

APPENDIX H

Level III Cultural Resources Survey Report – Redacted

A Cultural Resources Survey for the Proposed Crowned Ridge Battery Energy Storage System Project, Codington County, South Dakota

APRIL 2026

PREPARED FOR

Crowned Ridge Energy Storage I, LLC

PREPARED BY

SWCA Environmental Consultants

Non-public data has been redacted

A CULTURAL RESOURCES SURVEY FOR THE PROPOSED CROWNED RIDGE BATTERY ENERGY STORAGE SYSTEM PROJECT, CODINGTON COUNTY, SOUTH DAKOTA

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ABSTRACT

On behalf of Crowned Ridge Energy Storage I, LLC (CRES), a wholly-owned subsidiary of NextEra Energy Resources (NextEra), SWCA Environmental Consultants (SWCA) conducted a cultural resources survey for the proposed Crowned Ridge Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) Project (project) on May 18, 2024. The project is proposed to be located within the existing Crowned Ridge Wind Energy Facility project area (CRW), which is owned and operated by Crowned Ridge Wind, LLC in Codington County, South Dakota. The project area is located entirely within areas surveyed by SWCA during the current survey and previous investigations for the existing CRW and Crowned Ridge II Wind Energy Facility (CRWII) projects conducted between 2017 to 2019

The project will consist of a BESS and associated underground collector lines situated within an approximately 52.7-acres area (project area). The collector lines will connect the project to the existing CRW collector substation. Limits of ground disturbance are anticipated to be much less than the total project area, with approximately 32.6 acres and 7.8 acres of temporary and permanent impacts expected, respectively. The project does not include any federal nexus that would necessitate review under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

On May 18, 2024, SWCA re-surveyed approximately 21.0 acres within the project area. The survey area includes the area on which aboveground project components will be sited. Because the entire project area, including the proposed collector line route, was previously surveyed by SWCA during 2017 to 2019 investigations in support of the existing CRW and CRWII projects (Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate Tribal Historic Preservation Office et al. 2018, 2019a, 2019b), SWCA did not re-survey the remainder of the project area in May 2024. This report, which includes the literature review and cultural resources survey for the project, will be submitted to the South Dakota State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for review in compliance with the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission permitting process.

The current cultural resources field investigation was conducted by means of a pedestrian survey. Matthew Hull, M.Litt., and Christopher Shelton, M.A., served as SWCA’s principal investigators for the effort; Cyrena Udem conducted the fieldwork; and Christopher Shelton, M.A., served as SWCA’s principal investigator for the current report update.

During the current survey, no cultural resources were revisited or newly recorded. During previous surveys conducted with traditional cultural specialists, nine Tribal sensitive sites were recorded which intersect the project area but are avoided by proposed construction activities. CRES is committed to avoidance of all known Tribal sensitive sites within the project area. No known resources will be impacted by the project. It is SWCA’s professional opinion that **No National Register of Historic Places Eligible Historic Properties will be Affected**. No further cultural resources work is recommended for this project.

I certify that this investigation was conducted and documented according to the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards and Guidelines and that the report is complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge.



Signature

April 14, 2026

Date

Non-public data has been redacted

A Cultural Resources Survey for the Proposed Crowned Ridge Battery Energy Storage System Project, Codington County, South Dakota

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INTRODUCTION

On behalf of Crowned Ridge Energy Storage I, LLC (CRES), a wholly-owned subsidiary of NextEra Energy Resources (NextEra), SWCA Environmental Consultants (SWCA) conducted a cultural resources survey for the proposed Crowned Ridge Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) Project (project) on May 18, 2024. The survey was conducted in Section 11, Township 118 North, Range 51 West (Figure 1). The project is proposed to be located within the existing Crowned Ridge Wind Energy Facility project area (CRW), which is owned and operated by Crowned Ridge Wind, LLC, in Codington County, South Dakota.

The project will consist of a BESS and associated underground collector lines situated within an approximately 52.7-acre area (project area). The collector lines will connect the project to the existing CRW collector substation. Limits of ground disturbance are anticipated to be much less than the total project area, with approximately 32.6 acres and 7.8 acres of temporary and permanent impacts expected, respectively. The project does not include any federal nexus that would necessitate review under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

On May 18, 2024, SWCA re-surveyed approximately 21.0 acres within the project area. The survey area includes the area on which aboveground project components will be sited. Because the entire project area, including the proposed collector line route, was previously surveyed by SWCA during 2017 to 2019 investigations in support of the existing CRW and Crowned Ridge Wind II Energy Facility (CRWII) projects (Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate Tribal Historic Preservation Office et al. 2018, 2019a, 2019b), SWCA did not re-survey the remainder of the project area in May 2024. This report, which includes the literature review and cultural resources survey for the project, will be submitted to the South Dakota State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for review in compliance with the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission permitting process.

To review the project's potential effects on archaeological and historical resources, SWCA conducted background research in coordination with the South Dakota State Historic Society and a field investigation of the project area.

The cultural resources field investigation was conducted by means of a pedestrian survey. Matthew Hull, M.Litt., served as SWCA's principal investigator for the field investigation; Cyrena Udem conducted the fieldwork; and Christopher Shelton, M.A., served as SWCA's principal investigator for the current report update. All field notes and photographs are on file at SWCA's Bismarck, North Dakota, office under SWCA Project No. 81714.

