



Public Archaeology Facility Report

THE BINDY BAZAAR AT WOODSTOCK
ARCHAEOLOGICAL MAPPING PROJECT
MUSEUM AT BETHEL WOODS
BETHEL WOODS CENTER FOR THE ARTS
TOWN OF BETHEL
SULLIVAN COUNTY, NEW YORK

BY:

MARIA O'DONOVAN, PhD

SUBMITTED TO:

WADE LAWRENCE
THE MUSEUM AT BETHEL WOODS
200 HURD ROAD
BETHEL, NY 12720

SPONSOR:

THE MUSEUM AT BETHEL WOODS

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Binghamton University, State University of New York
Binghamton, New York 13902-6000

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Museum at Bethel Woods, Bethel Woods Center for the Arts contracted with the Public Archaeology Facility (PAF) to conduct a surface survey and mapping program. Bethel Woods occupies the site where many feel the 60s reached their zenith – the Woodstock concert site on Yasgur’s farm in the Town of Bethel, New York (Figure 1, p. 2). Bethel Woods has developed an approach to the recent past of Woodstock that utilizes this moment in time to focus attention on the larger social and environmental issues of the 1960s counter culture. An on-site museum was instituted in 2008 and the significance of the site of Woodstock was recognized in 2017 when it was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. Museum staff are currently developing a cultural interpretation program for the Bindy Bazaar, which featured vendors and other activities during Woodstock. This interpretive program includes construction of a trail system based on plans from the Woodstock archives. The Public Archaeological Facility (PAF) and Binghamton University graduate student volunteers assisted in the identification and mapping of cultural features in the Bindy Bazaar prior to construction of the trail system. This research was conducted in October and November of 2017 and is detailed in this report.

The fieldwork summarized in this document was performed under the supervision of Dr. Nina M. Versaggi, Director of the Public Archaeology Facility, Binghamton University. Maria O’Donovan served as the project director with Daniel Sieb providing additional project supervision. O’Donovan is the author of this report. Dylan Pelton served as crew chief. Edgar Alarcon, Jesse Pagel, Benjamin Kolb, Jacqueline Thiry and Chelsea Cunico were field crew. Maria Pezzuti performed all related administrative duties.

1.1 The Bindy Bazaar at Woodstock

The Bindy Bazaar is located northwest of the main stage area within the Woodstock site. In 1969, it was an intermediate area between two official campgrounds with trails that served to funnel foot traffic among the venues. Thus, it was an ideal place to locate vendors who could sell or trade items. Woodstock organizers laid out a plan for the Bindy Bazaar that showed approximately 25 rectangular vendors booths along defined paths. Photographs of the area indicate that trails were marked with signs, none of which survive on the ground. Vendor booths appeared to have been fairly ad hoc arrangements of natural rock, trees, wood, and other materials (O’Donnell et al. 2015).

1.2 Current Setting

On the surface, the area of the Bindy Bazaar has not changed much in the nearly 50 years since Woodstock (Figure 2, p. 3). It is still a heavily wooded, gradually sloping hillside. The surface terrain is uneven and interspersed with exposed bedrock and loose, natural rock. This is typical of upland terrain in the Catskill Mountain region. Land surface within the western section of the hill is more undulating and uneven. The woods feature second growth deciduous trees with some evergreens and are relatively open with little shrub undergrowth. The large number of deciduous trees has produced substantial leaf litter that limits surface visibility and obscures several vendor booth locations.

