

Site 9-10 Excavation Summary, Bethel

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Archaeological and Historical Services (AHS), under contract to the Connecticut Department of Transportation, recently completed the excavation of a Middle Archaic Site (Site 9-10) in Bethel.* This project was completed prior to the planned expansion of the parking lot at the Bethel Train Station. Site 9-10 is on a small knoll located to the east of Sympaug Brook. The site is about 150 square meters in size, and was likely a hunting camp, occupied once or possibly a few times. A small but diverse assemblage of stone artifacts was recovered. These include a crystal quartz projectile point and a complete quartzite Neville point that date to 8000-7000 years ago. Other tools discovered included an untyped chalcedony projectile point, three untyped point fragments, utilized quartz and chert flakes, quartz and chert scrapers, and quartz and quartzite cobble and groundstone tools. Also found on the site was debitage (stone flakes and chips that are created when making stone tools) composed of quartz, quartzite, chert, mudstone, and siltstone. Three quahog shell fragments and eight calcined bone fragments were also recovered.

Previously discovered sites dating to the Middle Archaic (8000-6000 years ago) in Connecticut generally appear to be short-term hunting camps. The people occupying these camps would have moved frequently to hunt game and collect plants. The artifact assemblage recovered from Site 9-10 is largely composed of tool production and resharpening debris, which are evidence of tool manufacture and maintenance. Broken projectile point fragments were likely discarded after hunting events when broken points were removed from hafts and animal hides. Food preparation activities that took place on site are evidenced in the recovery of chopping, cutting, and scraping tools as well as the calcined bone and shell.

The variety of stone types is notable, as many are from non-local sources, and suggest a complex pattern of trading or migration. The chert is similar to Normanskill chert from the Hudson River valley in New York, and the chalcedony is comparable to chalcedonies reported from the West Rock area near present New Haven. Site 9-10 is significant because so few Middle Archaic sites have been identified in western Connecticut. The data recovered from the site gives us a better understanding of broad patterns of Native American history.

* The full report, *Phase III Archaeological Data Recovery, Site 9-10, Bethel Railroad Station Parking Facilities Expansion, Bethel Connecticut, State Project No. 302-15* by Zachary Singer (AHS) is available upon request to mandy.ranslow@ct.gov.

See photos below

Photo 1: Sample of Tools Recovered During Phase I and II investigations of Site 9-10. Top row left to right: Brown chert sidescraper fragment; Green chert utilized flake; Crystal quartz end scraper; Crystal quartz scraper (AHS

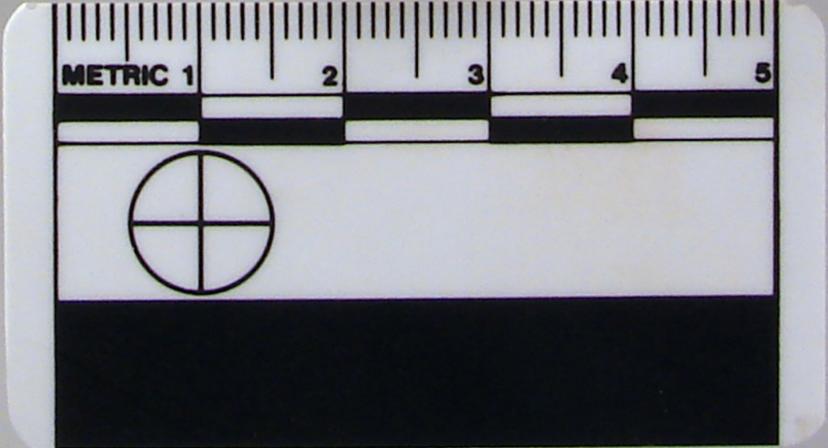


Photo 2: Chalcedony projectile point fragment, crystal quartz Neville-like stemmed point, Chert projectile point fragment; Chert projectile point fragment; Quartzite Neville Point, Quartzite projectile point fragment (AHS)

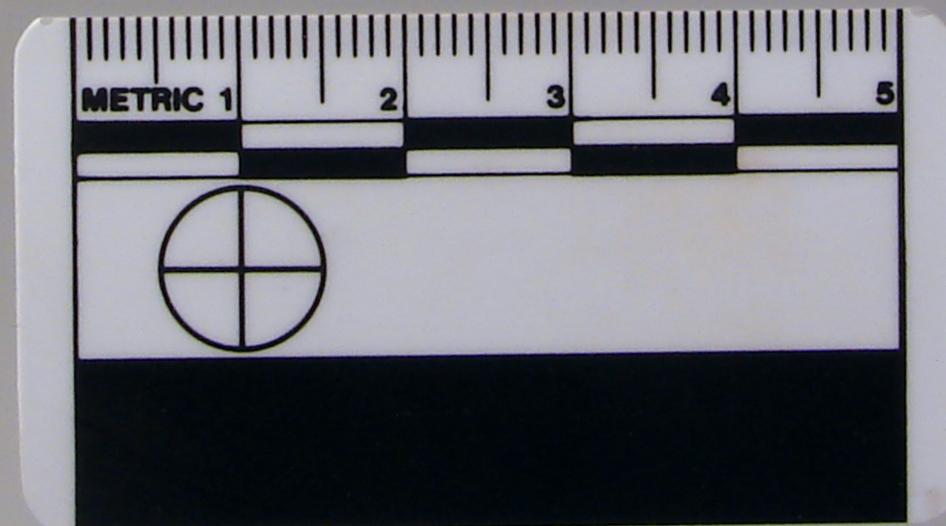


Photo 3: Cobble Tools. Three Quartzite cobble tools; Quartz cobble tool (AHS)