Non-public data has been redacted

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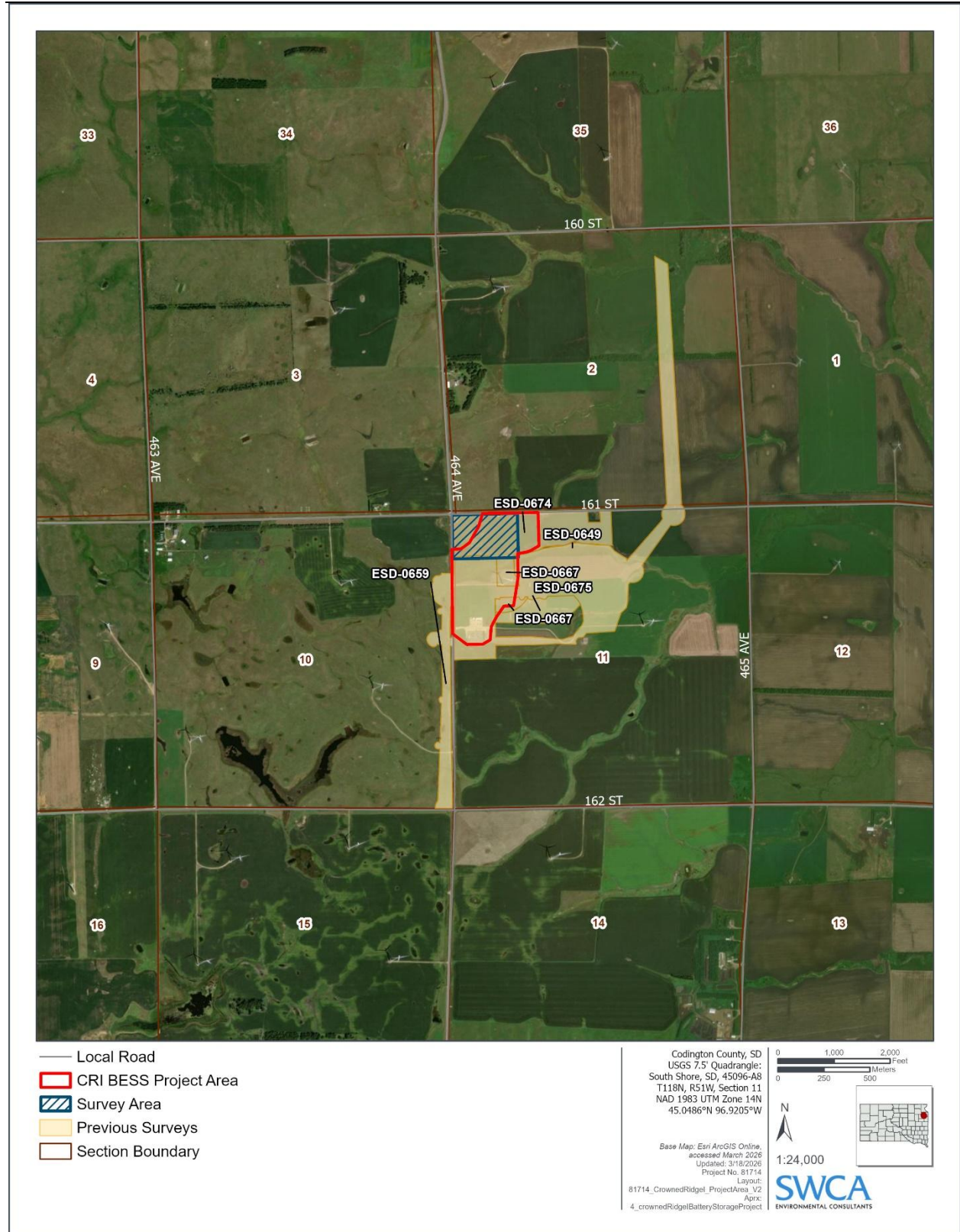


Figure 1. Project location aerial map.

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The project area is situated within the Prairie Coteau Level IV ecoregion, within the Northern Glaciated Plains ecoregion in Codington County, South Dakota. This ecoregion is a flat to gently rolling subhumid region across north-central to eastern North Dakota and eastern South Dakota (U.S. Geological Survey 2026). The Prairie Coteau subregion is glaciated, and consists of a platform of hummocky, rolling terrain raised above surrounding drift plains. It does not have a substantial stream network but does have a high concentration of large lakes and wetlands. Typical vegetation includes big and little bluestem, switchgrass, Indiangrass, blue grama, and woodland surrounding wetlands in the northeast section of the project area.

Topography

The project will be located at an elevation of 1,989 feet (606.2 meters [m]) above mean sea level (Figure 2). The terrain exhibits a very gentle east slope (1 to 5 percent), and an east, northeast, and southeast aspect (Google Earth 2026).



Figure 2. Overview of proposed project; facing west.
Photographed by SWCA (C. Udem), May 18, 2024; image has not been altered.

Hydrology

The project vicinity is drained by ephemeral drainages southeast of the project area that flow south into Crooked Lake, approximately 2.9 miles (4.6 kilometers [km]) southeast of the project area.

Geology and Soils

The project area is underlain by the Till, End Moraine and the Till, Ground Moraine geologic units. These units consist of compact, silty, clay-rich matrix with sand- to boulder-sized clasts of glacial origin (Martin et al. 2004; South Dakota Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources 2026). Soil formation within and adjacent to the proposed project has been adversely impacted by agricultural activity. The project area is primarily underlain by the Barnes-Buse-Svea complex. The Barnes series consists of very deep, well drained soils that formed in loamy till; and the Buse series consists of very deep, well drained soils that formed in loamy glacial till on moraines. Finally, the Svea series consists of very deep, well or moderately well drained soils that formed in calcareous till and local alluvium from the till (Natural Resources Conservation Service 2026).

CULTURAL HISTORY

The project area is located in the Upper Big Sioux Archaeological Region of northeastern South Dakota, as defined in the *South Dakota State Plan for Archaeological Resources: 2018 Update* (Sundstrom 2019).

