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**CULTURAL RESOURCES SURVEY AND MANAGEMENT PLAN  
OF THE CLEAR AIR FORCE STATION,  
CLEAR, ALASKA**

**Prepared for:  
HQ SPACECOM**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES .....	3
LIST OF APPENDICES .....	3
THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT OF CLEAR AIR FORCE STATION .....	1
PURPOSE OF STUDY .....	1
GEOMORPHOLOGY .....	1
PREHISTORY .....	1
HISTORY .....	5
CLEAR AIR FORCE STATION .....	6
THE CULTURAL RESOURCE SURVEY .....	6
THE RECONNAISSANCE SURVEY .....	6
1. Survey of the Healy Outwash Terrace. ....	7
Subsurface Test 1 .....	7
Subsurface Test 2 .....	7
Subsurface Test 3 .....	7
Subsurface Test 4 .....	8
Subsurface Test 5 .....	8
Subsurface Test 6 .....	8
2. Survey of the Riley Creek Outwash Terrace. ....	8
Site 1 .....	13
Sites 2-4 .....	13
Site 5 .....	13
Site 6 .....	13
Site 7 .....	16
Site 8 .....	16
Site 9 .....	16
Site 10 .....	16
3. Survey of Modern Floodplain. ....	16
4. The White Alice Communication Systems Site. ....	17
SUGGESTIONS ON FUTURE CULTURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT .....	18
REFERENCES CITED .....	21
LIST OF PREPARERS .....	23

**LIST OF FIGURES**

Fig. 1. Map showing location of Clear Air Force Station, known archaeological localities in Nenana Valley Area, and extent of Healy and Riley Creek glacial outwash (portions of U. S. Geological Survey Fairbanks and Healy Quads). . . . . 2

Fig. 2. Map of the Clear/Anderson area. Shaded areas were surveyed on foot or by car. Site numbers and subsurface tests (ST) correspond to those mentioned in the text. Map is based on a NASA U-2 photograph taken in July 1980. . . . . 5

Fig. 3. Composite stratigraphy of subsurface tests on Healy Terrace. . . . . 7

Fig. 4. Stratigraphy at Site 5 . . . . . 9

Fig. 5. Map of the Clear/Anderson area. Shaded areas and letters correspond to management areas mentioned in the text. . . . . 13

**LIST OF APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX A**

**RECORD OF CONSULTATION WITH AIR FORCE AND STATE  
HISTORICAL PRESERVATION OFFICER . . . . . 17**

# THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT OF CLEAR AIR FORCE STATION

## PURPOSE OF STUDY

This report presents the findings of a 5-day cultural resource survey of the Clear Air Force Station (CAFS), Clear, Alaska. The survey took place from August 8 through August 12, 1991. There were two major goals of this fieldwork: (1) to conduct a reconnaissance level archaeological survey of CAFS for prehistoric and historic cultural resources and (2) to examine the potential for future discovery of cultural resources on the base.

## GEOMORPHOLOGY

Clear Air Force Station is located about 25 km south of the village of Nenana. CAFS is situated near the southern edge of the Tanana Flats, a broad plain stretching 50 km from the foothills of the Alaska Range northward to the Yukon-Tanana Uplands.

Forming the western border of CAFS is the Nenana River, which flows northward out of the Alaska Range and through the Tanana Flats to the village of Nenana. There it empties into the Tanana River, a major tributary of the Yukon. At Clear, the Nenana is a broad, braided river flowing over a bed of gravels most likely glacio-fluvial in origin. Away from the river's edge the terrain is relatively flat, featureless, and sometimes marshy. The vegetation cover is characterized by dense birch, aspen, and spruce forests.

## PREHISTORY

Archaeologically, the Nenana Valley is the richest area of Interior Alaska. At least 100 prehistoric and historic sites have been discovered along its course (from its source at the Nenana Glacier to its mouth at Nenana, a distance of approximately 225 km) (Fig. 1). These sites range from 100 years old to as much as 12,000 years old and include some of the oldest cultural remains yet found in the Americas (Walker Road, Dry Creek, Moose Creek) (Goebel, Powers and Bigelow, 1991; Goebel and Powers 1990; Powers and Hoffecker 1989; Powers, Goebel, and Bigelow 1990). The earliest sites, assigned to the Nenana Complex, are Paleoindian in character and display many similarities with early Clovis sites found on the High Plains of the western U.S. (Goebel, Powers, and Bigelow 1991). Denali Complex microblade sites (dating between 10,000–7,000 years ago), Northern Archaic sites (6,000–3,000 years ago), and Late Denali sites (3,000–1,000 years ago) have also been found in the Nenana Valley (Powers and Hoffecker 1989), as have dozens of Late Prehistoric and Historic period sites.

Significantly, of the prehistoric sites thus far found along the Nenana River, none is located on the Tanana Flats between Rex Bridge and Nenana where CAFS is located. Before the present survey, the area in the vicinity of CAFS had not been examined for cultural resources. Past research in the Nenana Valley has been limited to survey and excavation of sites in the foothills zone (Goebel, Powers and Bigelow 1991; Powers and Hoffecker 1989; Powers, Guthrie, and Hoffecker 1983; Powers, Goebel, and Bigelow 1990).