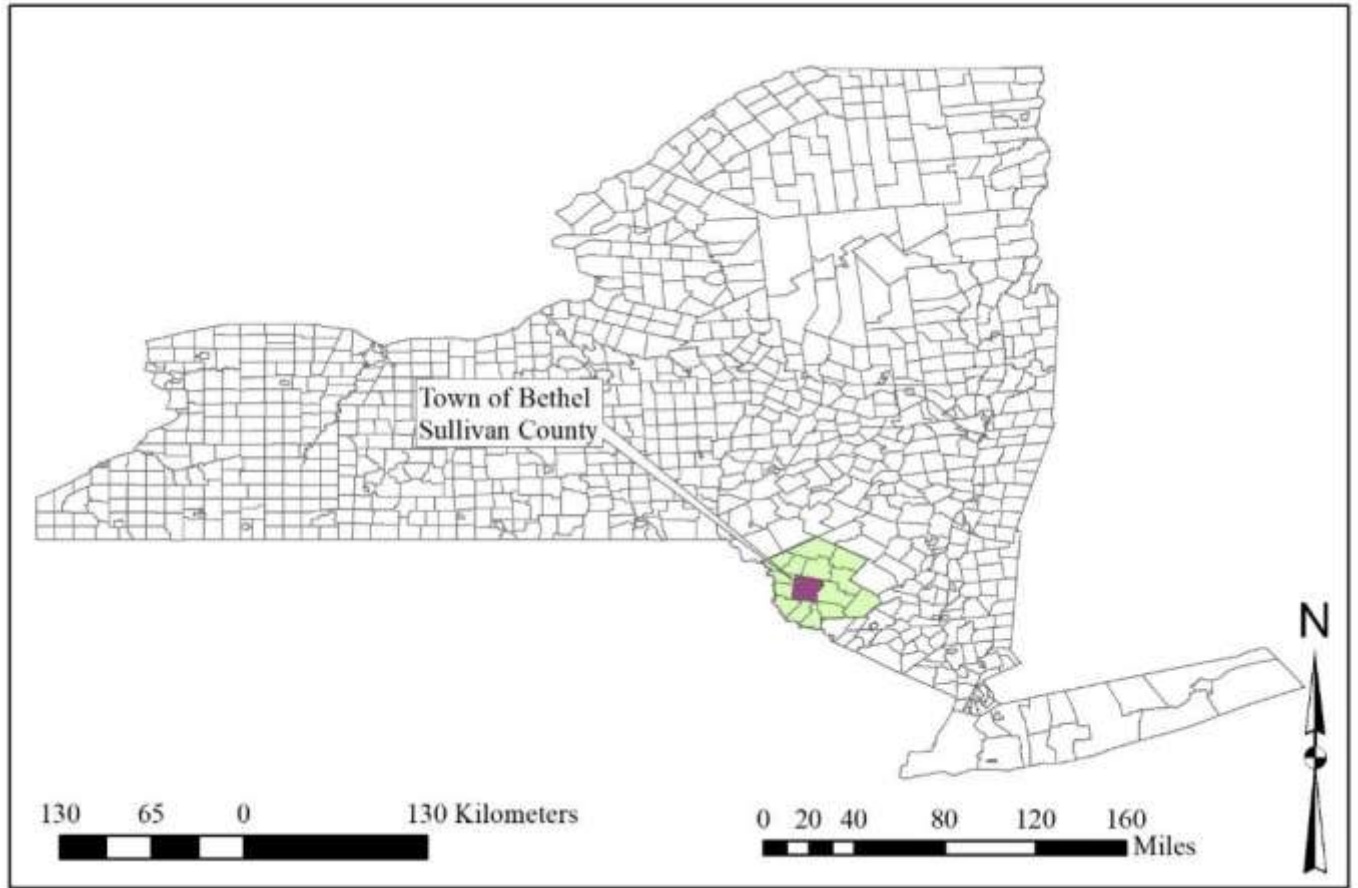


Figure 1. Location of the project area in Sullivan County and New York State.



Figure 2. Location of the Bindy Bazaar Area (in red) within the Woodstock site.

II. ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH

2.1 Methodology

Current goals of the Museum at Bethel Woods for the Bindy Bazaar include recreation of the trail system and interpretive context for this area. This requires identifying and recording the spatial and physical characteristics of the vendor booths and other cultural features related to Woodstock. The most efficient methods to accomplish this task were surface survey to identify cultural features that could then be mapped and recorded.

Surface survey of the Bindy Bazaar area presented several challenges. Soil deposition in this upland area is minimal and bedrock is exposed in several places so it seemed unlikely that any cultural features had been deeply buried in the nearly 50 years since the concert. Leaf litter and other vegetation presented an obstacle to surface visibility. The one detailed photograph of a vendor booth from Woodstock also suggested that these were relatively ephemeral and composed of natural rock. Archaeologists used leaf blowers and rakes to remove surface vegetation as they systematically walked over the Bindy Bazaar area. During the initial stages of this process we began to define criteria for identifying vendor booths to distinguish them from natural surface rock.

2.2 Criteria for Identification

The criteria we developed for identifying **vendor booths** were relatively straightforward and depended on recognizing cultural patterning. Several of the vendor booths near what appears to have been a main trail intersection were quite visible and had features that clearly indicated human intervention. These had some stacked stones, intersecting alignments, and shapes not created through natural processes. Stacked stones and some degree of cornering or intersection were the primary criteria we relied on in identifying vendor booths. This reduced but did not eliminate ambiguity in feature determinations in the field. Field crews identified some features that were clearly not vendor booths, including potential fire pits, and others that did not seem natural but whose function was unclear. These were labeled as **cultural features**.

