

**Cultural and Archaeological Survey of the Proposed 18-Acre Tumbling  
Ridge Development Near Cle Elum, Washington**

**Prepared for Nathan Weis**



**Dave M. Woody, M.S.  
Yakama Nation Archaeologist**

**Gregg Kiona  
Yakama Nation Cultural Specialist**

**John Shellenberger, M.S.  
Yakama Nation Archaeologist**

**THE YAKAMA NATION  
Cultural Resources Program  
Department of Natural Resources  
P.O. Box 151  
Toppenish, Washington 98948  
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## 1. Introduction and Project Description

On May 9<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>, 2008, the Yakama Nation Cultural Resources Program (CRP) completed a cultural resources survey of an 18-acre land parcel owned by Nathan Weis. Proposed activities for this 18-acre parcel entail the development of a 14-lot residential housing development. The housing development will be contained within the northeastern half of the subject property; with the southwestern half of the property being left as undeveloped open space (see Figure 1). The subject property is located on the eastern end of Easton Ridge, 3.4 miles west of the town of Cle Elum, Washington within Township 20N, Range 15E, Section 31 (see Figure 2). Following the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) notice of application for the proposed project published by Kittitas County in January of 2008, the Yakama Nation requested that the property be professionally surveyed for cultural resources. This request was based on the location of the property being within an area noted by Yakama Nation tribal elders as having a high potential for various types of cultural sites. Additionally, it was noted that a previously recorded cultural site (45KT1367) was located in the northern half of the property. This site, a possible Native American housepit depression, was declared eligible to the National Register of Historic Places by the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP). However, at the time of recording, no Native American cultural artifacts have been found in association with this depression and its National Register eligibility and even its potential as a cultural site is somewhat an unknown quantity. Currently, the site is no more than a depression on the ground, with no specific context that can be used to deem it a feature of Native American land use. As a means of addressing the potential impact of the development on 45KT1367 and any other cultural sites which may have been located on the subject property, Mr. Weis contracted with the Yakama Nation Cultural Resources Program (CRP) to perform a surface survey of the property, as well as an additional assessment of 45KT1367.

The cultural resource survey of the property and site assessment was conducted by CRP staff members Dave Woody, M.S. (CRP Archaeologist), Gregg Kiona (CRP Cultural Specialist), and Jon Shellenberger (CRP Archaeologist). As is CRP policy, Cultural Specialists who are trained in identification of Traditional Cultural Places (TCPs), legendary sites, cultural landforms, as well as food and medicinal plants, work in tandem with tribal archaeologists in order to encompass a much broader cultural scope of a project area than archaeology alone could provide.