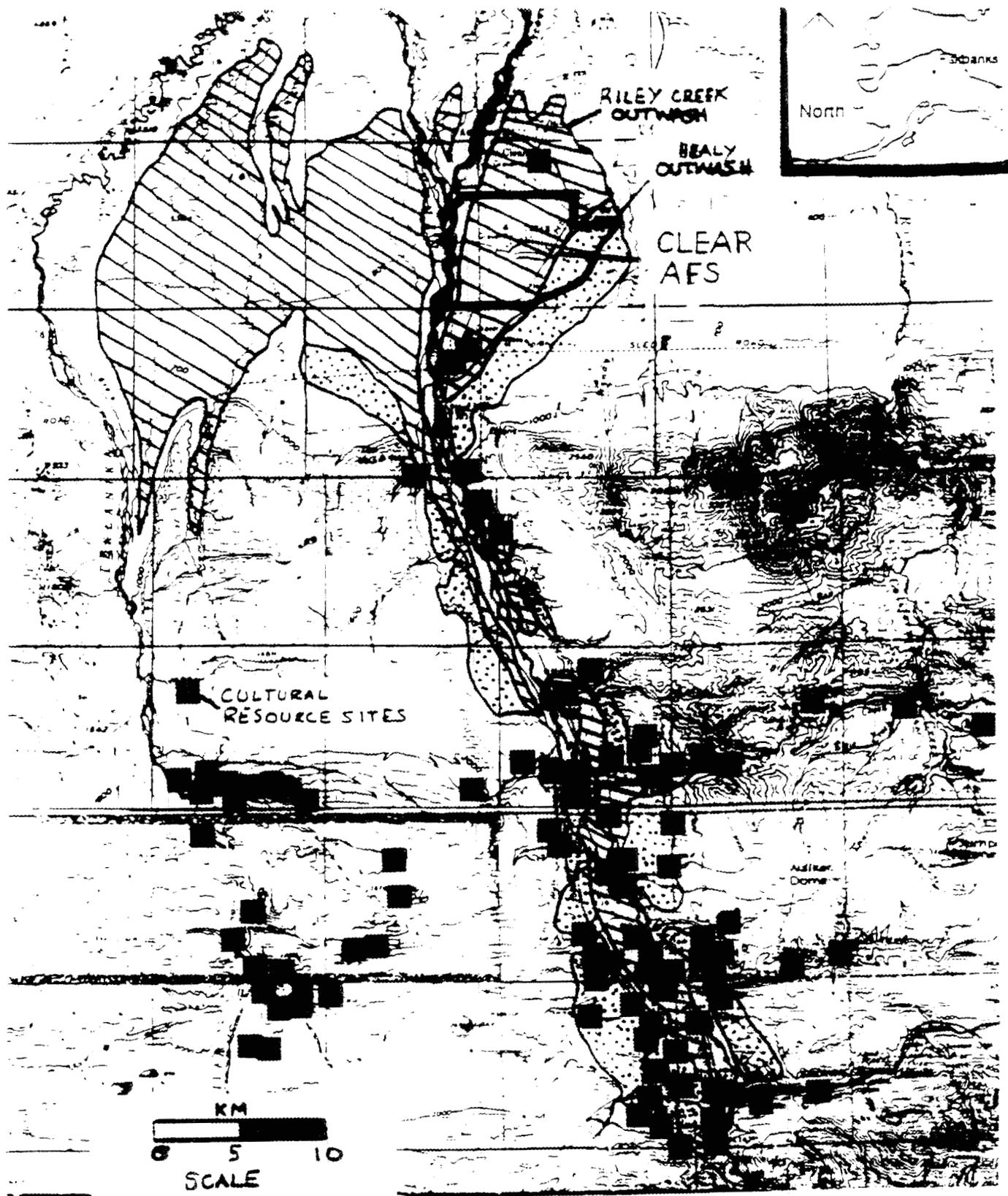


Fig. 1. Map showing location of Clear Air Force Station, known archaeological localities in Nenana Valley Area, and extent of Healy and Riley Creek glacial outwash (portions of U. S. Geological Survey Fairbanks and Healy Quads).

## HISTORY

Native Alaskan exploitation of the Nenana River has been documented by ethnohistorians and linguists. Historically (late 1800s) the local Athapaskan "Nenana Band" used the Nenana River as a route for seasonal migrations from summer fishing camps along the Tanana River to autumn caribou and dall sheep hunting grounds in the northern foothills of the Alaska Range (Kari 1983). Such seasonal movements along the Nenana River and/or Lost Slough likely can be extended into late prehistoric times, indicating the potential for campsites in the vicinity of CAFS.

Nenana placenames suggesting familiarity with the Clear area include the following:

Ana'notoxtadh'onh [Lost Slough] (Thompson 1979)

Ninano' [Nenana River] (Thompson 1979)

Totthaghi'odenh [Kobi Hill or Rex Dome] (Kari 1983; Thompson 1979).

Historic use of the CAFS area by Euroamericans appears to be limited largely to the building of the Alaska Railroad in the 1910s and the installation of a Ballistic Missile Early Warning System (BMEWS) station by the U.S. Air Force in the 1950s.

The Alaska Railroad, which runs northward from Healy to Nenana parallel to the Nenana River, was constructed in this area from 1917 to 1919 (Wilson 1977). During the spring of 1918, the Nenana River suddenly changed course, cutting eastward into Lost Slough and destroying 21 miles of the partially completed railroad. This section of railroad was subsequently abandoned and the road bed moved eastward, farther from the Nenana River.

Along the relocated line, the Clear Railroad Station (FAI-010) was built in 1918. In the early 1930s a new section house was built at Clear, and a small village emerged shortly thereafter (Orth 1971: 222). Local informants indicate that somewhere along the original 1918 railroad bed was the "Old Jap Roadhouse," which serviced construction workers along this stretch of the railroad (G. Ramsey, personal communication to T. R. Goebel, University of Alaska, August 9, 1991). The exact location of this roadhouse is unknown, and no written record of it has been found. The final modification of the Alaska Railroad in the vicinity of CAFS took place in 1960-1961, when the Air Force moved the tracks about 2 km to the east away from the Clear BMEWS installation.

## CLEAR AIR FORCE STATION

The earliest use of the Clear area by the U.S. military appears to have been shortly after World War II, when an airstrip was built for Army B-36 bombers (Jacobs and Woodman 1976). By 1950 Clear had become the Master Ground Control Intercept of the U.S. Air Force's Alaskan Interim Air Defense System (Cloe and Monaghan 1984), and from 1959-1961 this evolved into the Clear BMEWS station (Cloe and Monaghan 1984).

As part of the White Alice Communications System, the Clear BMEWS provided communication to the continental U.S. along the southeastern coast of Alaska (Reynolds 1988). During the height of the Cold War, this small, isolated military outpost in central Alaska provided a 15-min warning in the event the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics launched its

Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs) across the North Pole toward targets within the United States. In case of a nuclear attack, the Clear BMEWS gave the U.S. military enough time to retaliate by launching its own ICBMs from silos in the Midwest (Cloe and Monaghan 1984).

The Clear BMEWS can be divided into two separate stations. The first is the small TD-2 microwave relay station located 1 km west of the Parks Highway (currently nominated along with all other White Alice installations for placement on the National Register of Historic Places). The second is the presently active Clear Air Force Station, the hub of the BMEWS.

## THE CULTURAL RESOURCE SURVEY

As noted previously, this project had two principle objectives: (1) to conduct a detailed reconnaissance survey of CAFS for prehistoric and historic archaeological sites and (2) to evaluate the potential for future discovery of cultural resources at CAFS. The attainment of these objectives is discussed below.