The Upper Big Sioux Archaeological Region spans the upper reaches of the Big Sioux River drainage basin in portions of Roberts, Grant, Codington, Deuel, Hamlin, Brookings, Moody, and Lake counties. The general topography of the region is composed of the Big Sioux River valley, river bluffs, and adjacent plains. The Big Sioux River flows south from northeastern South Dakota, joining the Missouri River near Sioux City, Iowa. The area has been used by a variety of Native American groups throughout prehistory, beginning with Paleoindian traditions and continuing through to the onset of the European-dominated occupation of the region (Sundstrom 2019).

Within the prehistoric context of the Upper Big Sioux Archaeological Region, the cultural historic chronology is generally divided into the following traditions: Paleoindian, Early and Middle Archaic, Plains Woodland, and Late Prehistoric/Plains Village (Great Oasis, Mill Creek Variant, and Oneota), Protohistoric, and Historic (Sundstrom 2019).

Precontact Era

Local and regional archaeological studies suggest nearly continuous human occupation of the region for the past 12,000 years. At a minimum, humans have lived in eastern South Dakota since the end of the Pleistocene geologic epoch.

Paleoindian Period (ca. 10,000–6000 B.C.E.)

The Paleoindian tradition is usually characterized as a specialized adaptation to late Pleistocene/early Holocene environments involving hunting of now-extinct species of megafauna: mammoths, camels, and sloths. Paleoindian lithic assemblages are characterized by large tools, primarily dart points and specialized hide-processing tools. Projectile point styles are believed to be culturally diagnostic and to indicate social relationships, including some with groups outside the region. Although several Paleoindian traditions are present across South Dakota, within the Upper Big Sioux James Archaeological Region traditions relating to the Clovis, Cody, and Folsom complexes have been reported.

The Clovis complex is characterized by the use of large, fluted lanceolate points and a reliance on herd hunting, including mammoth, an extinct species of bison, and pronghorn (Sundstrom 2019). The Folsom complexes can be identified through medium-sized, fluted lanceolate points with parallel to convex sides

(Sundstrom 2019). The Early Plano complexes can be identified through unfluted lanceolate projectile point types, some with broad stems (Sundstrom 2019). Projectile points typical to this complex include Agate Basin, Hell Gap, Alberta, and Cody. Within the Upper Big Sioux Archaeological Region, four sites with Paleoindian components have been recorded within the archaeological region: ([NON-PUBLIC INFORMATION REDACTED]), ([NON-PUBLIC INFORMATION REDACTED]), ([NON-PUBLIC INFORMATION REDACTED]), and ([NON-PUBLIC INFORMATION REDACTED]).

Archaic Period (6000–200 B.C.E.)

Archaic period sites in the Upper Big Sioux Archaeological Region are limited and are solely associated with the Middle to Late Archaic phases (Sundstrom 2019). The Archaic period followed the extinction of the extremely large game animals and is generally characterized by Holocene fauna and episodes of environmental change that altered subsistence patterns, resulting in the replacement of large fauna by relatively smaller species and a warmer and dryer climate. The general archaeological consensus is that indigenous peoples adopted a wider diet, expanding their resources to a larger variety of small game and plant foods; however, many questions remain unanswered about the specifics of climate change during this period and how this change affected human and animal populations (Kornfeld et al. 2010). Technological changes of the Archaic period included a diversification of the toolkit, a general decrease in the size of projectile points, use of plant fibers for basket and cord production, and more common occurrence of grinding stones (manos and metates) for food processing.

MIDDLE ARCHAIC PERIOD

The Middle Archaic phase largely represents an Early Archaic cultural continuation. The phase is dominated by the McKean complex and the preceding/partially overlapping Oxbow complex. These complexes are associated with groups that practiced seasonal transhumance along geographically extensive rounds (Dyck and Morland 2001). During this phase, slab-lined and rock-filled pit hearths become more common, and the frequency of ground stone artifacts increases, suggesting an even more intense focus on plant-based food for subsistence (Carlson 1994; Frison 1991). Stone circles also appear prominently during the Middle Archaic, perhaps representing recurrent areas of use and residence (Frison 1991). The Oxbow complex is viewed by some as the beginning of a tradition focused on upland game procurement (Johnson 2007). McKean sites additionally yield diverse, often non-local, raw lithic materials, including Swan River chert, Tongue River silicified sediment, and Knife River flint. These materials were derived from bedrock sources or, more commonly, glacial till. Where non-local materials are used, Plains exchange systems may have been at work (Gregg 1985).

The following projectile point types are diagnostic of the Middle Archaic period:

- Duncan: small to medium stemmed points with a lanceolate-shaped blade and a concave base. Stems are tapering to straight, and the points have weak, sloping shoulders (ca. 3000–1500 B.C.E).
- McKean: a lanceolate point with a deeply indented base and convex blade edges; it is usually made of local materials (ca. 3000–1500 B.C.E.).
- Hanna: a long, stemmed, lanceolate point that is lenticular or plano-convex in cross section (ca. 3000–500 B.C.E).

Within the Upper Big Sioux Archaeological Region, five sites with Middle Archaic components have been recorded within the archaeological region: [NON-PUBLIC INFORMATION REDACTED], [NON-PUBLIC INFORMATION REDACTED], [NON-PUBLIC INFORMATION REDACTED], [NON-PUBLIC INFORMATION REDACTED], [NON-PUBLIC INFORMATION REDACTED],

[NON-PUBLIC INFORMATION REDACTED], [NON-PUBLIC INFORMATION REDACTED]
(Sundstrom 2019).

LATE ARCHAIC PERIOD

Within the archaeological record, the Late Archaic period shifts away from the broad-spectrum subsistence approaches used by peoples in Middle Archaic and toward an approach more reliant on communal bison hunting (Prentiss and Rosenberg 1996:47). On the Northern Plains, relatively wetter Late Holocene conditions probably fostered increased bison populations sufficient enough to sustain regular mass slaughter (Frison 1991). In South Dakota specifically, documented Late Archaic sites are approximately as numerous as Middle Archaic localities in the archaeological record, but Late Archaic sites have a smaller size range. Higher inter-regional cultural contact is also apparent during Late Archaic times, suggesting further population growth and trade expansion, possibly related to emerging horticultural societies in the eastern woodlands (Cassells 1983; Frison 1991).