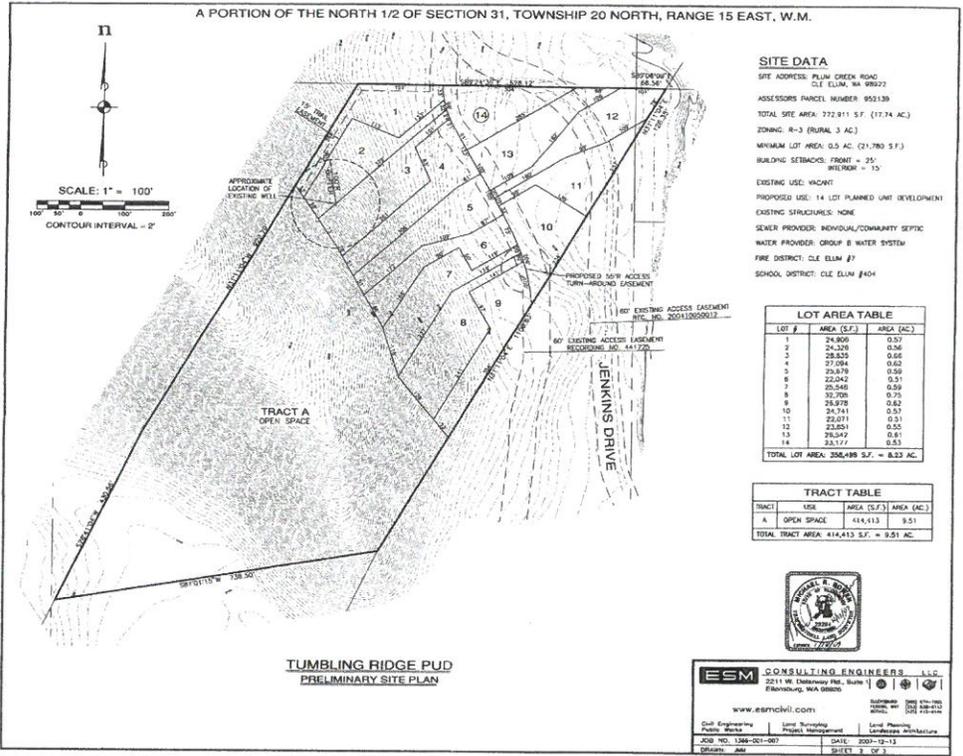


Figure 1. Plat map of the subject property showing the location of the proposed lots and area to be utilized as open space.

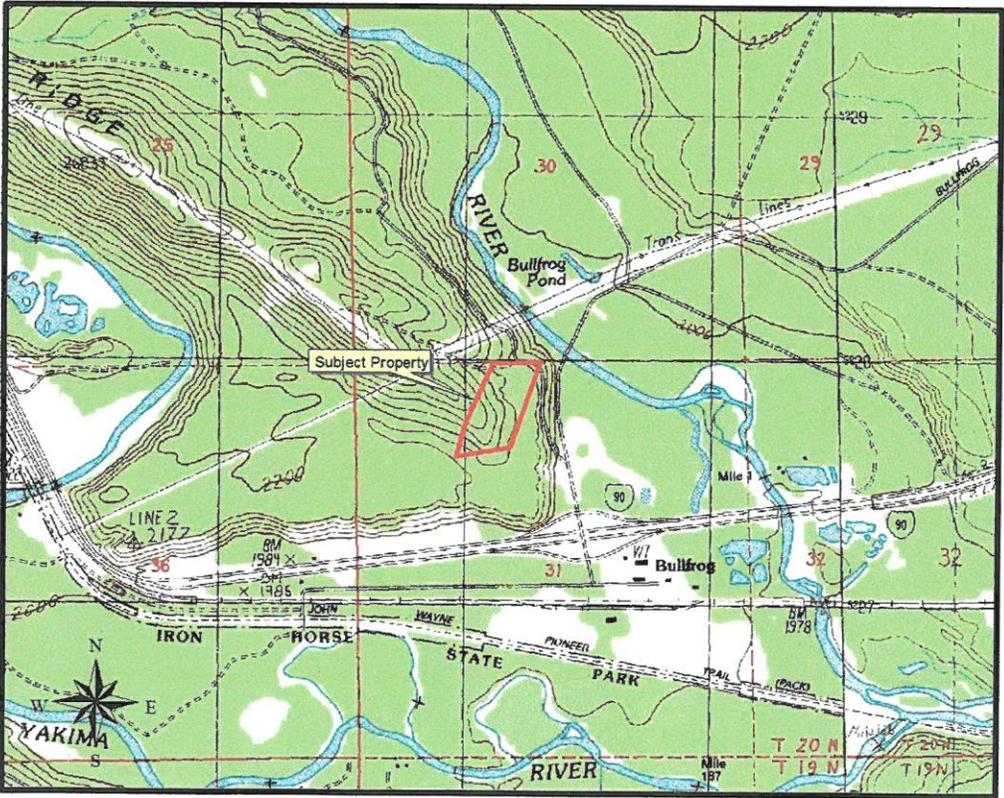


Figure 2. Subject property depicted on the Ronald, WA. 7.5' USGS topographic map.