### THE RECONNAISSANCE SURVEY

This cultural resource survey was directed primarily toward the identification and reconnaissance of prominent geomorphic landforms presumed likely to contain archaeological materials. These landforms included the Healy glacial terrace (which formed about 70,000 years ago), the putative Riley Creek terrace (which formed about 18,000 years ago), and the modern Nenana River cutbank. According to previous geologic mapping (Pewe, Wahrhaftig, and Weber 1966; Wahrhaftig 1958), the two major outwash terraces were traced from the Nenana Valley near Healy northward to around Anderson (Fig. 1) (Pewe, Wahrhaftig, and Weber 1966; Wahrhaftig 1958).

South of Clear in the vicinity of Healy and Ferry, the edges of the outwash terraces the modern cutbank of the river constitute the three major landforms upon which prehistoric archaeological sites have been discovered (Powers and Hoffecker 1989; Powers, Goebel, and Bigelow 1983). In fact, most prehistoric sites occur along south-facing bluffs of the Healy, Riley Creek, and Dry Creek terraces, near the confluences of small side-valley streams and the larger Nenana River (Powers and Hoffecker 1989). These localities offered prehistoric native Alaskans elevated lookouts from which wild game could be viewed and hunted. Such prehistoric land use patterns may have extended northward into the Tanana Flats. We therefore targeted our efforts toward a thorough examination of these landforms in the Clear area. The results of our reconnaissance are outlined below.

**1. Survey of the Healy Outwash Terrace.** Our reconnaissance survey proceeded on foot along the edge of the Healy terrace from south to north through the CAFS. The Healy terrace edge along the eastern bank of the Nenana River crosses the Parks Highway approximately 1 km north of the Clear Sky Lodge, at this point trending about 30° East of North. It continues north for about 5 km to the northern border of the station. A surface survey was conducted along the entire length of the terrace edge within the bounds of CAFS. Six subsurface tests were excavated with shovels along the terrace edge at regular 0.5 km intervals (Fig. 2). These testpits are described briefly below.

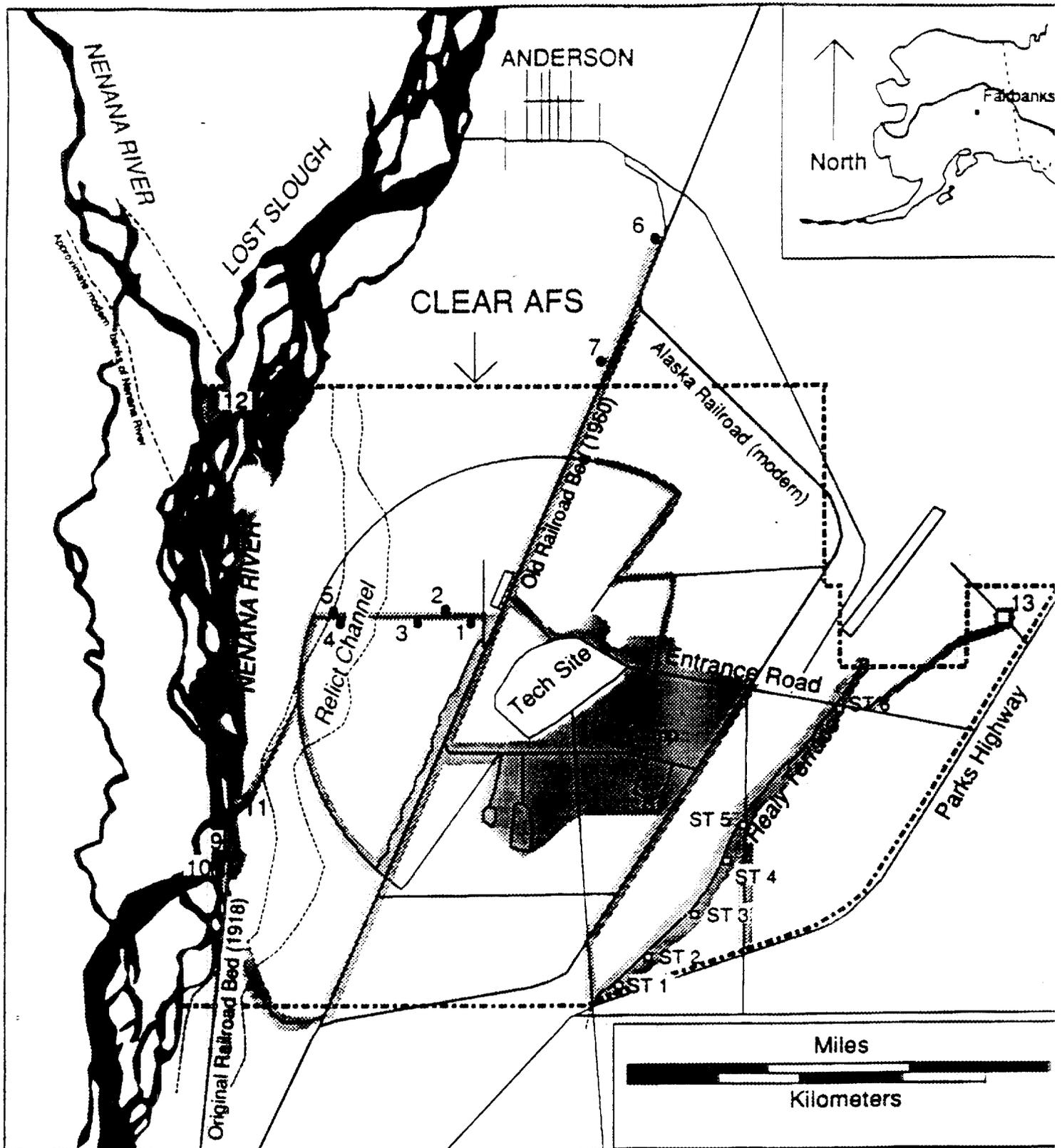


Fig. 2. Map of the Clear/Anderson area. Shaded areas were surveyed on foot or by car. Site numbers and subsurface tests (ST) correspond to those mentioned in the text. Map is based on a NASA U-2 photograph taken in July 1980.

Subsurface Test 1. Located about 1 km from the highway crossing of the terrace. The terrace here is about 2 m high. A shovel cut was excavated to outwash to a depth of 45 cm. The modern soil is 10 cm thick and consists of O (roof mat) and A (decomposed organics) horizons. Below the modern soil, the loess is massive and is described as a silty loam. No cultural remains were recovered.

