid.) several sites of the Historic era nearby.

The most distinctive cultural remains are extensive concentrations of chert (flint) processing. Geological exposures of Edwards limestone provided chert nodules used by ancient stone-tool makers for thousands of years. Such sites are often referred to as "lithic procurement areas," or more simply put, "quarries." They are characterized by broken chert cobbles (cores), large flakes removed from cobbles (primary flakes), rough, initially-flaked bifaces ("quarry blanks") and a vast amount of chert flakes and shatter resulting from the procurement and reduction efforts.

Within a radius of about mile of the Boldt Tract, there are several important, published quarry sites. These include 41BX68, north of FM1604 (McGraw and Valdez 1978)(Fig. 1), 41BX301 (Katz 1987:29-30) on Elm Creek, and 41BX901, a short distance to the west of the Boldt Tract (Potter et al. 1992). Additionally, 41BX905 was recorded by the late C. K. Chandler (Texas Archeological Site Atlas, Texas Historical Commission), described as a large quarry area. His map of the site boundaries include the area of the Boldt Tract.

Chipped stone quarry sites (also commonly referred to as lithic procurement sites) are very difficult to date. Typically, there was little campsite activity at the quarries and finished projectile points were not made during the procurement phases. Katz (1987:30) reports Middle and Late Archaic points from 41BX301, but these are just a couple of specimens and, realistically, peoples from other eras could have used the quarry, leaving no diagnostic point styles behind.

The great interest in artifact-collecting (“arrowhead hunting”) in Bexar County has, as noted above, greatly damaged the burned rock middens through uncontrolled digging. However, in the same vein, the quarry sites have been modified by surface-collecting. If diagnostic points had been present at the Boldt Tract, they have long ago been collected. Across the property, there are small “collector piles” of flakes and broken materials left behind by relic-hunters. It is also noticeable that the crude, early stage bifaces (quarry blanks) so typical of these sites (McGraw and Valdez 1978: Figure 7) are almost entirely absent from the survey area. Katz (1987:30) also reports the absence of quarry blanks, likely due to surface-collecting, at 41BX301.

Survey Results

Surface exposure was good to excellent, providing an opportunity to assess the extent and potential of 41BX905 within the project areas. The dominant vegetation was juniper and oak with ample open areas for surface inspection (Fig. 2). A major outcrop of Edwards chert occurs in 41BX68 just north of the 41BX905 (McGraw and Valdez 1978). The chert outcrop once extended onto the Boldt property (Figs 2, 3). Immediately to the west was 41BX901, a large quarry destroyed during the construction of a Northeast Independent School District middle school (Potter et al. 1992).

Site 41BX905, recorded by C. K. Chandler, encompasses a large area including the the entire northern two-thirds of the Boldt property. The cultural material is confined to the surface and consists of primary flakes and cores (Fig.3). No biface blanks or broken bifaces, artifacts that are commonly found in chert quarry sites, were observed despite the close inspection. A single sequent flake reject (Fig. 4), a flake tool form commonly found in the Balcones Canyonlands that may prove to be an Early Archaic marker, was the only potentially diagnostic artifact observed. The absence of bifaces and other potentially diagnostic artifacts is attributed to relic hunting. Numerous relic collecting reject piles, consisting mostly of flakes, were observed in the project area (Fig. 5). Rare biface retouch flakes suggest that in addition to producing large flakes and biface blanks for further reduction, at least some biface finishing took place at the site. Site 41BX905

has been heavily collected by relic hunters and the integrity of the quarry deposits and research potential has been greatly compromised.

Archaeological Assessment

As reported above, 41BX68 is a large quarry just north of the Boldt Tract. It is our assessment that 41BX905 is a southern extension of 41BX68. This site has already been carefully documented, mapped and published (McGraw and Valdez 1978). Furthermore, extensive artifact collecting at 41BX905 has greatly reduced its research potential. Given the fact that a report has been published that describes quarrying activities and its byproducts at 41BX68 and with the relic-collector damage to the Boldt Tract locale (41BX905), no further work is recommended for 41BX905.

References Cited

Katz, P. R.

1987 *Archaeological Mitigation at 41BX300, Salado Creek Watershed, South-Central Texas*. Archaeological Survey Report 130. Center for Archaeological Research, The University of Texas at San Antonio.

McGraw, A. J. and F. Valdez, Jr.

1978 *41BX68: A Prehistoric Quarry-Workshop in Northern Bexar County, Texas*. Archaeological Survey Report 56. Center for Archaeological Research, The University of Texas at San Antonio.

Potter, D. R., C. K. Chandler, and E. Newcomb

1992 *Archaeological Salvage Research at 41BX901, A Prehistoric Quarry in Bexar County, Texas*. Center for Archaeological Research, The University of Texas at San Antonio.

