

CCR - 12/14/01

NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 10-90)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

91-5026

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Cactus Hill Archaeological Site

other names/site number 44SX202

2. Location

street & number 1 2/5 Miles North of Routes 637/640 Intersection not for publication
city or town Sussex vicinity
state Virginia code VA county Sussex code 183 Zip 23884

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official _____ Date _____
Virginia Department of Historic Resources

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:
 entered in the National Register removed from the National Register
 See continuation sheet. other (explain): _____
 determined eligible for the National Register _____
 See continuation sheet. _____ Signature of Keeper
 determined not eligible for the National Register Date of Action _____

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5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u> 0 </u>	<u> 0 </u> buildings
<u> 1 </u>	<u> 0 </u> sites
<u> 0 </u>	<u> 0 </u> structures
<u> 0 </u>	<u> 0 </u> objects
<u> 0 </u>	<u> 0 </u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Domestic Sub: Camp

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Landscape Sub: Forest

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

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7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

 N/A

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation N/A
roof N/A
walls N/A

other N/A

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- x A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- x D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

 Archaeology, Prehistoric

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Period of Significance Woodland Period, 1000 B.C. - A.D. 1600
Archaic Period, 8000 B.C. - 1000 B.C.
Paleoindian Period, Clovis, 9500 B.C. - 8000 B.C.
Paleoindian Period, Pre-Clovis, 14,000 B.C. (?) - 9500 B.C.

Significant Dates N/A

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)
 N/A

Cultural Affiliation Paleoindian
 Archaic
 Woodland

Architect/Builder N/A

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

- Previous documentation on file (NPS)
- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: Virginia Department of Historic Resources

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 6

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
18	293350	4095850	2	_____	_____

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Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

II. Form Prepared By

name/title: E. Randolph Turner, III Archaeologist/Director, Portsmouth Regional Office

Organization: Virginia Department of Historic Resources date January 15, 2001

street & number: 612 Court Street telephone 757-396-6709

city or town Portsmouth state VA zip code 23704

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name International Paper Corporation

Attn: Munroe Jones, Forest Utilization Manager, Woodlands Division

street & number P.O. Box 178 telephone 757-569-4209

city or town Franklin state VA zip code 23851

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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7. Summary Description

Summary Paragraph

The Cactus Hill Archaeological Site (44SX202), located next to the Nottoway River in Sussex County, Virginia, is a Native American site containing stratified and well-preserved deposits dating from the Woodland, Archaic, and Paleoindian periods, thereby spanning the entire time of Native American settlement in Virginia. Drawing national and international attention are extremely rare archaeological deposits predating Paleoindian Clovis occupation, making it one of the oldest Native American sites yet discovered in all of North and South America. These pre-Clovis deposits at Cactus Hill have been radiocarbon dated to over 15,000 to 16,000 years ago.

Background

The Cactus Hill Archaeological Site (44SX202) is situated adjacent the Nottoway River in Sussex County, Virginia near the town of Stony Creek. It is a Native American site containing stratified and well-preserved deposits dating from the Woodland, Archaic, and Paleoindian periods and spanning over 15,000 years. Of particular importance are extremely rare cultural deposits predating Paleoindian Clovis occupation, making it one of the oldest Native American sites discovered in the Western Hemisphere.

Cactus Hill was first reported by Richard Ware, a local collector of Native American artifacts, to Howard A. MacCord, Sr., a former State Archaeologist. MacCord, in turn, filed a site inventory form for Cactus Hill with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources in 1985. He noted on this form that the site likely contained a Paleoindian component, with cultural material extending to a depth of approximately three feet. The site was owned by Union Camp Corporation, now International Paper Corporation.

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Nottoway River Survey, one of the two archaeological research teams subsequently to work at Cactus Hill, first became involved with the site in 1988 after a local resident, Harold Conover brought it to their attention. Conover had traced sand and artifacts deposited as road fill on property next to his Dinwiddie County farm as coming from a sandpit at the Cactus Hill site. As a result, Nottoway River Survey, under the direction of Joseph M. McAvoy conducted limited test excavations around the sand pit from 1988 through 1993, establishing that the site was indeed stratified and contained a Paleoindian Clovis component dating to ca. 8000 to 9500 B.C., an extremely rare occurrence in Virginia.