The following projectile point types are diagnostic of the Late Archaic period:

- **Durst:** a rough flaked, small, thick, narrow-stemmed point with weak shoulders and an expanding stem (1000–500 B.C.E.).
- **Merom:** small, corner-notched, expanding stem points. They commonly exhibit unexceptional workmanship with a combination of random percussion and pressure flaking (1500–800 B.C.E.).
- **Pelican Lake:** a medium-sized, well-made point with pronounced corner notches and barbed shoulders (1800 B.C.E.–A.D. 350).

Within the Upper Big Sioux Archaeological Region, four sites with Late Archaic components have been recorded: [NON-PUBLIC INFORMATION REDACTED], [NON-PUBLIC INFORMATION REDACTED], [NON-PUBLIC INFORMATION REDACTED], [NON-PUBLIC INFORMATION REDACTED] (Sundstrom 2019).

Plains Woodland Period (200 B.C.E.–A.D. 1200)

Temporally overlapping with the Late Archaic period, the Plains Woodland period is typically characterized by increased sedentism, garden horticultural activity, expanding regional exchange networks with eastern Woodland populations (Adena and Hopewell), and the elaboration of ceremonial activities and mortuary practices, specifically mound burials (Griffin 1967). The most common Plains Woodland site types identified in the James River Valley are burial mounds (Buechler and Keller 1983). Habitation sites are less common within the region but have been documented (Sundstrom 2019). Plains Woodland sites are typically located on islands, peninsulas, and isthmuses, and to a lesser extent along rivers and streams (Henning 2001). The site locations often feature water on two sides, which could be a strategy adopted to avoid impacts from prairie fires. This settlement pattern likely continued into the Late Prehistoric period (Alex 2000).

Significant technological advances, such as the bow and arrow weaponry and ceramics use, also arose; however, the fundamental subsistence strategies of peoples during the Plains Woodland period did not drastically differ from those of their Archaic predecessors (Zimmerman 1985). In general, sites in South Dakota that have Besant or Pelican Lake projectile points, but no ceramics are usually listed as Late Archaic, while those associated with burial mounds or with ceramics included in the assemblage are listed as Plains Woodland (Sundstrom 2019).

Non-public data has been redacted

A Cultural Resources Survey for the Proposed Crowned Ridge Battery Energy Storage System Project, Codington County, South Dakota

Within the Upper Big Sioux Archaeological Region, sites containing materials associated with the Plains Woodland Period are common. These include hunting and processing sites such as site [NON-PUBLIC INFORMATION REDACTED], [NON-PUBLIC INFORMATION REDACTED], and mound sites such as [NON-PUBLIC INFORMATION REDACTED] ([NON-PUBLIC INFORMATION REDACTED]).

Late Prehistoric/Plains Village Period (C.E. 900–1650)

The Late Prehistoric period in the project region is marked by the appearance of horticultural villages on river terraces and lakes associated with the Plains Village and Oneota peoples, and by changes in the form and decoration of ceramics (Sundstrom 2019). These changes were underway by A.D. 800 to 900 and represent an essential continuation and intensification of Plains Woodland lifeways. Archaeological evidence indicates the subsistence economy was split relatively evenly between mixed cultigen horticulture and bison procurement (Tiffany 2007; Winham and Lueck 1994). This subsistence mixture was supported by an equally varied technological spectrum, which included numerous types of stone and bone tools, seemingly created for specialized tasks (Winham and Calabrese 1998). Archaeologists define the Plains Village tradition primarily as a subsistence and settlement strategy, distinguished by the following traits: nearly equal horticulture and hunting and gathering strategies; semipermanent villages; large storage and refuse pits; distinctive ceramics; large numbers of end scrapers and arrow points; bison scapula hoes; and a well-developed bone tool industry (Lehmer 1971).

The earliest Plains Village sites in South Dakota are located below the Grand and Moreau Rivers and in the Big Bend region south of Pierre. Lehmer (1971) classifies these villages as demonstrating an initial variant of the Middle Missouri tradition. Initial Middle Missouri sites are noted for their distinctive earthlodge construction, which features long rectangular houses with subfloor pits. Fortifications are for the most part absent at Initial Middle Missouri sites, but some villages were placed in defensible positions within the natural topography (Lehmer 1971). Late Prehistoric contexts identified in the Upper Big Sioux Archaeological Region include Great Oasis, Plains Village, Plains Village or Late Prehistoric, Pate Prehistoric, and Oneota.

GREAT OASIS PHASE

The Great Oasis phase is often perceived as the transitional bridge between Late Woodland and Plains Village adaptations on the Northern Plains (Schlesier 1994; Tiffany 2007; Winham and Lueck 1994). Although maize had likely been introduced to the region centuries earlier, Great Oasis groups were the first in the Northern Plains region to rely intensively on it (Tiffany 2007), although they continued to hunt, gather wild plants, and practice the horticulture of native cultigens (Schlesier 1994). Increased reliance on maize in combination with bison hunting and a transition to semisedentary villages is the reason that archaeologists consider the Great Oasis phase an emergence of the Plains Village tradition.

