ARCHAEOLOGICAL STUDIES IN THE APPALACHIAN CORRIDOR H PROJECT AREA: PHASE IA ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT WITHIN BLACKWATER AVOIDANCE ALTERNATIVE 2, TUCKER COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA

STATE PROJECT X347-H-55.68 00
FEDERAL PROJECT ACNH-0484(290)

JUNE 2024

PREPARED FOR

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Archaeological Studies in the Appalachian Corridor H Project Area: Phase Ia Archaeological Assessment within Blackwater Avoidance Alternative 2, Tucker County, West Virginia

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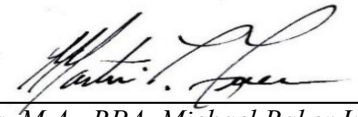

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ABSTRACT

Because important new information and circumstances relevant to environmental concerns have occurred within the Corridor H project area since the approval and circulation of the 2007 SFEIS, the West Virginia Department of Transportation, Division of Highways (WVDOH) and FHWA have determined that a second SEIS should be prepared and for it to be consistent with FHWA regulations (23 CFR 771.139a). The proposed action will be to prepare a SEIS to the 2007 SEIS. The purpose of the new SEIS is to evaluate two alignment alternatives developed within each of two 1500-foot-wide study corridors.

Study Corridor 1 includes the 2007 SFEIS-identified preferred alternative, referred to as the Refined ROPA (R-ROPA). A Phase Ia and Ib archaeological survey was completed by Michael Baker International (Michael Baker) within the R-ROPA in 2023 and the results were presented in *Phase I Archaeological Investigations for the Parsons-To-Davis Project, Appalachian Corridor H, Tucker County, West Virginia* (Robinson et al. 2023). Those efforts identified, and/or reidentified, five historic period archaeological resources, all dating to the late 19th – early 20th century. These included 46TU500 and 46TU501, identified and investigated within the APE of the R-ROPA/Parsons-to-Davis Mainline and three additional sites identified within the Truck Route APE (i.e., 46TU499, 46TU502, and 46TU503). None of the identified sites were recommended eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). No further work was recommended for any of these sites. It was also recommended that no further archaeological investigations were warranted within the R-ROPA archaeological APE. In a letter dated June 28, 2023, the West Virginia State Historic Preservation Office (WVSHPO) concurred with these findings.

Study Corridor 2, the Blackwater Avoidance Corridor, is proposed to be developed north of the Blackwater Avoidance corridor identified in the 2007 SFEIS. This alignment is referred to as Blackwater Avoidance Alternative-2 (BAA-2) and is the subject of the current study. The BAA-2 encompasses a roughly 17.9 km (11.1 mi)-long right-of-way (including easements) with an archaeological APE measuring 229 m (750 ft) in width on either side of the proposed BAA-2 project centerline. In its entirety, the BAA-2 encompasses an area measuring approximately 1,027.2 ha [2,538.4 ac]. At the request of the WVDOH, Michael Baker conducted a preliminary Phase Ia archaeological assessment within the BAA-2 study area to 1) identify areas of relative potential for containing buried prehistoric and historic period archaeological resources, 2) to produce refined probability and constraints mapping based on the results of a walk-over/pedestrian reconnaissance level survey, a review of previous investigations, and a review of historic mapping/archival resources, and to 3) make recommendations for potential Phase Ib archaeological survey, if the BAA-2 is selected to move forward.

The Phase Ia archaeological investigations revealed that the area containing the proposed BAA-2 study area has generally undergone considerable disturbance, including extensive and substantial expanses of clear cutting/tree removal, strip and/or contour mining, and reclamation. Evidence of said disturbances is particularly apparent on or near the western and eastern portions of the study area. In these areas of the APE, the potential to contain intact, unaltered soils that would have been available to aboriginal populations and/or later historic settlement, and preserved *in situ,* is considered low. In contrast, areas of higher probability for both prehistoric and/or historic potential remain extant along

watercourses such as Long Run, Snyder Run, Pendleton Creek, as well as the entirety of that portion of the study area between the unincorporated community of Benbush in the west and Pendleton Creek in the east. Historic topographic mapping indicates substantial historic use of the areas surrounding the communities of Benbush and Williams.

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION AND PROJECT LOCATION

The Appalachian Economic Development Highway, generally referred to as Corridor H, was authorized in 1965 by the U.S. Congress. The full extent of Corridor H begins in the west from its terminus at Interstate 79 (I-79) in Weston, West Virginia (WV) and traverses east to I-81 in the vicinity of Strasburg, Virginia (VA). The WV portion of Corridor H begins on the west at the I-79/US 33 Interchange in Weston and extends for approximately 222 km (138 mi) east to the WV/VA Stateline. Between the 1970's and 1990, approximately 52 km (32 mi) of Corridor H, from Weston to Elkins, was constructed and opened to traffic. In 2000, the remaining 171 km (106 mi) of Corridor H, from Elkins on the west to the WV/VA Stateline on the east, was divided into nine (9) separate projects of varying lengths. Seven (7) of those projects have since been constructed and opened to traffic, and one - the Kerens-to-Parsons Project - is currently under construction.

Because important new information and circumstances relevant to environmental concerns have occurred since the approval and circulation of the 2007 SFEIS (Michael Baker 2007), the WVDOH and FHWA have determined that a second SEIS should be prepared and for it to be consistent with FHWA regulations (23 CFR 771.139a). The subject action will be to prepare a SEIS to the 2007 SFEIS. This SEIS will evaluate two alignment alternatives developed within each of two 1500-foot-wide study corridors (Figure 1). Study Corridor 1 one includes the 2007 SFEIS-identified preferred alternative, referred to here as the Refined ROPA (R-ROPA). Study Corridor 2, the Blackwater Avoidance Corridor, will be developed north of the Blackwater Avoidance corridor identified in the 2007 SFEIS. The alignment that has been developed within this corridor is referred to as Blackwater Avoidance Alternative-2 (BAA-2), the subject focus of this report.

Extending from its western terminus with Corridor H at Mackeyville Road (CR 219/4) the mainline of the BAA-2 is approximately 17.9 km (11.1 mi)-long, terminating at an interchange with Corridor H (US 48/WV 93 just northeast of Davis, WV (Figure 2.11). BAA-2 also includes an approximately 1.15 km (0.715 mi)-long connector road extending westward from the mainline to US 219. It connects to US 219 with an at-grade intersection north of downtown Thomas. BAA-2 contains many important design elements. Each of these is discussed below.

Both the R-ROPA and BAA-2 utilize the same design from the project's western terminus in the vicinity of Mackeyville until just east of the Tucker County High School (TCHS) connector. At its western terminus, the BAA-2 will connect with Corridor H's Kerens to Parsons Project (currently under construction) at Mackeyville Road (CR US 219/4). From that point, BAA-2 climbs Backbone Mountain for approximately 3.2 km (2.0 mi) to a connection with US 219 approximately 91.4 m (300 ft) from TCHS (Mountaineer Way).

BAA-2 and the R-ROPA diverge just east of the TCHS interchange. From this divergence, BAA-2 proceeds to the north-northeast crossing an overhead electric transmission powerline (voltage class 100-161kv), bridges Long Run and continues along a northeasterly course to the Benbush Interchange and bridging Snyder Run.