This research led to an inquiry from Michael F. Johnson, archaeologist with Fairfax County, Virginia, and then in charge of the Virginia Fluted Point Survey. Through the fluted point survey, Johnson also had heard of Clovis projectile points coming from Cactus Hill. Both agreed that the site warranted further investigation, with more intensive archaeological excavations beginning in 1993. So as to be able back up results each might obtain, McAvoy and Johnson decided that excavations by them would proceed independently, with McAvoy heading up the Nottoway River Survey investigation and Johnson overseeing one sponsored by the Archeological Society of Virginia. Union Camp Corporation, when notified of the importance of the site in 1993, also immediately stopped all sand mining and timber removal in the area of archaeological deposits. The independent excavations begun in 1993 continue through today, although both are nearing completion. Throughout these excavations, Union Camp Corporation (and subsequently International Paper Corporation) has provided very strong support, including co-sponsoring the 1997 Virginia Archaeology Month poster which featured Cactus Hill.

Archaeological excavations at Cactus Hill have proceeded in four areas, encompassing less than 10% of the site. Overall, the core component of the site covers approximately six acres. Excavations at Cactus Hill have clearly documented well preserved stratified deposits encompassing the Woodland period (ca. 1000 B.C. to A.D. 1600), the Early, Middle, and Late Archaic periods

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(ca. 8000 B.C. to 1000 B.C.), and finally the Paleoindian period (ca. 9500 B.C. to 8000 B.C.). This sequence spanning the entire known period of Native American settlement in present-day Virginia is unduplicated at any other single archaeological site in the state. The Paleoindian period at Cactus Hill is represented by Clovis projectile points which traditionally archaeologists use to define initial Native American settlement in the Western Hemisphere.

Both the entire span of Archaic and Paleoindian deposits at Cactus Hill are characterized by intact cultural features and have been verified through extensive radiocarbon dating which was consistent with the artifacts recovered. These deposits ranged from approximately two feet to over three feet in depth across the site.

Totally unexpected, archaeological investigations at Cactus Hill documented the presence of human occupation which has been radiocarbon dated to over 15,000 to 16,000 years ago and which appears below the Clovis level. Tools associated with the pre-Clovis level included small trianguloid to lanceolate bifaces in association with a blade-core technology. Several factors strongly indicate that this component is spatially, temporally, and culturally distinct from the Clovis component above it:

- (1) The radiocarbon date of the Clovis level was established at 10,920 +/- 250 BP, while the dates for the deeper, pre-Clovis levels were assayed to be 15,070 +/- 250 BP and 16,670 +/- 730 BP.
- (2) The Clovis level and the deeper pre-Clovis level are not contiguous but rather are separated by a zone of artifact-free sediment ranging from three to over six inches in some areas.
- (3) The Clovis and pre-Clovis lithic assemblages show differences in artifact types and raw material composition.

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(4) The stratigraphic sequence of Clovis and pre-Clovis levels and accompanying assemblages were identified in multiple distinct locations across a distance of 300 feet on the centerline of an old dune, the core area of pre-Clovis settlement at Cactus Hill.

(5) Finally, these finds do not stand out in isolation but rather are consistent in age and context with other discoveries in eastern North America, namely the Meadowcroft Rockshelter in southwestern Pennsylvania and the Topper site in Allendale County, South Carolina.

This combination of factors makes Cactus Hill one of the very best candidates in all of the Western Hemisphere to argue for pre-Clovis occupation. Being one of perhaps only a dozen or fewer sites with such strong evidence in all of North and South America, Cactus Hill is literally of national and international significance for pushing Native American settlement in the Western Hemisphere past Clovis times.

While the vast majority of Cactus Hill remains unexcavated with significant Woodland/Archaic deposits still remaining, the same cannot be said of that portion of the site occupied during Paleoindian times. Here, because of the occurrence of very severe vandalism by looters an explicit effort was made to excavate the vast majority of these deposits. Current evidence suggests that less than 10% of the Paleoindian component still remains for future researchers. Surviving portions of the site currently are in forest cover.

