Early Settlers Field walking Methodology

1.0 Overview

This project seeks to explore the early prehistoric origins of the Tay and document the area's subsequent evolution. To do this, field walking of ploughed fields is a valuable method, alongside documentary and map research and aerial photograph analysis. The aim of this project is to involve the local community and interest groups in archaeological discovery, through field-walking and inter-tidal survey, to find out more about the prehistoric period, and the very different environment in which they existed at that time.

This field walking project covers a large area and hopes to target a range of different topographical zones in order to gain an indication of wider landscape use. The objective is not only to locate areas of settlement and activity as indicated by lithic scatters, but also to identify areas with little or no material.

2.0 Methodology

The project will be carried out extensively throughout much of the lower-lying parts of the TLP Scheme area: specifically targeting the Mesolithic coastline (c.8000-4000 BC) of the Tay Estuary as identified in the Stage 2 study by Dundee University (see Figure 1).

2.1 Desk Based Assessment

Prior to all fieldwork a Desk Based Assessment (DBA) will be undertaken. This will collate site specific information including the geology, historical use and known archaeological sites of the area. By collecting this information the project will be in a better position to interpret the field walking results. If possible, this will also look into the landowners ploughing regime as suggested as best practise by Dene Wright, Glasgow University (in prep).

2.2 Fieldwork

Fieldwork will be directed by Sophie Nicol (TayLP Historic Environment Officer) or another suitable archaeologist. The work will mainly take place during early winter and spring as and when fields are ploughed. Where possible, fields walked by the TayLP will be re-visited annually, for at least one or two ploughing rotations. This, alongside the ploughing regime, will give an indication of the quantity of finds in the ground (Wright in prep). On-site training will be on-going throughout the project work.

The team will systematically walk 5m apart over recently ploughed fields, flagging and bagging possible finds. No grid will be laid but instead each volunteer line will be flagged out at intervals, with the next section measured in accordingly. The supervisor will follow the team's path by zig zagging across the area, looking for any missed finds and checking bagged finds.

2.3 Finds Retrieval

This project is focussed on identifying evidence of early prehistoric people from lithics/ stone tool artefacts, as such not all later material will be retrieved. All worked stone tools will be kept, as will all prehistoric finds of pottery, metal etc. For large quantities of more modern material – i.e. bone china or machine made pottery a sample will be kept of each type, in order to report on ~~it~~its presence. Any find that is not clearly identifiable will be kept and assessed by an appropriate specialist. Each field and conditions will be recorded on a general field walking form (see Figure 2). All finds will be recorded by a finds register and handheld GPS. This data will be inputted into a GIS system and will be used to produce a distribution

map of finds recovered. All finds will be conserved and housed via Treasure Trove as per PKHT's *Post Excavation and Archiving Policy* (2014).
Where clusters of flints or finds are discovered then 1m x 1m test pits will be excavated for finds retrieval. Only the topsoil will be removed with an inspection of the soil horizon for any archaeological deposits (Wright in prep). This will be undertaken with permission of the landowner prior to excavation.

2.4 Known Archaeological Sites
All Scheduled monuments require SMC prior to field walking and therefore will not be walked without this permission from Historic Scotland. It may be that some sites will be de-marketed with a 20m buffer prior to field walking to avoid confusion.

Equipment List
- Flags and Canes
- Measuring Tapes
- Finds bags and Boxes
- Handheld GPS units
- Spare batteries
- Pro forma recording sheets
- Digital Camera
- Compass

2.3 Reporting
Reporting of the project is crucial on both an academic and community level. The minimum outcomes of the project will involve the appropriate publication of the results, with records and finds archived as per PKHT Policies. It is also important to find out if volunteers have learned and benefited from the experience and that all information is made available by TayLP to be incorporated in education and learning objectives.