Radiocarbon dating indicates that Great Oasis sites were contemporaneous with Initial Middle Missouri sites in surrounding regions (Johnson 2007). The rise of the Great Oasis phase after the Plains Woodland period is ultimately similar to other Initial Middle Missouri phase developments, whether it developed in place or arrived with immigrants (Benn 1990; Lovick and Ahler 1982). As part of the Initial Middle Missouri tradition, the Great Oasis phase could demonstrate an influx of groups from southwestern Minnesota and northwestern Iowa to the Missouri River and its tributaries (Lehmer 1971). Alternatively, the Great Oasis phase could be a Late Woodland transition period, arising from an introduction of Mississippian ideas prior to Initial Middle Missouri traditions being fully established within the Mills Creek and Cambria phases (Johnson 2007). Under this scenario, Late Woodland groups are speculated to have moved into the Missouri River area due to pressure from the expansion and migration of Upper Mississippian Oneota people.

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A Cultural Resources Survey for the Proposed Crowned Ridge Battery Energy Storage System Project, Codington County, South Dakota

Within the Upper Big Sioux Archaeological Region, two sites associated with the Great Oasis Phase have been identified: [NON-PUBLIC INFORMATION REDACTED] and [NON-PUBLIC INFORMATION REDACTED].

ONEOTA TRADITION

The Oneota tradition is part of the broader Upper Mississippian culture and extends across the Great Plains (Sundstrom 2019). Oneota culture is represented by several ceramic subgroups or phases associated with different geographic and temporal identities. Other artifacts common to the Oneota tradition include hoes made from bison and elk scapulas, small unnotched projectile points, small end scrapers, and copper ornaments, with Catlinite disk and elbow piers and Catlinite plaques in later periods (Henning 1998:348–352). As with the Great Oasis phase, Oneota groups hunted, gathered, and farmed, with villages of varying size near major river drainages or lakes. Structures associated with the Oneota tradition were generally rectangular shaped, and included wall-trench structures or pole structures, sometimes with subterranean basins (Sundstrom 2019).

Within the Lower James Archaeological Region, two sites have been identified representing the westernmost edge of the Oneota tradition: [NON-PUBLIC INFORMATION REDACTED], and [NON-PUBLIC INFORMATION REDACTED].

Protohistoric Period (C.E. 1700–1861)

During the Protohistoric period, several Native American tribes are known to have resided in South Dakota, including alphabetically the Arapaho, Arikara, Cheyenne, Crow, Kiowa, and Sioux (Dakota). The duration of each Tribe's occupation of South Dakota varied; many Tribes engaged in frequent and sometimes long-distance migrations, prompted by the rapidly changing social, economic, ecological, and demographic landscape characteristics of the Protohistoric period on the Great Plains. Although the Protohistoric period is reflected in some archaeological sites, the majority of information on the period comes from written accounts of nonnative trappers, traders, explorers, missionaries, and military personnel (Sundstrom 2019). Within the Lower James Archaeological Region, three sites are representative of the Protohistoric period: [NON-PUBLIC INFORMATION REDACTED], [NON-PUBLIC INFORMATION REDACTED], and [NON-PUBLIC INFORMATION REDACTED].

Postcontact/Historic Period (C.E. 1750–Present)

The Postcontact period is categorized by European-American incursion into the interior of the continent, first with the rise of the fur trade and early commercial exploration, followed by the spread of European-American settlement and intensive land use. The Missouri River Basin was opened to fur trading as a result of the expansion of French-Canadian commerce westward and southward into the river system (Phillips et al. 2006). That trade relied on the industry and knowledge of the Native American peoples already occupying the territory.

U.S. Fur Trade and Military Exploration

Not until 1743 did Francis and Louis-Joseph Verendrye and company, seeking Mandan trade, manage to establish the first European outpost on the Missouri River. Their fort, claimed for France, was near historic Fort Pierre in South Dakota. Like many commercial explorers of the time, the Verendryes were not only interested in expanding trade, but in exploring overland and river routes to the Pacific Ocean. After the Verendryes, by the 1780s through 1790s, several other French traders apparently continued trade with the Mandan in the Missouri River country (Robinson 1947).

Non-public data has been redacted

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The Lewis and Clark Expedition was the first to make the transcontinental trek for the United States. Like the Verendryes, this expedition also paused to set up an outpost at a Mandan village. Lewis and Clark established Fort Mandan on the Missouri River in present-day North Dakota for wintering over 1804 and 1805. By that time, Canadian fur traders and trappers were well established along the Missouri River. During their stay, Lewis and Clark attempted to promote inter-Tribal peace to make traveling up and down the Missouri easier for fur traders. Although their meetings to reconcile Tribes had mixed results, Lewis and Clark are credited with opening talks among Tribes, fur traders, and the government (Robinson 1947).

In 1811, in the face of Canadian competition, and with knowledge gained from the Lewis and Clark Expedition, John Jacob Astor sought to expand his American Fur Company to the Pacific Coast. Wilson Price Hunt was to lead the overland contingent of the Astorians along the Lewis and Clark route to the mouth of the Columbia River, but encountered a group of hunters who had been with the Missouri Fur Company's Andrew Henry. This group joined the Astorians as guides and advised Hunt to take a more southerly route across the Rocky Mountains around the northern edge of the Black Hills (Jewett 2000). This was the first recorded overland passage across the state of South Dakota. A returning party of Astorians, led by Robert Stuart in 1812, strayed south across the Green River, through South Pass, then down the North Platte River system, pioneering the path the Oregon Trail system would later develop.

The war with Great Britain threatened the American hold on the Missouri River fur trade in 1812. The British attempted to sway the Sioux in their favor against the U.S. businessmen and undermine U.S. political power in the area. At the end of the war, the 1816 Congress passed a measure that prohibited the granting of trading licenses to any aliens except by presidential permission (Schell 2004). This law weakened the British position in the area and interested colonial parties.

