

Levels of Archaeological Investigation

Phase I

- **Phase IA - Assessment of Archaeological Sensitivity:** This phase evaluates the potential for intact archaeological resources present in a specific project area, known as the “Area of Potential Effect” (APE). This involves historical research, environmental context review and field inspection. If archaeological sensitivity is low, no further archaeological survey is recommended. If archaeological sensitivity is moderate or high, the next level, a Phase IB survey is recommended.
- **Phase IB – Reconnaissance Survey:** This phase identifies all archaeological sites in a project area using systematic shovel test pit sampling to locate as many archaeological deposits as reasonably possible. If significant sites are identified during testing, a Phase II level survey is recommended.

Phase II

- **Intensive Survey:** This phase targets sites identified in Phase IB and combines shovel test pits with larger test units, such as 1 x 1 meter excavations. The purpose of this phase is to collect sufficient archaeological data to evaluate NR eligibility. Phase II defines the spatial boundaries of an archaeological site. When the survey is completed, there is sufficient information to design around NR eligible sites. If avoidance is impossible, an impact mitigation plan should be developed, which may require a Phase III archaeological investigation/data recovery program.

Phase III

- **Data Recovery:** This phase is undertaken if impacts to archaeological resources cannot be avoided. Artifacts and features are removed from part or all of the site in order to collect and preserve the essence of the site: its underground information. Data Recovery Programs are almost always conducted in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office (Mass Historical Commission) and/or other state or federal agencies.