Archaeological investigations at Cactus Hill have been largely a volunteer effort through the Nottoway River Survey and Archeological Society of Virginia with limited funding through the Virginia Department of Historic Resources and the National Geographic Society. This funding has been especially helpful in supporting a number of specialized analyses undertaken because of the site's significance, including (1) a detailed geological study of the site, (2) examination of charcoal, plant, and animal remains and immunological analysis of lithic artifacts for

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reconstructing prior environments at the site, and (3) both radiocarbon and luminescence dating of archaeological deposits.

Key scholarly reports for the Cactus Hill archaeological investigations include one published by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (McAvoy and McAvoy 1997) and another submitted to the National Geographic Society (McAvoy et al. 2000). Two sessions at professional meetings also have been devoted to research at the site, one at the 1997 Middle Atlantic Archaeological Conference's annual meeting and the other at the 2000 Society for American Archaeology's annual meeting.

In addition, the investigations have received national attention by coverage in such magazines as *Archaeology* (Metzler and Dillehay 1999), *Colonial Williamsburg* (Molineaux 2000), *Common Ground* (Grumet et al. 2000), *Discover* (D'Agnese 2001), *Mammoth Trumpet* (Hall 1996; Anonymous 1997), *National Geographic* (Parfit 2000), *Newsweek* (Begley and Murr 1999; Murr 1999), *Science News* (Bower 2000), *Scientific American* (Anonymous 1998), *Scientific American Discovering Archaeology* (Frison 2000; Waters 2000), *Time* (Dorfman 2000), and *U. S. News and World Report* (Petit 1998). Following an April 2000 press release from the National Geographic Society (Braum 2000), articles on Cactus Hill appeared in literally dozens of papers nationwide, including the *Washington Post*, *New York Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, and *Los Angeles Times*.

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8. Statement of Significance

Summary Paragraph

The Cactus Hill Archaeological Site (44SX202) is significant in that it can address important archaeological issues related to initial settlement of Virginia by Native Americans. Cactus Hill meets the following criteria established by the National Register of Historic Places:

Criterion A. The site is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history, namely

- The site is literally one of the very first in all of North and South America having a well-defined pre-Clovis component, thereby having a major historical role in the international archaeological debate on just when the Western Hemisphere was settled. Evidence from sites such as Cactus Hill is shattering the prior view for much of the twentieth century that initial settlement could be firmly dated back no further than Clovis culture beginning ca. 11,500 years ago.

Criterion D. The site has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in history, namely

- The site contains well preserved archaeological deposits that can provide significant new information on Native American lifeways during the Paleoindian, Archaic, and Woodland periods and the adaptations made by Native Americans over more than 16,000 years of settlement in Virginia prior to the arrival of Europeans and African Americans 400 years ago.
- The site, being one of a dozen or fewer recognized pre-Clovis sites in all of North and South America, contains well preserved archaeological deposits that can provide new significant information on the initial settlement of Native Americans in not merely modern-day Virginia but the entire Western Hemisphere

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Background

The Cactus Hill Archaeological Site (44SX202) is considered significant because it contains well-preserved archaeological deposits that can provide significant new information on Native American lifeways during the Paleoindian, Archaic, and Woodland periods and the adaptations made by Native Americans over more than 16,000 years of settlement in Virginia prior to the arrival of Europeans and African Americans 400 years ago. Being one of a dozen or fewer recognized pre-Clovis sites in all of North and South America that contain such well preserved deposits in a stratified context predating Clovis culture, it also can provide new significant information on the initial settlement of Native Americans not only in modern-day Virginia but also the entire Western Hemisphere.

Indicative of the site's well-preserved deposits and archaeological research potential are a number of specialized analyses undertaken, above and beyond intensive examination of the many thousands of lithic and ceramic artifacts excavated. These include a (1) detailed geological study of the site, (2) examination of charcoal, plant, and animal remains as well as immunological analysis of lithic artifacts for reconstructing prior environments at the site, and (3) both radiocarbon and luminescence dating of archaeological deposits.

