

David's Mill Pond Historic District (Site Number 2737) Historical Overview and Resource Descriptions

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Introduction

David's Mill Pond is a substantial mill pond that (based on available evidence) dates to the late nineteenth century. It is not known if the associated mill was a grist mill, saw mill, or other sort of water powered industrial operation. Elements associated with the pond include an earthen dam, spillway, mill race, and mill building remains. The site is located in Marlboro County, South Carolina, on the north side of David's Pond Road (S-33) approximately .35 miles west of the intersection of David's Pond Road and Wafer Road (**Figure 1**).

The David's Mill Pond Historic District was documented during a cultural resources survey conducted by South Carolina Department of Transportation personnel prior to the replacement of the bridge that carries David's Pond Road over the David's Mill Pond spillway. The bridge was damaged during Hurricane Florence, which struck the Pee Dee region of South Carolina in September 2018. The cultural resources survey took place on November 1, 2018.

Historical Overview

Little information about David's Mill Pond could be located at the survey level of investigation. The earliest map that shows the pond dates to 1897 (**Figure 2**). The pond is also shown on later soil survey and topographic maps and aerial photographs dating to the twentieth century (**Figures 3 – 8**). SCDOT highway plans from 1961 show the mill and some of its associated elements before David's Mill Pond Road was realigned (**see Figure 7**). Notes written on the plans map indicate that a 1-story frame house was moved to a location designated by the owner to clear the right-of-way (ROW). Looking at the subsequent 1964 aerial it is unclear where this structure was moved (**see Figure 8**). The plans also state that a 2-story frame mill house that was located within the new alignment of David's Mill Pond Road was razed with the building material salvaged and stacked clear of the ROW for the owner's use. Based on the aerial photographs and highway plans the mill building remained in place up to the late 1950s, possibly up until 1961 when David's Mill Pond Road was realigned (**see Figure 3 – 6**). However, it is unknown at this point how long the mill remained in operation.

Resource Descriptions

The David's Mill Pond Historic District Complex is recorded as Site Number 2737. The boundary for the district consists of a polygon drawn around all of the elements that comprise the complex (**Figure 9**). These elements include the remains of a mill building (recorded as an archaeological site, but also assigned a resource number), and the pond, the earthen dam, the mill race, and the sluice gate/spillway, all recorded as above ground resources and assigned a sub-number subservient to the overall site number.

Site Elements

Site No. 2737.01 (38ML373) – Mill Building Remains

The remains of the mill building associated with David's Mill Pond are located in the southeastern corner of the district just to north of David's Pond Road. A millrace leading from the southeastern corner of the pond passes through the building remains. The mill building is visible on aerial photographs dating to 1950 and 1958. Highway plans dating to 1961 indicate that the structure was demolished when David's Pond Road was relocated in 1961 (see **Figure 7**). The road originally passed over the mill dam. Historical maps and aerial photographs indicate that the mill building was located just to the south of and adjacent to the road at that time (see **Figures 3 – 6**). Extant remains of the mill building include seven concrete pier supports, a concrete lined channel/sluiice, a rectangular concrete enclosure that appears to have housed a turbine, and a curved concrete retaining wall constructed of bags of concrete that were hardened while in the bags. It is not clear if this retaining wall was constructed when the mill was operational or if the wall postdates the mill. **Figures 10 and 11** show the mill remains at the time of survey.

Site Number 2737.02 – Mill Pond

David's Mill Pond is a large shallow waterbody measuring approximately 1,860 feet by 1,470 feet (approximately 42 acres). The pond impounds a small stream called Naked Creek, and very probably covers an area that comprised natural wetlands prior to the time that the pond was constructed. At the time that the district was recorded in November 2018 flooding associated with Hurricane Florence had caused the mill dam to be breached and most of the water in the pond had drained out into the wetlands south of the district. **Figures 12 and 13** show the mill pond at the time that it was recorded.

Site Number 2737.03 – Earthen Dam

The earthen dam that impounds David's Mill Pond is located along the southern end of the pond. The dam is oriented roughly east to west and is approximately 1,630 feet long by about 40 feet wide. The dam appears to have been maintained and in use until the hurricane damaged it causing the pond to drain. David's Pond Road originally ran along the top of the earthen dam but was moved south onto its current alignment in the 1960s. **Figures 14 and 15** show the earthen dam at the time that it was recorded.