With United States-based fur traders unhindered by political upheaval, and with the decline of British trade interest, the U.S. fur business became prosperous on the Northern Plains. The period from 1815 to 1850 is often considered the most active years of the fur trade on the Northern Plains, with the Teton Sioux being one of the most actively engaged Tribes. Throughout this period the Sioux remained independent, living in villages across the region. In eastern South Dakota, the fur trade was furthered with the establishment of Fort Pierre in 1832 at the confluence of the Bad River and Missouri River. The fort became a hub for trading in the area. The Sioux would bring their furs and pelts to the fort and trade for various supplies such as blankets, guns, metal cooking utensils, and contraband whisky. It was a booming business. For example, during the single year of 1830, fur shipments from the region included 26,000 bison robes, 25,000 pounds of beaver fur, 37,500 muskrat skins, and 4,000 otter and beaver pelts, all from areas occupied by the Sioux (Schell 2004). Despite the apparent prosperity, tensions between the Teton Sioux and the growing number of European-American immigrants increased. The Sioux found their hunting grounds slowly inundated by immigrants from the east. There were topographical surveyors and scientists such as Stephen Long and Joseph Nicolas Nicollet, as well as settlers, priests, and missionaries who encroached on the Sioux and their neighbors. Relationships deteriorated and the military occupation at Fort Pierre and, later, the establishment of Fort Randall, symbolized the U.S. military's attempt to control the Northern Plains (Schell 2004).

Stephen Long is credited by some as the first to pursue the scientific exploration of the Great Plains. Long purposed, to the U.S. Army, that the use of army engineers as explorers would show taxpayers a positive return for the expense of a peacetime army after the War of 1812 (Nichols 1971). In 1918, the Secretary of War, John C. Calhoun, approved a plan, believing that American military occupation of the upper Mississippi and Missouri Rivers was essential due to continuing difficulties with Native Americans and a fear of British influence among northern Tribes (Nichols 1971). In 1823, on behalf of U.S. Corps of Topographical Engineers, Long embarked on an expedition up the Minnesota River to the Red River. This trip fostered the expansion of U.S. fur traders into northern Minnesota and present-day North Dakota

and South Dakota, as well as the development of the Red River Trails, and resulted in interactions with the Sisseton and Wahpeton peoples (Nichols 1971). In late July 1823, the Long expedition arrived at Lake Traverse, encountering a large group of the Dakota, with whom they stayed and interacted (Neill 1858).

In 1838 and 1839, Joseph Nicollet led another two expeditions between the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers on behalf of the U.S. Corps of Topographical Engineers to refine existing maps of the region. In 1839, on his return trip from an expedition between Fort Pierre and Devils Lake, North Dakota, he crossed the Coteau des Prairie before reaching the upper Minnesota River post of the American Fur Company. The writings resulting from these expeditions and interactions with native peoples have been credited with much of the rendering of the Great Plains in ethnohistory (Picha 2009).

European-American Settlement

Beginning in the 1850s, the United States established numerous frontier settlements along the Little Sioux and Big Sioux Rivers, after the decline of the fur trade industry and before the U.S. Civil War. The creation of the Dakota Territory in 1861 was a direct result of the Civil War. The Lincoln administration wanted a stronger federal hold over the western territories and sought to extend the U.S. territorial system over any and all remaining frontiers west of the Mississippi River. It was important during the Civil War to keep these western territories in the Union. Lincoln signed the Pacific Railway Act of 1862 to connect the United States coast to coast and open up the interior. At the same time, the western territories were sequentially opened to settlement from the Civil War through the 1930s after Lincoln's signing of the Homestead Act of 1862.

Throughout the 1870s and 1880s, railroad construction brought increased mobility and access to settlers in the Dakota Territory. One of the first railroads to make an impact in South Dakota was the Dakota Southern Railway Company (DSRC), even though Congress had denied the company land grants (Schell 2004). The DSRC line opened in 1873 and brought traffic from Sioux City, Iowa, into Yankton, South Dakota. The Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad (CMSR), also known as the Milwaukee Road, purchased the DSRC in early 1883. The CMSR continued westward, laying track across western South Dakota and naming towns after company officials. Competition arose from the Chicago & North Western (C&NW) Railway Company. Between the CMSR and C&NW, numerous towns, settlers, and markets were brought into South Dakota. By 1890, nearly 2,500 miles of track crisscrossed the state (Schell 2004).

The coinciding "Great Dakota Land Boom" refers to the period from 1878 to ca. 1887, when a flood of homesteaders settled in the region of the Dakota Territory east of the Missouri River. Between 1881 and 1885, the Dakota Territory was the most intensive area of expansion in the West, attracting approximately 67,000 homesteaders. The territory was excited about statehood; however, the Dakota Territory was split north-south for statehood in 1889 due to the politics of the time.

President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal tried to bring relief to South Dakota and the Dustbowl states with the Agricultural Adjustment Act (AAA) of 1933. The AAA offered adjusted payments to farmers of approximately \$0.29 a bushel for wheat. This policy was extended in 1934 to include the fallowing of land at a 15 percent reduction and 10 percent in 1935. Farmers were subsidized by the government to take crops out of the field (Schell 2004). In addition to programs such as the AAA, which provided direct economic relief to farmers, other New Deal programs, including the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and the Works Progress Administration (WPA), provided new employment opportunities to residents of eastern South Dakota with a focus on addressing both causal factors of the Dustbowl and Great Depression and problems resulting from the events (Dennis 1998). These programs facilitated the construction of roads, bridges, utility infrastructure, and dams throughout the state, as well as the development and maintenance of numerous parks. The CCC and WPA also assisted the Soil Conservation

Service, an agency within the U.S. Department of Agriculture, in implementing practices to combat soil erosion and moisture loss, including the construction of stock dams and the development of shelterbelts as part of the Great Plains Shelter Belt, later referred to as the Prairie States Forestry Project. The Prairie States Forestry Project, established by executive order in 1934, used CCC and WPA crews until its end in 1942. The project provided shelterbelts to more than 5,000 farms in South Dakota and resulted in the planting of more than 40 million trees and shrubs (Dennis 1998).

