

**INTENSIVE CULTURAL RESOURCES SURVEY OF THE  
REPUBLIC OAKS PROJECT AREA,  
BEXAR COUNTY, TEXAS**

Prepared for

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SWCA Cultural Resources Report No. 11-38

February 7, 2011

## ABSTRACT

On behalf of Velma Development, LTD, SWCA Environmental Consultants (SWCA) conducted an intensive cultural resources survey of the Republic Oaks project area, located in Bexar County, about 7 miles southeast of downtown San Antonio, Texas. The project area is 62 acres in size, with approximately 1,280 feet of frontage along W. W. White Road and 1,240 feet of frontage along S. E. Loop 410.

Cultural resource investigations were conducted to satisfy the requirements of the San Antonio Historic Preservation Office (HPO) per the City of San Antonio Historic Preservation and Design Section of the Unified Development Code (Article 6 35-630 to 35-634). These investigations included a background archival review and an intensive pedestrian survey with subsurface investigations designed to identify any potentially significant prehistoric or historic cultural resources which may be affected by the project.

The background review revealed that two archaeological surveys have been previously conducted within portions of the project area, and that no previously recorded sites are located within the project area. However, two previously recorded sites, 41BX176 and 41BX596, are within 100 meters of the property, and three more are recorded within the 1-mile search radius (41BX360, 41BX361, and 41BX362). In addition, two previously conducted archaeological surveys are located within 1 mile of the project area.

Prior disturbances within the 62-acre project area include vegetation clearing, transmission line construction, two-track road and fence construction, and modern construction debris deposits. An unnamed tributary of Salado Creek flows through a small portion of the project area near its center. The project area occupies upland terraces adjacent to Salado Creek and the eroded floodplain of its tributary.

SWCA's investigations consisted of an intensive pedestrian survey with subsurface investigations within the project area. A total of 32 shovel tests were excavated in settings that were assessed as having potential for buried cultural resources. This survey exceeded the Texas Historical Commission's survey standards, which require a minimum of one shovel test per two acres, or 31 for a project of this size. No significant cultural materials were identified on the surface, or within any of the subsurface investigations conducted within the 62-acre project area. Overall, SWCA's intensive archaeological survey determined that no cultural resources will be affected by any construction activities within the project area. SWCA recommends no further archaeological investigations.

## INTRODUCTION

On behalf of Velma Development, LTD, SWCA Environmental Consultants (SWCA) conducted an intensive cultural resources survey of the 62-acre Republic Oaks project area, located in Bexar County, about 7 miles southeast of downtown San Antonio, Texas (Figure 1).

Cultural resource investigations were conducted to satisfy the requirements of the San Antonio Historic Preservation Office (HPO) per the City of San Antonio Historic Preservation and Design Section of the Unified Development Code (Article 6 35-630 to 35-634). These investigations included a background archival review and an intensive pedestrian survey with subsurface investigations. The purpose of the work was to locate and identify all prehistoric and historic archaeological sites in the project area, establish vertical and horizontal site boundaries as appropriate with regard to the project area, and evaluate the significance and eligibility of any site recorded within the property for designation as a State Archeological Landmark (SAL). SWCA archaeologists Mary Jo Galindo and Christina Nielsen conducted the fieldwork on January 21, 2011.

## DEFINITION OF STUDY AREA

Located in southeast Bexar County, Texas, the project area is 2 miles north-northeast of the intersection of Interstate Highway (IH) 37 and S. E. Loop 410. The project area consists of an irregularly-shaped 62-acre parcel that is bordered to the west by golf course, and to the east by WW White Road and S.E. Loop 410 (Figure 2). The 62-acre parcel is mostly heavily wooded, with the exception of a cleared transmission line corridor that runs north/south across the center of the project area. A two-track road parallels the project area's entire western boundary. Modern con-

struction debris piles (concrete fragments, bedsprings, fencing material, metal beverage cans with pull tabs, paint cans, etc.) were noted in numerous locales, particularly along the road, the transmission line corridor, and the unnamed tributary of Salado Creek. These debris piles appear to represent episodes of illegal dumping in accessible places. A tributary's headwaters are near the center of the project area, and the waterway continues south for approximately 200 m before exiting the project area at the golf course. At the time of survey the tributary was dry.

## ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The underlying geology of the project area is mapped as Holocene-era Fluvial terrace deposits (Fisher 1983). These terrace deposits consist of predominately gravel, limestone, dolomite, and chert, with sand, silt, and clay. Most low terrace deposits along entrenched streams are above flood level (Fisher 1983).

Three types of soil are mapped in the project area: Lewisville silty clay, Karnes clay loam, and Frio clay loam (Taylor et al. 1991:Map Sheet 64 and 72). Approximately 62.5 percent of the project area is mapped as Lewisville silty clay, which occur on nearly level, broad terraces along tributaries of the San Antonio River. The surface layer is a silty clay or light clay, 24 inches thick. The underlying layer consists of brown silty clay, 20 inches thick (Taylor et al. 1991:25).

Karnes clay loam comprises about 37 percent of the project area. Karnes clay loam is eroded with 3 to 5 percent slopes, and occurs as short convex slopes between terraces and along deeply entrenched drainages. The surface layer is a clay loam, 15–20 inches thick. The underlying layer consists of brown clay and is 18 inches thick (Taylor et al. 1991:22).

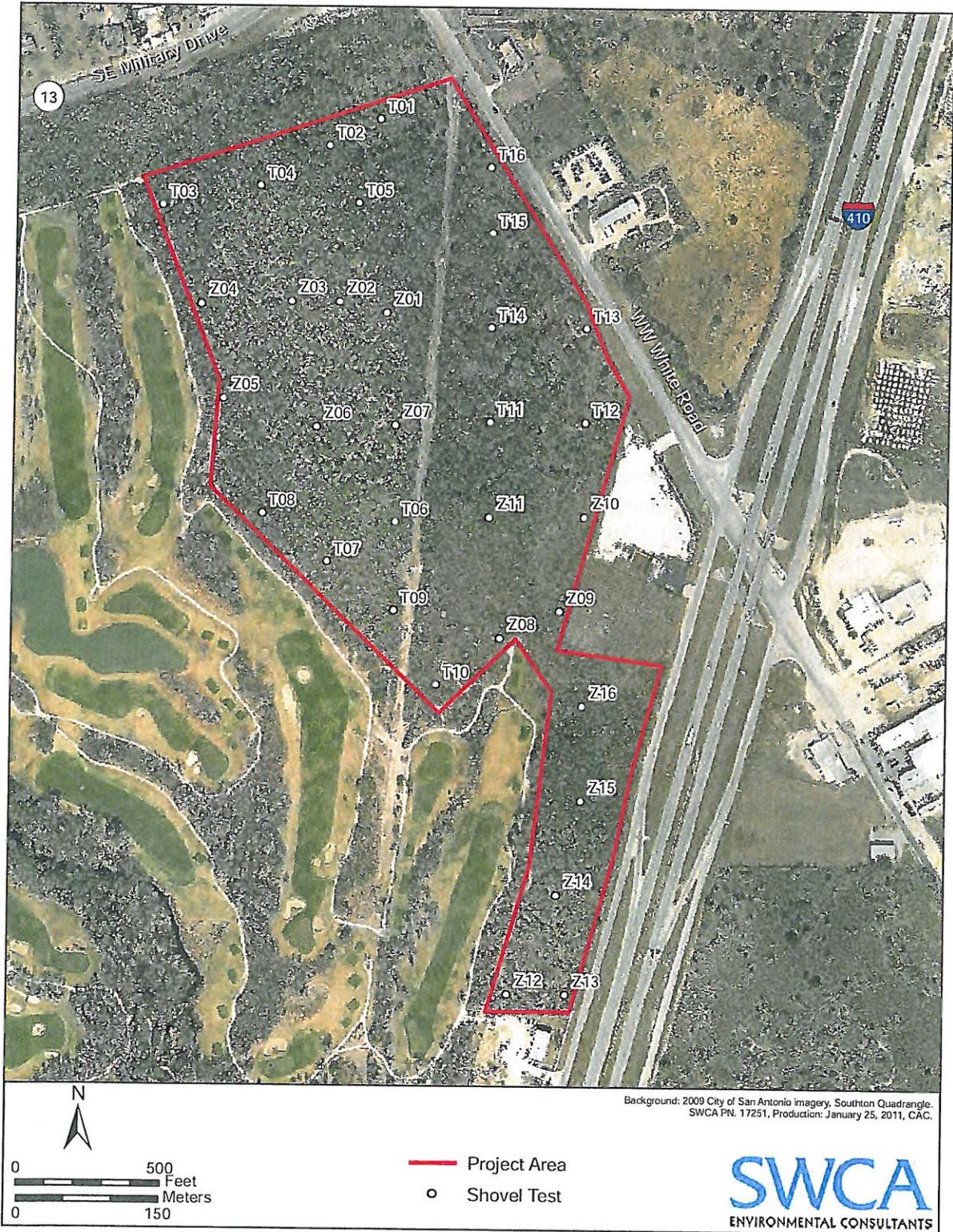


Figure 2. Survey results map.

## RESULTS

### *BACKGROUND REVIEW*

The background review revealed that two archaeological surveys have been previously conducted within portions of the project area, and that no previously recorded sites are located within the project area. However, two previously recorded sites, 41BX176 and 41BX596, are within 100 m of the property boundary and three more are within the 1-mile search radius (41BX360, 41BX361, and 41BX362). In addition, two previously conducted archaeological surveys are located within 1 mile of the project area.

In 1999, an area survey was conducted by the Center for Archaeological Research at the University of Texas at San Antonio (CAR-UTSA), on behalf of the San Antonio Water System (SAWS) under Permit No. 378 (Snively et al. 1984). The boundary of this survey encompasses roughly the southern half, or approximately 40 percent of the Republic Oaks project area. During this survey, site 41BX596 was recorded approximately 30 m south of the Republic Oaks project area (Snively et al. 1984:7). Also encompassed by this survey area was site 41BX176, which is located about 107 m southwest of the Republic Oaks project area. Both of these sites are now within the boundaries of the adjacent golf course.