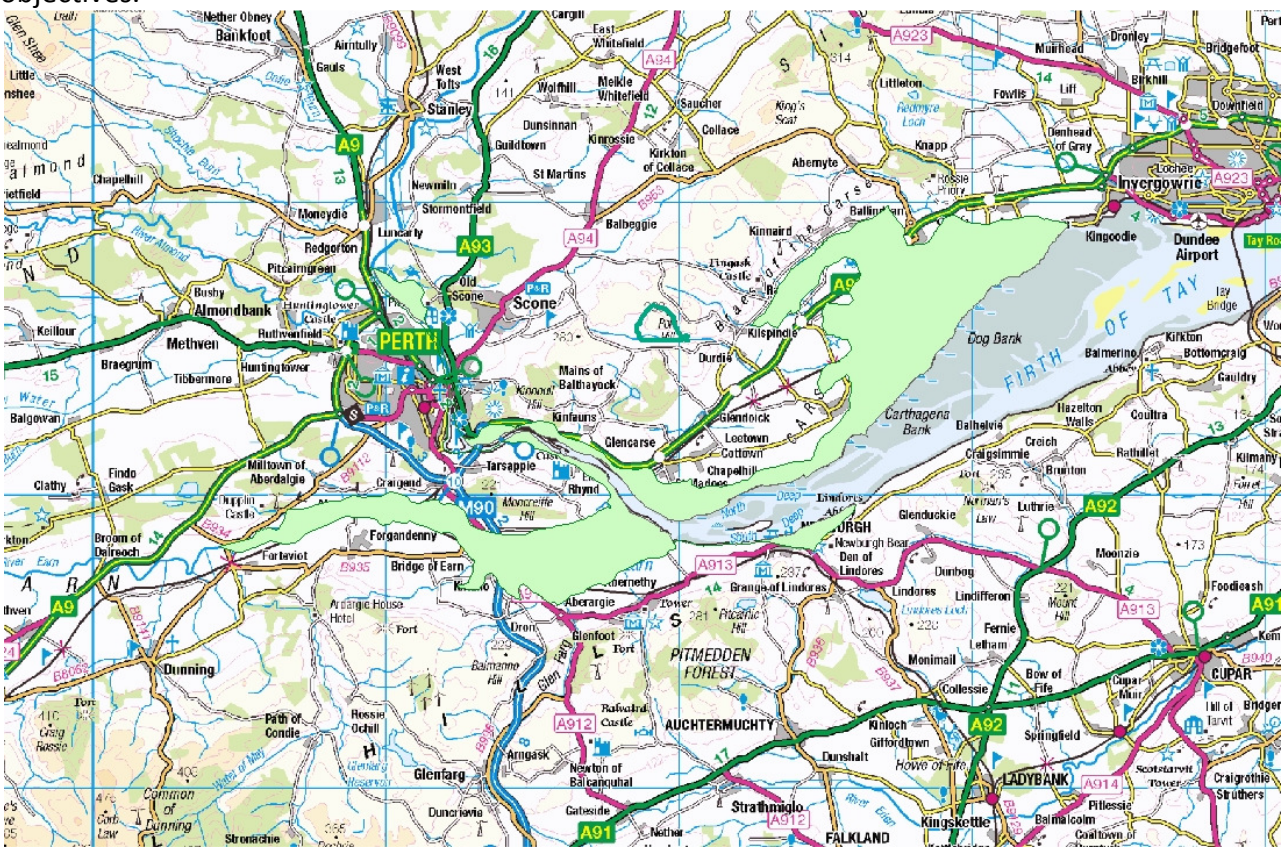

Figure 1: Mesolithic Shoreline (Dundee University)

FIELD WALKING FORM

VILLAGE/AREA	ADDRESS: NGR/ POSTCODE:	FIELD NO.

CONTACT

NAME OF LANDOWNER: _____ TENANT? ☐ Yes ☐ No

_____

ADDRESS: _____

CONTACT NUMBER:

FIELD DATA

TOPOGRAPHY: _____

SOIL TYPE: _____

SOIL COLOUR: _____

FIELD CONDITIONS: ☐ WET ☐ DAMP ☐ DRY ☐ FROZEN

☐ WEATHERED PLOUGHED ☐ UNWEATHERED PLOUGHED

☐ HARROWED ☐ SOWN ☐ OTHER _____

IF SOWN, STATE OF CROP ☐ Not through ☐ Through ☐ Thick ☐ Other (Don't Know)

WEATHER: _____

LIGHTING CONDITIONS: _____

FINDS

Finds No's recorded in this field From to

General comments on finds/ walking results:

Photo No's	Walked by Date

Figure 2: Field Walking Pro-Forma