## 2. Historic Overview

### *Regional History*

Human populations have occupied the Columbia Plateau, which encompasses the subject property for at least the past 11,500 years. Archaeological investigations of the region have indicated the earliest populations were likely small, extremely mobile groups of hunter-gatherers exploiting a wide range of resources (Galm et al, 1981). These groups have been separated into cultural phases defined in part by the unique style of dart points which they utilized. Most researchers have termed these earliest cultural phases as Clovis, which dates from 11,500 years before present (BP) to 10,500 BP, and Windust which dates from 10,500 BP to 8,000 BP. Archaeological sites from either of these cultural phases are quite rare, particularly sites from the Clovis phase, which is most often represented by isolated finds of fluted Clovis dart points.

At approximately 8,000 BP, the Windust cultural phase gives way to the Vantage cultural phase. Vantage groups are also seen as highly mobile opportunistic foragers much as people from previous times, although their subsistence activities appear to be more focused on riverine environments (Chatters, 1986). This focus could be, in part, a factor of people utilizing the few remaining productive habitats available during the hyper-arid mid-Holocene: riverbottoms and brushy galleries (Chatters, 1980). The Vantage Phase archaeological assemblage is much like assemblages from preceding phases, with the exception of hopper-mortar bases, pestles, and the large unstemmed lancolate projectile points, which characterize the phase. Further differentiating Vantage groups from the populations which preceded them are the appearance of pithouses, possibly an indication of a less nomadic lifestyle. This cultural phase lasts until approximately 4,500 BP.

The Frenchman Springs Phase begins at roughly 4,500 BP and is characterized by the continuation of pithouse use, which began late in the Vantage Phase. As documented by Chatters (1989), this pithouse adaptation was not a continuous one, but rather two periods of pithouse use. The first of the periods began around 4,500 BP and the second around 3,500 BP, with a 500-600 year intervening period during which pithouse use was curtailed. Whatever the cause of this changing strategy early in this phase, Plateau researchers have suggested that the ethnographic Plateau pattern emerged by the end of this phase (e.g., Nelson, 1969). The plateau pattern entails the groups of people moving throughout the landscape on a seasonal basis, exploiting the natural resources of the region as they become available. Several styles of smaller contracting stemmed projectile points are the primary diagnostic artifacts of this period. This cultural phase lasts until approximately 2,500 BP.

The Cayuse Phase which follows Frenchman Springs begins at around 2,500 BP and lasts until Euro-American contact 200 years ago. During the Cayuse Phase, the ethnographic Plateau pattern is thought to have been fully developed. Groups wintered in large nucleated villages of up to 50 pithouses or more (Chatters, 1986). With the coming of spring, people dispersed to gather roots, hunt, and fish, strategically locating themselves to take advantage of seasonally available resources. This seasonal round became quite

diverse and well organized. Trade with coastal groups was widespread, as evidenced in the amount of coastal shellfish and other goods in Cayuse Phase archaeological assemblages. Approximately 200 years ago, the introduction of European trade goods, the horse, and massive population collapse brought about by the spread of European diseases caused significant changes in settlement and subsistence patterns throughout all native Columbia Plateau groups (Campbell, 1990). Artifacts which are diagnostic of the Cayuse Phase are small, corner, side, and basal-notched projectile points. The smaller size of these points, relative to previous phases, possibly represents the adoption of the bow and arrow. The historic reservation period and the usurping of Native American lands by white settlers during the middle 1800s essentially marks the end of the traditional seasonal round adaptation for the Native American people of the region.

### *History of the Project Area*

Mirroring the rest of the Columbia Plateau, human occupation of the project area extends back to at least the Clovis cultural phase of approximately 11,500-10,500 years BP. Evidence of these early populations in the area has been demonstrated through the discovery of a Clovis projectile point near Cle Elum dam by a local artifact collector (Hollenbeck and Carter, 1986). Although changes in specific adaptations and ecology have been observed within the archaeological record, the Native people of the region had essentially maintained a hunter-gatherer lifestyle throughout the past 10,000 years, utilizing the naturally occurring foods, medicines and other resources found throughout the region. Upland wildlife, fish, root and berry crops were likely the most sought after resources in and around the subject property and Native use would likely have been focused in the spring and early summer months (Johnson Meninick, personal communication, May, 2008).