Subsurface Test 2. Located about 0.5 km north of Subsurface Test 1. The terrace here is about 2 m high, and is dissected nearby by a small, dry creek flowing to the west. A shovel cut was excavated to outwash to a depth of 70 cm. The modern soil is 8 cm thick and consists of O and A horizons. No paleosols were noted. Instead, the lower-lying loess is massive and is characterized as a silt loam or loam. No cultural remains were recovered.

Subsurface Test 3. Located about 0.5 km north of Subsurface Test 2. The terrace at this point is only 1 to 2 m high and is rounded probably because of previous erosion. The subsurface test was placed along the northern side of a small, dry creek bed heading toward the West, Northwest. The test was excavated to a depth of 71 cm below the surface, where frozen ground was encountered. The modern soil here is 15 cm thick and consists of distinct O and A horizons. The loess below the modern soil is characterized as a massively bedded, unweathered, silty loam or loam. No cultural remains were recovered.

Subsurface Test 4. Located about 0.5 km north of Subsurface Test 3. At this point, the terrace is characterized by a sharp, steep edge about 2 m high. The testpit was excavated to a depth of 109 cm below the surface, but neither outwash nor frozen ground was reached. The modern soil is 16 cm thick and contains distinct O and A horizons. Under the modern soil is an unweathered layer of loam about 45 cm thick, followed by a 10 cm thick band of coarse sand occurring at a depth of 60 to 70 cm below the surface. Unweathered loam continues below this sand unit down to the base of the excavation. A representative stratigraphic section of this and the other subsurface tests along the Healy terrace edge is shown in Fig. 3. No cultural remains were recovered.

Subsurface Test 5. Located about 1 km north of Subsurface Test 4, at the edge of a gravel pit. A small portion of the northern wall of the gravel pit was cleaned and examined. The loess stratigraphy here is similar to other tests along the terrace edge in that (1) the top of the section contains O and A horizons of the modern soil, and (2) the remaining section of loess underlying the modern soil is an unweathered and massive loam. The contact between the loess and outwash here is abrupt, with a thick (ca. 10 cm) level of very coarse sand at the base of the eolian mantle. No cultural remains were recovered.

Subsurface Test 6. Located approximately 20 m south of the CAFS entrance road. Here the terrace is about 2 m high, with a fairly abrupt edge. The testpit was excavated to 120 cm; neither frozen ground nor outwash was reached. The exposed section is largely unweathered loam, except for the modern soil (about 10 cm thick) at the top of the section and a band of sand 61-71 cm below the surface. No cultural remains were recovered.

**2. Survey of the Riley Creek Outwash Terrace.** The survey of the Riley Creek outwash (as mapped by Pewe et al. 1966) proceeded through a detailed surface survey along established trails and roads on the CAFS (Fig. 2). Our reconnaissance of the Riley Creek

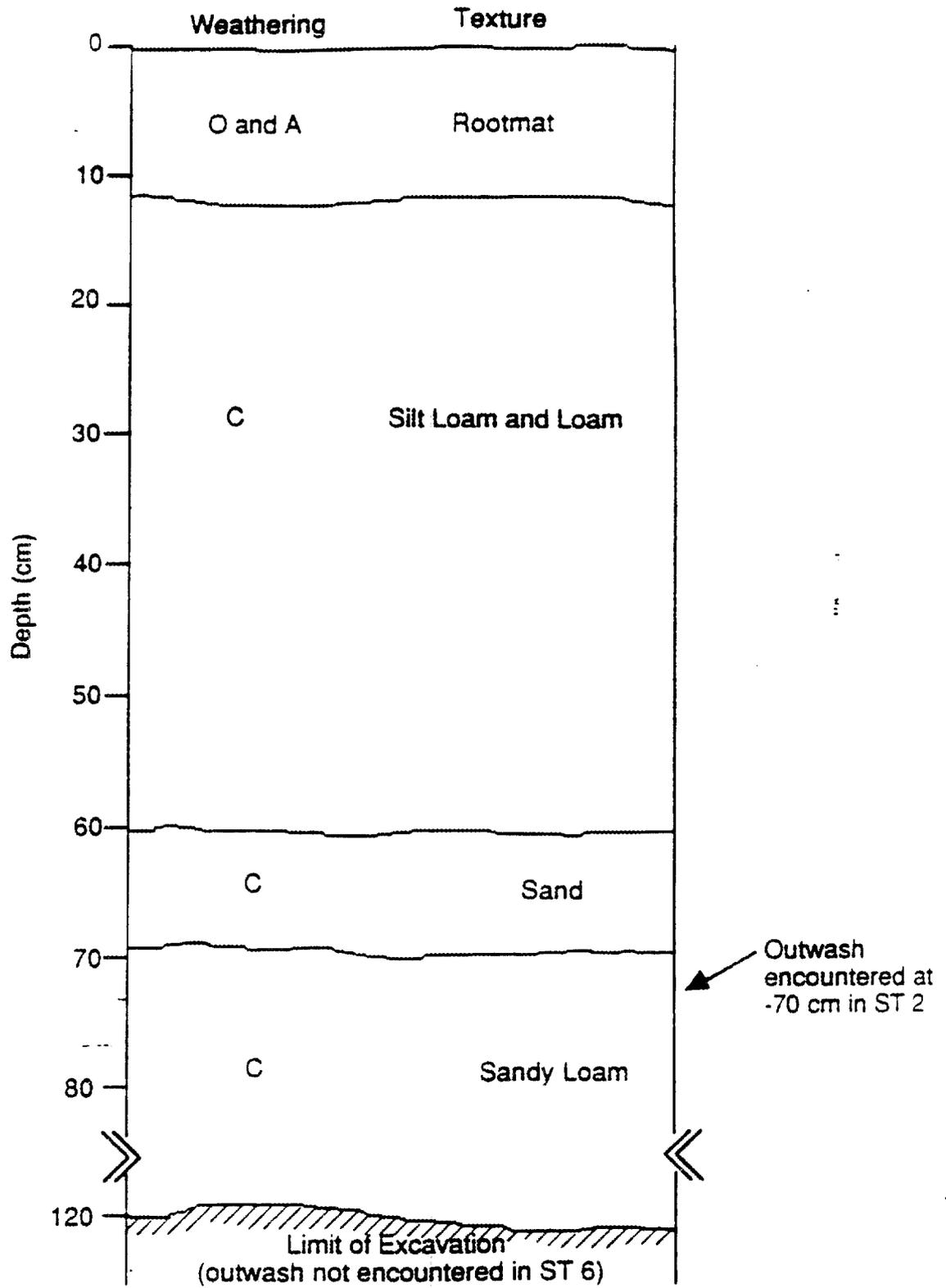


Fig. 3. Composite stratigraphy of subsurface tests on Healy Terrace.

outwash showed that the terrace has been largely disturbed by past flooding of the Nenana River, making the actual edge of the terrace unidentifiable. In fact, a large portion of the Riley Creek outwash has been cut out indiscriminately by the river, leaving in its place an array of fossil gravel bars, sand bars, and channels. Some of these bars are mantled by 10–20 cm of loess that could contain archaeological materials.