All vendor booths and cultural features were labeled and numbered in the field before they were mapped and recorded. Vendor booth designations began with the letters VB and were numbered consecutively, e.g., VB-1, VB-2, etc. Cultural features were labeled with the designation CF. Given the terrain, a global positioning system (GPS), such as a Trimble hand-held device, would have been most efficient for mapping the spatial positions of features. However, GPS technology did not prove to be sufficiently accurate for the purposes of this project and mapping was done with a Sokkia total station. Mapping utilized a systematic reference grid with an arbitrary central datum. Archaeologists also recorded notes on physical characteristics, dimensions, and other relevant characteristics for each feature.

2.3 Results

Archaeologists recorded 24 potential vendor booths and 13 potential cultural features (Figure 4, p. 11). Interpretation of vendor booths and cultural features was somewhat subjective in this rocky terrain. Potential vendor booths ranged from well-defined examples with some stacked stone (Photo 1, p. 7) to those where there was a somewhat ambiguous alignment (Photo 2, p. 7). Cultural features included at least two fire pits (Photo 3, p. 8), although there were several that appear to primarily be natural concentrations of rock or where a purpose could not be discerned (Photo 4, p. 8). All determinations were based on surface characteristics and it is possible that more detailed cleaning and minor excavation could better define more ambiguous examples. Table 1 summarizes vendor booths and cultural features and provides information on functional interpretations.

Table 1. List of Vendor Booths and Cultural Features

Designation	Description/Comments
VB-1	Some stacked rock; clearly not natural in shape.
VB-2	Not natural in shape.
VB-3	Some stacked stone but quite ephemeral.
VB-4	Stacked stone; single rock alignment.
VB-5	Stacked stone; odd shape that is definitely cultural.
VB-6	Somewhat ephemeral but appears to have intersecting rock alignments.
VB-7	Some stacked stone; somewhat V-shaped.
VB-8	Possibly intersecting rock alignments.
VB-9	One definite rock alignment with stacked stone.
VB-10	One definite rock alignment.
VB-11	Very ambiguous; natural?
VB-12	Ambiguous; possibly a small rock alignment.
VB-13	One possible rock alignment.
VB-14	Possibly some stacked stone but most natural; ephemeral.
VB-15	Possibly one rock alignment; ephemeral.
VB-16	Small; possibly some stacked stone but difficult to distinguish from natural.
VB-17	Possibly one rock alignment; somewhat ephemeral.
VB-18	Possibly one rock alignment; ambiguous.
VB-19	Some stacked stone; adjacent to VB-2.
VB-20	Some stacked stone; one definite rock alignment.
VB-21	One definite rock alignment.
VB-22	Intersecting rock alignments.
VB-23	Some stacked stone; encircles a tree.
VB-24	Consists of two stacked stones; ambiguous; not large enough to be a vendor booth.
VB-25	Wire embedded in ground; somewhat ephemeral and ambiguous.
CF-1	Appears to be a small rock alignment; depression adjacent to it is natural.
CF-2	Natural.
CF-3	Circular; overlapping of rocks that is not natural; function unclear.
CF-4	Concentration of rock; possibly natural.
CF-5	Probable fire pit.
CF-6	Small pile of stacked rock; purpose unclear
CF-7	Natural.
CF-8	Probable fire pit.
CF-9	Natural.
CF-10	Probable fire pit; possibly quite recent; an acrylic fabric blanket in fairly good condition was located by it.
CF-11	Natural.
CF-12	Natural.
CF-13	Small, stacked rock features on the same alignment as VB-4 but not attached to it.

Archaeological assessment of surface characteristics of vendor booths and cultural features indicated that six out of the 25 vendor booths defined were somewhat ephemeral and may not be cultural. The map of the Bindy Bazaar area made prior to the Woodstock concert (Figure 3, p. 9) shows 25 vendor booths, but these are not in the same spatial configuration as those defined by the current archaeological research. No other cultural features were identified in this area on the 1969 map and it is possible that some of these post-date Woodstock. The 13 cultural features initially identified included three fire pits, one of which (CF-10) is associated with cultural material that appears to be more recent than Woodstock. There are four other potential cultural features that do not appear to be the result of natural process but their function is unclear. They include small piles of rock. Vendor booths and cultural features with questionable functional characteristics are coded separately on the project map (Figure 4, p. 11).