An additional area survey was conducted along Salado Creek from S. E. Military Drive southward, on behalf of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in 1977 (Atlas 2011). This survey overlaps a thin swath of the project area along its central southwestern border, just north of the recorded location of site 41BX596. No further information is available for this survey.

A linear survey was conducted along S. E. Loop 410 on behalf of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in 1986 (Atlas 2011). This survey is adjacent to the property's southeastern border. No further information is available for this survey.

Finally, a linear survey was conducted in 1983 on behalf of the EPA and the Texas Department of Water Resources (Atlas 2011). This survey paralleled the left (north) bank of Salado Creek and passed within about 100 m southwest of the Republic Oaks project area. No further information is available for this survey.

### PREVIOUSLY RECORDED ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

Two previously recorded sites, 41BX596 and 41BX176 and are within 100 m of the Republic Oaks project area and three more are within 1 mile (41BX360, 41BX361, and 41BX362).

Site 41BX596 is a small (30×80 m) surficial prehistoric lithic scatter that is located approximately 30 m south of the Republic Oaks project area (Snively et al. 1984:7). Artifacts observed on the surface included lithic debitage, land snail shell, fresh water mussel shell fragments, and burned rock fragments. Shovel testing revealed no buried components. No recommendations regarding the sites eligibility for inclusion to the NRHP or for designation as an SAL were recorded; however, no further work was recommended (Snively et al. 1984:7).

Site 41BX176 is a disturbed prehistoric human burial consisting of at least three individuals with grave goods that is located about 107 m southwest of the Republic Oaks project area (Atlas 2011). A two-track road separates the project area from the golf course at this location. The site was recorded in 1972 by

