

# Deciphering the Stratigraphy and Landform Context of an Archaeological Site on the Whitewater River, Indiana

## Rocky Mountain Express (REX)-East Pipeline – Franklin County, Indiana

**The Louis Berger Group, Inc.**

Franklin County, Indiana  
2007-2009

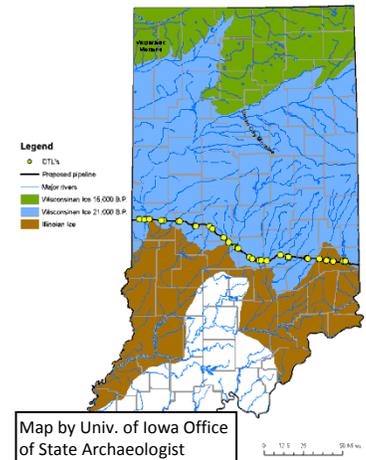
EarthView Environmental, Inc. (EVE) of Coralville, Iowa, conducted geoarchaeological investigations in support of a Phase III excavation at 12FR377, a prehistoric archaeological site in the Whitewater River valley of Franklin County, Indiana. The excavations were conducted by the Louis Berger Group (LBG) Marion, Iowa, as part of federally-mandated cultural resource management projects undertaken along the REX-East pipeline.

The REX-East corridor across the Whitewater River valley was designated in the early planning stages of archaeological investigations as a location where deeply buried cultural deposits could be anticipated. The late Holocene deposits are buried by a surface veneer of historic alluvium.

EVE proposed a two stage approach to the geoarchaeological investigation. The two stage approach was intended to streamline the time and labor intensive process of subsurface prospection for buried sites. The first stage was conducted entirely by a two to three person geoarchaeological team. It was intended only to identify areas likely to contain sites, and not necessarily to find the sites themselves. In the second stage, the archaeological team assumed a greater role including screening soil matrix with the explicit intention of recovering artifacts that may be present and determining their depth and abundance in the stratigraphic sequence. The advantage of involving the archaeological team in Stage 2 is that as soon as buried cultural material was found, archaeological excavation could immediately begin.

A Giddings hydraulic drill rig mounted on a six-wheel John Deere Gator was used to extract cores 3 inches (7.5 cm) in diameter from within the right of way. The purpose of coring was to identify the major stratigraphic units represented at the site, describe their pedologic and lithologic characteristics, and trace the vertical and lateral extent. Selected excavation unit profiles were also described. These units were selected to provide additional details on the soil stratigraphy associated with cultural deposits.

Cores and unit profiles were described in the field using standard Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) terminology. Soil horizonation, Munsell colors, texture, structure, consistence, redoximorphic (mottling) features, horizon boundaries, and other pertinent pedologic or stratigraphic features were recorded.



This project is a perfect example of the kind of geoarchaeological survey work that EarthView Environmental produces. EVE conducted a systematic, high quality study of the geomorphic context of the archaeological record in the project area.

### Client References:

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