No prehistoric cultural remains were noted during our survey, and only minimal historic materials were encountered. These historic sites and other points of interest on the putative Riley Creek outwash (as mapped by Pewe et al. 1966) are discussed briefly below. Locations are shown in Fig. 2.

Site 1. This historic site consists of two surface features, a benchmark and a rectangular building depression. The benchmark is U.S. Engineers survey marker L-7 dated 1947. It is enclosed within a red wooden fence measuring 1.6 m on a side. Approximately 3 m west of the benchmark is a rectangular depression 20 cm deep, measuring 3.6 m × 3 m. No other features or artifacts were noted.

According to Harley Love, CAFS civil engineer, during the first few years of operation of the BMEWS installation, the western perimeter of the station was patrolled regularly at isolated guardposts. Site 1 may represent such a guardpost because it lies along a major road due west of the Tech site (the central portion of the station).

Sites 2–4. U.S. Engineers survey markers, numbered L-6 to L-3. Each is dated 1947. Each is enclosed by a red fence or remains of a red fence, similar to that noted at Site 1.

Site 5. Gravel pit cut along road 0.5 km due west of Site 4, or benchmark L-3. Along the southern edge of this gravel pit a section of loess was cleaned, drawn, and photographed. This section is shown in Fig. 4. It is characterized by fluvial sediments overlain by eolian sediments 23 cm in thickness. The modern soil can be classified as a buried entisol or inceptisol. No cultural materials were found during excavations.

Site 6. The Clear Townsite (FAI-010). There was some confusion as to the exact location of the Clear Railroad Station—Mile 392.9 (according to Orth 1971) or Mile 394.2 (according to the Alaska Heritage Resources Survey). We therefore deemed it necessary to document the exact location of the townsite to ascertain whether it is situated on or off the Clear Air Force Station.

Our survey of the area revealed the remains of 13 razed structures along the western side of the railroad at Mile 329.5, about 2 km north of the Air Force station boundary. They included eight large oblong structures with wooden beam foundations and deep cellars (four of which show evidence of burning), four outhouses, and one tent frame. The eight larger structures were almost all the same size and displayed the same layout or floorplan. These may represent regulation housing of either the U.S. Army or the Alaska Railroad. A piece of cardboard nailed to an outhouse wall revealed the date 1942, perhaps dating the occupation of these buildings roughly to the World War II era.

Currently, the people living at nearby Anderson appear to be using the Clear townsite as a refuse dump. There is evidence of bulldozing and landfilling only 5 m from the structure

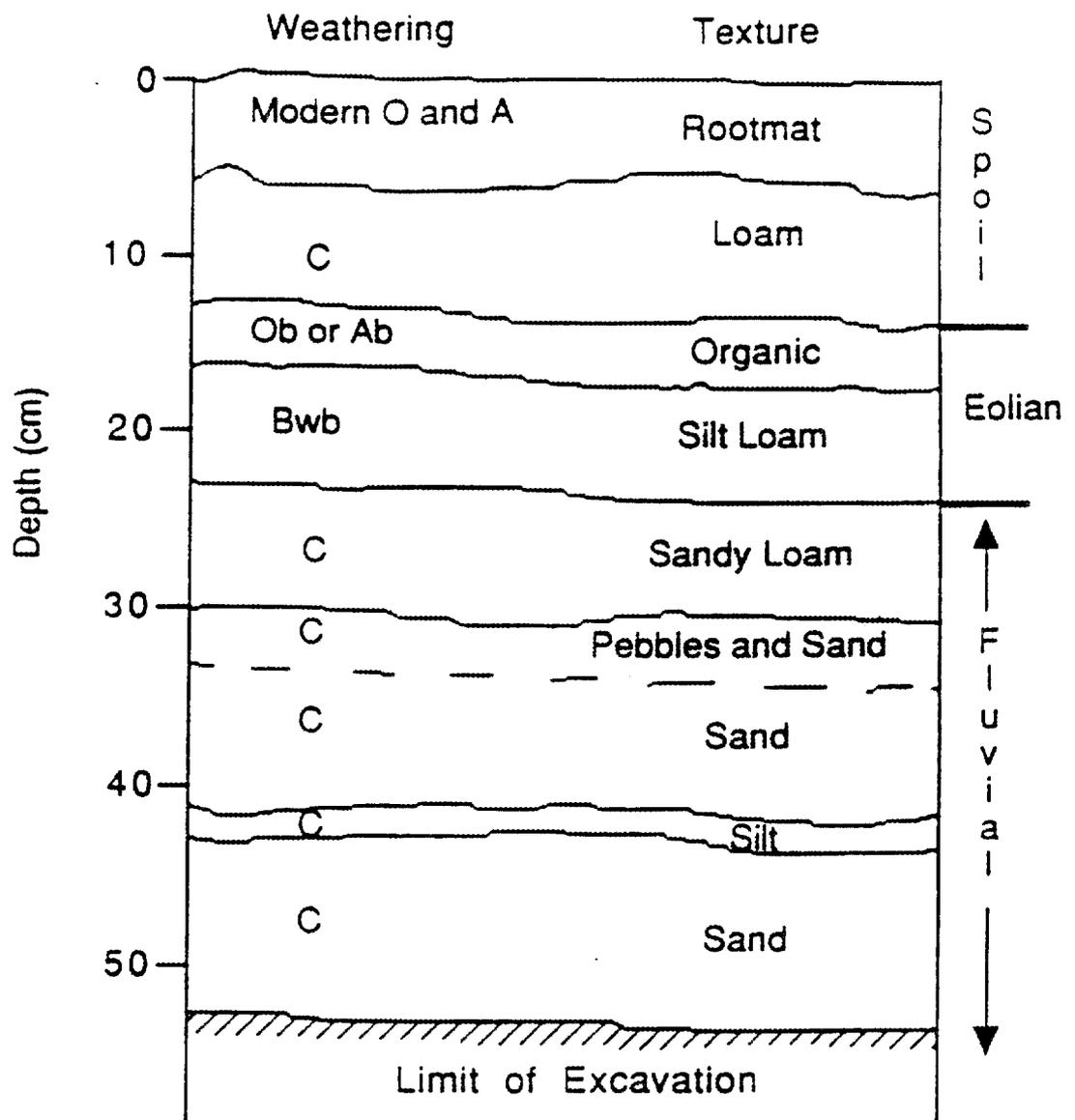


Fig. 4. Stratigraphy at Site 5

foundations described above. It is possible that additional building remains have been destroyed in the recent past.

