



**Cultural Resource Investigation
of the proposed
Horse Creek Hills Subdivision Tract
Broadwater County, Montana.**

Report prepared for:

Allied Engineering,
Bozeman

By:

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Introduction

Allied Engineering, Bozeman, contracted GCM Services, Inc., of Butte, to provide a cultural resources assessment of a tract of about 435 acres owned by 71 Ranch LP. The tract is being developed as the Horse Creek Hills subdivision and the cultural resources review was done in fulfillment of part of the Broadwater County subdivision review process.

The legal description of the approximate 435-acre development is: North 1/2; North 1/2 of the Southwest 1/4; and the Northeast 1/4 of the Southwest 1/4 Quarter of Section 31, Township 9 North, Range 2 East, Principal Meridian Montana, Broadwater County, Montana. The subject property is currently vacant land.

GCM Services conducted a pedestrian survey of the 435-acre tract on November 4, 2021. The field crew consisted of archaeologists David Ferguson, Andrew McElroy and Viktor Kujawa. The cultural resource inspection was carried at a sampling level. Pedestrian transects covered roughly 250 acres of the parcel. Included were all drainages, ridge tops, and terraces in the tract. Excluded were previously cultivated areas and broad alluvial slopes with poor soil development and minimal potential for the preservation of significant archaeological remains. In short, the highest probability areas for archaeological site preservation or occurrence were inspected.

Environment

The tract is located on the east shore of Canyon Ferry Reservoir within the relatively dry alluvial fan along the west slope of the Big Belt Mountain range. The study area includes small linear ridges and a couple shallow drainages. Soils are characterized as alluvial silts and decomposing bedrock and related outcrops, principally of limestone. The predominant geologic unit that is exposed along the west shore and within most of the project areas is defined as undivided sedimentary rocks of Miocene and Oligocene origin (Reynolds and Brandt 2005; Robinson 1963), overlain at slightly higher elevations by pediment gravels, generally undivided, of Pleistocene and Pliocene age.

The soils on the east side of the reservoir are generally coarse, granular platy sediments derived from weathered limestone and shale. Pebble-sized alluvial gravels are abundant. Beds of sand are found near the current and ancestral creek channels where overbank events have occurred, probably on a seasonal basis. The study area lies at about 3,850-4,084 feet in elevation. The only perennial or intermittent drainages are Confederate Gulch Creek and Horse Creek which confluence on the south side of the tract. The other drainages in the study areas are ephemeral.

Vegetation in the tract consists of dry grasslands (xeric grasses, prickly pear, sagebrush), with scattered Rocky Mountain juniper in the ephemeral drainages and willow in the adjacent Confederate Gulch drainage bottom. The primary vegetative ground cover is the micro-community known as "living crust" which is comprised of lichens, mosses, micro fungi, bacteria, algae and other organisms. "Club Moss" and "Dense Spikemoss" as well as possibly other species of *selaginella* are one of the main constituents of this phenomenon

and effectively coat the ground in some locations. Shrubs including rhus, rabbitbrush and silver sage are present along with prickly pear and barrel cactus, blue grama, needle-and-thread, prairie junegrass and western wheatgrass. The environmental setting of a portion of the tract has been significantly altered by past cultivation. Introduced weeds and grasses (crested wheatgrass and cheatgrass brome) are prevalent.

Methods

The Montana State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) made a cultural records search of the area on November 5, 2019. Two historic sites had been recorded in the file search area, a ditch, 24BW1074, and a historic site that is off-project (24BW0277, on Bureau of Reclamation land).

The project tract was walked on November 4, with a return trip to retake some photos on November 6, 2021. Potential historic cultural site types anticipated in the tract included homesteads and ditches. Potential prehistoric cultural site types anticipated in the tract included surface stone features, such as tipi rings, rock cairns, and rock alignments, as well as lithic scatters and possibly camp sites.

Results

The remains of a ditch, possibly 24BW1074, and a homestead / farmstead were recorded. The homestead consists of foundations made of concrete and local aggregate cobbles, scattered lumber and a few farm implements. It appears to be a 1920s-1930s occupation. No standing structures remain. The county road bisects the site. The homestead location is on a 164-acre parcel patented by John Thomas in 1876, Bureau of Land Management serial number MTMTAA 001114 (GLO), but the farmstead remains clearly postdate that filing by about 50 years. Additional research would be required to assign a name to the homestead remains.

The ditch, possibly 24BW1074, is no longer in use. It was a private, local system that diverted water from Horse Creek through the homestead site to irrigate a few acres before returning to the Missouri River. Currently of course, the ditch disappears into Canyon Ferry Reservoir a few hundred yards from the homestead. The extant length of the ditch from point of diversion to the reservoir is about 3200 feet (1066 yards).

One broken projectile point of probable Late Archaic affiliation (3,500 years before present (BP) to 1,800 years BP) was observed but not collected. It is a side notched style, made of mottled pink quartzite.

