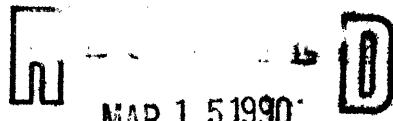


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



MAR 15 1990

NATIONAL REGISTER

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Platte River Campground

other names/site number 20EZ16

2. Location On the east bank of the Platte River in Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore

street & number \_\_\_\_\_  not for publication

city, town Empire  vicinity

state Michigan code MT county Benzie code 019 zip code 49630

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
_____	_____
<u>1</u>	<u>6</u>
_____	<u>1</u>
_____	<u>5</u>
_____	_____
<u>1</u>	<u>12</u>
	Total

Name of related multiple property listing: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Benjamin Levy  
Signature of certifying official  
Acting FPO, NPS  
State or Federal agency and bureau

3/14/90  
Date

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Walter D. West  
Signature of commenting or other official  
State or Federal agency and bureau

2-5-90  
Date

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.  See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:)

John J. Kwock  
Signature of the Keeper

4/27/90  
Date of Action

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

~~DOMESTIC~~ Prehistoric Camp

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION--Campground

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)

N/A

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation N/A

walls

roof

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Summary

The Platte River Campground (20BZ16) is on the east bank of the Platte River approximately one mile inland from Platte Bay on Lake Michigan. The site is within the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, Benzie County, Michigan. The site represents a multicomponent site, and one of only a few sites in the region with a preserved Middle Woodland component. The presence of rocker stamped Hopewellian style ceramic vessels make the site unique in the area.

Resource Count

Contributing Resources: There is one contributing resource which is a prehistoric archeological site.

Noncontributing Resources: There is one noncontributing site component which is a historic (late 19th century) scatter and foundation remnants from a nonexistent dwelling. There are six noncontributing buildings (4 outhouses, a maintenance building, and a contact station) 5 noncontributing structures (The Lake Michigan Road, State Route 22, campground loop roads, buried waterlines, and buried electrical conduit) and noncontributing objects (scattered picnic tables, grills, 2 telephone poles, campground marker posts, firepits, a wooden fence, and gravel parking areas.

Environmental Description

The topographic characteristics of Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore are largely the result of late Wisconsin deglaciation, postglacial lake level fluctuations, and aeolian processes. Resting upon Traverse series limestone of the middle/late Devonian period (Dorr and Eschman 1970:84, 86) are

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massive glacial till deposits modified over time by water, climatic change, and the biotic community. Late Wisconsin deglaciation of the Lake Michigan basin is represented by a sequence of moraine and glacio-lacustrine features that exemplify a progressive deglaciation marked by retreats, standstills, and readvances, with none of the later readvances extending farther than the preceding one (Evenson et al. 1976:411).

The three major micro-environments represented within the campground include: the relatively level former lakebed known as the Platte Plains, the relic beach dunes associated with the former lakebed, and the Platte River which bisects the aforementioned features.

Northern Michigan soils consist of spodosols which developed in a cool, moist climate under coniferous or mixed coniferous and hardwood forests. In the Platte River Campground area three major soils are prevalent. These are classified as the Deer Park-Dune Land association. They are well-drained, sandy soils on lacustrine/beach lain deposits. Profiling of subsurface test units across 20BZ16 showed the presence of artifacts in a very well developed soil profile. Artifacts and features extend from the base of a black/gray humus zone (10 cm) to ca. 40 cm below surface in the active soil weathering zone.

The climatic conditions of the study area are characterized by a humid temperate climate supporting a deciduous and mixed forest temperate woodland (Butzer 1971: 63). Lake Michigan affects local climate by modification of extremes in air temperatures. Winters are milder and summers cooler due to prevailing westerly winds. Growing seasons differ in various areas due to micro-climates created by localized air pockets. Shore regions have a longer growing season than many inland regions. Growing seasons in the lakeshore area are within a 150-day frost-free thermocline, while approximately 60 miles to the southeast the growing season is limited to less than 90 days. (USDA 1941: 922-923). Average temperatures at Frankfort in Benzie County vary from 22.6 degrees to 66.1 degrees F with extremes between -32 to 99 F. Precipitation has been measured annually at 29.35 inches (USDA 1941: 914).

