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CULTURAL RESOURCES SURVEY FOR LINEAR ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE

East Texas

PROJECT OVERVIEW

ESE conducted a comprehensive cultural resources survey for an approximately 11-mile linear energy infrastructure project crossing federally managed lands in East Texas, where portions of the alignment were subject to Section 106 review under the National Historic Preservation Act, requiring coordination with federal agencies and adherence to Secretary of the Interior standards, with the objective of identifying potential cultural resources early, reducing regulatory uncertainty, and establishing a clear, defensible path forward prior to construction.

CHALLENGES

The multi-segment corridor traversed dense pine forest, multiple creeks and tributaries, existing transmission and pipeline corridors, and areas with limited ground surface visibility, with previously recorded archaeological sites documented in the broader vicinity, including one historic site near the alignment; because federal jurisdiction triggered Section 106 compliance and the project required both open trenching and directional boring, the survey had to withstand rigorous agency review while maintaining schedule certainty for a time-sensitive infrastructure development.

ESE'S APPROACH

ESE designed and executed a field strategy that exceeded State of Texas Minimum Survey Standards and Secretary of the Interior guidelines, beginning with detailed archival research of historic maps, aerial imagery, prior investigations, and recorded sites, followed by a 100 percent pedestrian survey supported by systematic subsurface testing and GPS documentation; shovel testing intervals were adjusted near waterways in accordance with federal guidance, previously recorded resources were delineated to confirm boundaries relative to the right-of-way, and testing in disturbed corridors was strategically placed to evaluate intact soils, resulting in a thorough and defensible record capable of withstanding regulatory scrutiny while minimizing project risk.

RESULTS

The investigation included:

- 100% pedestrian survey coverage
- 102 systematic shovel tests
- Evaluation and delineation of a previously recorded historic site
- Documentation of multiple water crossings

No prehistoric or historic archaeological components were identified within the right-of-way. No intact cultural deposits, features, or structural remnants were encountered. Based on soil conditions, prior disturbances, and the absence of artifacts, the probability for significant buried resources within the corridor was determined to be extremely low.

ESE recommended the project proceed as planned with no additional cultural resources investigations required.

PROJECT IMPACT

For linear infrastructure projects, regulatory uncertainty can quickly lead to delays and cost escalation; by combining rigorous field execution with proactive Section 106 coordination, ESE reduced risk early in development and delivered a clear, defensible compliance pathway that reflects our Texas First approach — applying technical expertise with practical judgment to keep complex projects moving forward with confidence.