In the years following, and just prior to, initial Euro-American contact in the early 1800s, the lifeways of the Native people of the region were radically changed by the goods, diseases, government, and world-views these people brought with them. Throughout the 1800s, the Euro-American presence and influence among the Native people in the region grew, particularly following the construction of various wagon road and then rail lines into the central Washington area. With the growing numbers of settlers in the area, land became a commodity and the traditional Native use of the region did not fit into the Euro-American plan of settlement and development. With two competing cultures vying for territory and having substantially different thoughts as to its use, conflicts were inevitable and sometimes bloody. By the mid-1800s the Governor of Washington Territory, Isaac Stevens, began work on treaties with the Native people of the Northwest. These treaties would require the relinquishment of their territory, but would allow the retention of the right to hunt, fish, and gather on these "ceded" lands (Griffin and Churchill, 1998). Further, other lands would be reserved for the sole use and occupation by the Native people (reservations). The subject property is located on the ceded lands of the Yakama Nation, which were established by the Treaty of 1855.

With the passage of the Homestead Act in 1865 and construction of a wagon road over Snoqualmie Pass in 1865, the Euro-American presence in the Cle Elum area grew

rapidly. The discovery of gold in the Swauk Valley in upper Kittitas County in the 1860s attracted many people to the region (Dart, 1948). Gold prospectors began to congregate in the Cle Elum River area as well, although no significant finds were made there until 1894. Gold was not the only mineral resource sought in the Cle Elum area; coal deposits, which were inadvertently discovered in the late 1800s, became the true economic boon of the region. The mining of the 21 square mile Roslyn-Cle Elum Coal Field resulted in the towns of Cle Elum, Ronald, and Roslyn growing to more than 4,000 people by the 1920s (Griffin and Churchill, 1998). The end of commercial mining of the Roslyn-Cle Elum Coal Field came in the 1960s. The downturn of the region's mining and logging industries in the 1960s had obvious economic impacts to the local communities. However, in more recent years, the area has seen somewhat of an economic resurgence with the establishment of the Suncadia Resort and other recreational properties.

### **3. Survey Methodology**

Survey methodology encompassed a thorough search of the ground surface within the subject property utilizing the survey sampling strategy implemented by the Wenatchee National Forest. All areas identified as high and moderate probability terrain received 100% survey coverage, with a 5% sample of low probability terrain also investigated (see Table 1 for terrain probability definitions). Parallel transects spaced at 20-meter intervals were utilized throughout the survey. The use of a Garmin eTrex Legend Cx GPS unit proved invaluable in keeping survey transects parallel in areas of dense vegetation or rough terrain. Realtime tracking of the survey path walked by the surveyor carrying the GPS unit allowed for both on-the-fly adjustment of any errant direction and accurate spacing on the return segment of a survey sweep.

The differing survey percentages prescribed by the sampling strategy resulted in approximately 13.5-acres of the overall 18-acre subject property (75%) falling within the set standards. The primary factor reducing the overall survey sample acreage was the steepness of the terrain found on the western side of the property. See Figure 3 for map depicting the actual surveyed area.

## Wenatchee National Forest Archaeological Sensitivity Model

### **High Probability (100% Survey Coverage)**

- terrain with 15% or less slope within 700 feet of perennial water sources
- locations of known or suspected sites
- major ridgelines (including continuous and feeder ridgetops, saddles, divides and gaps)
- wet and dry meadows with 15% or less slope
- floodplains of 15% or less slope of main branches of drainages and major confluences
- rhyolite domes (obsidian sources)
- margins of springs, ponds, lakes, marshes
- rock outcrops
- other terrain of 15% or less slope along edges of major ridge systems/travelways

### **Moderate Probability (100% Survey Coverage)**

- isolated, discontinuous ridges
- floodplains and benches of intermittent streams
- terrain with 15% or less slope farther than 700 feet from perennial water sources

### **Low Probability (5% Survey Coverage)**

- terrain with slopes greater than 15%
- lodgepole pine stands with ash or pumice mantles
- steep forested and nonforested slopes
- heavily forested areas with no water source

Table 1. Wenatchee National Forest definitions of terrain probabilities and associated survey coverage.