"Four zones of maximum temperature contrast were determined by subdividing the Marion Lake data below an 1860 settlement horizon (Bernabo 1981: 148, 149). Temperatures between 800 B.C. and A.D. 400 were consistently warmer than the 2700-year average [17.2 C (62.9 F)]. A marked cold interval is evident from A.D. 600 to 800, after which a warming trend begins which climaxes between A.D. 1000 and 1200, when temperatures were approximately equivalent to the 1931-1960 mean [17.8 C (64 F)]. From A.D. 1200

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to about A.D. 1750, temperatures declined to a minimum of about 1 centigrade colder than the 1931-1960 mean. Increasingly warmer conditions had risen the average temperature by about 0.5 C by the time of Euro-American settlement" (Gilbert/Commonwealth 1986: 16).

A study conducted by Bernabo (1981: 150-151), states that these temperatures did not alter forest types but did vary enough to alter the relative composition of the forest. These changes also altered the species available to aboriginal groups, and may have had an impact upon agricultural development.

The study area is characterized by a deciduous and mixed forest temperate woodland. Because of the diversity of landforms and their attendant soil types, a wide variety of plant associations exist. Dune, upland forest, plain, meadow, swamp, and aquatic environments are populated by diverse plant communities and corresponding animal communities. Climatic variations have been affecting these communities throughout the late Holocene. The area has also been impacted by the agricultural and timber industries which followed the initial Euro-American settlement. Presettlement vegetation (Isleib 1969) consisted of seven distinct plant communities. There exists a series of successive vegetation zones from the present lakeshore inland over the relic embayment features of level lake plain and dune ridges. From the shoreline progressing inland are zones of beach vegetation, and grasses; a transitional zone between the beach and conifer zone beyond which is dominated by red, white, and jack pines; a savanna-like vegetation zone dominated by red and white oaks mixed with conifers from the preceding zone and occasionally an isolated aspen community; and finally the beech-maple hardwood forest that occurs as a climax woodland on inland morainal hills.

The site consists of second growth of red and white pines, maples, and a variety of oaks. Hemlock and spruce are present in small numbers. The understory is open and ferns and other plants are present in little used areas. In more heavily used areas, sparse grass cover is present.

Physical Description

The Platte River Campground (20BZ16) is characterized by a level to gently undulating area that extends from the riverbank northeastward into a wooded area flanked on the north and east by prominent dunes. The site is located on a high, well drained area approximately 600-605 feet above MSL close to extensive

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swamps toward the east. The Platte River and Lake Michigan Road lies on the western edge of the site. The area immediately east of the riverbank is partially covered by the Lake Michigan Road and a widened road shoulder which accomodates the approach to the boat launching facility, while east of the road is a stable sand ridge truncated by the road and flanked by a heavily used campground loop.

Recordation

Survey in the form of shovel testing and surface reconnaissance was conducted at Platte River Campground within the Sleepng Bear Dunes in Benzie County, Michigan, on May 13-17, May 20-24, May 28, June 4-6, and September 16-20 and 23-27, 1985. The assessment of the cultural materials from site 20BZ16 was undertaken by Gilbert/Commonwealth Inc. of Michigan.

The research conducted by Commonwealth covered the entire campground. This strategy was developed because the final rehabilitation plans were not available at the time of study. The National Park Service plans to construct new roads, campsites, trails, utilities, support structures, and picnic facilities. This intensive study was conducted to provide an excavated sample of the campground, recognizing a high potential for use of the area by prehistoric and historic cultures.

Surface reconnaissance and shovel testing were the field strategies employed. Shovel tests approximately 30 cm in diameter at 15 m intervals along transects spaced 15 m apart and were dug to ca. 30 to 40 cm below the surface. Matrix was trowel sorted and backfilled.

A total of 1490 shovel tests were dug in the campground and all positive shovel tests were further evaluated to better define the vertical and horizontal extent of associated cultural materials. This was accomplished by the original shovel test fill being removed, screened, and the unit expanded. All the fill was passed through a 1/8-inch mesh hardware cloth. Artifacts were bagged and the unit wall profiled.