Following the Great Depression, new demands for power, irrigation, economic development, and flood control on the Northern Plains focused greater attention on the Missouri River. Starting in the early 1940s, a series of legislative measures and agency plans were developed to address the difficult task of harnessing the Missouri River. In 1944, under the Pick-Sloan Plan, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation received responsibility for all irrigation issues and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers received responsibility for constructing and maintaining mainstream dams (Billington et al. 2005; Ferrell 1993). Missouri River dams were proposed to provide system-wide storage for flood control, navigation releases, hydroelectric power generation, and water for irrigation, municipal, and industrial uses. In addition to the economic uses for which the Missouri River was impounded, recreation on the lakes proved popular during the mid- to late twentieth century. Resultantly, sport fishing, camping, and boating—along with the tourism-related income that these pursuits created—also developed into an important industry.

BACKGROUND RESEARCH

SWCA performed a cultural resources background review in May 2024, which was updated in February 2026, to determine if the project area had been previously surveyed for cultural resources or if any cultural resources had been recorded within a 1.0-mile (1.6-km) radius of the project. The purpose of this background review was to identify the density and types of resources previously identified in the immediate region and make predictions regarding the potential presence of cultural resources within the project area, surrounded by a 1.0-mile (1.6-km) buffer, which constitutes the project study area. An SWCA archaeologist coordinated with the South Dakota Archaeological Research Center (SDARC) to conduct the original file search on May 14, 2024, and an updated file search on February 23, 2026. The search provided information on the nature and location of previously conducted cultural resources surveys, previously recorded cultural resources sites, locations of National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) districts and properties, and sites designated as South Dakota State Historical Sites.

SWCA has surveyed the entire project area during three previous surveys and an additional six cultural resources investigations were previously conducted within the study area (Table 1; Figure B-1). During previous surveys, nine Tribal sensitive sites were identified which intersect the project area (Figure B-2). All Tribal sensitive sites are being avoided and will not be impacted by the project.

The file search results identified 10 previously recorded sites within the study area, although none of the resources within SDARC's files are present within the project area (see Figure B-2). All of the previously recorded sites are unevaluated for NRHP eligibility, except 39DO175, a **[NON-PUBLIC INFORMATION REDACTED]**, which was determined not eligible (Table 2).

SWCA also conducted a search of the NRHP for any resources that are listed in the NRHP and any National Historic Landmarks within the project or study areas. The search of the NRHP indicated that there are no resources in the project or study areas listed on the NRHP, and no National Historic Landmarks are present (National Park Service 2026).

Non-public data has been redacted

A Cultural Resources Survey for the Proposed Crowned Ridge Battery Energy Storage System Project, Codington County, South Dakota

Table 1. Previous Surveys Conducted within the Study Area

Archive Number	Title	Author	Year
ESD-0045	Cultural Resources Survey of Selected Portions of the Proposed Grant-Roberts Rural Water System in Roberts, Grant, Codington, and Deuel Counties, South Dakota. CIS No. 31	Haug, James	1981
ESD-0649	Level III Intensive Archaeological and Traditional Cultural Property Resources Inventory for the Crowned Ridge Transmission Line, Codington and Grant Counties, South Dakota. SWCA Report No. 17-694	SWCA	2018
ESD-0659	Level III Intensive Archaeological and Traditional Cultural Property Resources Inventory for the Crowned Ridge II Generation Tie Line, Codington and Deuel Counties, South Dakota. SWCA Report No. 18-303	SWCA	2019
ESD-0663	Addendum 1 to Level III Intensive Archaeological and Traditional Cultural Property Resources Inventory for the Crowned Ridge Transmission Line, Codington and Grant Counties, South Dakota. SWCA Report No. 19-329	SWCA	2019
ESD-0667	Level III Intensive Archaeological and Traditional Cultural Property Resources Inventory for the Crowned Ridge Wind Turbine Array, Codington and Grant Counties, South Dakota. SWCA Report No. 19-52	SWCA	2019
ESD-0669	Addendum 1 to Level III Intensive Archaeological and Traditional Cultural Property Resources Inventory for the Crowned Ridge II Generation Tie Line, Codington and Deuel Counties, South Dakota. SWCA Report No. 19-396	SWCA	2019
ESD-0674	Addendum 1 to Level III Intensive Archaeological and Traditional Cultural Property Resources Inventory for the Crowned Ridge II Generation Tie Line, Codington and Deuel Counties, South Dakota. SWCA Report No. 19-396	SWCA	2019
ESD-0675	Addendum 1 to Level III Intensive Archaeological and Traditional Cultural Property Resources Inventory for the Crowned Ridge Wind Turbine Array, Codington and Grant Counties, South Dakota. SWCA Report No. Report No. 19-481	SWCA	2019
ESD-0676	Addendum 2 to Level III Intensive Archaeological and Traditional Cultural Property Resources Inventory for the Crowned Ridge Wind Turbine Array, Codington and Grant Counties, South Dakota. SWCA Report No. 19-588	SWCA	2019

* Shading indicates that the survey intersects the project area.

Table 2. Previously Recorded Archaeological Sites within the Study Area

Site Number	Description	National Register Status Recommended	SHPO* Determination
39CD0083	[NON-PUBLIC INFORMATION REDACTED]	Unevaluated	Undetermined
39CD0093	[NON-PUBLIC INFORMATION REDACTED]	Unevaluated	Undetermined
39CD0094	[NON-PUBLIC INFORMATION REDACTED]	Eligible	Undetermined
39CD0095	[NON-PUBLIC INFORMATION REDACTED]	Unevaluated	Undetermined
39CD101	[NON-PUBLIC INFORMATION REDACTED]	Unevaluated	Undetermined
39CD0109	[NON-PUBLIC INFORMATION REDACTED]	Unevaluated	Undetermined
39CD0110	[NON-PUBLIC INFORMATION REDACTED]	Unevaluated	Undetermined
39CD0116	[NON-PUBLIC INFORMATION REDACTED]	Eligible	Undetermined
39CD0168	[NON-PUBLIC INFORMATION REDACTED]	Not eligible	Undetermined
39CD0175	[NON-PUBLIC INFORMATION REDACTED]	Not eligible	Not eligible

* SHPO = State Historic Preservation Office.