III. MAPPING PROCESS

The primary goals of the Bindy Bazaar mapping project were to identify and locate vendor booths and other cultural features, as well as determining their shape and dimensions. The locations and dimensions of all identified vendor booths and cultural features were recorded with a Sokkia total station and mapped in AutoCad LT 2015 (Figure 4, p. 11). Aerial imagery from Esri and OpenStreetMap was used as a base map. The resultant map provides a basis for trail reconstruction and cultural interpretation of this important area within the Woodstock site.



Photo 1. Vendor booth 5, looking northeast (note the stacked stone and definite shape).



Photo 2. Vendor booth 10, looking northwest. This is more ephemeral but a rock alignment is visible at center.



Photo 3. Cultural feature 10, looking south. This is one of the probable fire pits identified.



Photo 4. Cultural feature 6, looking south. This is a pile of stacked rocks that does not seem big enough to be a vendor booth but is clearly not natural.

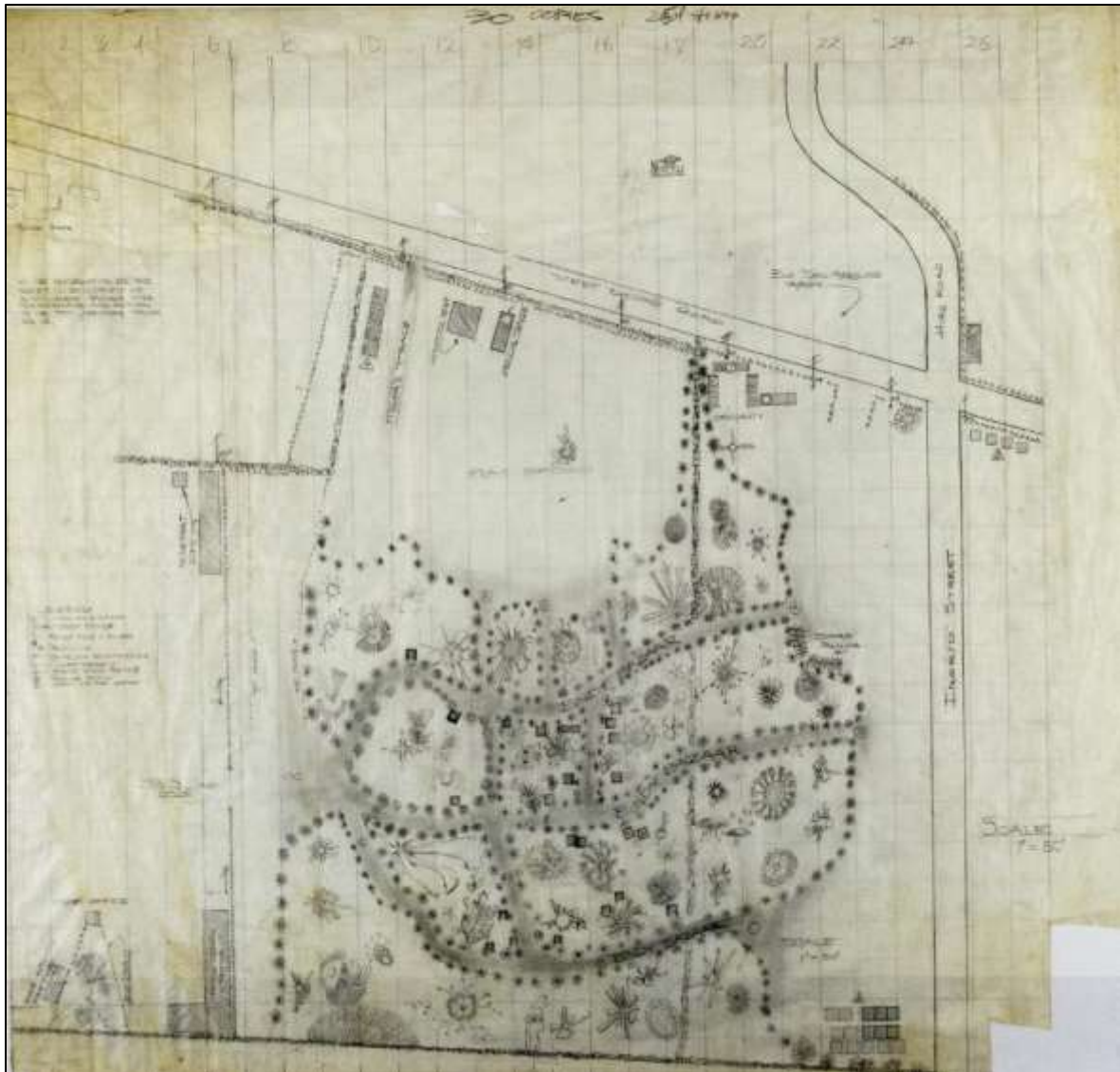


Figure 3. 1969 drawing of the plans for the Bindy Bazaar (Courtesy of the Museum at Bethel Woods).