Further refinement in method was made in an attempt to establish any inter-loci relationships and to delimit site boundaries. Additional screened shovel tests were positioned in a range of test configurations at selected locations. From each positive test an additional test was used until a negative unit was encountered. From the first positive test (PT-1), (0-N, 4-E) an additional twenty-three units were expanded, nine of which proved positive. This location was given the designation G/C 6, and yielded a ceramic artifact concentration and a few lithic artifacts.

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Positive shovel tests 4 through 9 and the G/C 8 surface scatter (Figure 1) (Gilbert/Commonwealth 1986: Figure 6) were in the northernmost section of the site. This section is characterized by a level to gently undulating area that extends from the riverbank northeastward into a wooded area. It is flanked on the north and east by prominent sand ridges, on the west by the river, and on the south by a heavily used part of the campground. Shovel tests were used to determine site boundaries and provided direction for subsurface testing.

This phase consisted of excavation of two 1 meter square excavation units. They were placed at opposite ends of the site in areas where prior investigation indicated a high concentration of cultural material. Both test units were given the number "1" within areas G/C 6 and G/C 8. Test Unit 1 in Area G/C 6 contained a ceramic feature and Test Unit 1 in area G/C 8 was a lithic feature being used as a vehicle turn-around and/or a camping spot.

It was at this phase in the investigation that the site was given the state site designation 20BZ16. This concluded the initial investigation at the campground in June 1985.

A new testing program was then developed in order to more accurately delimit the horizontal and vertical extent of the site and determine its significance. A controlled subsurface testing strategy was employed which entailed gridding the site area into 24.5m (80.11 ft) square blocks, each containing 2498 potential .5 m x .5 m sample units. Randomly chosen, single, 50 cm square units from each block were then excavated to sterile subsoil.

The 33 test units which yielded prehistoric cultural materials better defined the primary loci and established the existence of an additional pair: TU-23, contained a lithic feature; and TU-167, contained a possible hearth or midden feature containing bone, fire-cracked rock, debitage, and ceramic artifacts.

#### Intrasite Distributions and Loci Definition

The physical distribution of cultural materials across the site as determined from the original survey revealed two distinct loci of artifacts, G/C 6 and G/C 8, separated by an intervening stretch of less intensively utilized site area. The near river bank area is largely covered by the Lake Michigan Road, and a widened shoulder to accommodate the approach to the boat launching facility, while east of the road is a stable sand ridge truncated by the road and flanked by a heavily used campground loop. Little evidence of occupation was found on the ridges, and the rather extensive roadways were omitted from consideration during the testing phase.

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Features

Concentrations of chert debitage

Test unit 23 is situated on the edge of a gravel parking area at the foot of a gently sloping, wooded sand ridge. This area was formerly a playground, evidenced by a nearby concrete footing. The first 7 cm of this test unit consisted of dark brown silty sand, originating from recent fill. This covered a 1/cm thick buried humic horizon which graded into a 4 cm deep dark brown A horizon. The base of this horizon exhibited a clear and wavy boundary with the underlying pale brown sands, and it is near this boundary that debitage first became apparent. A concentration of flakes constituted an intact feature near the center of this unit. Nested in an oval area roughly 20cm in diameter, flakes were clustered. They extended through the B-horizon, from 12 to 31 cm below the surface. The position of the flakes were horizontal, often in contact with each other. The lower 6 cm of this horizon contained fire-cracked rock in the northwest corner. The lithics themselves do not appear to be heat treated. At least 95 percent of the debitage was derived from two separate cores: a translucent brown chalcedony unusual to the site, and a gray homogenous example of Norwood chert, a common raw material.

Location G/C 8 is an artifact scatter west of the Lake Michigan Road on a level and partially denuded section of riverbank. A 1 x 1 test unit (Test Unit 1) was excavated in order to examine the subsurface integrity of a surface lithic concentration. Several distinct soil horizons were discovered, with a complex profile involving a feature of undetermined origin. Artifacts included 7512 pieces of lithic debitage, 11 cores, 12 tools, and some ceramics and bone in small amounts. The majority of the artifacts recovered were derived from all four soil types represented in the first 40cm of depth and were processed through 1/8-inch mesh screen.