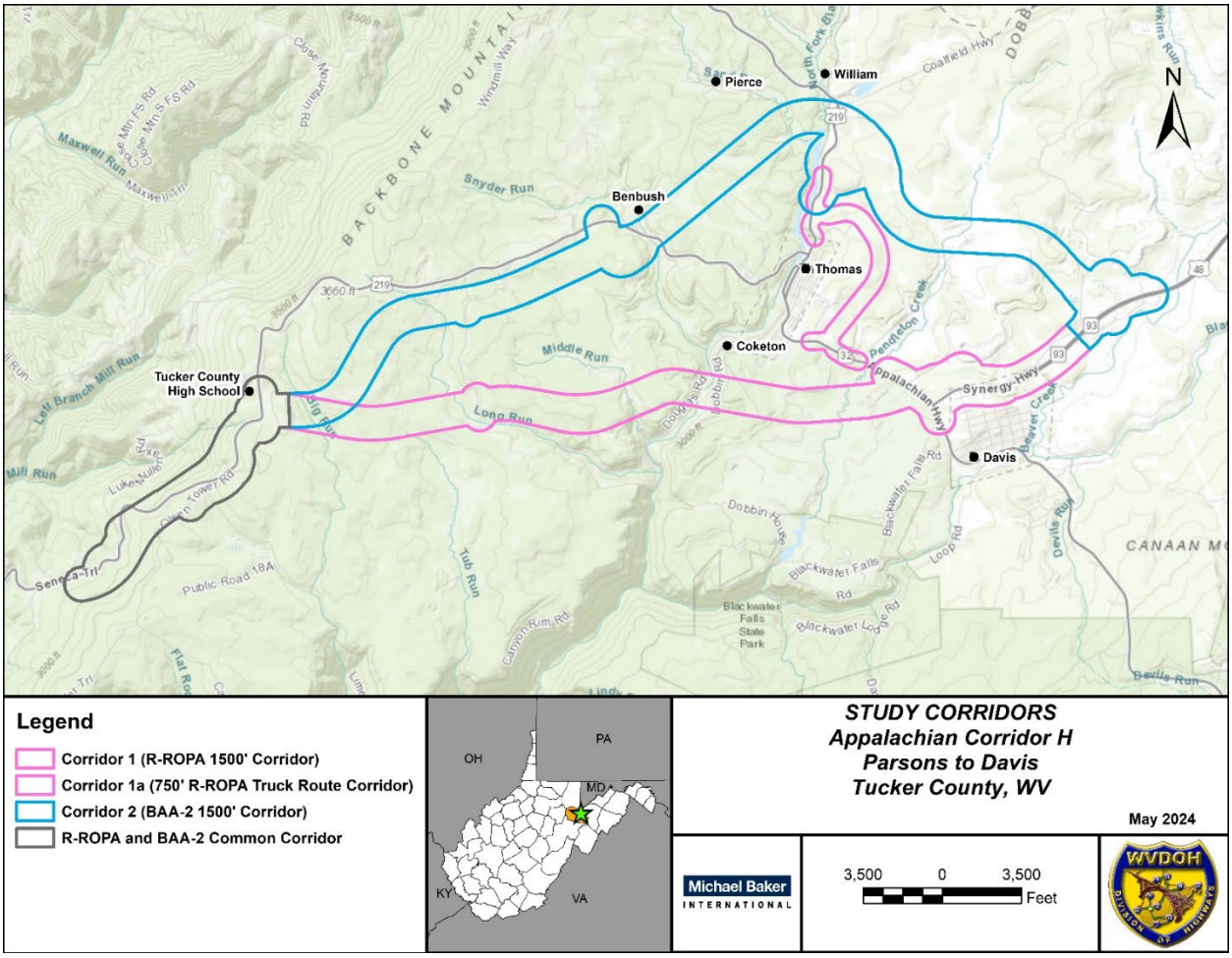

Figure 1: **Parsons-to-Davis Project Archaeological APE (Corridor 1 / R-ROPA) in relation to the Blackwater Avoidance Alternative 2 (Corridor 2 / BAA-2) Archaeological APE as seen on the USGS *Lead Mine, WV* and *Davis, WV* 7.5' Topographic Quadrangles.**

From the eastern end of the Snyder Run bridge (just east of Ben Bush), the alignment proceeds to the northeast bridging an approximate 5.3 ha (13 ac) wetland complex. The alignment continues to the northeast and bridges Sand Run, an important tributary to the Town of Thomas's water supply. BAA-2 then proceeds easterly, bridging both the North Fork of the Blackwater River and US 219 immediately south of the WV 90/US 219 merge point. East of the North Fork of the Blackwater River/US 219 bridge, the BAA-2 proceeds to the southeast for approximately 0.97 km (0.6 mi), to the US 219 Connector. The approximately 1.15 km (0.715 mi)-long, 2 lane connector provides a direct connection from Corridor H to US 219. It connects to US 219 with an at-grade intersection north of downtown Thomas.

From the US 219 Connector, BAA-2 proceeds to the south for approximately 0.4 miles to minimize and avoid impacts to a large wetland complex. It then veers to the east-southeast where it bridges Pendleton Creek and continues to its interchange with US 48/WV 93.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AREA OF POTENTIAL EFFECTS (APE)

This report presents the results of a Phase Ia-level archaeological assessment conducted in February and April 2024 within the archaeological Area of Potential Effect (APE) for the proposed BAA-2 Project Area, Appalachian Corridor H, Tucker County, West Virginia. As indicated above, in its entirety, the BAA-2 encompasses a roughly 17.91 km (11.13 mi)-long right-of-way (including easements) with an archaeological APE measuring 229 m (750 ft) in width on either side of the proposed Project centerline (encompassing approximately 1027.25 ha [2,538.38 ac]). A connector road, the US 219 Connector, joining the BAA-2 with US 219 just north of Thomas, is 1.15 km (0.715 mi) in length (see Figure 1).

The purpose of this Phase Ia archaeological assessment was to identify areas of relative potential within the BAA-2 for containing prehistoric and/or historic archaeological resources, to produce refined probability and constraints mapping based on a review of available historic mapping, a review of previous archaeological investigations, the results of a walk-over/pedestrian reconnaissance-level survey, and to make recommendations for potential Phase Ib archaeological survey, if the BAA-2 is selected to move forward.

As indicated above, the R-ROPA and the BAA-2 utilize the same design from the project's western terminus in the vicinity of Mackeyville until just east of the Tucker County High School (TCHS). That area has already been subjected to a full Phase I archaeological survey and no further archaeological assessment and/or investigation for that portion of the BAA-2 is warranted (e.g., Robinson et al. 2023). Similarly, a small portion of the proposed US 219 Connector overlaps with the proposed Truck Route associated with the R-ROPA project area, and, as such, no additional archaeological assessment is warranted within that overlap area as well (e.g., Robinson et al. 2023).

All work is being conducted in consultation with the WVDOT and other agencies, as appropriate, pursuant to the instructions and intents set forth in Section 101(b)(4) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969; Section 1(3) and 2(b) of Executive Order 11593; 36 CFR Part 800, Protection of Historic Properties, regulations implementing Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, (16 U.S.C. 470f), as amended through 1986; 36 CFR Part 63; Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines (Federal Register 48(190) 44716-44742); West Virginia Title 82, Series 3, Standards and Procedures for Granting Permits to Excavate Archaeological Sites and Unmarked Graves; and Guidelines for Phase I, II, and III Archaeological Investigations and Technical Reports (Trader 2001),

prepared by the West Virginia Division of Culture and History, Historic Preservation Office; and the Programmatic Agreement among the Federal Highway Administration, the West Virginia State Historic Preservation Officer, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation Regarding the Construction of Appalachian Corridor H, Elkins to the West Virginia/Virginia State Line, State Project: X142-H-38.99 C-2; Federal Project: APD-484 (59), in Hardy, Grant, Tucker, and Randolph Counties, West Virginia.

The Section 106 consultation process for the Corridor H project is being conducted under a Programmatic Agreement (PA), which was signed in September 1995. The PA requires compliance with specific sections of the Section 106 regulations that were in effect at the time the PA was signed, e.g., 36 CFR 800.5, which governs the evaluation of effects on historic resources. On May 18, 1999, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation published new Section 106 regulations in the Federal Register. The new regulations became effective on June 17, 1999, and they were subsequently updated January 11, 2001, and August 5, 2004. In guidance accompanying those regulations, the Advisory Council stated that, except in unusual cases, the parties to a PA would be required to comply with the regulations that were in effect when the PA was signed. The only exception recognized by the Council in its guidance was for situations in which a PA referred to the Section 106 regulations generally, without mentioning specific provisions. That exception does not apply here, because the PA for Corridor H requires compliance with specific provisions of the old Section 106 regulations. Therefore, this report has been prepared in accordance with the old Section 106 regulations (i.e., the regulations that were in effect when the PA was signed).

PREVIOUS ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCE EXPECTATIONS

PREVIOUS ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS

Background data, including the general natural and cultural setting, are contained in previous associated documents (e.g., Siemon et al. 1995), and are not repeated in this report. Results of previous archaeological investigations conducted within the Project Area vicinity are also contained in earlier Corridor H-related documents as detailed in Table 1. In addition, five (5) archaeological compliance studies were conducted within a 1.6 km (1.0 mi) radius of the current BAA-2 archaeological APE. These were for wind farms (n=2), a bridge replacement, bridge construction, gas pipeline, and trail construction projects.

TABLE 1: PREVIOUS ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES STUDIES – BAA-2 PROJECT VICINITY

Year	Study Title	SHPO Review and/or Concurrence	Keeper Review and/or Concurrence	USFS Review and/or Concurrence
1991	Cultural Resources Reconnaissance Report – Blackwater Railroad (Monongahela National Forest)	09/08/1997	--	--
1992	Phase II Evaluation of the Davis Coal and Coke Company and Western Maryland Railroad Industrial Complex at Tucker County, West Virginia (Monongahela National Forest)	09/08/1997	--	--
1996	Phase I Archaeological Investigations in the Appalachian Corridor H Project Area: Sections 11 and 12 (Michael Baker)	08/20/1996	--	--
1996	Phase I Archaeological Investigations in the Appalachian Corridor H Project Area: Section 13 (Michael Baker)	09/04/1996	--	--
1996	Phase I Archaeological Investigations in the Appalachian Corridor H Project Area: Section 14 (Michael Baker)	01/14/1997	--	--
1998	Phase II Archaeological Investigations at the Mason Site – Letter Report Management Summary, Section 14 (Michael Baker)	03/12/1998	--	--
1998	Phase II Archaeological Investigations in the Appalachian Corridor H Project Area: Sections 14 (Michael Baker)	10/30/1998	--	--
1999	Phase II Archaeological Investigations in the Appalachian Corridor H Project Area: Sections 13 (Michael Baker)	09/23/1999	--	--
1999	Phase I Archaeological Investigations in the Appalachian Corridor H Project Area, Management Summary Addendum – Sections 11, 12, and 13 (Michael Baker)	11/19/1999	--	--
1999	Appalachian Corridor H Sections 8, 9, 10, 12, and 13 – Additional Cultural Resources Documentation: Resources in Grant and Tucker Counties, West Virginia (Michael Baker)	09/16/1999	--	--
2000	Appalachian Corridor H Sections 8, 9, 10, 12, and 13 – Additional Cultural Resources Documentation: Resources in Grant and Tucker Counties, West Virginia (Michael Baker)	02/15/2000	03/31/2000	--
2001	* Phase I Cultural Resource Management Report, Davis Truss Bridge, Tucker County (WVDOH)	-	-	-
2002	Phase I Archaeological Investigations in the Appalachian Corridor H Project Area Revised Management Summary Battlefield Avoidance Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) Avoidance Alternative Df – New Preferred Alternative, Randolph and Tucker Counties, West Virginia (Michael Baker)	05/07/2002	--	10/22/2002

Year	Study Title	SHPO Review and/or Concurrence	Keeper Review and/or Concurrence	USFS Review and/or Concurrence
2002	Addendum - Phase I Archaeological Investigations in the Appalachian Corridor H Project Area Revised Management Summary Battlefield Avoidance Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) Avoidance Alternative Df – New Preferred Alternative, Randolph and Tucker Counties, West Virginia (Michael Baker)	08/22/2002	--	--
2005	Phase I Archaeological Investigations of Previously Unsurveyed Portions of the Revised Original Preferred Alternative in the Parsons-To-Davis Project, as well as an Associated Truck Route, Appalachian Corridor H, Tucker County, West Virginia (Michael Baker)	02/17/2005	--	--
2005	* Records Search and Preliminary Background Research, Proposed Mount Storm Wind Force Wind Farm, Grant and Tucker Counties, West Virginia (CRA, Inc.)	-	-	-
2008	Phase I-II Archaeological Investigations in the Appalachian Plateaus, Appalachian Corridor H, Randolph, Tucker, and Grant Counties, West Virginia (Michael Baker)	--	--	--
2013	* National Youth Sciences Center Bridge, Tucker County, West Virginia, Phase I Archaeology Abbreviated Technical Report (WVDOH)	-	-	-
2016	Corridor H Project, Kerens to Parsons (Sections 2 and 3), US 219 Corridor to Mackeyville, Tucker County, West Virginia: Phase I Archaeology Survey (Skelly & Loy, Inc.)	02/02/2016	--	--
2016	* Mt. Storm Wind Project, Phase I Archaeological Survey Report, Grant and Tucker Counties, West Virginia (ERM)	-	-	-
2016	* Technical Report, Phase I Archaeological Investigation, Line WB-3 Integrity Project, Preston and Tucker Counties, West Virginia (GAI, Inc.)	-	-	-
2023	Phase I Archaeological Investigations for the Parsons-to-Davis Project, Appalachian Corridor H, Tucker County, West Virginia (Michael Baker)	-	-	-

*denotes previous investigations within 1.6 km (1.0 mi) of the current archaeological APE.

A file search for previously identified archaeological sites within a 1.6 km (1.0 mi) radius of the proposed BAA-2 archaeological APE was conducted using the WVSHPO Interactive GIS Map Viewer to assist in assessing the probability for identifying archaeological sites during current investigations. No previously identified archaeological sites have been recorded within the archaeological APE. Five (5) previously recorded sites are located within a 1.6 km (1.0 mi) radius of the archaeological APE (Table 2).

The five loci possessed historic components consisting of domestic artifact scatters/foundational remains (n=2), industrial foundations (n=2), and a midden. All were situated in upland settings including hilltop (n=2) and hillside/bench (n=1) except for two sites. The Chaffey Mill site (46TU335) is a ca. 1900-1907 sawmill located on the floodplain of the North Fork Blackwater River and 46TU499 is an industrial site located on a terrace of the same river. It appears domestic occupations and farmsteads utilized upland landforms located within the drainage heads or low order tributaries. All the previously recorded historic sites were recommended as not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) apart from 46TU335 that is listed as unevaluated for the NRHP.

