

Phase I, II and III Archaeological and Historical Investigations Reconstruction of U.S. Route 7

New Milford, Connecticut

The Connecticut Department of Transportation proposed and implemented a series of improvements to a five-mile-long portion of the U.S. Route 7 corridor in New Milford between the Brookfield town line on the south and State Route 67 on the north. Because the improvements involve Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) funding, the project fell under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, which requires that significant archaeological and historical resources be identified and that impact to such resources be avoided or mitigated in accordance with Section 106. AHS conducted Phase I, II and III archaeological investigations to mitigate project-related impacts to several archaeological sites determined to meet the National Register eligibility criteria.



Topsoil Removal at Site 96-134

Over the course of this multi-year project, more than 1000 test pits were excavated and 19 archaeological sites were identified in the impact areas. Twelve of the sites were subjected to Phase II intensive testing, which required the excavation of an additional 296 test pits and 14 one-by-one-meter units. Four of the sites were determined to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Because no prudent or feasible design alternatives existed for avoiding these resources and *in situ* preservation was not warranted, a Phase III Data Recovery program was developed and implemented at each of the four sites.

The three prehistoric sites investigated provided information primarily about Late Archaic period activity along the Still River, although one feature was dated to the Early-Middle Archaic transition. The historic period site is a 19th-century blacksmith shop. In addition to these multi-level archaeological investigations, two historic cemeteries were

investigated and state-level building forms were updated or prepared for historic buildings in the project area.