Site 7. This locality is marked by a Corps of Engineer Benchmark along the western side of the old railroad bed, 0.5 km north of the CAFS boundary. The site consists of the benchmark enclosed within a red fence, a rectangular depression (ca. 3 m × 3.5 m) 10 m west of the benchmark, a pile of rusted tin cans, and a metal frame that may have been the base of an old guard tower. The layout of this locality is very similar to that of Site 1; it also may represent one of the early guard stations posted around the CAFS perimeter.

Site 8. At the eastern edge of an old gravel pit now used as a hazardous waste dump is an old gravel sorter that likely operated during construction of the BMEWS site in the 1950s and 1960s.

Site 9. Site of the initial Alaska Railroad bed where the Nenana River has cut into it since 1918. No other structures besides the railroad bed were noted, except for a small wooden signpost that perhaps once marked the end of the road. A rusted stove pipe was found nearby. Guy Ramsey, a local inhabitant of the Rex area, told us about an old roadhouse, called the "Old Jap Roadhouse," located somewhere along this old railroad bed. Our reconnaissance survey failed to bring to light any indication of this roadhouse, and we found no record of it in Alaska Railroad documents at the University of Alaska Rasmuson Library.

Site 10. At the end of "Ramsey's Road" are two separate junk piles located about 5 m from the riverbank. In these piles are rusted tin cans, gas stoves, chairs, a tricycle, and other pieces of junk. They probably date to the late 1950s or early 1960s.

**3. Survey of Modern Floodplain.** Another landform we considered to have high potential for containing cultural materials is the edge of the modern floodplain of the Nenana River. During historic and prehistoric times, central Alaskan Athabaskans spent much time salmon fishing along the Tanana River and possibly the lower Nenana River. Remains of such summer fish camps may also be located along the Nenana River floodplain in the Clear area. For this reason, a detailed surface survey of the river's edge was performed. The banks of Lost Slough in the northwestern portion of the base were also examined to ascertain whether cultural materials occur along this distributary of the Nenana River within the Clear Air Force Station.

The survey of the modern Nenana River cutbank was conducted by canoeing down the river from Rex Bridge to Anderson. One-half km north of Rex Bridge along its eastern bank the river cuts into the Riley Creek terrace. Here the terrace rises about 3 m above the modern floodplain. But the terrace does not reemerge anywhere else along the river cutbank between Rex Bridge and CAFS northern boundary; and, as stated above it, is largely destroyed within CAFS boundaries.

From the edge of the river, we were able to examine several km of exposures where the Nenana is eroding into thick flood deposits and fossil gravel bars. Although no cultural resources were identified during this period of the survey, we were able to identify extensive series of fluvial deposits that potentially hold archaeological sites from the late prehistoric period (from ca. 1,000 years ago to the present). For example, along the river at Site 11, we identified and photographed a flood deposit consisting of interbedded sands, silts, and paleosols rising

approximately 3 m above the modern level of the river.

The braided river, however, has destroyed much of the Riley terrace and many ancient sites that may have been situated on it. Here the course of the river is very unpredictable and subject to drastic changes in the direction of flow. The sudden loss of 21 miles of the Alaska Railroad in 1918 is the result of one such redirection. Sometime during the last decade, the river dramatically changed again. The 1980 NASA U-2 aerial photo for the region shows the Nenana River dividing near Anderson into two separate channels—the Lost Slough and the Nenana River. At that time 90% of the water in the river system flowed down Lost Slough, leaving most of the Nenana River floodplain downriver of this point dry. Today the flow of the river has been reversed, with 90% of the water flowing down the Nenana to the west and only 10% flowing into Lost Slough.

At Site 12, the point of land between the Nenana River and Lost Slough, the river has cut a wide swath through the floodplain, eroding any dry land that was once within the bounds of CAFS (Fig. 2). About 5 km north of this locality Pewe et al. (1966) mapped Riley Creek outwash, indicating the possible presence of a terrace. We judged this area high on our list of potential locations for cultural resource sites, but no sites were discovered within the bounds of the station.

4. **The White Alice Communication Systems Site.** The WACS facility at Clear was sold to Alascom, Inc., in 1983. It no longer is located on CAFS land and was not formally included in this survey. The site is being considered for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places, along with all other WACS facilities in the state. The site consists of a radio relay building, well house, chain link fence, communications antennas, and storage tank. We drove by the site but were not able to enter its premises. From what we could see, the site was in good condition and well maintained.

## SUGGESTIONS ON FUTURE CULTURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The second objective of this project was to advise the Alaska State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and CAFS on the management of cultural resources based on the results of the reconnaissance survey described above. Although no prehistoric sites were found on CAFS premises, we believe that the potential for discovery of such sites is high, especially along the edge of the Healy terrace and along the fossil river channels located between the Tech Site and the Nenana River.

The central area of the base surrounding the Tech Site has been extensively bulldozed, flattened, and stripped of any loess mantle. It is unlikely that any prehistoric sites will be found there in the future. The Clear BMEWS station itself, however, represents an important phase of 20th Century history (the Cold War), and if ever closed should be considered for inclusion in the Alaska Heritage Resources Survey and the National Register of Historic Places.

We recommend that the following steps be taken to preserve the unknown and known cultural resources on the Clear Air Force Station.

1. If any construction or earth moving occurs in the area between the contemporary Alaska Railroad bed and the Parks Highway (called Area A on Fig. 5), an archaeologist should be contracted to perform a detailed cultural resources survey of the area to be impacted. This survey should include frequent subsurface tests, since the loess along the edge of the Healy terrace is at least 1 m thick and very likely contains Late Pleistocene/Early Holocene archaeological materials.