Ceramic Vessel

Test unit 1 within G/C area 6 is on top of a low, deflated dune ridge used as a picnic ground. (Figure 7a). This feature was found in proximity to the present ground surface, ranging from approximately 11 to 15 cm below the surface. It consisted of an assemblage of sherds, derived from a single vessel and was

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located below a cluster of sherds in the B-horizon, a pale brown soil stained with brownish yellow. The contact with the overlying black A-horizon was smooth and abrupt. Other artifacts comprised five lithic flakes from the upper B horizon. More sherds were recovered from the underlying levels but are believed to be from the feature area itself. Fire cracked rock was found 26cm below the surface. Oxidized square nails, a wooden post fragment, and mixed soils documented historic disturbances near the feature and extended well into strong brown C horizon sands. The feature did appear to be intact and a wood charcoal sample was recovered from it.

Area G/C 9

This historic feature is a single foundation and surficial artifact scatter situated between the Lake Michigan Road and the Platte River Road. It consists of adjoining banked earth foundation berms that each measure 6.5 m in length and ca. 75 cm in width. A third connecting wall is suggested by an equally long and 2 m wide shallow depression, that indicates a different type of foundation. The side of the structure without any evidence of a wall faces the riverbank located 25 m west. Artifacts were found within the structure and toward the riverbank. Recovered artifacts included a zinc-plated mason jar cap, glass fragments, and historic ceramic sherds (whiteware). Artifacts indicate an occupation site with a late nineteenth-early twentieth century time frame. This dwelling may have been associated with the logging industry.

Recovered Artifacts

Lithic material consisted primarily of unmodified debitage, with 8365 flakes, 17 cores, 20 tools (four bifaces and 16 unifaces) recovered from surface collection, shovel tests and test excavation units. The majority of the debitage (90 percent), cores (65 percent), and tools (60 percent) were obtained from a single test excavation unit, the G/C area 8 Test Unit #1.

A high degree of lithic homogeneity of the raw material exists at the site. The majority (95 percent) of the lithic material is Norwood Chert, (Luedtke 1976: 257-270, 350-364). Norwood chert is available at a quarry some 80 km to the northeast, suggesting some degree of group mobility.



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Excavation and surface reconnaissance yielded some 1515 ceramic sherds. The condition varied as half are only 1 cm in size and most of the rest are in fairly good condition. A minimum of eight individual vessels could be identified. Vessel 1, mostly from a single excavation unit accounts for 1286 of the total sherds. The other vessels are only represented by a few body sherds. Vessel 1 may represent a Green Point Rocker stamped type, which is a Middle Woodland ware defined at the Schultz site in the Saginaw Valley (Fischer 1972). There is, however, some question about this vessel since precise identification is difficult and location of manufacture uncertain.

Faunal material from testing was very sparse. Animal remains included one large unidentifiable bone, one unfused proximal epiphysis from the left humerus of a gray squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*), and the left dentary of a small or large mouth bass. This identified bone is probably associated with the historic component at the site.

## 1987 Excavations

Additional excavation was carried out from June through August 1987 by the staff of the Midwest Archeological Center to mitigate pending redevelopment efforts. Areas for excavation were chosen according to plans of the park to make changes in a large campground and picnic area adjacent to the Platte River and State Highway 22. Area 1 includes the portions of the site which occur within the western edge of the current campground, and the forested area to the north (Figure 1). Area 2 consists of the picnic/day use area at the southern portion of the site. There, extensive changes in road alignments and other picnic area modifications are anticipated. Area 3 consists of the portion of the site west of the Lake Michigan Road. Little, if any, impact from development is expected to occur there.

It was necessary to work within only one of these designated areas at a time. Areas had to be roped off during excavation, because of the very large volume of tourists attracted to the activities.

## Area 1

Area 1 was initially chosen as a focus for the 1987 field work because the original development plan called for construction of a road and maintenance area which would directly

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impact a large portion of the site in that area. Also, the site in this area had been subject to few adverse impacts and could serve as a useful baseline for assessing impacts to other portions of the site. As excavation progressed in the north portion of Area one, project planners selected a new off-site location for the maintenance area and associated road.