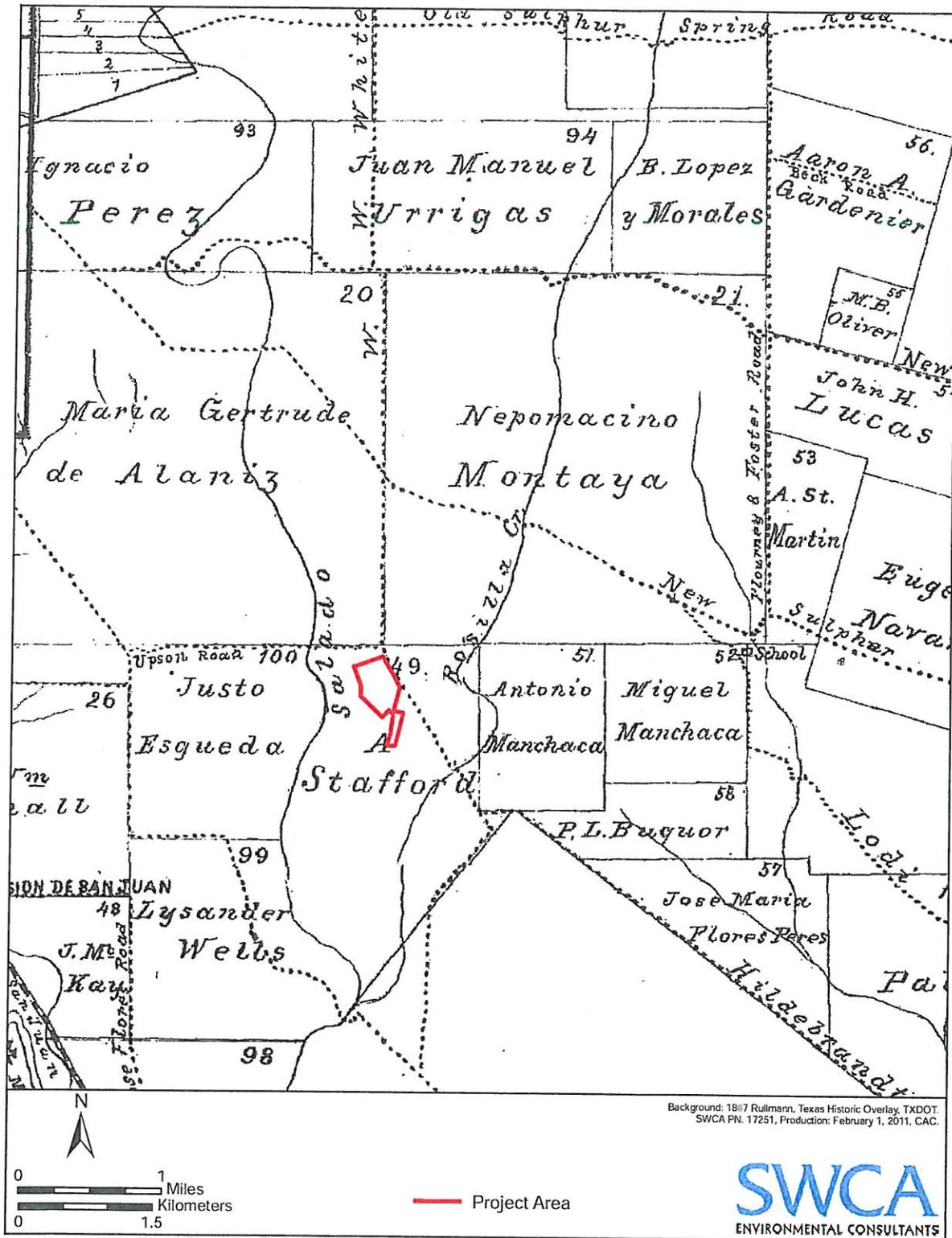


Figure 3. Project area on a Bexar County Rullmann 1887 map.

cluded Tract 49 in Bexar County. The Civil War and Reconstruction destroyed most of his fortune. After the war he moved to Hempstead and later to Boerne, where he died on July 6, 1878 (Muir 2011).

Herndon, like Stafford, probably did not reside at Tract 49; rather the property was one of many owned by him across Texas. Records of Herndon's sale of Tract 49 could not be located.

The trail picks up again when Franz Coreth purchased a portion of the original Stafford Tract from Mary Josephine James on March 12, 1918 (Bexar County Courthouse Records Book 534, Page 122). His estate paid the final installment and a release filed on June 24, 1948 (Bexar County Courthouse Records Book 2553, Page 169).

