



Martha's Vineyard Airport Improvement Program West Tisbury and Edgartown, Massachusetts

Date of Performance: 2003–2004

Client: Hoyle, Tanner, & Associates, Inc.

The Martha's Vineyard Airport Commission is in the process of meeting growing facility demands with 13 improvement projects, scheduled for construction from 2003 through 2010. Access roads and ramps, taxiways, detention basins, fire suppression systems, expanded parking, car rental facilities, and a new county jail are among the commission's priorities. The proposed plans were reviewed under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (as amended). As such, the Airport Commission was required to take into consideration the effects of the undertaking on potentially significant cultural resources.

In 2003, an archaeological team from PAL working with Hoyle, Tanner & Associates (HTA) assisted the Airport Commission with cultural resource sections of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). PAL's services included consultation and coordination with the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) and the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head/Aquinnah Tribal Historic Preservation Office, historic research and context development, archaeological assessments of the 13 project areas, and an intensive archaeological survey focusing on specific areas likely to contain archaeological sites.

Research determined that the airport originated in 1941 when the United States Navy established the Martha's Vineyard Naval Auxiliary Air Station (NAAS), an auxiliary airfield for Quonset Naval Air Station in Rhode Island. The NAAS was built to support the final phase of training for World War II naval aviators and aircrews prior to their deployment to aircraft carriers in the Pacific. After the war in 1947, the NAAS was transformed into a public facility leased from the government by Dukes County. In 1959 the county took ownership.



Aerial View of the Martha's Vineyard Airport

The PAL team was able to document a history of land use since 1941 that included extensive development and reuse as a military air installation and subsequently as a commercial airfield and businesspark. Using environmental data, historic maps and records, and aerial photographs, the team determined that much of the land was considerably disturbed and unlikely to contain preserved archaeological resources. The assessment streamlined the scope, cost, and time frame for completing the required intensive archaeological survey of various project impact areas.

PAL SERVICES

- **SECTION 106 CONSULTATION**
- **ARCHIVAL RESEARCH**
- **HISTORIC CONTEXT DEVELOPMENT**
- **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT**
- **NATIVE AMERICAN CONSULTATION**
- **ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS**