



# McLane and Goldman Dams Removal and River Restoration Feasibility Study Milford, New Hampshire

## Phase 1A Archaeological Survey Results Summary Report

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As part of the McLane and Goldman Dams Removal and Restoration Feasibility Study (Project), The Public Archaeology Laboratory, Inc. (PAL), completed a Phase IA archaeological reconnaissance survey to provide preliminary information about the potential of the Project to impact significant archaeological resources. The results of the investigation were presented in a report that was submitted to the New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources (NHDHR). The report contains confidential site location information protected under state law ([New Hampshire RSA 227-C:11](#).) that is designed to prevent the sites from looting. As an alternative, the following document provides a summary of information contained in the report that is suitable for public dissemination. It includes information about the methodology employed in conducting the investigation, survey results, and recommendations for additional investigations that may be necessary to locate and evaluate the significance of archaeological sites.

### Survey Methodology

The goals of the Phase IA archaeological sensitivity assessment were 1) to develop a preliminary project Area of Potential Effect (APE), which is defined as the “geographic area or areas within which an undertaking may directly or indirectly cause changes in the character of or use of historic properties, if any such properties exist” ([36 CFR 800.16\(d\)](#)); 2) provide a summary prehistory and history of the APE; 3) conduct a walkover/drive-over survey of the APE to document existing conditions; 4) identify areas of potential archaeological sensitivity within the APE based on the results of the historical research and walkover/drive-over survey; and 5) provide recommendations for any future archeological survey work that may be necessary in compliance with applicable state and federal regulations. PAL conducted the fieldwork and prepared and submitted the results of the archaeological survey between October 2010 and May 2011.

For the purposes of the dam removal feasibility study, PAL recommended a preliminary Project APE extending 100 ft from either river bank beginning approximately 525 feet (ft) downstream of McLane Dam and continuing upstream along the length of the river to the Gregg Crossing Footbridge. This 100-ft APE was based on anticipated hydraulic impacts resulting from dam removals as provisionally identified through engineering models, and was consistent with other similar dam removal projects in New Hampshire. For those areas immediately surrounding the McLane and Goldman dam structures, the APE was extended to 150 ft to accommodate the construction of access roads, staging and storage areas, and direct riverbank impacts that will likely occur during the dam removals.

Following the delineation of the Project APE, PAL staff conducted research focused on the history and prehistory of the Project corridor with a particular emphasis on the dams and known historical industrial sites. PAL reviewed readily available town and Milford Historical Society and Milford Town Library research files and photograph collections pertaining to the work areas. Nineteenth- through twentieth-century town and county maps and insurance maps were reviewed

for changes in land use and development in the study area. The research also included a review of local geography, geology, ecology, soils, and regional Native American occupational sequences as a means to address the precontact history of the Project corridor. Finally, PAL conducted a historic and archeological site file search at NHDHR to identify previously inventoried National and/or State Register-listed or eligible historic properties in or near the project study area. The results of the research were then used to develop historical contexts within which to discuss and assess the known and potential cultural resources within the project APE.

In October 2010, PAL staff conducted a pedestrian archaeological survey of the preliminary Project APE and identified surface remains and intact landforms along both banks of the river that suggest favorable conditions for the survival of both prehistoric and historic/industrial archaeological resources. The Souhegan River has been subjected to various natural and cultural disturbances throughout its long history that have both created and destroyed potential archeological sites. Major and minor flooding episodes and channel meandering have both eroded and buried evidence of prehistoric period occupation, while intensive industrial, commercial, and residential development along the riverbanks have similarly disturbed and/or destroyed prehistoric and early historic period sites.

### **Survey Results**

Despite the documented and historic period disturbance, approximately 40 percent of the project corridor was assessed with moderate–high prehistoric archaeological sensitivity. While no prehistoric sites have been identified within the project corridor, potential resources may include moderately-sized, seasonal camps dating primarily to the Woodland Period (3000–400 years ago) with artifact assemblages reflecting a semi-sedentary, riverine/hunter-gatherer subsistence orientation. Features may include evidence of structures in the form of post molds; hearths; pottery; middens; and stone tool assemblages geared toward plant and animal processing (e.g., pestles, anvil stones, scrapers). Similarly, while no prehistoric period fishery sites have been identified in Milford, the presence of two former “falls” within the preliminary Project APE suggests the potential for such sites to exist.

Approximately 50 percent of the project corridor was assessed with moderate–high historic period archaeological sensitivity. The Souhegan River, and particularly that portion of the river contained within the preliminary Project APE, has been intensively developed for residential, commercial, and industrial purposes from the eighteenth through early twentieth centuries. Expected archaeological deposits associated with those former industrial complexes could include foundation/masonry remains, dam and coffer dam structures, raceways (headrace, tailrace, and spillways), stone wing/retaining wall elements, wheel and turbine pits, other water power features (water control gates), machine parts, ancillary work areas, domestic refuse, and general use features (trash middens, privies etc). The APE also has the potential to contain worker housing/tenement sites. Expected archaeological deposits associated with these types of buildings could include buried house and outbuilding foundations, trash middens, garden plots, and privies.

Finally, several stretches of Souhegan River within the Project corridor were not intensively developed for industrial purposes during the historic period but rather remained active farmland. It is possible that structural or landscape features associated with this use may survive within the Project APE, with potential resources including barn and outbuilding foundations, cart paths, and sheet middens.

### **Recommendations**

PAL concluded its report with recommendations for additional archeological survey within the project corridor in the event that dam removal plans are approved and formalized. It was recommended that with the completion of engineered plans that the project proponents and NOAA consult with the NHDHR concerning specific impacts to areas assigned moderate–high archaeological sensitivity, and that Phase IB intensive archaeological investigations be conducted in those areas in accordance with [NHDHR standards](#) and [Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 \(as amended\)](#).