TABLE 2: PREVIOUSLY IDENTIFIED ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES WITHIN 1.6 KM (1.0 MI) OF THE APE

Site Number	Site Name	Site Type	Temporal Period	Landform	NRHP Eligibility
46-TU-335	Chaffey Mill	Saw Mill	1900-1907	Floodplain	Not Evaluated
46-TU-499	Concrete Ruins	Industrial	Unassigned	Terrace	Not Eligible
46-TU-501	TA 11	Historic Domestic	1851-1900 1901-1950	Hilltop	Not Eligible
46-TU-502	TA 13	Historic Domestic	1851-1900 1901-1950	Hillside/Bench	Not Eligible
46-TU-503	TA 14	Historic Trash Midden	1851-1900 1901-1950	Hilltop	Not Eligible

PREHISTORIC ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCE EXPECTATIONS

An extensive prehistoric context that includes the overall Corridor H project study area was prepared and presented in the technical appendices to the 1995 ASDEIS (Siemon et al. 1995), and as such, is not repeated in this report. Similarly, a Prehistoric Predictive Model was developed and employed to identify areas of high to medium probability for the presence of prehistoric archaeological sites (Johnson et al. 1994). That model was again applied during preparation of the 2007 SEIS that took into consideration an assortment of potential northern alternatives, inclusive of most of the current BAA-2 study area. In consideration of the BAA-2 specifically, the model test results of the 2007 SEIS, indicate that 40.8 ha (100.9 ac) of high probability areas and 22.1 ha (54.7 ac) of moderate probability areas (combined total of 63 ha [155.6]) are located within the current BAA-2 study area. That is roughly 6% of the total acreage of the BAA-2. The area extending east from Pendleton Creek to its rejoining with US 48/WV 93 is, for the most part, entirely low probability as that portion of the study area has been significantly disturbed through a combination of construction, mining and/or reclamation, as well as by a significant expanse of saturated soils and/or standing water. In contrast, although only a portion of the R-ROPA was considered during the 2007 predictive model assessment of proposed northern alternatives, with only 7.6 ha (18.7 ac) of high probability and 8.3 ha (20.4 ac) of medium probability noted (combined total of 15.8 ha [39.1 ac]), subsequent intensive Phase Ib archeological survey clearly demonstrated that the entire alignment exhibited low potential for encountering prehistoric archaeological resources (i.e., Robinson et al. 2023) (Figure 2 and Figure 3).

HISTORIC ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCE EXPECTATIONS

An extensive historic context that includes the broader Corridor H project area was prepared and presented in the technical appendices to the 1995 ASDEIS (Siemon et al. 1995). That information is not repeated in this document. Additional historic potential within the BAA-2 was further supplemented via a review of available historic mapping that was utilized to plot the locations of potential historic resources. USGS topographic mapping from 1908, 1916, 1921, 1926, 1959, 1967, and 1968 and aerial photographs (Historic Aerials 1956, 1958, 1964, and 1966) were referenced, and identified resources were plotted on BAA-2 study area mapping (Figure 4). The results of that historic mapping review indicate that most of the historic sites were recommended as not eligible for the NRHP apart from 46TU335 that is listed as unevaluated for the NRHP.