Site Number 2737.04 – Mill Race

The mill race begins at the southeastern corner of David's Mill Pond, passes the mill building remains, and continues to the southwest, passing under David's Pond Road and eventually emptying into Naked Creek or the wetlands surrounding the creek. The mill race is approximately 1,200 feet in length and roughly 20 feet wide. At the time of the November 2018 cultural resources survey the race was heavily silted in and covered with thick vegetation for most of its length. **Figure 16** shows the mill race at the time of the survey.

Site Number 2737.05 – Sluice Gate/Spillway

The sluice gate that once regulated water levels in David's Mill Pond is located centrally within the earthen dam that impounds the pond. The spillway leading from the sluice gate flows south from the dam, passing beneath David's Pond Road, and appears to follow the original course of Naked Creek. The sluice gate was heavily damaged during the flooding associated with Hurricane Florence, and remains of the feature are intermixed with the remains of the bridge that once carried David's Pond Road over the spillway when the road was located on top of the mill dam. **Figures 17 and 18** show the sluice gate and spillway at the time of survey.

National Register Assessment

Although David's Mill Pond is a named feature on maps dating to the last decade of the 19th century, there is no evidence that the pond and concomitant mill are associated with individuals or events that rise to the level of prominence that would make the district eligible under National Register of Historic Places Criteria A or B. Similarly, the elements that comprise the district do not constitute an outstanding, unique, or intact example of a turn of the 20th century mill complex, and the extent of damage to the site, including the near total loss of the mechanical infrastructure associated with the operation, limit the potential that important historical information could be gleaned from a closer study of the remains of the complex. As such, the David's Mill Pond Historical District is assessed as not eligible for the National Register under Criteria C or D. Taking all this into account, the David's Mill Pond Historic District, although an interesting example of a turn of the 20th century Coastal Plain mill complex, is assessed as not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

References Cited

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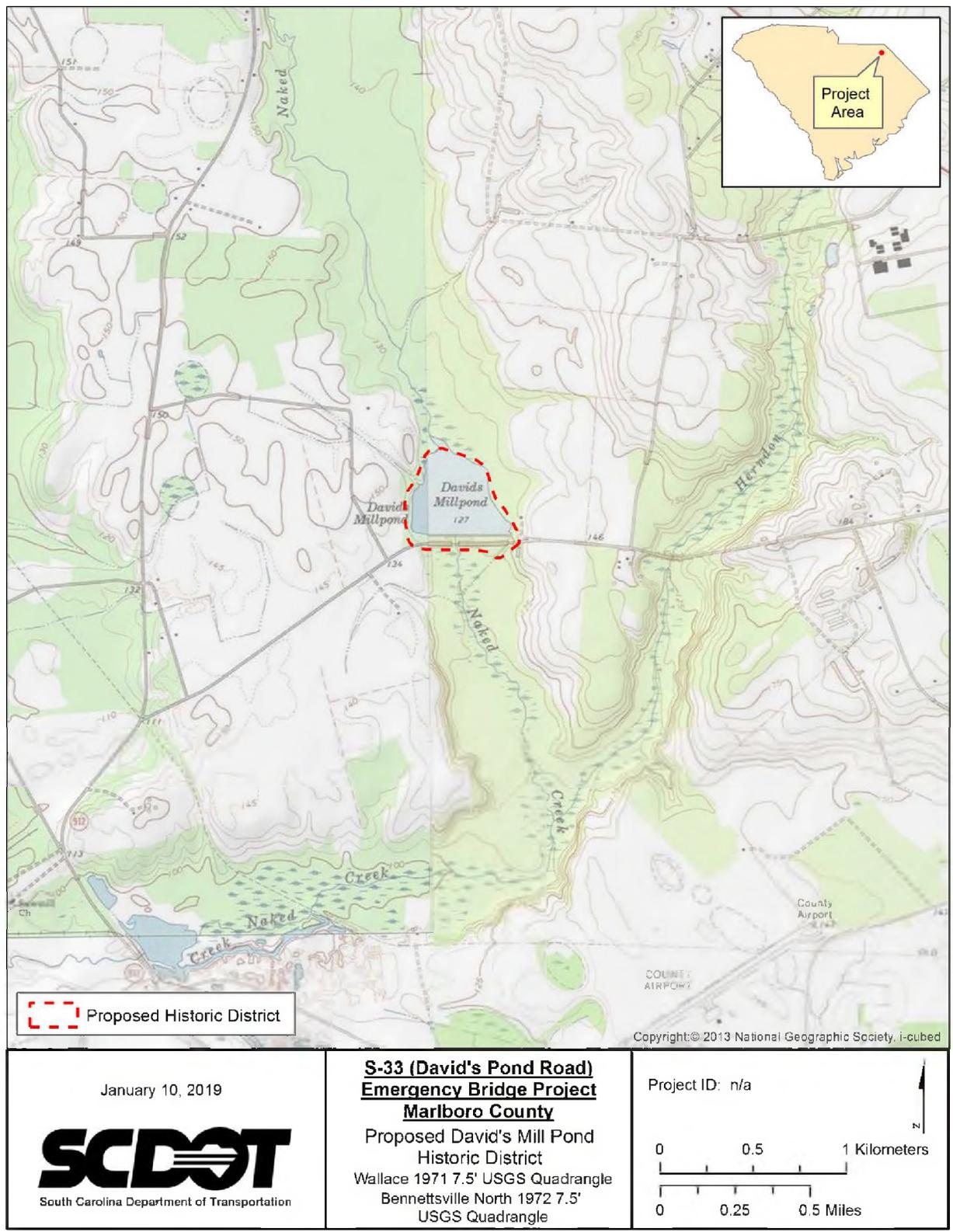


Figure 1. Topographic Map Showing Proposed Historic District (USGS 1975a and 1975b).

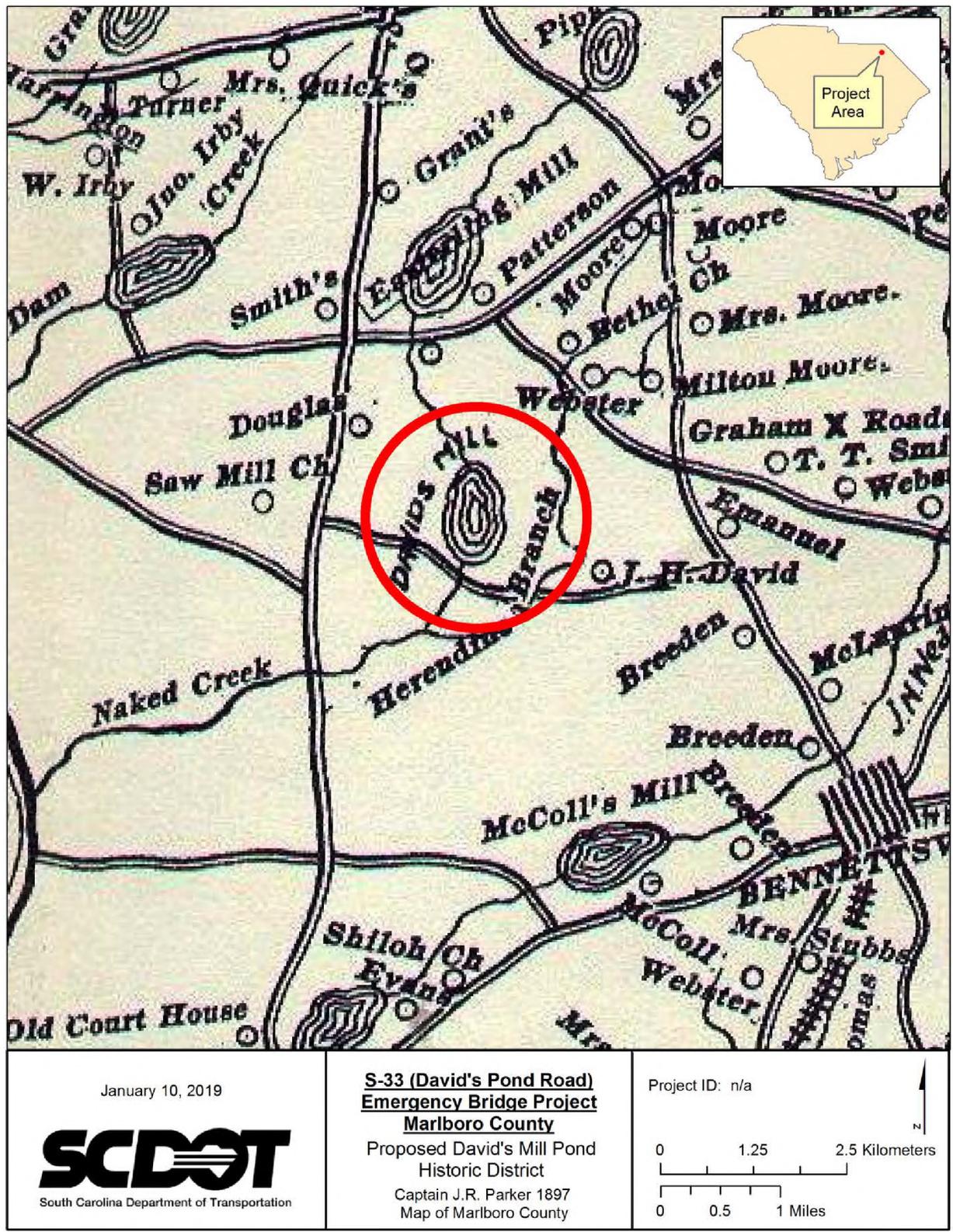


Figure 2. 1897 Map of Marlboro County Showing Location of David's Mill Pond (Parker 1897).