Coreth's will, filed August 31, 1921, indicates that the family lived near New Braunfels in Comal County on a homestead known as Mission Hill Place (Bexar County Courthouse Records Book 651, Page 158). Thus, of all the known owners of Tract 49, none are thought to have ever inhabited it. Instead, it appears to have been the site of a livestock ranch.

## FIELD SURVEY

On January 21, 2011, two SWCA archaeologists conducted an intensive pedestrian and subsurface survey of the Republic Oaks project area. SWCA excavated a total of 32 shovel tests (ST) within the project area (see Figure 2; Table 1). The depth of these investigations ranged from 25–55 cm below surface (cmbs). Soils within the shovel tests consisted of brown to very dark grayish brown silty clay loam underlain by extremely compact clays.

Prior disturbances within the 62-acre project area include vegetation clearing, transmission line construction, two-track road and fence construction, and modern construction debris

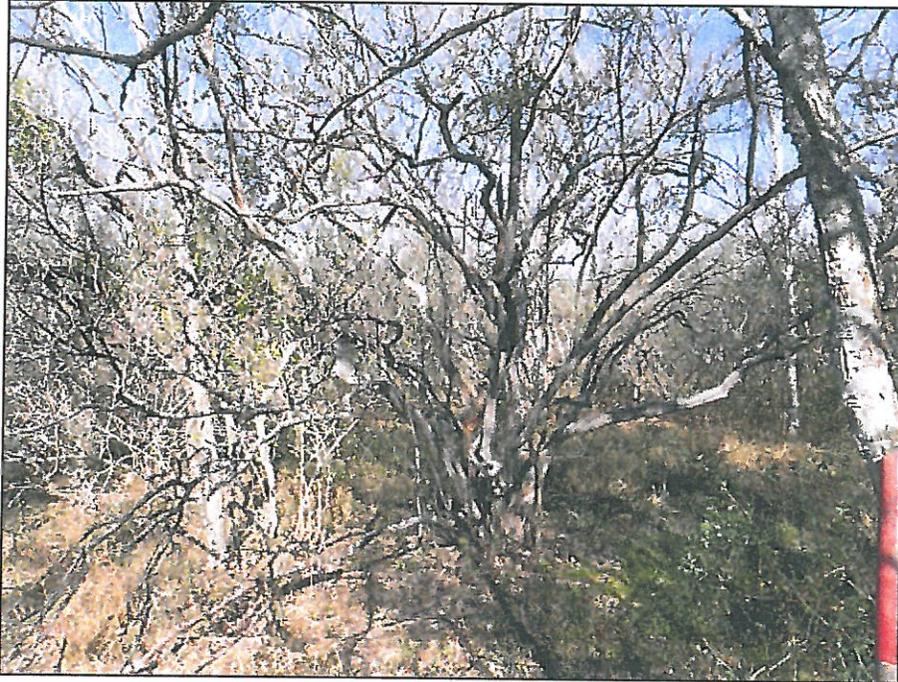
deposits. The project area occupies upland terraces adjacent to Salado Creek and the eroded floodplain of its tributary. An unnamed tributary of Salado Creek flows through a small portion of the project area near its center. The tributary is erosional in nature and large debris and modern trash attest to occasional high energy flooding, although the drainage was dry at the time of survey.

The north/south running transmission line corridor was used to access the property and served as a base line for the survey transects (Figure 5). Occasional piles of modern trash and construction debris (floor tile, roof shingles, concrete and asphalt chunks, etc.) were noted at several locations along the periphery of the transmission corridor (Figure 6). The remainder of the project area, however was wooded with dense understory. In general, surface visibility ranged from extremely low to approximately 30 percent in areas where cleared corridors or erosional profiles offered better views of the ground surface (Figures 7 and 8).

Particular attention was paid to the central portion of the project area, as sites 41BX176 and 41BX596 are documented within 100 m of the project area boundary. STs T07–T10 were excavated in this area to determine if either site extended northeast into the project area. A two-track road and dense vegetation separated the project area from the recorded locations of the sites in the golf course. No cultural materials were observed on the surface in these locations and all shovel tests were negative. It is likely that the construction of the golf course has destroyed much, or all of these previously recorded sites.

In fact, besides modern trash, no cultural materials were encountered on the surface or within any of the 32 shovel tests excavated across the project area.