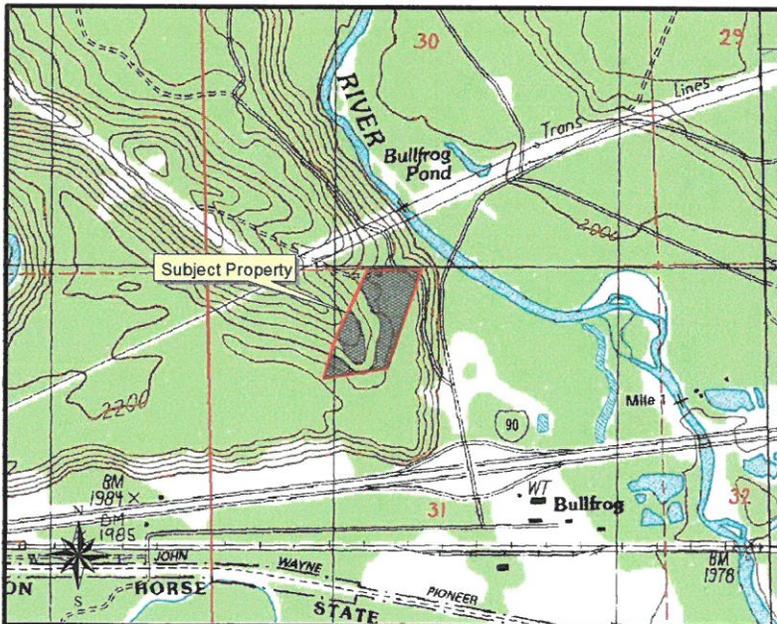


Figure 3. Subject property depicted on the Ronald, WA. 7.5' USGS topographic map. The shaded area denotes the actual area surveyed following the Wenatchee National Forest survey sampling strategy.

#### 4. Pre-Field Research

Pre-field research was conducted during the month of May 2008. The following sources were investigated in terms of cultural and historic information on the subject property.

##### *DAHP GIS Database*

One previously recorded site (45KT1367) was identified within the subject property. This site consists of a depression measuring 26 feet in diameter x 5 feet in depth. The site was determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places by the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation in 1999. Additionally, it was noted that four other cultural sites had been previously recorded on Easton Ridge, all of which are found within 1 mile of the subject property. Three of these sites are associated with Native American land use and one with Euro-American development (see Table 2 for a brief summary of these sites).

##### *1881 GLO Map of Township 20N, Range 15 E*

This map does not indicate any features of historic note within or near the subject property (see Figure 4).

##### *Cultural Information*

Yakama Nation CRP cultural specialists who possess knowledge of Yakama culture and are trained in the recognition of Tribal historic properties, Traditional Cultural Properties (TCPs), legendary sites and traditional resource gathering areas provided information on the overall geographic area. This information indicated that there are culturally significant properties in the general vicinity of the subject property. However, the proposed development would have little effect on these culturally significant properties beyond that which has already been done by other regional development.

<b>Site Number</b>	<b>Presumed Affiliation</b>	<b>Site or Isolated Artifact</b>	<b>Site Type</b>	<b>Distance From Project Area</b>
45KT1365	Native American	Site	Lithic Scatter	.5 Miles Northwest of the Subject Property
45KT1373	Native American	Site	Lithic Scatter	.5 Miles Northwest of the Subject Property
45KT1364	Native American	Site	Lithic Scatter	.6 Miles Northwest of the Subject Property
45KT1378	Euro-American	Site	Historic Cabin	.8 Miles Northwest of the Subject Property

Table 2. Summary of previously recorded sites found on Easton Ridge within one mile of the subject property.