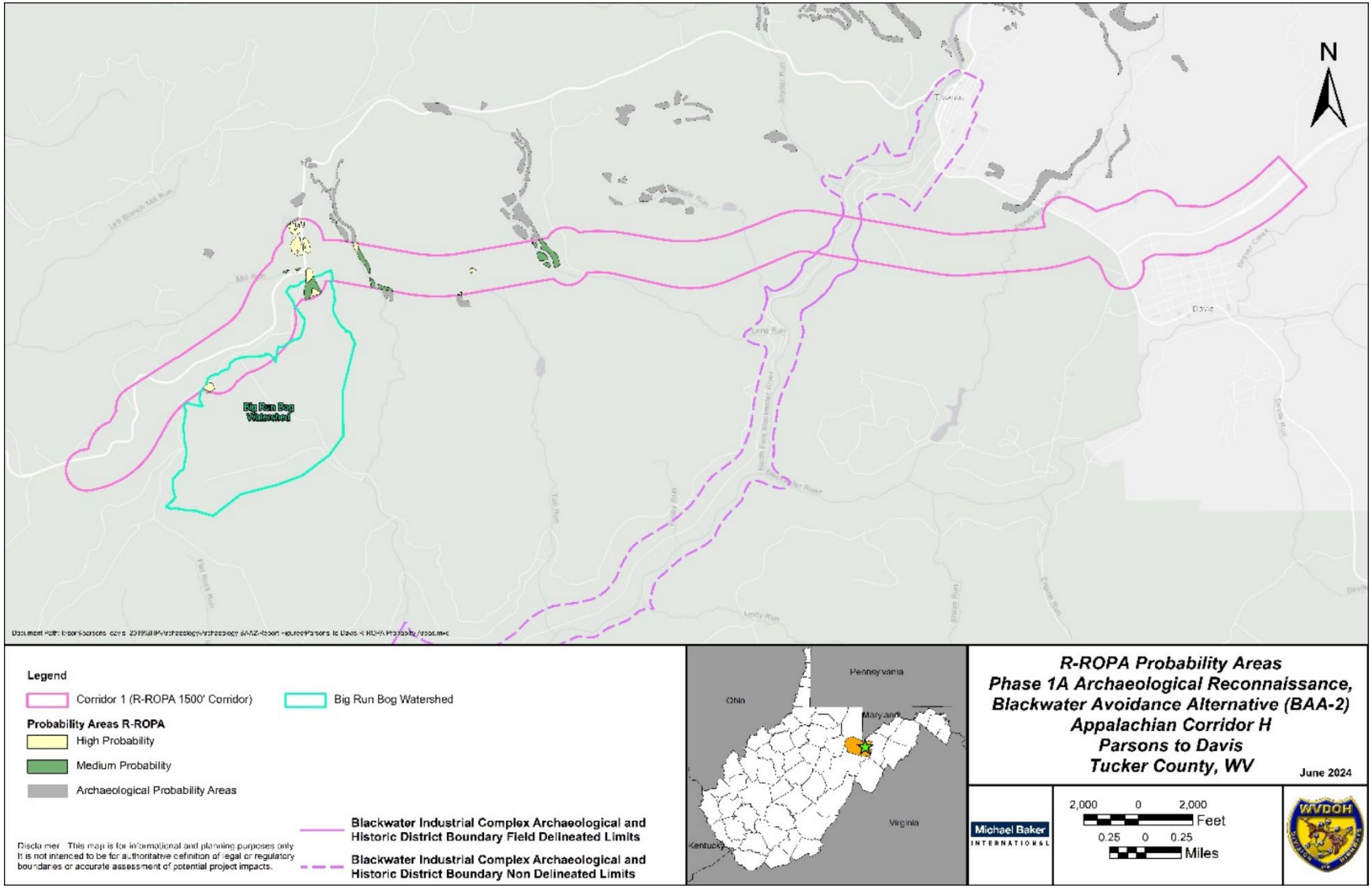

Figure 2 **Corridor 1 (R-ROPA) Prehistoric Probability Areas**

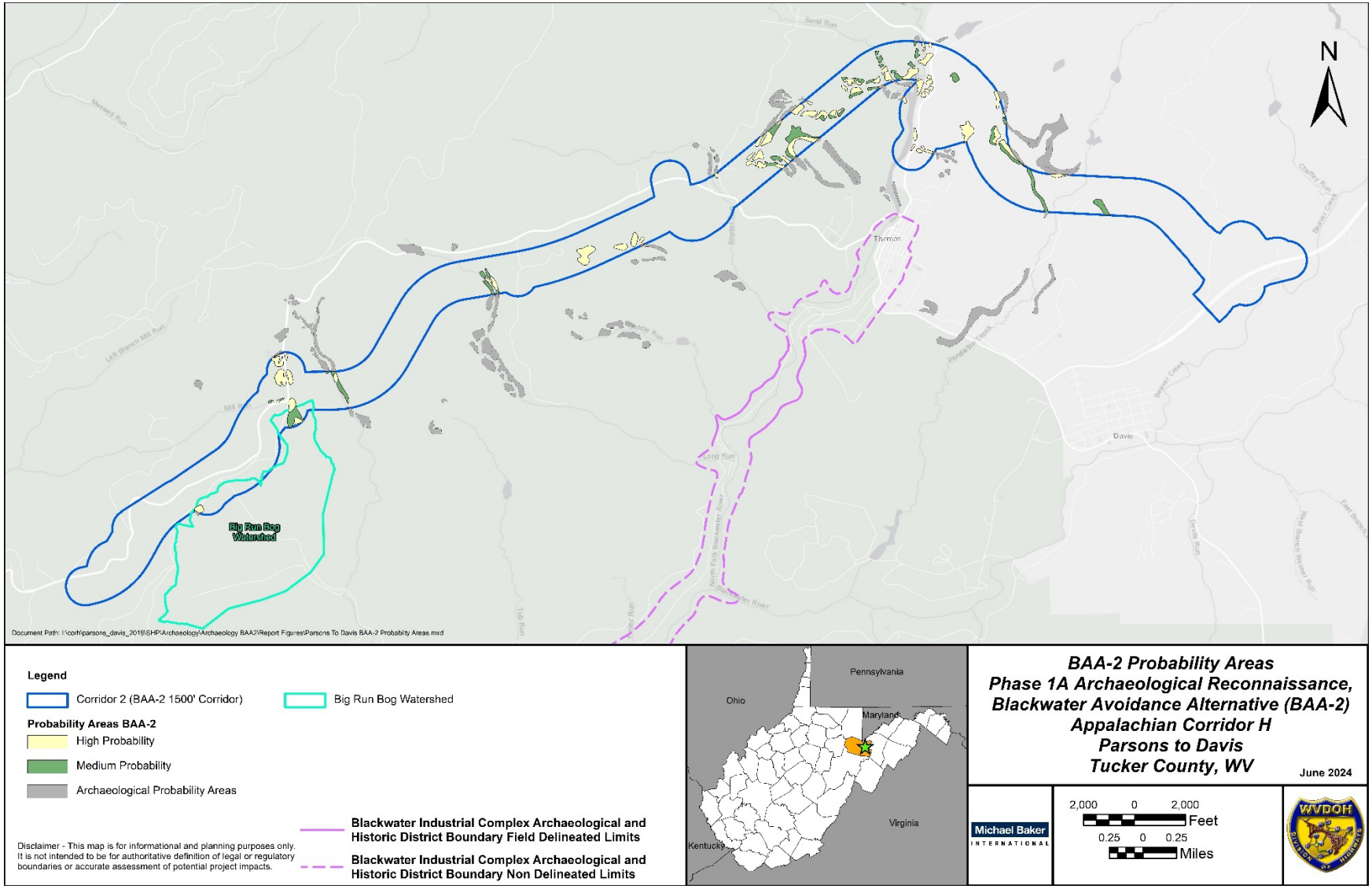

Figure 3 **Corridor 2 (BAA-2) Prehistoric Probability Areas**

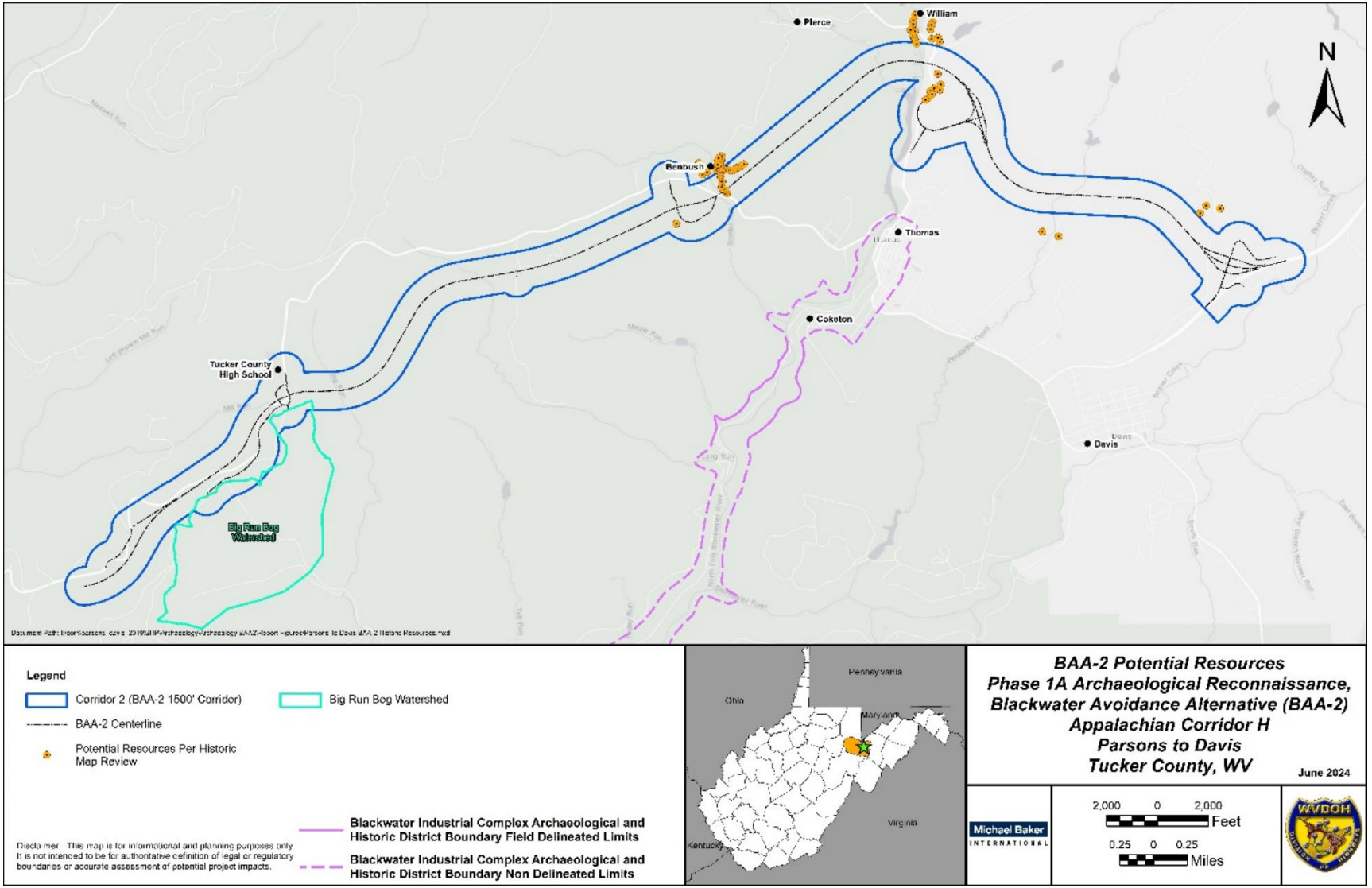

Figure 4 **Potential Historic Archaeological Resource Locations within the BAA-2 APE Based on USGS Topographic Mapping**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODS

The Phase Ia methods included background research and field work. Background research included desktop review of relevant environmental information, such as pedological and geological maps, as well as related archaeological and cultural resources literature. Historic maps were reviewed and locations of potential historic period resources (e.g., structures) were noted for further inspection. In addition, results of an archaeological predictive model developed for Corridor H in 1994 and reexamined in the early 2000s were reviewed for areas within the BAA-2 alignment identified as having medium and high probability of containing pre-contact period resources. Relevant results of the background research – such as locations of medium and high probability areas and known extents of previous disturbances – were plotted on project maps and used to guide the pedestrian reconnaissance field work.

Phase Ia reconnaissance field methods included in-person inspection of the BAA-2 APE and documentation of observations; previously investigated portions of the BAA-2 APE, such as the western end where the current APE overlaps with the ROPA APE, were not inspected during the BAA-2 reconnaissance. Areas identified in the Corridor H predictive model as having medium and high probability for pre-contact period resources were visited and assessed via visual examination, as were of potential historic period resources based on the historic map review. Furthermore, hillslopes within the APE were examined for rock outcrops and overhangs as well as other natural features and landforms that may contain archaeological resources. No shovel testing or other subsurface sampling was conducted, and no archaeological materials were collected.