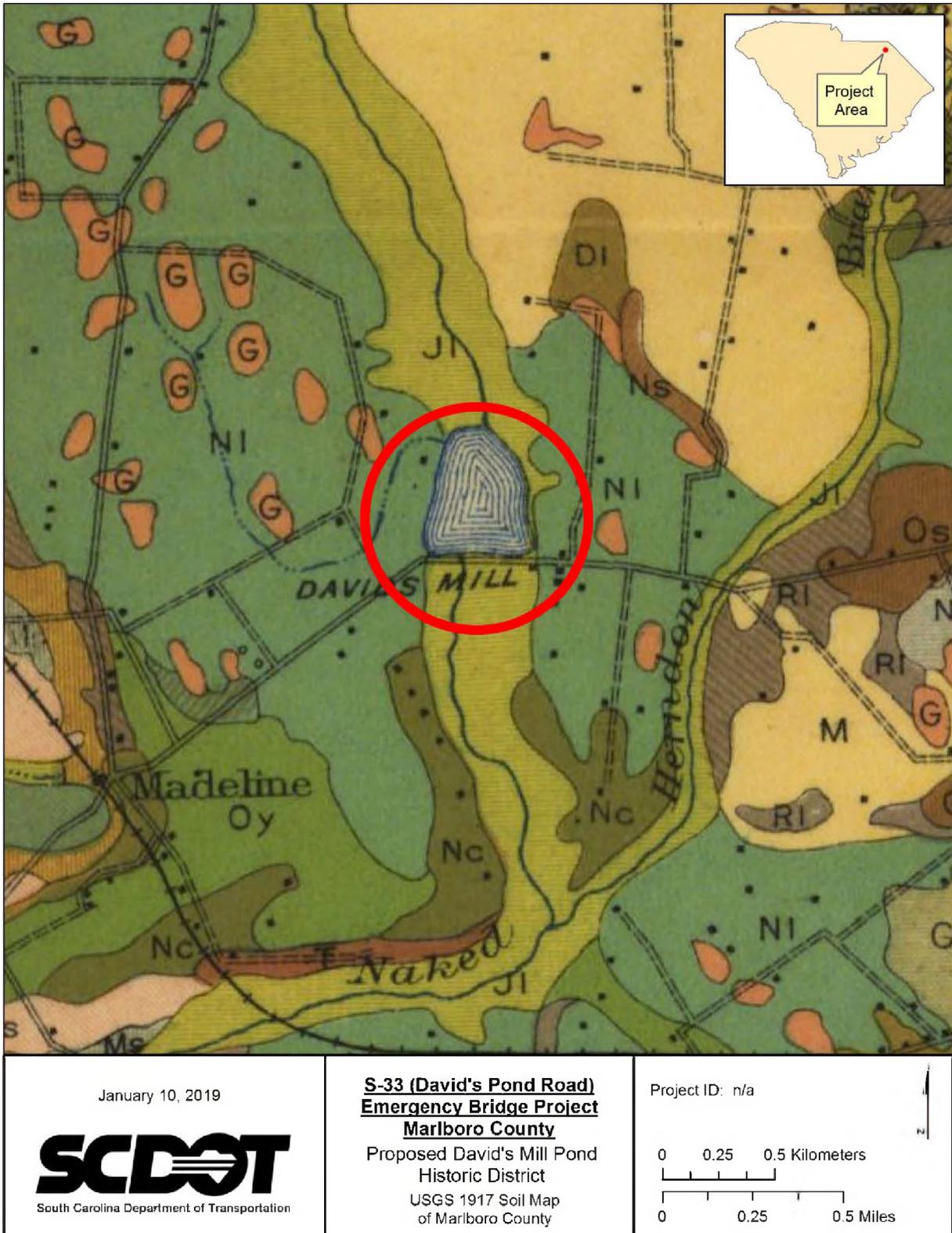


Figure 3. 1917 Soil Map of Marlboro County Showing Location of David's Mill Pond (USGS 1917).