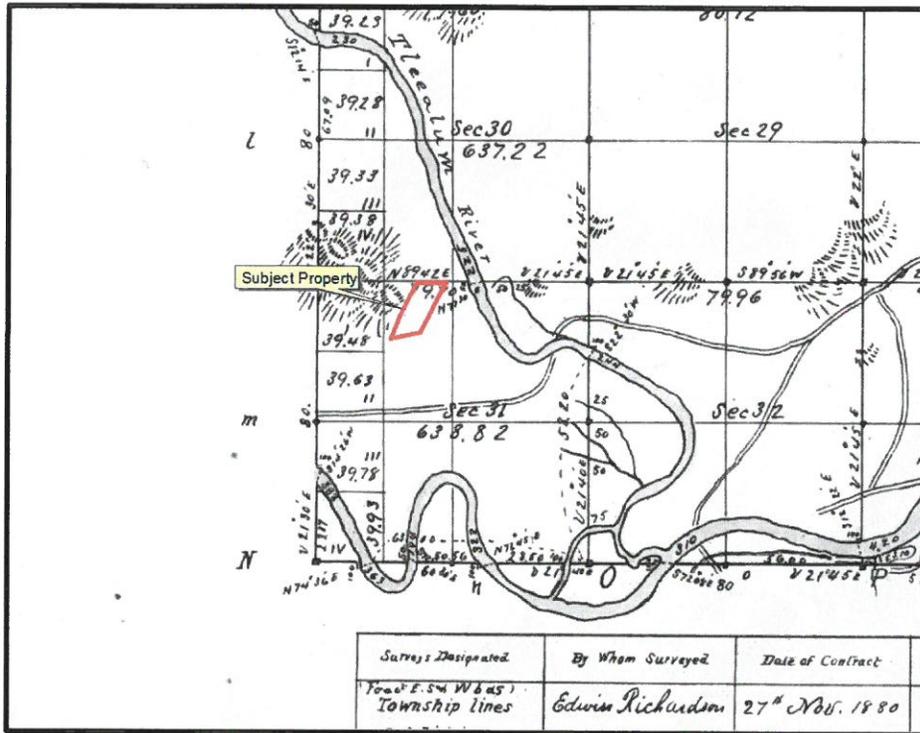


Figure 4. Location of the subject property depicted on the 1881 GLO map of Township 20 North, Range 15 East. No features of historic note are shown within or adjacent the subject property.

## 5. Survey Results

Field work was conducted by the YN CRP on May 9<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>, 2008. The YN CRP field staff included archaeologists Dave Woody and John Shellenberger and cultural specialist Gregg Kiona. No cultural sites or artifacts were encountered on the subject property. Previously recorded site 45KT1367 was, after much searching, relocated. This site was found to be not actually on the subject property, but rather roughly 20-meters to the west on land owned by the Suncadia Resort. Given this, the site would be outside the proposed development area and therefore, not subject to physical impact. The site appears, for all intents and purposes, exactly as it did when recorded in 1998. Several photographs were taken of the depression and a GPS point was collected and later corrected utilizing base station data. This updated position data should provide locational accuracy of the site to within a meter, which is a substantial improvement over the original position estimate which had the site placed 120-meters to the northwest of the GPS corrected position.

As with the majority of cultural surveys in forested areas, the principle limiting factor to the survey was ground visibility. Duff on the forest floor, trees, and miscellaneous vegetation limited ground visibility to between 0-40%. This was somewhat alleviated by logging activities on the property which had taken place within the previous year. This activity provided ground visibility of nearly 100% in select areas. In places where the

ground surface was heavily obscured by vegetation, surveyors utilized foot scrapes every few paces so that at least a partial view of the surface could be obtained.

