

REPLACEMENT OF CRANBERRY HIGHWAY MILLPOND BRIDGE AND DAM OVER AGAWAM RIVER, WAREHAM, MA

Under a task-order contract with Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT), AHS conducted an archaeological reconnaissance/site assessment survey of the replacement of the historic Cranberry Highway Dam and the stone-lined herring run integrated into the dam, which carries the Cranberry Highway over the Agawam River. The dam and herring run are contributing resources within the historic Agawam Village. Since the 17th century, the towns of Plymouth and Wareham have maintained an annual agreement to maintain a fishway here and to auction the rights to collect fish. AHS's role in this project was to conduct intensive documentary research into the dam and fish run, as well as historic resources once in the project area, such as mills and residences, and to assess the National Register of Historic Places eligibility of the extant historic resources. The dam and associated mill complex, and the 1000-foot-long stone-lined fish run, were photo-documented. An archaeological assessment of a proposed wetland replication area was also conducted to determine the potential of this part of the project area for containing significant archaeological resources. The herring run was constructed ca. 1836 by Samuel T. Tisdale, around the time he built the Agawam Nail Company, which formerly operated on the site. Tisdale was an early innovator in American pisciculture. The project involved extensively consultation with the Wareham Herring Warden and Assistant Herring Warden, as well as the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe. Ethnographic data on herring collection and preparation, and the importance attached to the fish, was gathered from written sources and interviews. The herring run complex was assessed as a National Register-eligible Traditional Cultural Property based on its cultural and historical importance to the local Mashpee Wampanoag tribe and to the non-Native Wareham-area population. The Massachusetts Historical Commission has concurred with this assessment.

