ABSTRACT
A Phase I Archeological Ground Reconnaissance of two culvert constructions on the Tau road identified remnants of one probable house foundation adjacent to Faleiula Stream. We carried out a literature and archival search, informant interviews and shovel test excavations. Based on the results of our research we feel there will be no effect of construction activities on cultural properties.

INTRODUCTION

Improvements to the Tau Road, (Phase I Tau Road Project, Road 1B) required archeological clearance at two stream crossings where old culverts are to be removed and new culverts constructed.
On January 29, 1996 David Eisler(Phd), Staff Archeologist for ASPA carried out a ground reconnaissance at the two stream crossings along the west end of the Tau Road in order to comply with Federal Section 106 requirements to identify historic properties which might be impacted by construction of two culverts. Reconnaissance identified the presence of two surface features and on February 14, subsurface testing determined that the house foundation was non significant and there would be no effect by construction activities. Research of the site also included a literature search, archival search, informant interviews, intensive ground reconnaissance, sketch maps, and photographs. Field notes, photographic negatives will be stored with ASPA at the Water Warehouse in Tafuna.

HISTORIC AND PREHISTORIC BACKGROUND

Military: Archival check produced no military installations or activities on the northwest coast of Tau.
Prehistoric: On the north coast of Tau are the villages of Faleasao on the west end of the island, Fitiuta on the east end and the now abandoned village of Faga on the west end of the east half of the island. These villages were noted by Kikuchi (1963). Clark’s 1990 survey for the Tau Island Road construction located nine sites or site indicators along the north coast as well as noting the entire village complex of Faga. Within the immediate vicinity of the stream crossings and culvert construction, Clark’s 1990 report identified sites AS-11-63, AS-11-64, AS-11-65. Site AS-11-63 is a large house foundation with associated walls and additional smaller foundations with scattered waterworn pebbles. Eighteen lithic artifacts and one pottery sherd were collected. The presence of a Type V adze fragment suggested that the site may be an early one. Site AS-11-64 is a single adze fragment. Site AS-11-65 is a house foundation on a gentle slope. This site had a short retaining wall in front of an oval house foundation of approximately 13.6 meters by 7.6 meters the floor of which was covered with waterworn pebbles. Eight basalt artifacts were located on the surface around the foundation. As Clark notes, the presence of an inland site is important for the information it may provide for settlement patterns and early systems of land and resource exploitation.
Currently the area is used for food production. Because the road provides access by vehicles, villagers using the garden travel from their villages to work in the gardens and return by evening. Except for several abandoned houses near the road, according to informants people are no longer
maintaining houses in what is referred to as an old village. The name of the stream, Faleiulu, suggests that this area may have been an important breadfruit plantation. This village site has yet to be surveyed beyond the immediate road corridor and may yield an extensive noncoastal village site, a village type which has not been examined in American Samoa.

RESEARCH DESIGN
The purpose of this research was to comply with federal requirements to identify and protect historic properties which might be impacted by the Federally funded Tau Road Improvement project. Two locations were identified by the Archeologist for the Office of Historic Preservation as having potential for historic properties. A Phase I assessment of these two locations included a literature and archival search, informant interviews, a pedestrian survey, and shovel test pit excavations.