In terms of the cultural landscape observed by CRP cultural specialists, numerous species of food and medicinal plants were noted throughout the project area. Some of the more commonly observed of these plants included Western Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), Carey's Balsamroot (*Balsamorhiza careyana*), Bitterbrush (*Purshia tridentate*), Hooker's Basamroot (*Balsam hookeri*), Indian Paintbrush (*Castilleja hispida*), Nine Leaf Lomatium (*Lomatium triternatum*), and Silky Lupine (*Lupinus sericeus*).

In addition to the plant resources noted by Cultural Specialists, several Traditional Cultural Properties (TCPs), significant cultural sites associated with oral histories, and resource gathering areas known to the Yakama are found in the general vicinity of the subject property. However, given that none of these cultural properties fall within the specific boundaries of the property, it is thought that the proposed development would have little if any adverse effect on them beyond that which has already been done by previous regional developments.

## **6. Conclusions and Recommendations**

The survey of the subject 18-acre property did not identify any cultural or archaeological properties. Although several TCPs and other significant cultural sites were noted by CRP Cultural Specialists as being within the vicinity of the subject property, it was thought that the proposed development would have little if any adverse effect on them beyond that which has already been done by previous regional developments. Additionally, several plant resources were also noted. Although the proposed development could potentially impact this resource, the majority of the noted plants are relatively abundant within the Cascade Mountain foothills and Columbia Plateau and its impact to the resource as a whole would be fairly limited.

At the outset of the survey, a primary concern was the potential impact the proposed development would have on site 45KT1367, a depression which was thought to be a housepit associated with Native American habitation. Following an extensive search of the area surrounding the original site geographic coordinates, the site was relocated approximately 120-meters southwest of its recorded position. It was found roughly 20-meters to the east of the subject 18-acre property on land owned by Suncadia Resort. Given this, the site would be outside the proposed development area and therefore not subject to physical impact. A GPS point was collected for the site, which should provide geographic accuracy within 1-meter. Additionally, several photographs were taken of the depression. These information sources will be added to the existing site form as both an update and correction.

The site was considered as being associated with Native American habitation by the original site recorders. CRP Cultural Specialists thought this to be unlikely. The depth (approximately 5 feet) and high berm which surrounds the depression were noted as being the primary traits which make this an unlikely candidate for the remains of a

pithouse or teepee depression. The site was originally termed a “depression”, but given the depth and steepness of its sidewalls, “pit” is a much better term for this feature (see Photo 1). Further, although numerous cedar trees are found in the surrounding area, not one was noted to have peeling scars. CRP Cultural Specialists noted that if the cedars were so close to a habitation location they would have certainly been utilized. The lack of any artifacts surrounding the pit was also noted as being evidence running contrary to the “pithouse” case. One noteworthy observation is that the pit does have some antiquity. Two pine trees having diameters of approximately 24 inches were noted growing on the berm of the pit (see Photo 1). So, time enough has passed since the pit was excavated for these trees to grow from sapling to their current size. An assessment of the pit could be furthered by some form of subsurface testing, although given that the site is outside the property surveyors were tasked with investigating, this path was outside the scope of this project.

Given that no archaeological or cultural sites were identified on the subject property, it is recommended that the development proceed. However, should ground disturbing or other related development activities result in the inadvertent discovery of archaeological deposits, work should be stopped in the immediate area and contact be made with the Washington State DAHP. Work should remain suspended until the find is assessed and appropriate consultation is conducted. Should human remains be inadvertently discovered, as dictated by Washington State RCW 27.44, work should be immediately halted in the area and contact made with local law enforcement, DAHP, and affected Native American Tribes.



Photo 1. Site 45KT1367 “depression” or more accurately “pit”. Note the depth of the pit being higher than Cultural Specialist Gregg Kiona and (somewhat difficult to see in the photo) its steep sidewalls. Also note the large tree growing on the pit berm in the background behind Mr. Kiona.

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