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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL DIG COMPLETED  
AT PENNSYLVANIA SIDE OF SCUDDER FALLS BRIDGE**

*Site Yielded Fewer Artifacts than Previous Excavation on New Jersey Side of River*

**LOWER MAKEFIELD, PA** – Archaeologists working for the Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission (DRJTBC) have completed a nearly four-month-long excavation in the vicinity of the Pennsylvania landfall location for a new bridge structure that will replace the current Scudder Falls Bridge, which carries I-95 across the Delaware River between Bucks County, PA. and Mercer County, N.J.

The archaeological dig, which began in early April, yielded fewer artifacts than anticipated and no evidence that Native Americans ever constructed dwellings at the location. The research was conducted by employees of AECOM, the design management consultant for the Commission’s replacement bridge project.

Before initiating the dig, archaeologists were optimistic about the prospects of recovering and cataloguing Native American artifacts that could date back as far as 8,000 to 10,000 B.C. But the work by a team of 12 archaeologists and other scientists only uncovered evidence of Native American activity from a relatively narrow time period -- from roughly 1000 to 1500 A.D.

Overall, 3,700 artifacts were recovered, primarily shards of pottery. One piece, however, was very close to being a complete pot. The excavation also yielded a Native American pipe bowl fragment and fish and turtle bones.

By comparison, an archaeological dig that took place during the fall of last year and early this year in the vicinity of the I-95/Route 29 interchange in Ewing, New Jersey produced more artifacts and evidence of Native American activity dating back to 500 B.C. Rocks and residual chips from the making of arrowheads and other stone tools constituted the preponderance of items unearthed at the Ewing site.

“Given the fact that the Pennsylvania excavation was longer in duration, involved more property and went deeper into the ground, we’re surprised by the outcome,” said Frank G. McCartney, the DRJTBC’s executive director. “Nonetheless, it’s reassuring to know that some artifacts were recovered and that these may help archaeologists in understanding how Native Americans lived along the middle Delaware River before Europeans arrived in America.”

The artifacts recovered from the archaeological dig will be taken to a laboratory where they will be cleaned and subjected to microscopic analysis. Some samples will be selected for shipment to other laboratories for chemical analysis. All of the recovered artifacts will then be cataloged before being sent to the State Museum of Pennsylvania in Harrisburg, where they will be stored for examination and analysis by future generations.

As for the dig site, the pits where archaeologists worked have been backfilled. The area will be reseeded and the surrounding security fencing will be removed, returning the site to its original condition.

The archaeological digs in Pennsylvania and New Jersey were the latest in a series of mitigation measures the Commission is carrying out in preparation for actual construction activities on the I-95/Scudder Falls Bridge Improvement Project.

The two excavations are part of \$1.1 million worth of archaeological activities the Commission is funding in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act and at the request of New Jersey State Historic Preservation Office and the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. Scudder Falls Bridge project consultants previously determined that further archaeological work at the two sites was warranted following archaeological testing that occurred in 2004, 2005, and 2009. Items recovered during the testing phase included pottery shards and projectile points.

Standard archaeological excavation methods were employed at both dig sites, requiring all soil to be dug by hand with shovels and trowels and passed through screens to recover artifacts. The excavation work at the Pennsylvania location extended to as much as 14 feet deep, the depth of the potential impacts of the replacement bridge piers at the site. The artifacts recovered from the archaeological dig will be taken to a laboratory where they will be cleaned and cataloged before being stored with the State Museum of Pennsylvania in Harrisburg.

AECOM's prior archaeological dig in Ewing, N.J. discovered a possible pre-historic hearth, evidence of tool-making, and evidence the site may have been occupied as long ago as 2,000 B.C. Artifacts from that dig will be provided to the New Jersey State Museum in Trenton.

Archaeologists determined that dig locations in New Jersey and Pennsylvania are at a geographically significant point in the river because they lie in an ecotone location, the broad area upstream from where the river ceases to be tidal. Such sites were attractive to Native Americans because ecotones contained a greater variety of diverse food resources in a concentrated area. In addition to the archaeological dig and recovery, scientists such as geomorphologists and palynologists will work to determine the time when the site was occupied and what the environmental conditions at the site were at the time.

The Scudder Falls Bridge project will be the Commission's largest single capital initiative in its 76 year history, with a current estimated project cost of \$322 million. The project is part of the Commission's comprehensive \$1.2 billion capital improvement program enabling the agency to refurbish, expand and modernize its 20 Delaware River bridges and other facilities.

Congestion on the bridge results in average delays for motorists of 27 minutes per day and traffic is projected to rise an additional 35 percent -- to 77,500 vehicles per day - by the year 2030. The project area extends 4.4 miles along I-95 from PA Route 332 in Bucks County, PA to Bear Tavern Road in Mercer County, N.J. The project includes replacement of the existing functionally obsolete four-lane Scudder Falls Bridge with new twin structures -- one on the upstream side of the existing bridge and the other overlapping the current bridge's footprint.

The new structures will have six lanes of through traffic (three in each direction) with two auxiliary northbound lanes for entry/exit travel and one auxiliary southbound lane entry/exit travel. The project calls for full inside and outside roadway shoulders on the bridge crossing to handle breakdowns and emergencies. The inside shoulder also would have the capacity to serve proposed bus/rapid transit routes. Last year, the Commission responded to public requests and approved the inclusion of a bicycle/pedestrian walkway on the new bridge.

The project will include the reconfiguration of the Taylorsville Road interchange on the bridge's Pennsylvania side and the reconstruction and reconfiguration of the Route 29 interchange through the use of roundabouts for accessing I-95. The project also will include an inside widening of I-95 in Pennsylvania in the project area and the installation of noise-abatement walls at multiple locations in New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

A "cashless tolling" system in the southbound direction will be used to collect revenues to help pay for the project, averting the need for conventional cash toll booths.

For more information, please visit the project website at [www.scudderfallsbridge.com](http://www.scudderfallsbridge.com)

#### About the Commission

The Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission was formed by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the State of New Jersey in 1934. It operates seven toll bridges and 13 toll-supported bridges, two of which are pedestrian-only spans. The Commission is a self-supporting public-service agency that receives neither federal nor state tax dollars to finance its projects or operations. Funding for the operations, maintenance and upkeep of its bridges and related transportation facilities is solely derived from revenues collected at its toll bridges. The Commission's jurisdiction extends along the Delaware River from the Philadelphia-Bucks County line north to the New Jersey/New York border. The bridges carried more than 139 million cars and trucks in 2010. For more information about the Commission and its various initiatives to deliver safer and more convenient bridge travel for its customers, please see: [www.drjtbc.org](http://www.drjtbc.org).