The remainder of excavations in Area 1 were focused primarily in areas where the proposed new alignment of the Lake Michigan Road and a parking loop will intersect the site. Four relatively dense and discrete artifact scatters were investigated through four clusters of excavation units. One group consisting of 25 one square meter units was excavated west and south of the maintenance building in the area where the new alignment of the Lake Michigan Road will merge with the current alignment. A 7-meter long backhoe trench (Backhoe Trench #2) was also excavated through a gravel road in this area to begin to assess the impacts upon the site deposit from the extensive campground gravel road system.

A second group of loosely clustered units were excavated south of the maintenance building where a parking loop road will split from the new Lake Michigan Road alignment. A third cluster of units was placed further to the southeast within existing campsites 13 and 14. No specific development actions are anticipated in that area, but current camping activities are occurring on a significant cultural deposit. The final cluster of units in Area 1 was placed in the proposed Lake Michigan Road alignment near PT6, as designated on preliminary construction drawings. This occurs in a heavily used portion of the campground which is enclosed within a campground road loop.

Area 2

Area 2, the existing picnic area, was the focus for two block excavations, and numerous additional 1 x 1 m units. The northern area is confined within a gravel road loop south and east of the current fish cleaning station. In addition to units excavated in these areas, a backhoe trench (Backhoe Trench #1) was excavated through a gravel road to determine if cultural deposits are intact under the road. The southern portion of this area was intensively sampled, as future developments of day use facilities will be extensive here. Since much of Area 2 consists of a sparse scatter of material, the excavation of two blocks of units in the most dense cultural deposits has provided relatively large samples of site features and artifacts.

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## Area 3

Area 3 consists of the portion of the site west of the Lake Michigan Road. This area was thought to constitute a large and significant portion of the site and was not threatened by development action. No attempt was made to conduct extensive excavation in this area, but limited excavation did yield important unexpected information.

## Area 4

This portion of the site was discovered during the 1987 field season after campers who had used this area for nearly 50 years reported seeing artifacts many years ago east of the campground entrance road near the contact station. Cultural material, including intact features was recorded in 1987 and seemed to be limited to the flat ground south of the Contact Station. Evidence for extensive modern disturbances hindered excavation, but significant deposits were found in at least six of the units.

## Summary of 1987 Field Work

A total of 288 square meters were excavated during the field season. There was a surprising pattern of purposeful fill episodes within portions of Area 1 and 2, and these fills served to protect cultural deposits which were often significant. Cultural material rarely extended below 50 cm, and was usually confined to the upper 30 or 40 cm of the soil profile. The soil was sand and ranged from slightly acidic to neutral. All the recovered artifacts occurred within the upper levels of the sandy soil profile.

As a result of excavation, rather dense artifact scatters and cultural features northwest, west, and south of the maintenance building were recorded in Area 1, and the small, but significant, deposit in Area 4 adjacent to the Contact Station. Included in the Area 1 scatters is a deposit in campsite 13 where a crushed ceramic vessel was recovered. Previous testing had indicated that the central portion of the site had only very sparse cultural remains. The recovery of relatively large numbers of artifacts and features from two scatters in Area 2, and throughout Area 3 was expected, based upon previous testing.

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## Features

A total of 28 features were recorded in 1987 representing four types: soil anomalies in the form of distinct gray or brown stains, firecracked rock concentrations, crushed ceramic vessels, and various features relating to modern use of the campground. Only Feature 5 of the soil anomalies contained any cultural material other than debitage and/or firecracked rock. Feature 5 and Feature 12 were crushed ceramic vessels exposed across contiguous 1 x 1 m excavation units. Feature 5 contained a small pit under the vessel.

The most common features recorded at the site were the firecracked rock concentrations. Several of these consisted of a single layer of closely packed firecracked, angular rocks with little or no space between rocks. Other firecracked rock features covered a much smaller area, but consisted of deeper, basin shaped, or rounded pit-like accumulations. Very few artifacts were recovered from these firecracked rock features. While these features appear to represent cooking activities, the precise nature of the activities may be difficult to isolate.

