

Phase IB/Intensive (Locational) Survey Nemasket River Drainage Project Middleborough, Massachusetts

AHS completed an Intensive (Locational) Archaeological Survey of three proposed detention-basin areas on the western side of the Nemasket River in Middleborough, Massachusetts, under an on-call contract with MassDOT, Highway Division. The survey also included an area affected by the replacement of a fish-ladder retaining wall. The survey areas were in an area of high archaeological sensitivity, particularly for pre-Contact and post-Contact Native American archaeological sites. A number of large multi-component archaeological sites indicate the Nemasket River was an important resource for Native groups, and the Middleborough portion of the river is known to have housed a Contact-period Native American village. Later, industrial use of the river side dominated.

AHS excavated 86 shovel test pits in the detention-basin areas; the fish-ladder area was too disturbed to warrant testing. Pre-Contact Native American artifacts, including a Late Archaic period Orient projectile point and a Woodland period Levanna point, plus lithic flakes from the manufacture and maintenance of stone tools were identified in all three basins, but none in intact stratigraphic contexts. AHS concluded that intensive and extensive ground disturbance had destroyed the potential for the detention-basin areas to qualify for the listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

This project involved coordination with the Mashpee and Gay Head Aquinnah tribes.

