

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

FOR FEDERAL
REGISTER

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 Bilbo Basin Shell Deposit Site
other names/site number 22-Ge-512

2. Location

street & number _____ not for publication
city, town _____ vicinity
state _____

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	_____	_____ buildings
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> site	<u>1</u>	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____ objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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.

Kenneth A. P. Paul Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer Mississippi Department of Archives and History Jan. 9, 1992
Signature of certifying official _____ Date _____
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

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

Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

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:) _____

Janet E. Townsend 2-25-92

Signature of the Keeper _____ Date of Action _____

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/camp

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Landscape/conservation area-wildlife
refuge

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

N/A

N/A

N/A

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation N/A

walls N/A

N/A

roof N/A

other N/A

N/A

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Bilbo Basin Shell Deposit Site was first reported by Jean Heartfield, president of the Pearl River Chapter of the Mississippi Archaeological Association, in April of 1986. The site is characterized by a surface scatter of freshwater mussel shell and dark midden soil. The quantity of shell fluctuates considerably with several areas revealing very dense concentrations. At the time of occupation, the site was probably situated on a natural rise near the active channel [redacted]. This area is presently the location of a small backwater lake known as Bilbo Basin. The best preserved portion of the site is that falling within a wooded elevation abutting the gravel road immediately to the north of the site (see attachment A). Several large potholes were noted in this area, undoubtedly the result of digging by relic collectors.

[redacted] Some damage has been done to the upper levels of the site in this area by clearing and ground preparation activities associated with powerline construction. At present, this portion of the site is planted in rye grass, keeping erosion to a minimum. As previously noted, [redacted] edge of the site extends beneath a gravel road. A dense shell concentration was exposed by recent road grading. Thus, this portion of the site is in danger of continued destruction through both scraping and compaction by heavy equipment.

Soil corings revealed dark midden soil extending to a depth of 80 cm throughout much of the site. Freshwater mussel shell was observed to a comparable depth.

Artifacts recovered from the site are predominately shell tempered sherds, which were noted in both the wooded and grassy areas of the site.

[redacted] ce,
its protection is virtually assured through the cooperation of resident Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks officials.

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)
archaeology/prehistoric

Period of Significance
Mississippi

Significant Dates
AD 1200-1700

Cultural Affiliation
Mississippian

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.

The Bilbo Basin Shell Deposit Site qualifies for listing under National Register Criterion D. Specifically, this site has yielded and is capable of yielding additional information concerning the prehistory of the state. At present, the prehistory of the Longleaf Pine Belt (the physiographic region which subsumes this portion of [redacted]) is so poorly understood that even the general cultural sequence for the area has had to be adopted from adjacent regions (see Neitzel 1968; Marshall 1982; Blitz 1982, 1983; and Morgan n.d.). The Bilbo Basin Shell Deposit Site provides several opportunities to improve on this state of affairs.

The presence of exclusively shell-tempered ceramics at the site indicates that the occupation is confined to the Mississippi period. As such, the investigation of aboriginal activities during a relatively restricted timeframe may be possible.

The ubiquity of freshwater mussel shell at the site suggests a specific subsistence focus for the site's inhabitants and additional investigation will aid in determining both site function and permanency of occupation. To date, this is the only known site of its [redacted] Mississippi period shell middens (of oyster and/or *Rangia* shell) are recorded along the Mississippi Coastal Pine Meadows (cf. Lehmann 1984 and Lewis 1988) and Lewis (1988:119) has interpreted these as indicative of small seasonal encampments attributable to groups whose permanent habitations are in interior riverine settings. Notably, however, limited survey in the interior has produced few sites which might be considered year-round occupations (Morgan n.d.). *Rangia* midden sites also characterized as seasonal fishing encampments (Knight 1984) are known to extend well into the northern reaches of Mobile Bay, the next major drainage [redacted] While these sites differ in being estuarine in nature, it will be enlightening to determine whether

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

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:
local collectors _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property _____

UTM References

A _____
Zone Easting Northing

C _____

B _____
Zone Easting Northing

D _____

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description: The Bilbo Basin Shell Deposit Site

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification Site limits were based on an observance of the surface distribution of mussel shell on the site surface as well as shovel testing in areas of poor visibility. Subsurface testing was also undertaken with a 1" diameter Oakfield coring tool. These subsurface investigations indicated that the surface distribution of shell accurately reflects the site limits as provided in the verbal boundary description.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title David Morgan and James Lauro, archaeologists
 organization Miss. Dept. of Archives & History/Archaeology date July, 1991
 street & number P.O. Box 571 Miss., Inc. telephone (601) 359-6940
 city or town Jackson state Mississippi zip code 39205

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such sites as the Bilbo Basin Shell Deposit represent a freshwater variation of coastal fishing strategies during the late prehistoric period. In that the presence of large quantities of shell at a site is known to aid in the preservation of faunal remains there is considerable potential for investigating subsistence activities at this site.

Among the ceramics recovered from the site are several decorated sherds. Relic hunters have also reported spouted vessels as well as ones with effigy rim adornos. Recovery and analysis of such materials would provide valuable insights into the relationships between occupants of this site and Mississippian groups in adjoining areas. The presence of Pensacola Incised sherds suggests associations with the Gulf Coastal Pensacola Complex.

Finally, while no human bone has yet been identified at the site, the reporting of elaborate ceramic vessel forms (in combination with sizable potholes) may indicate that aboriginal burials are present. If this is the case, the site will offer the opportunity to undertake studies of Mississippian burial practices as well as bio-anthropological investigations.

Undoubtedly, the Bilbo Basin Shell Deposit Site is an important one in terms of Mississippian research in the Longleaf Pine Belt of southeast Mississippi and as such is worthy of designation to the National Register.

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