An **Archaeological Survey** is a systematic assessment of a specific area to identify and evaluate archaeological resources, such as artifacts, structures, and buried features. The primary goal is to locate and document any cultural resources before development or construction. This may involve walking surveys, shovel testing, or geophysical surveys.

PURPOSE

Locating and documenting cultural resources. Archaeological surveys aim to find evidence of past human activity, including artifacts, structures, and burial sites.

Assessing the significance of resources

The survey helps determine the importance of the identified resources and their potential for providing valuable insights into the past.

Protecting cultural resources

Surveys help ensure that development projects do not inadvertently destroy or damage significant archaeological sites.

Facilitating responsible management

The information gathered from surveys informs decisions about site preservation, mitigation, and further research.

METHODS

Surface surveys

Walking across the land and visually inspecting the ground for artifacts and other evidence of past human activity.

Subsurface testing

Digging small test pits (shovel test pits) or auger holes to explore beneath the surface for buried features.

Geophysical surveys

Using non-destructive methods, such as ground-penetrating radar, to detect subsurface features without digging.

Aerial photography and remote sensing

Using aerial photographs and satellite imagery to identify potential sites from above.

TYPES OF SURVEYS

Intensive surveys

Involve a thorough examination of an area, often walking in parallel transects to ensure coverage.

Extensive surveys

Cover a larger area using sampling techniques to get a general understanding of the distribution of cultural resources.

Intrusive surveys

Involve digging or other actions that may alter the landscape to access buried features.

Non-intrusive surveys

Utilize techniques like geophysical surveys or aerial photography that do not disturb the soil.

IMPORTANCE

Archaeological surveys are crucial for Understanding human history and culture. They provide information about where, when, and how people lived in the past.

Protecting heritage sites

They help ensure that valuable archaeological resources are not destroyed or damaged during development projects.

Informing planning and management decisions

The data gathered from surveys informs decisions about land use, resource allocation, and conservation efforts, providing a foundation for further research. Surveys can identify promising sites for excavation and detailed analysis.