## Artifacts Recovered

Artifacts have not yet been analyzed. Field observations indicate the diversity of forms at the site is extremely limited. The large majority of chipped stone artifacts are flakes and shatter from reduction of cores and bifaces, and the refurbishing of tools. Cores are fairly numerous and tools extremely limited in diversity and few in number. Most of the tools appear to be forms of stemmed projectile (dart) points. Firecracked rock is particularly numerous. Ceramic sherds are not numerous and are generally in a poor state of preservation. A crushed ceramic vessel was associated with a C14 sample with a date range of A.D. 1172-1253 in Area 1. A second crushed vessel was recovered from the south portion of Area 2. This vessel is also in poor condition and appears to be of Middle Woodland age and was found only a few meters from the Middle Woodland rocker stamped vessel recovered during site testing in 1985. Faunal and floral remains are poorly represented at the site. A small number of diagnostic faunal elements were recovered from prehistoric contexts, primarily from Area 2.

## Area Excavated

The area of 20BZ16 is 36,000 square meters. This encompasses all the scatters within the site, and includes gravel

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roads, and sterile and disturbed areas as well. A total of 100 (30 cm) shovel tests (9 square meters), 53 (50 x 50 cm) test units (13.25 square meters), and two 1 x 1 meter units were excavated in 1985. An additional 288 square meters were excavated in 1987. The total excavated area (312.25 square meters) represents ca. 1% percent of the total site area.

### Disturbances

Disturbances in Area 1 include the area where two privies are located, and an abandoned, unimproved sand road bed, which leads to the privies, the area immediately adjacent to the maintenance building, the area east of the building where soil and gravel is stockpiled, and an area immediately south of the building where a trailer was formerly maintained. Associated with the former trailer location and current maintenance building are underground trenches related to various utility lines. There is also a small cement and wood structure which is used to store debris from the campground, and a gravel road in this area.

Disturbances in Area 2 include a fish cleaning station, two former structural locations, underground utility lines, and minor components including a fence line, parking posts, and posts for cooking grills.

There is evidence that most of Area 3 has been plowed, and prehistoric and historic materials are mixed in a shallow soil profile. This is most likely associated with farming/gardening activities by former residents of the 19th century historic cabin site (G/C 9). Foundation remains and a historic artifact scatter are also present at G/C 9. Additional damage to the site was caused by modern vehicle traffic in the loose sand leaving visible ruts.

Extensive disturbances from road and building construction were recorded in Area 4, however, a small area of intact site deposit containing features and diagnostic artifacts was also recorded.

Further disturbance is present from the Lake Michigan Road, State Route 22, the Contact Station, the maintenance building and area, and two campground loop driveways.

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Data Limitations

There is a scarcity of floral and faunal material at the site. Ceramic sherds and charcoal are also poorly represented for dating, and ceramics are usually in a poor state of preservation.

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally  statewide  locally

Applicable National Register Criteria  A  B  C  D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)  A  B  C  D  E  F  G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Archeology--prehistoric  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance

Middle Woodland  
Late Woodland  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates

A.D. 300-700  
A.D. 800-1100  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation

Middle Woodland  
Early Late Woodland  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

N/A

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Summary Statement

The Platte River Campground site, 20BZ16, is a multicomponent prehistoric site spanning at least 1000 years which is significant in the area of prehistoric archeology under Criterion D of the National Register's Criteria for Evaluation. The site is highly significant in its potential to provide information about the little understood Hopewell-related Middle Woodland cultural horizon in this area, and as an example of a multicomponent short term site. The relatively undisturbed nature and intact features of this large site provides an excellent resource for expanding present knowledge of these kinds of sites in northern Michigan.

Specific Dates

Vessel 1, which resembled a Green Point Rocker stamped vessel, recovered in Feature 1, represents a Middle Woodland type. The Green Point Ware at the Schultz site has been dated by relative stratigraphy to the latter portion of the Middle Woodland period, from A.D. 300 to 500 (Commonwealth 1986:62). A radiocarbon date was obtained from a sample of wood charcoal in Feature 1. This sample yielded a date of 2420+/-80 B.P. (Beta-14334) corrected to 2514+/-132 B.P. (Damon et al. 1974). This date can be converted to a date range between 427 and 691 B.C.