The field director and/or crew chief were responsible for the basic note taking on the project. Locational data for photos, surficial features, other resources, and disturbances, for example, were plotted with a Juniper GPS unit using Uinta GIS software. Crew members prepared additional field notes on specific tasks that were assigned to them. Most mapping was conducted by crew members with overall supervision by the crew chief and field director. Photographs of the project area as well as natural and cultural features were taken in digital format. All photographs were logged according to date, photographer, location, subject and points of interest, orientation, and photo number (Figure 5).

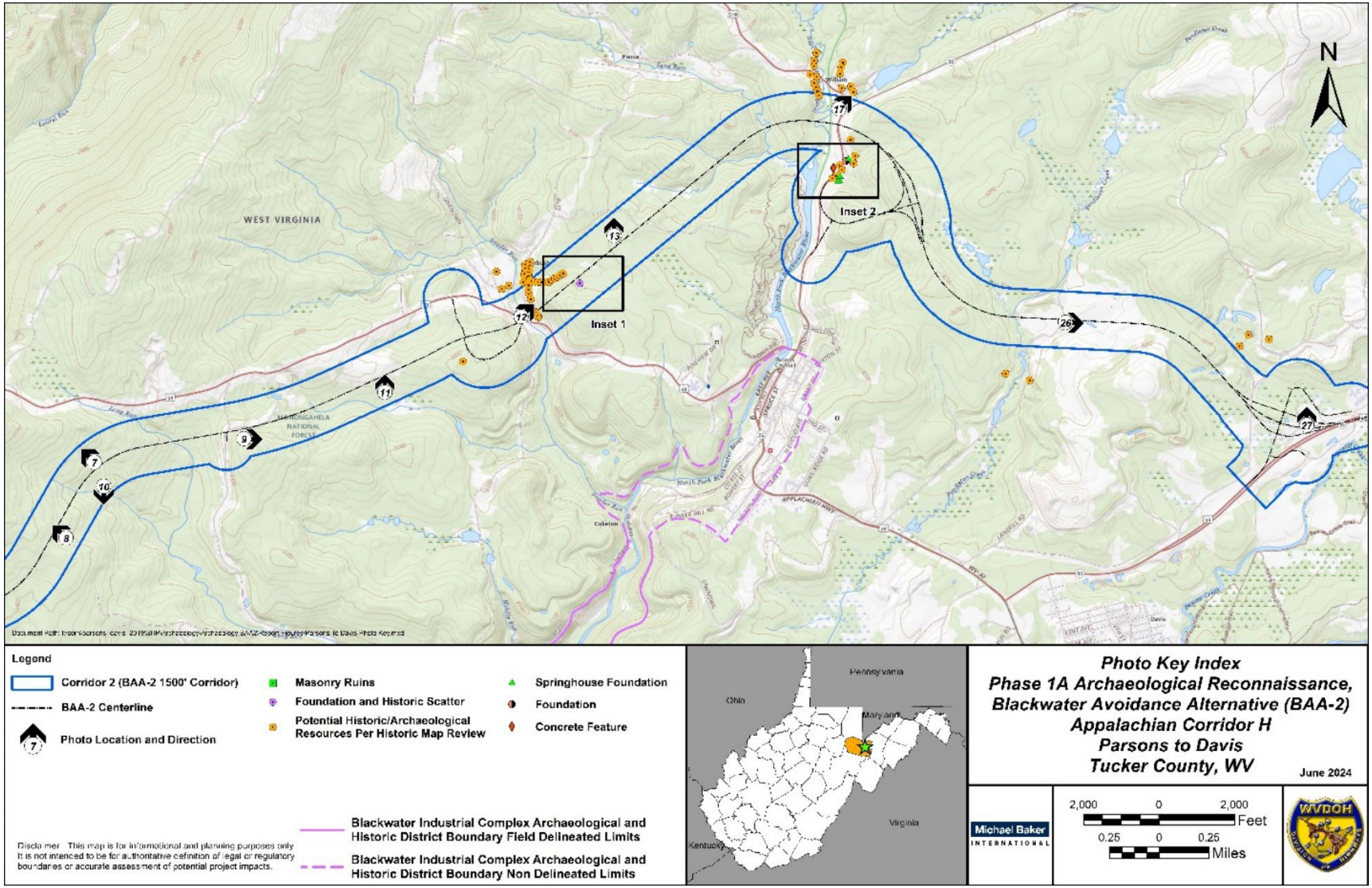

Figure 5 **Photo Key Index, BAA-2 Phase Ia Archaeological Reconnaissance**

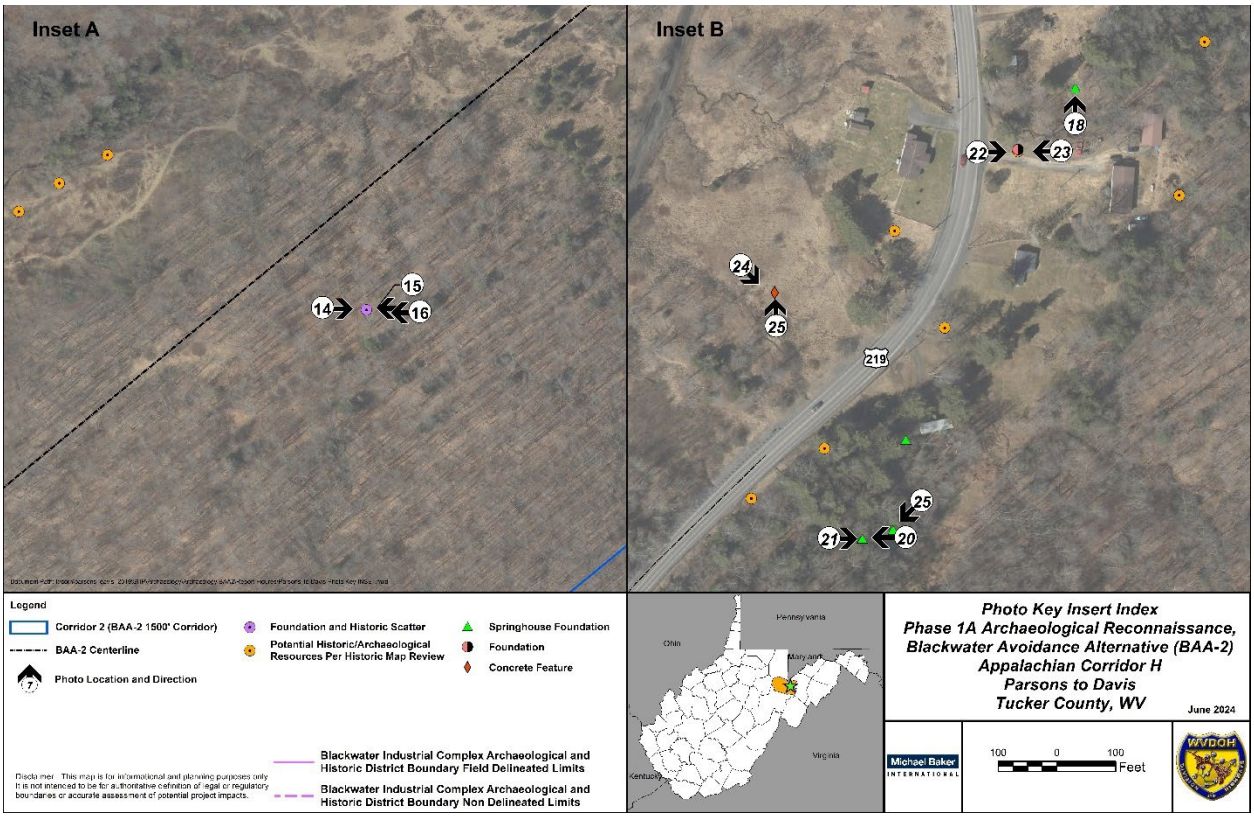

Figure 5 (Continued) Photo Key Index, BAA-2 Phase Ia Archaeological Reconnaissance, Inset A and B

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RESULTS OF FIELD INVESTIGATIONS

Pedestrian reconnaissance was performed throughout the proposed BAA-2 APE between February 1 through 8, 2024 and again on April 10, 2024. Results of the reconnaissance confirmed the locations of excessive slopes, modern disturbances, and other conditions identified during desktop review and provided better definition of the extent of portions of the landscape that do not warrant additional archaeological investigation. The reconnaissance also identified several potential historic period archaeological resources within the APE as well as areas that would require archaeological survey should the BAA-2 be further considered for construction. The results are described in further detail below and depicted in Figure 6.