FIELDWORK METHODS

SWCA field personnel conducted the current and previous cultural resources surveys according to South Dakota SHPO standards and guidelines for conducting intensive cultural resources surveys in South Dakota (Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate Tribal Historic Preservation Office et al. 2018, 2019a, 2019b). To accomplish this, the following methods and procedures were employed during the current survey.

SWCA archaeological staff investigated the 21.0-acre survey area using parallel linear transects spaced 30 m apart. The ground surface was examined for artifacts, features, or other evidence of cultural occupation, such as charcoal-stained sediments, with special attention focused on rock outcrops, cut banks, eroded areas, anthills, animal burrows, and two-track road exposures, when present.

Ground surface visibility was adequate to conduct an intensive pedestrian survey. Weather conditions at the time of the survey did not result in any changes to the survey methods outlined above and did not bias the results of the survey. SWCA photographed the proposed BESS location during the survey (Appendix A).

CULTURAL RESOURCES SURVEY RESULTS

The current cultural resources survey was conducted by SWCA archaeologist Cyrena Udem, with the support of Matthew Hull, M.Litt., as principal investigator. The cultural resources survey of the project area was conducted on May 18, 2024, in sunny, warm, and windy weather. The project area is on private land and was almost entirely cultivated, with portions recently tilled. Vegetation consisted of grass pasture or grain crops, and likely soybean crops (Figures A-1 and A-2). The northern and western boundaries of the project area are demarcated by roads and associated ditches, which are vegetated by grasses and various weeds, including thistle. The eastern boundary of the project area is located within an agricultural field, and the southern boundary of the project is adjacent to land hosting an operational turbine associated with CRW (see Figure A-1). The ground surface visibility ranged from 70 to 90 percent within planted agricultural fields and was between 70 to 80 percent overall. The 21.0-acre survey area encompassed the northern portion of the project area, with transects spaced 98.4 feet (30 m) apart. The southern portion of the project area was fully surveyed by SWCA with participating Tribal Historic Preservation Office representatives during previous surveys and was not resurveyed during this effort (Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate Tribal Historic Preservation Office et al. 2018, 2019a, and 2019b).

The SWCA archaeologist noted a large rock pile on the northern edge of the field at the proposed northern entrance for the BESS, which was up to 3.5 feet (1.0 m) high and measured 47.6 feet (14.5 m) by 27.2 feet (8.3 m) northwest-southeast and consisted of stones that ranged in size from small cobbles to small boulders. The rocks were non-cultural and appeared to have been removed from the field mechanically for agricultural purposes (Figures A-3 and A-4). SWCA did not encounter any cultural resources or observe any evidence of archaeological materials within the survey area.

During previous CRW and CRWII surveys, nine Tribal sensitive sites were identified that intersect the project area but are avoided by proposed project infrastructure. Maps showing the project area with previously conducted surveys and previously recorded sites; and locations of the project site plan with previously recorded Tribal sensitive sites, which are mapped as Tribal avoidances, are included in Appendix B.

Non-public data has been redacted

A Cultural Resources Survey for the Proposed Crowned Ridge Battery Energy Storage System Project, Codington County, South Dakota

For a description of survey results specific to the previous surveys which intersected the project area, including limited descriptions of Tribal sensitive sites recorded during these efforts, please refer to Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate Tribal Historic Preservation Office et al. 2018, 2019a, and 2019b.

RECOMMENDATIONS

On May 18, 2024, SWCA conducted a cultural resources survey for the project in Codington County, South Dakota. The project area is located entirely within areas surveyed by SWCA during the current survey and previous Level III intensive investigations conducted between 2017 and 2019 in support of CRW and CRWII. No cultural resources were newly recorded or revisited during the current survey. During previous investigations, nine Tribal resources were identified which intersect the project area but are avoided by project infrastructure. CRES is committed to avoidance of all known Tribal sensitive sites within the project area and no known resources will be impacted by the project. Therefore, SWCA recommends the project will result in **no NRHP eligible historic properties affected**. No further cultural resources work is recommended for this project.

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A Cultural Resources Survey for the Proposed Crowned Ridge Battery Energy Storage System Project, Codington County, South Dakota

APPENDIX A

Photograph Pages

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A Cultural Resources Survey for the Proposed Crowned Ridge Battery Energy Storage System Project, Codington County, South Dakota



Figure A-1. Project area overview from northeast corner; facing southwest.



Figure A-2. Project area overview from southeast corner; facing northwest.

Non-public data has been redacted

A Cultural Resources Survey for the Proposed Crowned Ridge Battery Energy Storage System Project, Codington County, South Dakota



Figure A-3. Rock pile disturbance within project area; facing north.



Figure A-4. Rock pile disturbance within project area; facing east.

Non-public data has been redacted

A Cultural Resources Survey for the Proposed Crowned Ridge Battery Energy Storage System Project, Codington County, South Dakota

APPENDIX B

Cultural Resources Maps

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A Cultural Resources Survey for the Proposed Crowned Ridge Battery Energy Storage System Project, Codington County, South Dakota

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Figure B-1. Cultural resources map.

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A Cultural Resources Survey for the Proposed Crowned Ridge Battery Energy Storage System Project, Codington County, South Dakota

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Figure B-2. Tribal avoidances map.

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A Cultural Resources Survey for the Proposed Crowned Ridge Battery Energy Storage System Project, Codington County, South Dakota

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