Even if no cultural resources are recovered during such a survey, an archaeologist should also be on site when earth moving does occur. Archaeological sampling procedures do not allow for 100% subsurface coverage of a large impacted area; therefore, smaller-sized sites can easily be missed. It should be emphasized that the Healy terrace edge along the Nenana River saw heavy use by the prehistoric occupants of the area, as demonstrated by the dozens of sites found on the terrace south of Clear in the Nenana Valley (Fig. 1).

2. If any construction or earth moving occurs west of the old Alaska Railroad bed (and Lake Sansing) eastward to the banks of the Nenana River (Area B), an archaeologist should be contracted to conduct a detailed cultural resource survey of the impacted area. Depending on the exact location of the construction (e.g., the river's edge, a Riley Creek terrace remnant, a fossil gravel bar mantled with loess), an archaeologist should also be present when the actual earth moving takes place, in the event that archaeological materials surface. As noted above, the river's edge was often used by the prehistoric occupants of the area for fishing, and prehistoric fish camps may be buried along the modern course or along past courses of the Nenana River.

3. The central portion of the CAFS (Area C), which includes the Tech Site, "Camp," personnel housing, parking facilities, gravel pits, and numerous railroad lines and roads, has witnessed extensive development. Any prehistoric archaeological sites in this vicinity likely have been destroyed.

The BMEWS facility itself, however, is in our opinion worthy of preservation because of its historical significance as an artifact of the recent Cold War. We suggest that any future destruction of buildings and other facilities in or around the Tech Site be cleared through the Alaska SHPO office.

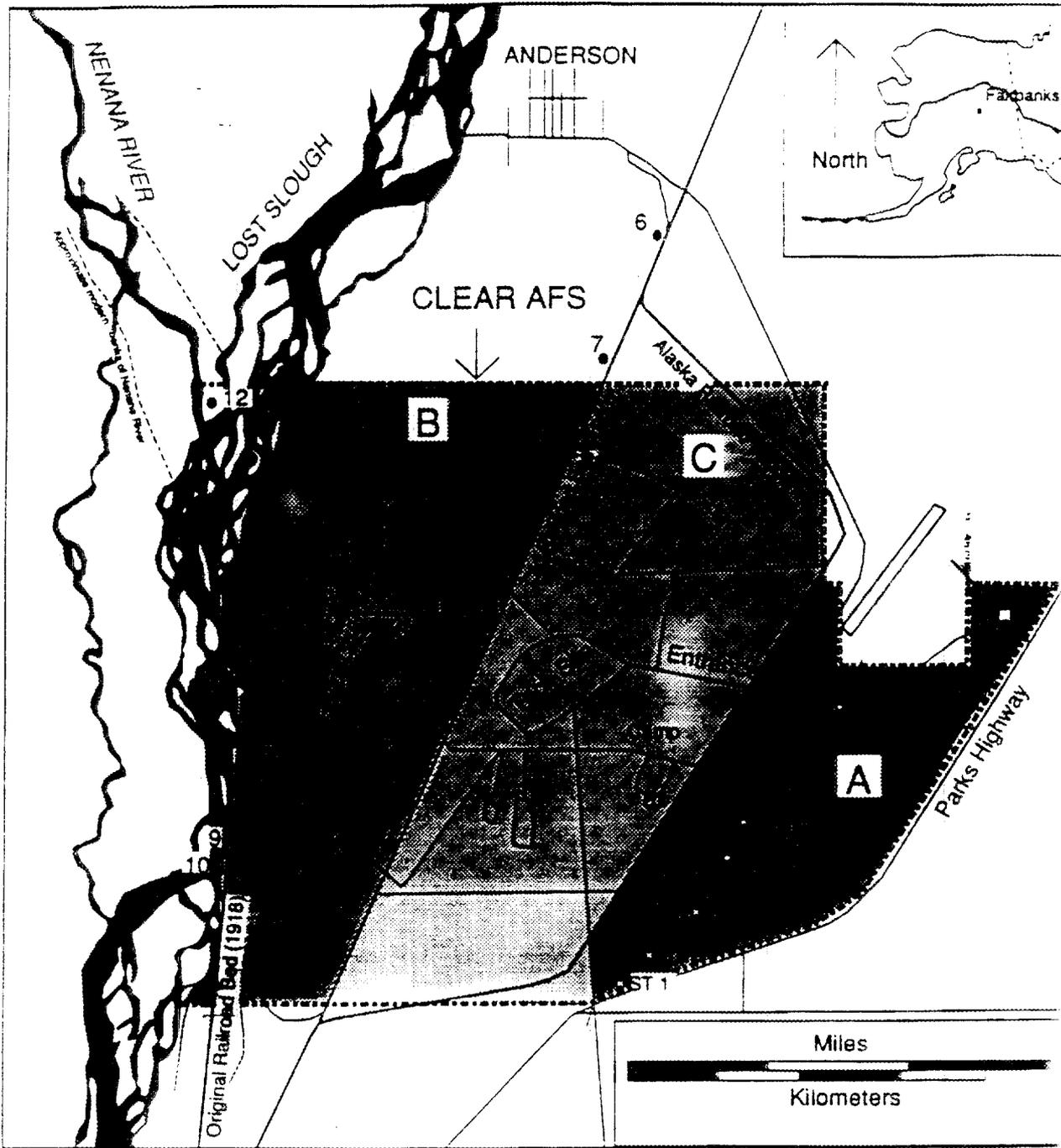


Fig. 5. Map of the Clear/Anderson area. Shaded areas and letters correspond to management areas mentioned in the text.

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- Goebel, Frank Edward (Ted), M.A., anthropology, University of Alaska, Fairbanks; B.A., anthropology, Washington and Lee University; 6 years' experience in field archaeology. Contribution: Reconnaissance survey and report writing.
- Powers, William Roger, Ph.D. and M.A., anthropology, University of Wisconsin, Madison; B.A., anthropology, Idaho State University, Pocatello; 31 years' experience in contract archaeology. Contribution: Project director.
- Treitler, Inga E., Ph.D., anthropology, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; M.A., anthropology, University of Illinois; M.A., linguistics, State University of New York at Stony Brook; B.A., linguistics and French, Wellesley College; 2 years' experience in environmental assessment. Contribution: Technical reviewer.