Conclusions

None of the cultural resources located meet the criteria required for eligibility to the National Register of Historic Places. None of the cultural resources located possess unique or exceptional cultural or intrinsic values, and none of the sites possess potential for further scientific research.

It is concluded that the proposed Horse Creek Hills subdivision would not impact any important or significance cultural (archaeological, historical or paleontological) resources.

A formal report has not as yet been prepared. A formal report, if required, would include an updated SHPO records search, a review of the sites in the SHPO database, an expanded historic context, Additional research on the homestead site and the preparation of Montana Cultural Resource Inventory System (CRIS) site records for the ditch and homestead, and an isolated find form for the projectile point fragment.

Below are a location map and tract overview photographs.

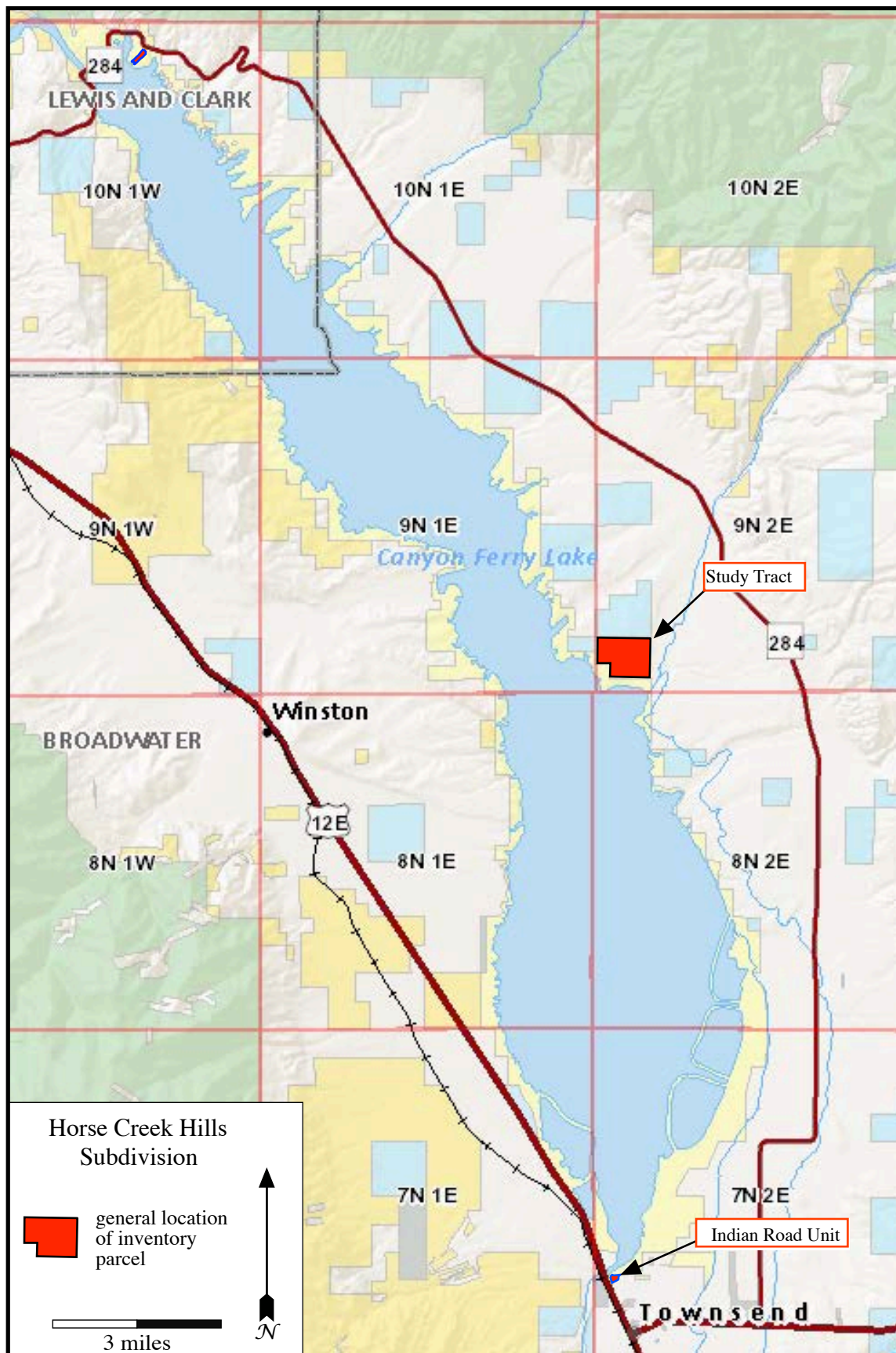


Figure 1. General location of the Horse Creek Hills Subdivision tract.



Figure 2. Tract overview looking south.



Figure 3. Tract overview looking northwest.

References

General Land Office (GLO)

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