Figures

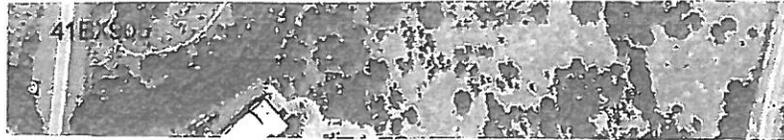
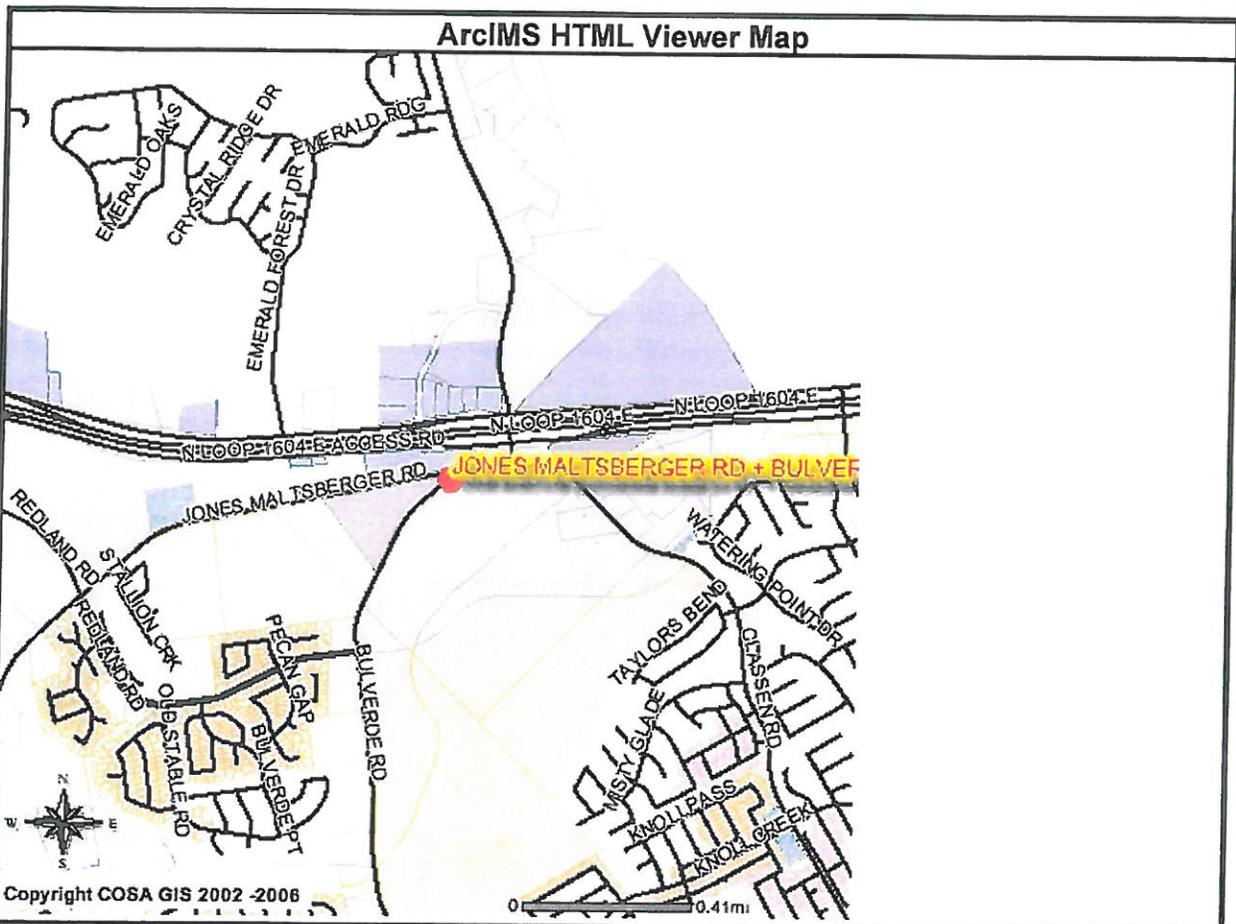


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Figure 1. Map of the Bolt Tract showing the extent of 41BX905 (outlined in red) on the property.



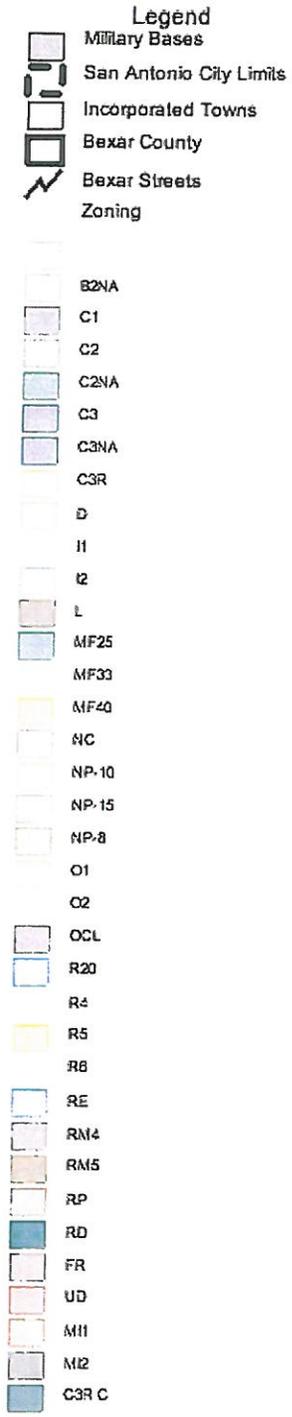




Figure 2. Surface at 41BX901 with exposed limestone and chert cobbles.