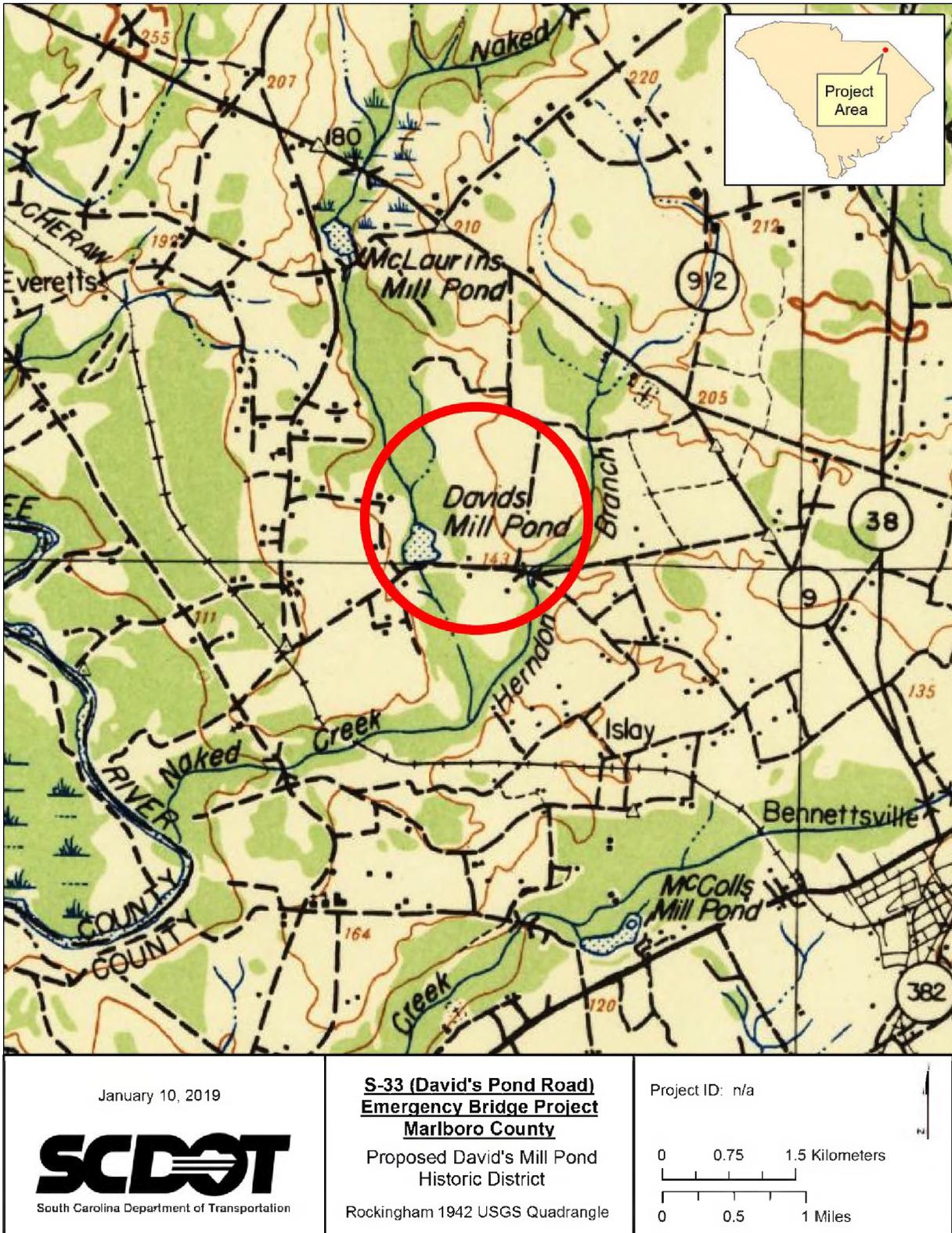


Figure 4. 1942 Topographic Map of Marlboro County Showing Location of David's Mill Pond (USGS 1944).