The western portion of the proposed BAA-2 coincides with the western portion of the proposed R-ROPA alignment from their shared western terminus to approximately one-quarter mile east of the Tucker County High School; this section of BAA-2 was previously investigated during the Phase Ia and Phase Ib investigations of the ROPA APE (i.e., Robinson et al. 2023) and no further investigation was performed during the current reconnaissance.

The BAA-2 extends primarily across broad, level hilltops and relatively steep slopes surrounding the North Fork Blackwater River and its tributaries including Long Run, Snyder Run, and Sand Run. The western end of the alignment is in the Big Run watershed, which drains into the Blackwater River, and the eastern end of the alignment is drained by Pendleton Creek and Beaver Creek, both of which are also tributaries of the Blackwater River.

The western limit of investigation for current BAA-2 Phase Ia reconnaissance is located approximately one-quarter mile east of the Tucker County High School. From this western limit towards the northeast, the BAA-2 alignment is located south of and generally parallel to the existing US Route 48/219/Seneca Trail for approximately 5.0 km (3.1 mi) to where it crosses US Route 48/219/Seneca Trail at a proposed interchange at the unincorporated community of Benbush, WV.

Except for two areas surrounding unnamed tributaries of Long Run and Snyder Run, the section from approximately 0.40 km (0.25 mi) east of Tucker County High School to the proposed interchange at Benbush has been extensively disturbed through recent clearcut logging operations and is unlikely to contain any sensitive archaeological resources. The disturbances are widespread, mechanical in nature, and are evidenced by networks of logging roads, push-piles of soil and boulders, and a largely denuded landscape littered with tree stumps and timber slash (Figure 7 and Figure 8). Exposures of Pottsville Formation bedrock were common within the western portion of the APE (Figure 9); however, no rock overhangs, outcrops, or other exposures that might provide shelter for humans were identified within the section.

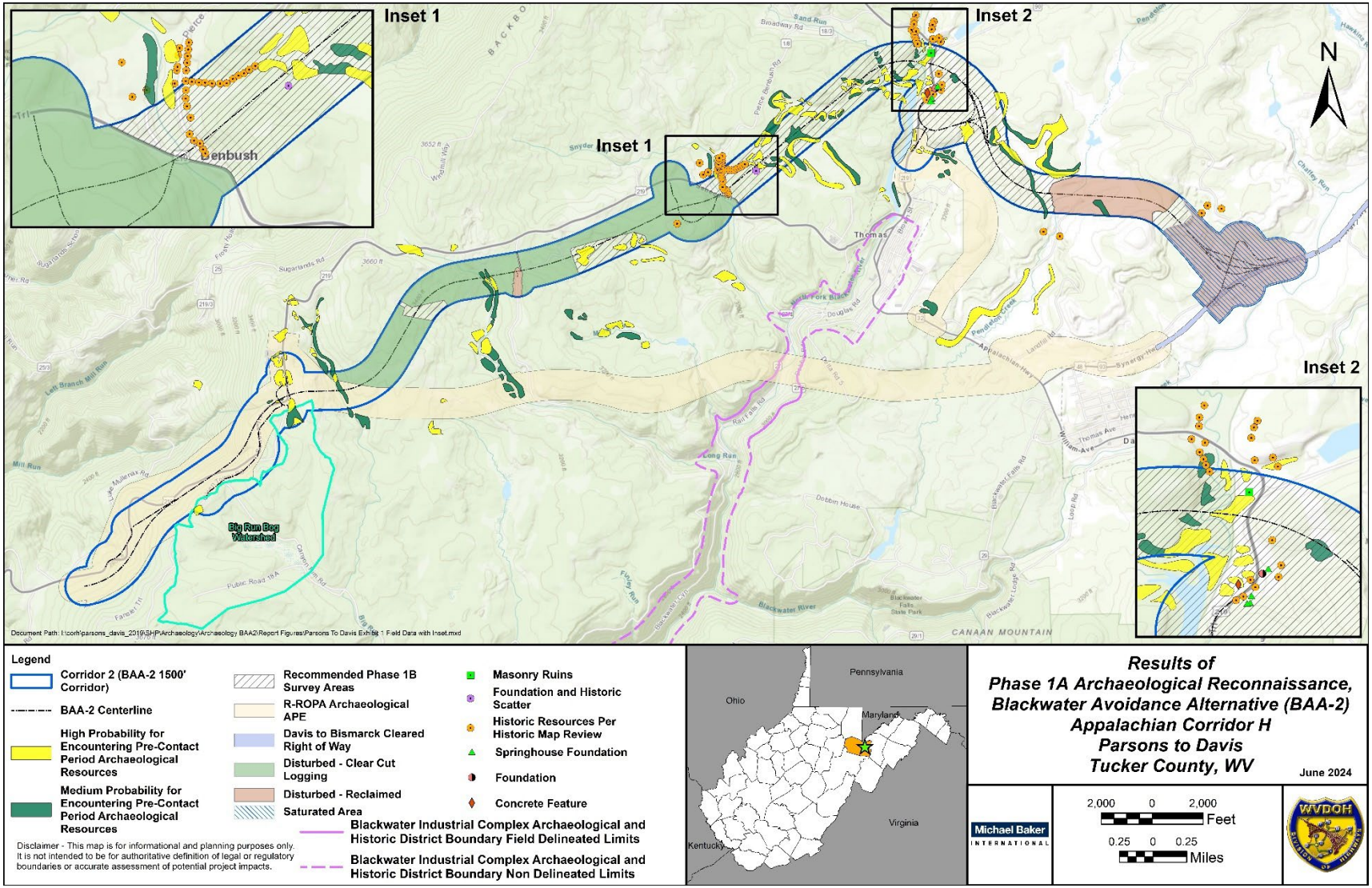

Figure 6 **Results of Phase Ia Archaeological Reconnaissance, BAA-2 Study Area, Tucker County, West Virginia**

Figure 7: **Clearcut landscape in the western portion of the APE in the vicinity of Long Run**

Figure 8: **Clearcut landscape in the western portion of the APE**

Figure 9: Boulder field along a hilltop and hillslope in the western portion of the APE

The mechanical disturbances noted throughout the western portion of the APE were not observed at the two areas along Long Run and Snyder Run (Figure 10 and Figure 11) and the potential for the areas to contain undisturbed archaeological resources cannot be ruled out.