Figure 3. Discarded cores at 41BX901.



Figure 4. Abandoned sequent flake

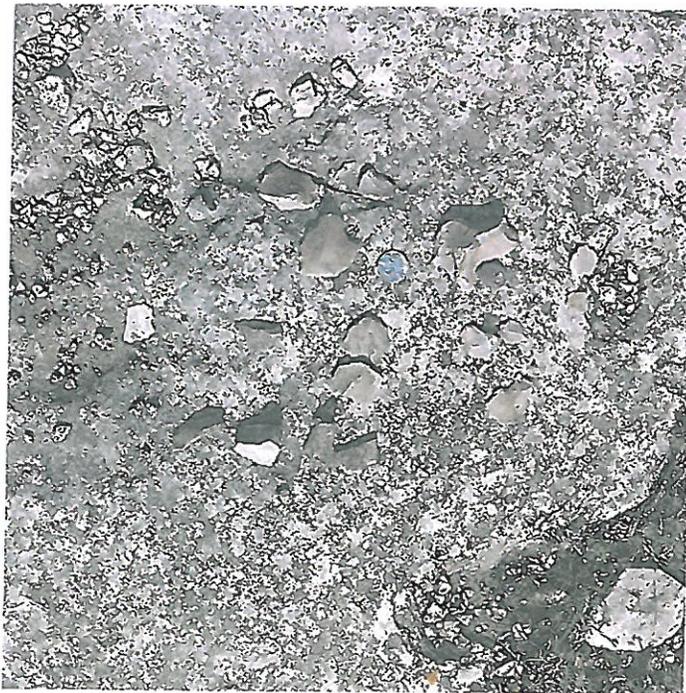
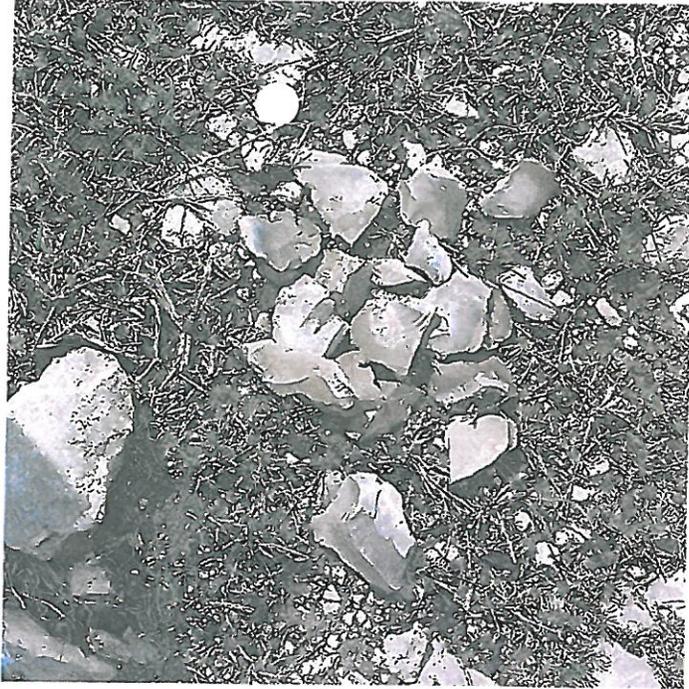


Figure 5. Two piles flakes discarded by relic hunters at 41BX901.

Charlotte Barrett (DSD)

From: Roger McGuire [RMcGuire@walkerglass.com]
Sent: Monday, October 21, 2013 9:57 AM
To: Charlotte Barrett (DSD)
Subject: Re: [INCONNU] - Lunch presentation
Attachments: DSD logo.bmp

December 4th looks good for me also.

Roger McGuire AHC

On Oct 18, 2013, at 3:47 PM, "Charlotte Barrett (DSD)" <Charlotte.Barrett@sanantonio.gov> wrote:

Good afternoon,

I took a quick poll of some Development Services Department supervisors, and several were interested in your presentation.

This might also be something we can offer to contractors and developers who we have on an extensive e-mail list. We have Lunchtime Learning sessions 2 Wednesdays per month, and I'd like to see if you could make your presentation on December 4. With the holidays and some major trainings going on, this is the earliest we can get the Training Rooms reserved. If we can't reserve that date, we would have to put the training off until January.

Let me know what you think. Thanks!

Charlotte Barrett, MA

Special Projects Manager

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Please take a moment and tell us how we are doing by taking our survey:

<http://www.sanantonio.gov/dsd/survey.asp>

Visit our website at <http://www.sanantonio.gov/dsd/>

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