T13	0-30	10YR3/1	very dark gray	clay	rootlets, roots, microgravel	small drainage to WSW; wooded area; terminated at compact clay
T14	0-20	10YR3/2	very dark grayish brown	silty clay	none	friable; clay content increases with depth
	20-30	10YR3/2	very dark grayish brown	clay	microgravel	terminated at compact clay
T15	0-15	10YR3/2	very dark grayish brown	silty clay	none	friable; clay content increases with depth
	15-25	10YR3/2	very dark grayish brown	clay	microgravel	terminated at compact clay
T16	0-30	10YR3/2	very dark grayish brown	silty clay	rootlets and roots	push piles with modern trash nearby
	30-35	10YR3/3	dark brown	silty clay	microgravel	mottled with 10YR5/6 clay; terminated at compact sticky clay
Z01	0-45	10YR4/4	dark yellowish brown	silty clay	roots	mature and sapling deciduous trees with grassy understory; terminated at compact clay
Z02	0-35	10YR4/4	dark yellowish brown	silty clay	roots	mature and sapling deciduous trees with grassy understory
	35-45	10YR4/4	dark yellowish brown	clay	roots	terminated at compact clay
Z03	0-40	10YR4/4	dark yellowish brown	silty clay	roots	mature and sapling deciduous trees with grassy understory; terminated at compact clay
Z04	0-45	10YR5/3	brown	silty clay loam	rootlets, roots, microgravel	adjacent to golf course; same vegetation with thicker under brush
	45-55	10YR6/2	light brownish gray	silty clay	roots	terminated at compact clay
Z05	0-35	10YR4/4	dark yellowish brown	silty clay	roots	10 m east of 2-track separating golf course from project area; terminated at compact clay
Z06	0-40	10YR4/4	dark yellowish brown	silty clay	roots	same vegetation; terminated at compact clay
Z07	0-40	10YR4/4	dark yellowish brown	silty clay	roots	same vegetation; terminated at compact clay
Z08	0-40	10YR4/4	dark yellowish brown	silty clay	roots	same vegetation with thicker under brush; terminated at compact clay
Z09	0-40	10YR4/4	dark yellowish brown	clay	roots	same vegetation; opposite side of unnamed tributary from Z08; terminated at compact clay
Z10	0-35	10YR4/4	dark yellowish brown	clay	roots	Eastern edge of APE; mesquite, huisache, cactus, grass, and bushes; terminated at compact clay
Z11	0-30	10YR4/4	dark yellowish brown	clay	roots	persimmon, oak, and elm; terminated at a large root
Z12	0-45	10YR5/3	brown	silty clay loam	roots	mesquite, huisache, cactus, grass, and bushes; terminated at compact clay
Z13	0-40	10YR5/3	brown	silty clay	roots	same vegetation as Z12; terminated at compact clay
Z14	0-35	10YR4/4	dark yellowish brown	silty clay	roots	elm, agarito, spiny bushes, grass, and cactus; terminated at compact clay
Z15	0-40	10YR4/4	dark yellowish brown	silty clay	roots	elm, oak, persimmon, grass; terminated at compact clay
Z16	0-45	10YR4/4	dark yellowish brown	silty clay loam	roots	elm, oak, persimmon, grass; terminated at compact clay



**Figure 7.** Vegetation in the project area from ST Z02, facing west.



**Figure 8.** Unnamed tributary to Salado Creek between STs Z08 and Z09, facing north.

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# TRANSMITTAL

<b>To:</b> Development Services.	<b>From:</b> John Adkins
<b>Attn:</b> Kay Hinds	<b>Date:</b> February 10, 2011
<b>Address:</b> 1901 S. Alamo San Antonio, TX 78204	<b>cc:</b> File
<b>Re:</b> Republic Oaks MDP	<b>MDP#</b> 003-11
	<b>KFW Job #:</b> 205-03-01
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>For Review &amp; Comment</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>For Your Records</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Preliminary</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Please Respond</b>	

**Comments:**

- Copy of Cultural Resources Survey

Kay,

Here is a copy of the Cultural Resources Survey for the Republic Oaks MDP. If you have any questions please let us know.

Thank you,

John