In contrast to the western portion of the APE, the central portion, from the proposed interchange at Benbush, eastward to where the BAA-2 APE encounters Pendleton Creek, appears to be relatively undisturbed. Although this section contains localized disturbances associated with existing transportation, residential, and commercial infrastructure, it lacks evidence of widespread disturbance such as that associated with logging and mining operations. The central portion of the APE extends across a forested upland environment from the proposed interchange at Benbush towards the northeast (Figure 12 and Figure 13). It crosses two unnamed tributaries of Sand Run as well as Sand Run, itself, before spanning the North Fork Blackwater River north of Thomas, WV. At the east side of the North Fork Blackwater River crossing, the APE widens to accommodate a proposed interchange with US 219 at Thomas then continues toward the southeast.

In addition to the relatively undisturbed nature of the central portion of the APE, this portion contains most of the potential historic period resources identified during the historic map review. These potential resources cluster at two locations: one cluster in the vicinity of Benbush and the other in the vicinity of the North Fork Blackwater River (see Figure 4). Furthermore, the eight potential archaeological resources identified during reconnaissance of the BAA-2 APE are located within the central portion of the APE and are in proximity to the two clusters of potential historic period resources. These eight resources include a

Figure 10: **Possible undisturbed area located along an unnamed tributary of Long Run**

Figure 11: **Possible undisturbed area located along an unnamed tributary of Snyder Run**

Figure 12: View towards the northeast from the location of the planned interchange with US 48/219/Seneca Trail at Benbush

Figure 13: Forested upland setting in the central portion of the APE

dry stack, roughcut stone foundation measuring 2.5 m x 4 m (8 ft x 13 ft) and an adjacent historic artifact scatter within a stream, situated northeast of Benbush (Figure 14, Figure 15, and Figure 16). Other identified resources along US 219 in the vicinity of the proposed interchange at Thomas include:

- masonry ruins along the east bank of the North Fork Blackwater River, in a pond between the former Western Maryland Railroad tracks and US 219 (Figure 17).
- four probable springhouses (Figure 18, Figure 19, Figure 20, and Figure 21),
- one foundation and structural remains of unknown function (Figure 22 and Figure 23),
- and one semi-subterranean concrete feature of unknown function (Figure 24 and Figure 25).

Figure 14: View of rough-cut stone foundation facing east

Figure 15: View of rough-cut stone foundation facing west

Figure 16: Metal artifacts scattered throughout a stream channel adjacent to the rough-cut stone foundation

Figure 17: View towards the northeast showing masonry ruins

Figure 18: One of four springhouses in the vicinity of the proposed US 219 interchange at Thomas

Figure 19: One of four springhouses in the vicinity of the proposed US 219 interchange at Thomas

Figure 20: One of four springhouses in the vicinity of the proposed US 219 interchange at Thomas

Figure 21: One of four springhouses in the vicinity of the proposed US 219 interchange at Thomas

Figure 22: View facing east showing foundation and structural remains in the vicinity of the proposed US 219 interchange at Thomas

Figure 23: View facing west showing foundation and structural remains in the vicinity of the proposed US 219 interchange at Thomas

Figure 24: View of semi-subterranean concrete feature

Figure 25: Plan view of orifice of concrete feature

The eastern portion of the APE begins at the location where the APE crosses Pendleton Creek and continues southeastward to the eastern terminus at the junction with the Davis to Bismarck section of Corridor H. As with the western portion of the APE, the eastern portion has been extensively disturbed through modern land uses – primarily mining and reclamation (Figure 26). In addition, large areas within the eastern portion of the APE consist of low-lying, poorly drained, and saturated landforms that are unlikely to contain sensitive archaeological resources (Figure 27).

Although most of the eastern portion of the APE appears unlikely to contain sensitive archaeological resources, a section of the drainage divide between Pendleton Creek and Beaver Creek (see Figure 6) may be relatively undisturbed and would warrant additional investigation should the BAA-2 be further considered for construction.

Figure 26: **Reclaimed land in the eastern portion of the APE**

Figure 27: **Stream channel and saturated landscape at the eastern end of the APE**

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This report presented the results of a Phase Ia reconnaissance conducted within the BAA-2 archaeological APE. The BAA-2 APE is roughly 17.9 km (11.1 mi) long and 229 m (750 ft) in width on either side of the proposed centerline and includes proposed right-of-way and easements. In its entirety, the BAA-2 APE encompasses an area measuring approximately 1,027.2 ha [2,538.4 ac]. At the request of the WVDOH, Michael Baker conducted a Phase Ia archaeological reconnaissance within the BAA-2 APE to 1) identify areas of relative potential for containing prehistoric and historic period archaeological resources, 2) to produce refined probability and constraints mapping based on the results of a walk-over/pedestrian reconnaissance, a review of previous investigations, and a review of historic mapping/archival resources, and to 3) make recommendations for potential Phase Ib archaeological survey, if the BAA-2 is selected for construction.

Phase Ia reconnaissance of the BAA-2 APE resulted in the identification and delineation of areas that, because of extensive artificial disturbance or natural landscape features, are unlikely to contain archaeological resources that are eligible for the NRHP. The reconnaissance also identified areas that appear to be relatively undisturbed and have potential of containing prehistoric and historic archaeological resources. In addition, several potential historic period archaeological resources were also identified during the course of investigation, including springhouses, concrete foundations, and other historic cultural features.

Most of the western portion of the APE, from approximately 0.40 km (0.25 mi) east of the TCHS to the proposed interchange at Benbush, has been extensively disturbed from recent, and potentially repeated, clearcut logging operations and is unlikely to contain archaeological resources that are eligible for the NRHP. The extent of landscape disturbance and preservation potential is not clear at two areas within the western APE: one area is along an unnamed tributary of Long Run and one area is along an unnamed tributary of Snyder Run.

The central portion of the APE, from the proposed interchange at Benbush eastward to where the APE intersects Pendleton Creek, appears to be relatively undisturbed. This portion of the APE extends across a forested upland environment and spans several streams including two unnamed tributaries of Sand Run, Sand Run, and the North Fork Blackwater River. East of the North Fork Blackwater River crossing, the APE widens to accommodate a proposed interchange with US 219 at Thomas then continues towards the southeast.

In addition to appearing relatively undisturbed, the central portion of the APE contains most of the potential historic resource locations gleaned from the historic map review. These potential historic resource locations are clustered in the vicinity of Benbush and the in the vicinity of the North Fork Blackwater River. Furthermore, all the potential archaeological resources identified during the reconnaissance – including a foundation and artifact scatter, masonry ruins, four springhouses, one foundation with structural remains, and one semi-subterranean concrete feature – are within proximity to the potential historic resource locations identified during historic map review.

The eastern portion of the APE extends from Pendleton Creek to the eastern terminus. Most of the eastern portion of the APE is on property that either has been extensively disturbed through mining, reclamation,

and infrastructure development or is poorly drained and saturated. However, the extent of disturbance and potential for archaeological preservation is unknown within an area at the approximate midpoint of the eastern portion of the APE, along the drainage divide that separates the Pendleton Creek watershed from the Beaver Creek watershed.

In conclusion, the Phase Ia archaeological reconnaissance has resulted in the identification of areas within the BAA-2 APE that are unlikely to contain archaeological resources that are eligible for the NRHP. These areas of low archaeological sensitivity include most of the western portion of the APE, from approximately 0.40 km (0.25 mi) east of TCHS to the proposed interchange at Benbush, as well as most of the eastern portion of the APE, from Pendleton Creek to the eastern terminus. Should the BAA-2 APE be further considered for construction, Michael Baker recommends Phase Ib archaeological survey be conducted in the central portion of the APE, from the proposed interchange at Benbush to the intersection of the APE and Pendleton Creek, as well as at the two areas along unnamed tributaries of Long Run and Snyder Run in the western portion of the APE and the area along the drainage divide between Pendleton Creek and Beaver Creek in the eastern portion of the APE.

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