APPENDIX I: REFERENCES CITED

O'Donnell, P. G. DeVries, P. Viteretto, T. Helmkamp, and R. Reese
2015 *Woodstock Festival Grounds Historic Site, Cultural Landscape Report*. Bethel Woods Center for the Arts,
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APPENDIX II: PROJECT MAP

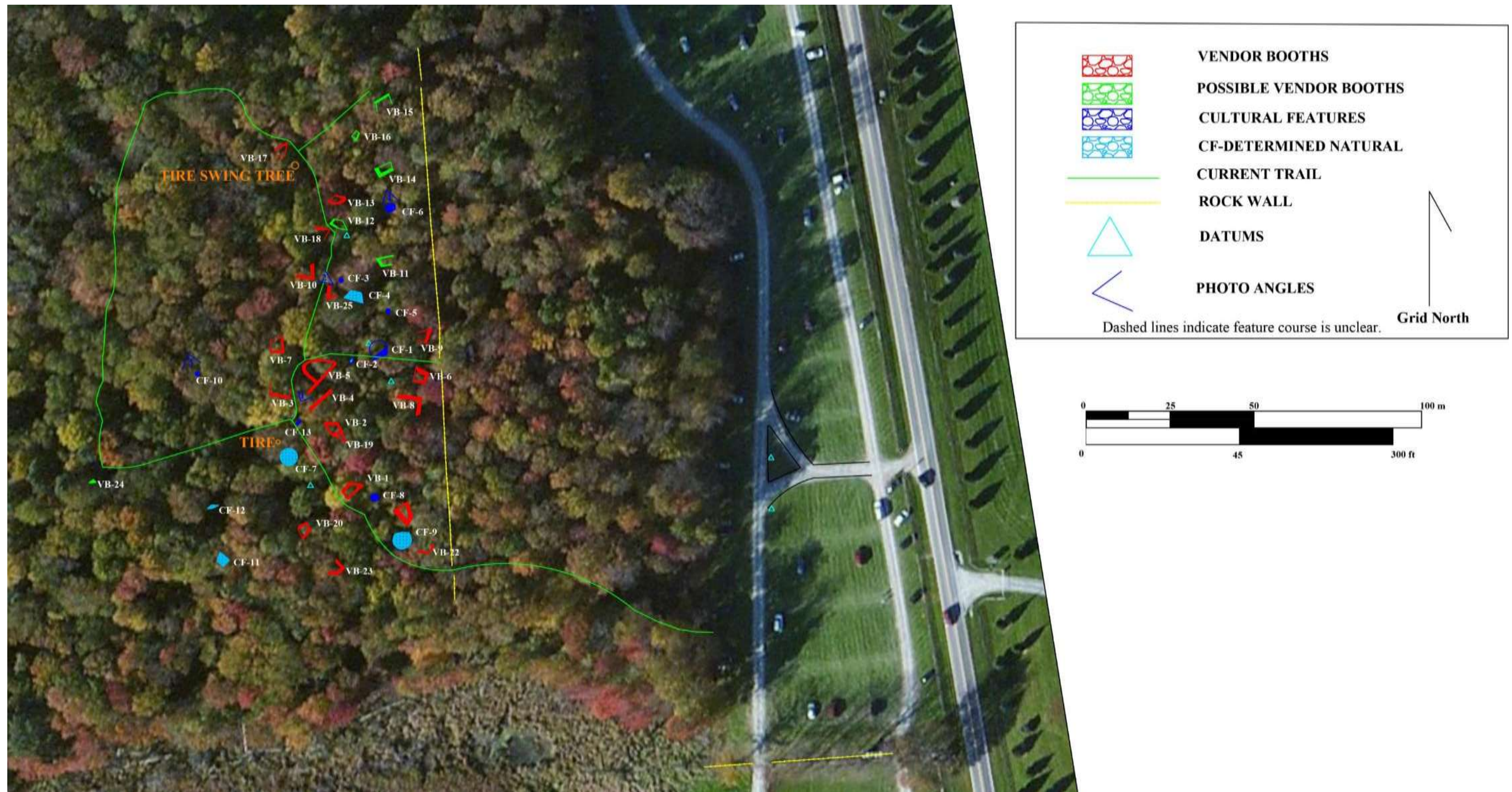


Figure 4. Project Map showing the potential vendor booth sites and other cultural features.