Already this research at Cactus Hill has documented that it has one of the best preserved and most tightly defined Archaic/Paleoindian sequences in eastern North America thereby having remarkable potential for adding to our knowledge Native American lifeways and adaptations to a changing environment over thousands of years. For example, detailed botanical analysis of well preserved wood charcoal has documented the presence of white pine during pre-Clovis times, a species not found in Sussex County today but rather restricted to colder environments. Similarly, immunological analysis of selected Paleoindian lithic artifacts has identified protein traces from such animals as

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deer, elk, and rabbit in addition to possibly bison and/or muskox, both now extinct in Virginia. Further documenting the site's archaeological research potential, the remarkable radiocarbon sequence of cultural deposits spanning over 15,000 years is largely unparalleled, not merely in Virginia but elsewhere in the Western Hemisphere.

The Cactus Hill Archaeological Site also is considered significant in that it has and will continue to make major contributions to the broad patterns of our nation's history. The site is one of the very first in all of North and South America to be recognized as having a well-defined pre-Clovis component and thus has played a major historical role in the international archaeological debate on just when the Western Hemisphere was settled. Evidence from sites such as Cactus Hill is literally shattering the prior view for much of the twentieth century that initial Native American settlement could be firmly dated back no further than Clovis culture beginning ca. 11,500 years ago.

In 1997 the National Geographic Society and Dallas Museum of Natural History issued a press release which received national attention by announcing a consensus among a panel of archaeologists who after visiting the Monte Verde site in Chile accepted the position that pre-Clovis settlements in the Western Hemisphere do indeed exist. To cite the New York Times at that time, "For American archaeologists, it is a liberating experience not unlike aviation's breaking of the sound barrier, they have now broken the Clovis barrier." Almost immediately, Cactus Hill received national attention in helping to substantiate the startling Monte Verde announcement (see Section 7 for specific references). As a result, Cactus Hill is playing a pivotal role in the rewriting of our hemisphere's history on its initial settlement by Native Americans.

Because of intact stratified sequence virtually encompassing the entire span of Native American settlement in the Americas, the Cactus Hill Archaeological Site is considered to be of national significance. This evaluation is consistent with the contextual requirements for national significance established in

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the National Park Service's recently completed National Historic Landmarks Earliest Americans Theme Study (Grumet and Brose 1998). The Earliest Americans Theme Study specifically identifies Cactus Hill as a potential National Historic Landmark under this theme. Currently, there is one Virginia National Historic Landmark designation listed under this theme study, the Thunderbird Archaeological District in Warren County.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Anonymous

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1998 Tool Time on Cactus Hill: In Search of the Earliest Americans. *Scientific American*, November 1998, pp. 34,36.

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National Park Service, Archeology and Ethnography Program.
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2000 *The Earliest Americans. Common Ground.* National Park Service, Archeology and Ethnography Program. Summer/Fall 2000 issue, pp. 14-53.

Hall, Don Alan
1996 Simple Tools, Hearth Found Beneath Clovis Horizon: S.E. Virginia Site Yields 15,000-Years-Old Date. *Mammoth Trumpet* 11(4):1,14-18.

McAvoy, Joseph M., and Lynn D. McAvoy
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2000 Summary of Research at the Cactus Hill Archaeological Site, 44SX202, Sussex County, Virginia: Report to the National Geographic Society in Compliance with Stipulations of Grant #6345-98. Report on file, National Geographic Society, Washington, D.C.

Metzler, David J., and Tom D. Dillehay
1999 The Search for the Earliest Americans. *Archaeology* 52(1):60-61.

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2000 Cactus Hill: The Oldest Site of Human Habitation Yet Found in This Hemisphere. *Colonial Williamsburg* 22(4):58-61,

Murr, Andrew
1999 Who Got Here First? The War over the First Americans Rages as Science Sifts Through Spear Points - and Shibboleths. *Newsweek*, November 15, 1999, p. 71.

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10. Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The Cactus Hill Archaeological Site (44SX202) encompasses approximately six acres in roughly a circular shape with a diameter of approximately 600 feet. Eliminated from the acreage is a sand borrow pit that intrudes into the eastern side of the site.

Boundary Justification

Boundaries were determined through comprehensive surface examinations and subsurface testing, documenting intact archaeological deposits throughout the six acres nominated.