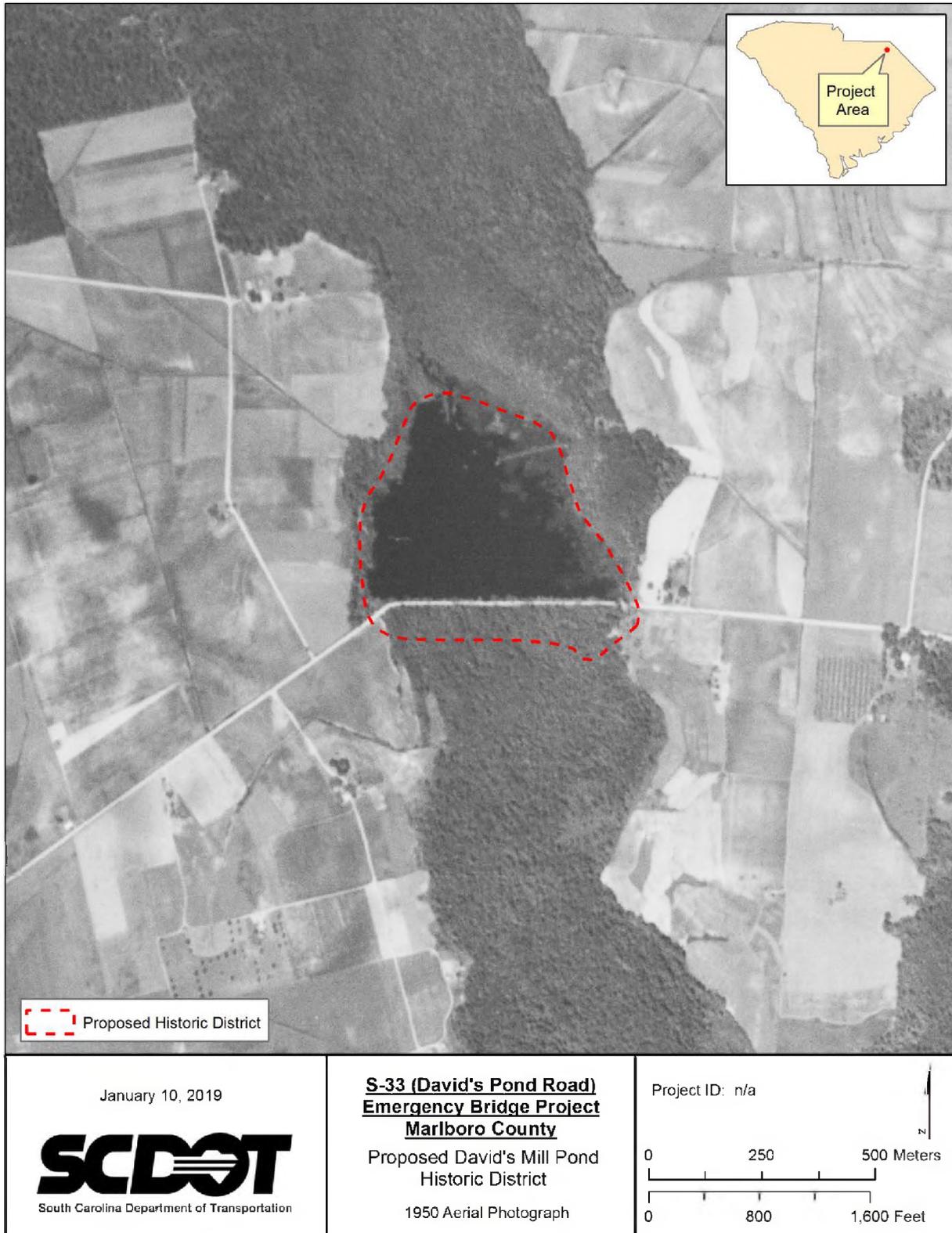


Figure 5. 1950 Aerial Photograph of Marlboro County Showing Location of Proposed David's Mill Pond Historic District (USGS 1950).