Although the radiocarbon date range appears inconsistent with the date range associated with similar ceramics, recent contamination would expectably produce a younger date. It is interesting also that there are a number of apparent early dates (Fitting 1975:XVII) for Middle Woodland occupation throughout the Upper Great Lakes. More dates are clearly needed to refine site age.

See continuation sheet

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After the 1987 field season there was evidence to indicate that the site was occupied sporadically over a considerable time span (ca. A.D. 200-1250). Some suggestion of time depth is seen in the vertical position of cultural material within the soil profile. While in some areas of the site ceramic sherds were found within the base and immediately below the humus zone, some lithic debitage, tools, and firecracked rock were often recovered much deeper in the site. The consistent pattern of firecracked rock features and debitage scatters well into the soil profile suggests that these deeper deposits may be considerably older than the shallow, late Woodland ceramic scatters.

Four radiocarbon dates were obtained from the site in 1987 which confirm the multicomponent nature of the deposit. One sample from Feature 22 in the south portion of Area 2 is located within a rather dense scatter apparently dating to the Middle Woodland Period. This sample yielded a modern date. A dark gray soil stain (ca. 20-30 cm below surface) in the north portion of Area 2 yielded charcoal which dates A.D. 860+/-40 (Beta 23112). This falls within the early portion of the Late Woodland period. A sample from Area 1 was directly associated with a crushed ceramic vessel (Feature 5), and yielded a date of A.D. 1120 +/-40 (Beta 23109). The final date is derived from a basin shaped soil stain in the southern portion of Area 2 at a depth of 40-60 cm below surface. That sample dates to A.D. 260+/-80 (Beta 23110), which reflects the age of the Middle Woodland site component.

When the Carbon 14 dates are calibrated according to the most recent synthesis available (Stuiver and Becker 1986), the following ages are obtained: (Beta 23112) A.D. 893-996; (Beta 23109) A.D. 1161-1260; and (Beta 23111) A.D. 243-425. Even at a more conservative 95% confidence interval, none of the dates overlap.

Research Topics and Related Data Categories

1. Hopewell-related Middle Woodland component. Sites with a Hopewell-related Middle Woodland component are extremely rare in the northern Michigan area. This period of Michigan culture history is poorly understood. Most sites in this area are short-term camps with limited cultural debris. Because of the discovery of intact cultural deposits, site 20BZ16 has the potential to yield a considerable amount of information about the period.



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2. Site integrity. The site is intact with limited disturbances. Most of the sites in this area or region have been disturbed by pot hunters, shifting sand, recreational disturbances, agriculture, and other developments. Although some artifacts are on the surface, the majority of material is located in the B-horizon below the topsoil. Several fill episodes at the site have served to protect cultural deposits.

At least 1/2 of Area 1 still contains significant and intact cultural deposits. Undisturbed firecracked rock features, and dense artifact scatters containing temporally and functionally diagnostic materials were found in proximity to these modern structures. South and west of the maintenance building, fill has been placed over cultural deposits sealing and protecting them. Backhoe Trenches 2 and 3 revealed extensive intact soil zones under the roadways. The north portion of Area 2 has extensive fill zones over the original humus, and these have served to protect one of the most important deposits at the site. Area 4 also contains a small area of intact site deposit containing features and diagnostic artifacts.

3. Subsistence. The discovery of the site on a high, well drained area adjacent to the Platte River and extensive swamps, and one mile from Lake Michigan provides possibilities for studies on subsistence and seasonality. While little faunal material has been recovered to date, turtle and fish remains were recovered during the 1987 excavations. This material and the potential for obtaining additional material later can contribute to what is known about groups exploiting swamp resources.

