Newton County displayed a lack of artifacts as compared to similar county surveys in Indiana. It is very likely that the presence of Beaver Lake wetland and the Kankakee Marsh during prehistoric times and into the mid-1800s heavily influenced the habitability of the area. The variably extensive wetlands would have dramatically restricted both livable land and resources in the area for the incoming Euro-American settlers during the historic period. This constraint would have concentrated those individuals who were there to select upland and well drained features in order to avoid the marshlands that were so prevalent throughout the county. The surveys conducted in Newton County are unable to be compared to those of other Indiana counties whose results show a greater evidence of land use in upland areas because of the disproportionate survey of upland features in Newton County. Newton County would benefit from further archaeological investigations, especially those focusing on the procurement of diagnostic prehistoric materials and systematization of landform use prehistorically.

Acknowledgments - This project has been funded in part by a grant from the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service’s Historic Preservation Fund administered by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology. The project received federal financial assistance for the identification, protection, and rehabilitation of historic properties and cultural resources in the State of Indiana. However, the contents and opinions contained in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. Department of the Interior, nor does mention of trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendation. The U.S. Department of the Interior prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, or disability in its federally assisted programs. If you believe that you have been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility as described above, or if you desire further information, please write to: Office of Equal Opportunity, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240.

References

Legend

Newton County

Legend

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Discussion/Conclusion

Newton County displayed a lack of artifacts as compared to similar county surveys in Indiana. It is very likely that the presence of Beaver Lake wetland and the Kankakee Marsh during prehistoric times and into the mid-1800s heavily influenced the habitability of the area. The variably extensive wetlands would have dramatically restricted both livable land and resources in the area for the incoming Euro-American settlers during the historic period. This constraint would have concentrated those individuals who were there to select upland and well drained features in order to avoid the marshlands that were so prevalent throughout the county. The surveys conducted in Newton County are unable to be compared to those of other Indiana counties whose results show a greater evidence of land use in upland areas because of the disproportionate survey of upland features in Newton County. Newton County would benefit from further archaeological investigations, especially those focusing on the procurement of diagnostic prehistoric materials and systematization of landform use prehistorically.

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References

Methods

Results

Over the course of the FY2014, FY2015, and FY2016 Historic Preservation Fund Grant projects pedestrian transects at 10 meter intervals were used for archaeological reconnaissance in Newton County of over 2,600 acres. In addition, two reinvestigations were conducted totaling approximately 13.73 acres. Areas were selected for survey using topographic maps, aerial maps, soil information, historic sources and reconnaissance information. The survey was constructed to sample different regions within the project area, with a different emphasis within the county each year. Cultivated fields with optimal visibility were sought for survey. Any potential new archaeological sites encountered were recorded using handheld GPS units. The artifacts encountered were collected and brought to the AAL for identification and cataloging.

Newton County is located in northwestern Indiana bordered by the Kankakee River to the north and sharing a western border with Illinois. Prior to these three surveys, there were 178 archaeological sites documented in Newton County, a lower number compared to the surrounding counties. The amount of previous archaeological investigations in Newton County have been predominantly oriented toward surface surveys and only a small percentage of sites have been tested or excavated. The goals of the FY2014, FY2015, and FY2016 Historic Preservation Fund grants were increasing the existing archaeological data base, refining the cultural chronology, and examining evidence for the settlement and interaction of the Euro-American settlers and Native Americans in Newton County.

Abstract

The AAL conducted three data enhancement projects for archaeological resources in Newton County, Indiana funded by the FY2014, FY2015, and FY2016 Historic Preservation Fund Grants. These projects covered all townships in Newton County. A total of 2,691.2 acres of agricultural land was surveyed, identifying 275 new archaeological sites. The survey recovered 683 prehistoric artifacts and 7,638 historic artifacts. Cultural periods represented in the artifact assemblage include precontact era Middle, Early, and Late Archaic, Middle and Late Woodland, and Late Prehistoric, in addition to Historic components. Sixteen sites were recommended for additional research and are potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

Background

An Archaeological Survey of Newton County: Enhancement of a Data Deficient Region, Part II.

An Archaeological Survey of Newton County: Enhancement of a Data Deficient Region, Part III.