**APPENDIX A**

**RECORD OF CONSULTATION WITH AIR FORCE AND STATE  
HISTORICAL PRESERVATION OFFICER**

# STATE OF ALASKA

## DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

DIVISION OF PARKS AND OUTDOOR RECREATION

STEVE COWPER, GOVERNOR

3501 C STREET  
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99503  
PHONE: (907) 561-2020

MAILING ADDRESS:  
PO. Box 107001  
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99510-7001

April 20, 1990

File No.: 3130-1R USAF

Subject: Clear Air Force Base Site  
Information Request

Mr. Harlie Love  
FELEC Services, Inc.  
P.O. Box 500  
Clear, AK 99704

Dear Mr. Love:

In response to your April 16, 1990 request for information on known or suspected historic or archaeological properties on Clear Air Force Base, we have reviewed our Alaska Heritage Resources Survey (AHRs) file for listings in that area. We find data on only two such properties there: AHRs sites FAI-010 and FAI-342. FAI-010 is the historic Clear Railroad Station which was established about 1918 and FAI-342 is the Clear BMEWS Communication facility.

We have no information on the present condition of any remains of the Clear Railroad Station. Further information on this site may be available at the Alaska Railroad.

The Clear BMEWS facility is included in a thematic nomination to the National Register of Historic Places for the White Alice Communication System which has been determined eligible. Georgie Reynolds with the Corps of Engineers in Anchorage may have further information on this nomination.

No archaeological surveys are known to have been conducted on Clear Air Force Base. However, ethnographic information pertinent to the area indicates the area along the Nenana River, especially where the Lost Slough departs, is of high probability for the existence of historic and prehistoric sites.

Mr. Harlie Love  
April 20, 1990  
Page 2

I hope the foregoing addresses your request. If we can be of further assistance with this matter, please do not hesitate to contact us at 762-2622.

Sincerely,



Judy Bittner  
State Historic Preservation Officer

JEB:GD:dw



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE

HEADQUARTERS 1ST SPACE WING (AFSPACECOM)

PETERSON AIR FORCE BASE, COLORADO 80914-5000

REPLY TO  
ATTN OF:

1SWG/XRE

9 Oct 91

SUBJECT:

Draft Cultural Resources Surveys for Clear AFS, AK and Cavalier  
AFS, ND

TO:

Mr. Donald W. Jared  
HAZWRAP  
P.O. Box 2003  
Tri County Mall MS-7606  
Oak Ridge, TN 37831-7606

1. The survey of Cavalier AFS seems adequate to establish the absence of cultural resource values on the installation. Recommend that the report be forwarded to the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) for concurrence.
2. The survey of Clear AFS does not serve to establish the presence or absence of cultural resource values on the installation. The report should provide a more definitive position on the presence/absence of archaeological resources in Area A (Alaska Railroad bed and Parks Highway) and Area B ( old Alaska Railroad bed east to the Nenena River). If archaeological resources are present, the report should also identify what the needs are regarding a Cultural Resources Plan.
3. POC is W. D. Ritchie, 1SWG/XREV, 719 554-2539.

*David Clapp*

DAVID F. CLAPP, GM-13  
Acting Chief, Engineering and Services Div

Info  
1SWG/XR

# STATE OF ALASKA

## DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

DIVISION OF PARKS AND OUTDOOR RECREATION  
Office of History and Archaeology

WALTER J. HICKEL, GOVERNOR

3601 C STREET, Suite 1278  
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99503  
PHONE: (907) 762-2622

MAILING ADDRESS:  
P.O. Box 107001  
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99510-7001

August 12, 1992

File No.: 3130-1R USAF

Subject: Clear Air Force Station Cultural Resources Survey

Ms. Inga Treitler  
MS 6206, Building 4500N  
Oak Ridge National Laboratory  
P.O. Box 2008  
Oak Ridge, TN 37831-6206

Dear Ms. Treitler;

Thank you for the survey report for the Clear Air Force Station. It is a very good document. We are in agreement that Area C is sufficiently modified that the likelihood of intact archaeological resources being present is nil. However, we are in agreement that Areas A and B still retain a high potential to contain undiscovered sites, up to 12,000 (or possibly more) years old.

We recommend that reconnaissance level survey be continued in Areas A and B in keeping with Section 110(a)(2) of the National Historic Preservation Act (see also "The Section 110 Guidelines: Annotated Guidelines for Federal Agency Responsibilities under Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act" by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation). Simply put, the Air Force is required to establish a program to inventory lands they manage and evaluate any historic properties discovered. The guidelines urge prioritization of lands for inventory that may be developed in the foreseeable future. In the Clear AFS case, we would also include lands that are susceptible to erosion by the Nenana River and Lost Slough. This need not be done all at once; a multi-year project is generally better in that knowledge and experience gained from one year may be fruitfully applied to the next year's work.

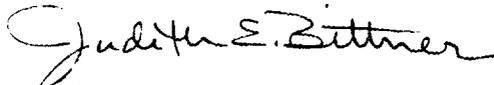
The consultants' figures for inventorying the remainder of the base are erroneous. The base is approximately 7 by 7 kilometers, or 49 square kilometers. There are one million square meters per square kilometer (1000m X 1000m); the area of the base is then roughly 49,000,000 sq m. Excluding Area C, about 30,000,000 sq m remain to be inventoried, not 64,000 as the consultant suggests. Also, the consultant suggests that a test pit placed every 25 m on transects spaced every 25 m apart equates to a test pit on every 25 sq m.

Actually, this is a test pit on every 625 sq m. Anyway, this is about 48,000 test pits, not 2560, multiplying the highly preliminary budget by a factor of 18.75 to \$2,800,000. We don't think that the Air Force would be interested in the project. Rather, we would recommend a smaller-scale phased approach that would initially concentrate survey in lands to be developed, as recommended by the consultant, and the highest potential areas of the base, such as along the lip of the Healy Terrace and the Riley Creek Terrace (where present).

Otherwise, the consultant's recommendations (pgs 12 and 14 of the survey report) are well taken. In particular, the BMEWS facility could well be eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. The Department of Defense Legacy Project is beginning to form a framework for evaluation of Cold War facilities. You may wish to contact Janelle Warren-Findley, senior project historian, at (202) 293-1774 for more information. In that light, we recommend that the Air Force consider a determination of eligibility for the property prior to any demolition or modification.

Please call Tim Smith at 762-2625 if there are any questions or if we can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,



Judith E. Bittner  
State Historic Preservation Officer

JEB:tas