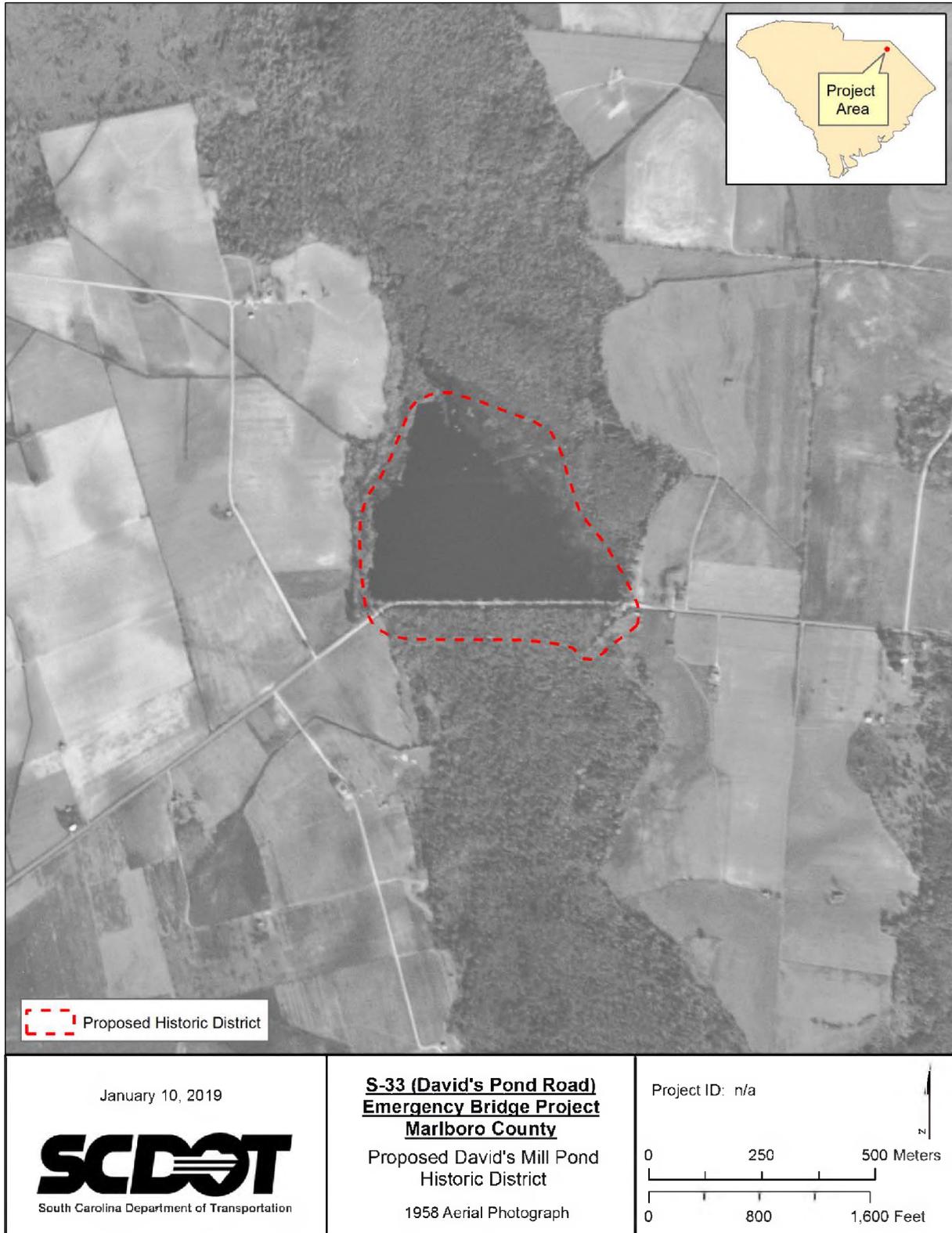


Figure 6. 1958 Aerial Photograph of Marlboro County Showing Location of Proposed David's Mill Pond Historic District (USGS 1958).