FINDINGS
On January 29, 1996 I carried out a pedestrian survey of the proposed culvert reconstruction at Faleiulu Stream on the northwest coast of Tau Island. Plantations in various states of use are located on both sides of the road and both sides of the stream. Dense brush and small trees line the stream banks. The streambed is notable for its uniformly smoothed surface of bedrock and distinct lack of gravels and silts. On the south side of the road approximately 125' (40 meters) upstream, there is a 15' (5 meter) deep pool where two stream courses converge and drop over a relatively harder outcrop of basalt. I walked an area approximately 100 feet in all directions from the culvert crossing. Ground cover and ground visibility was good to fair in only 40% or less of the area, with the majority occurring in the plantation areas. On the northeast side of the crossing I located a wall segment approximately 50' (15 meters) from the road on the east side of the stream and 3 meters from the edge of the exposed stream bedrock. The wall segment was composed of boulders stacked three deep. It ran for 3.6 meters, was 1.8 meters high. There was a 2 meter drop to the stream bed. The wall marks the west extent of the plantation. At the south end of the wall there is a 55 gal. drum (See sketch map from fieldnotes). On the south side of the road: On the east side of the stream the stream bank rises 4 meters to the west extent of a plantation area. At the bank edge is a dump of 55 gal drums and approximately 20 meters to the east is a garden house (not occupied for over a year). On the west side of the stream, on the edge of the plantation flat is an alignment of boulders 7 meters from the road and 10 meters to the stream road intersection. There is a 2 meter rise from the road up to the top of the alignment. Further to the south along the terrace edge is a 1.8 meter high mound of boulders ranging in size from .5 to 1.5 meters. This mound appeared to be a random pile and may have been the result of land clearing. Pedestrian survey within a 100 foot (30 meter) radius of the culvert stream crossing yielded no surface artifacts and no additional features. On February 14 I returned to the site and cleared the vegetation from a discontinuous alignment of boulders running 50'(17 meters) (See sketch). A slumped area between 25' (8 meters) and 40 feet
(13 meters) was heavily disturbed with no boulders present. I dug four shovel test pits, two on the flat to the south of the stone alignment, one adjacent to the alignment on the north side, one between the road and the stone alignment. Soils were uniformly 25YR33 on the Munsell Soil Color Chart. The two shovel test pits on the south side of the alignment both had 20cm of fine silty, slightly clayey soils. At this point I encountered vesicular basalt boulders 30cm by 20 cm or larger. The shovel test pits on the north side of the alignment had less than 10 cm of soil before hitting large basalt boulders. There were no waterworn stones or corals which would have indicated a house platform. Pete, the landowner, states that there has been no bulldozing in the area. He states that the alignment has been there for as long as he can remember. I would conclude that the stone alignment is a retaining wall rather than a house platform owing to the lack of cultural materials or the presence of smooth stone or coral gravels. Previous archeological survey (Clark, 1990) located house platforms, retaining walls, lithic tools and ceramics along the road corridor. Informants identify the area as an old village site. A teacher at the high school stated that, as a child, 40 years ago, he would leave with his father and brothers after school on Fridays and walk to a house they had in their garden near Faleiulu Stream. He and his brother would stay by themselves while their father would walk, in the dark, to the cliff edge, climb down a precipitous trail to the beach 400 feet below and fish until morning. He would then return and they would spend the day working in the garden and walk home by evening with their baskets of food. He commented that at that period of time not many families maintained houses (shelters?) in the old village area.

Stream crossing culvert #2: 700 feet to the west is the second stream (unnamed) crossing where the existing culvert will be taken out and rebuilt. As at Faleiulu Stream, there is plantation on both sides of the road and both sides of the stream. Along the streambed there was considerable dense brush and small trees. The terraces above the stream had recent plantation activity and ground visibility was good (greater than 40%). I did not locate any surface features or cultural materials in the 100 foot radius from the stream crossing.

CONCLUSION

Phase I assessment of two culvert constructions at stream crossing on northwest Tau Island identified a cluster of surface features at Faleiulu Stream. A 3.6 meter segment of wall along the stream 15 meters from the north side of the road and a 17 meter stone alignment 7 meters from the south side were located during a ground reconnaissance covering a 30 meter radius from the stream crossing. No lithics or ceramics were located during the survey. Shovel tests of the stone alignment yielded no cultural materials. It is most likely that the stone alignment is a retaining wall for a terrace rather than a house platform. This feature is part of the larger complex of village features. Other terraces and house platforms with cultural materials have been located in the area by Clark (1990) and informants state that an old village on this upland flat has been used until relatively recently. (A feature number has not been given to these features). The features located in this project are poor examples of Samoan architecture and offer little information on Samoan prehistory. Both features have been disturbed and further investigation of these features would be unwarranted. Both features are nonsignificant and do not meet the criteria for nomination to the National Historic Register. The construction of a culvert at Faleiulu Stream will have no effect on either the rock alignments or the larger village site.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Map of the Manu'a Islands.

The Samoan Archipelago.

from Kirch, P and Hunt, T, 1993
Figure 1. Map of Ta'u Island showing locations of Road Links and archaeological sites.
from Clark, J. 1990
Photo #1  Looking south towards rock alignment
Photo #2  Rock pile at east extent of terrace

Photo #3  Rock pile in upper area, corner of stone alignment, bottom center
Photo #7 Faleiulu Stream. Wall segment on north side of road

Photo #8 Section of wall segment. Yellow field notebook (scale), center photo
Field notes field sketch of Faleitua Stream rock wall segment and stone alignment
Location of proposed culvert construction and rock alignment/terrace