4. Features. The site also contains numerous intact features which adds significantly to the research potential of the site. These features include the "pot-bust" found at the G/C 6 loci and the lithic scatter found at the G/C 8 loci. The lithic scatter was chosen because of the high density of surface artifacts in a site context modified by recent human activities, specifically its use as a vehicle turn-around and/or camping area. Features recorded in the 1987 season included soil stains, two types of firecracked rock features, and two crushed ceramic vessels (one with a shallow pit associated). The discovery of these intact features emphasize and indicate the undisturbed nature of the site.

5. Ceramics. Vessel 1 (Gilbert/Commonwealth 1986) is a very distinctive, nearly complete Middle Woodland pot reminiscent of Havana-derived Middle Woodland manifestations in western Michigan or the Saginaw area. This vessel resembles different typological

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examples and shows general similarities to Sumnerville or Green Point wares (e.g., rocker stamped rim band and body decoration). The pot, however, is unusual or unique in several respects. First, the vessel form is unusual. Most Sumnerville or Green Point pots are globular with rounded or sub-conoidal bases and straight sides (e.g., Quimby 1941a:Plate 17; Fischer 1972:163, Figure 44); vessel orifices are not usually appreciably smaller than maximum vessel diameters. Vessel 1 apparently has much more pronounced shoulders, and the body diameter is correspondingly considerably greater than the orifice. Also, the slight constriction of "neck" near the base is unusual, and suggests an elongated or extruded basal element. The form of Vessel 1 is more reminiscent of the Laurel Tradition Middle Woodland pottery to the north than to the Norton or Saginaw Tradition pottery to the south.

More unusual is the presence of exterior nodes on the vessel rim. As mentioned, rocker stamped rim bands are more commonly accompanied by a row of small punctates, a motif that duplicates that on most classic Hopewell ware. Nodes are an attribute more commonly associated with Havana ceramics. Vessel 1 is not unique in this regard, however, since Fischer (1972:161) reports nodes on a small (1.8 percent) portion of Green Point Rocker Stamped rims from the Schultz site. Also, combinations of Hopewell and Havana attributes are found on Norton Ware from the Norton Mounds site (Griffin et al. 1970:171-175), though not specifically rocker stamping with nodes.

A unique feature of Vessel 1 is the presence of punctates on the vessel body. Punctates on vessel bodies are not unknown on Middle Woodland pottery, but when they occur they are usually found within bounded zones or otherwise separated from other decorative modes. The presence of punctates within plats of rocker stamping is highly unusual. Further complicating things is the fact that each plat on the pot is evidently not accompanied by punctates, and the two sets of punctates were made with two different tools and two different types of application (i.e., deep vs. shallow).

Based on the above, Vessel 1 is difficult to assign to a specific established type. All factors considered, however, the closest parallels appear to be with Green Point Rocker Stamped from the Saginaw region. This estimation is based primarily on the presence of unbounded rocker stamped decoration on Green Point vessels, and on the rare occurrence of rim nodes. As stated above, this identification is considered tentative due to the several unusual features of the vessel that are not found on other Middle Woodland pottery.

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The two crushed ceramic vessels recovered in 1987 have not yet been analyzed. The vessel from Area 1 Feature 5 appears to represent a Late Woodland time period and is associated with a C14 sample dating from A.D. 1172-1253. The second vessel appears to be similar to the Middle Woodland vessel known as Vessel 1 (Gilbert/Commonwealth 1986) and was found only a few meters away from this vessel.

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

See continuation sheet.

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

**Specify repository:**

Midwest Archeological Center  
Lincoln, Nebraska

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property 9 acres

**UTM References**

A 

1	6
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5	6	9	6	5	0
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4	9	5	1	3	0	0
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Zone      Easting      Northing

B 

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Zone      Easting      Northing

C 

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D 

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See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description** The boundaries of this nomination include a 9 acre parcel. Surface reconnaissance, positive shovel tests and excavation units were used to delineate the site area. The site is bounded on the west by the Platte River and on the south by State Highway 22. The eastern limits of the site were determined by archeological methods mentioned above. Two primary loci of artifacts were located in the northwest and southwest portions of the site with a relatively sterile area in between. This property is located in the northwest and southwest portions of the site  See continuation sheet with a relatively sterile area in between. See accompanying map.

**Boundary Justification**

See above.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

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