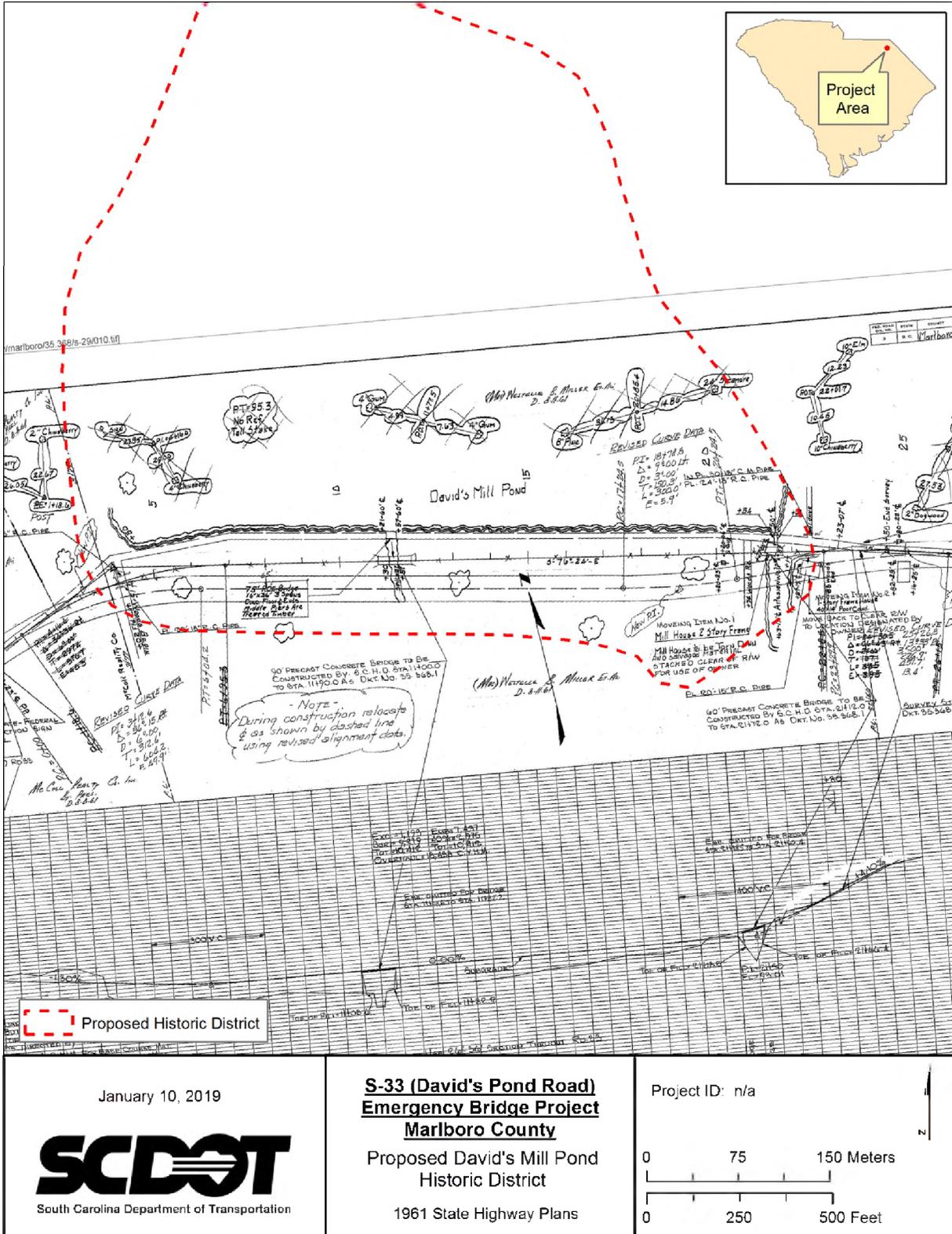


Figure 7. 1961 SCDOT Highway Plans Showing David's Pond Mill (SCDOT 1961).

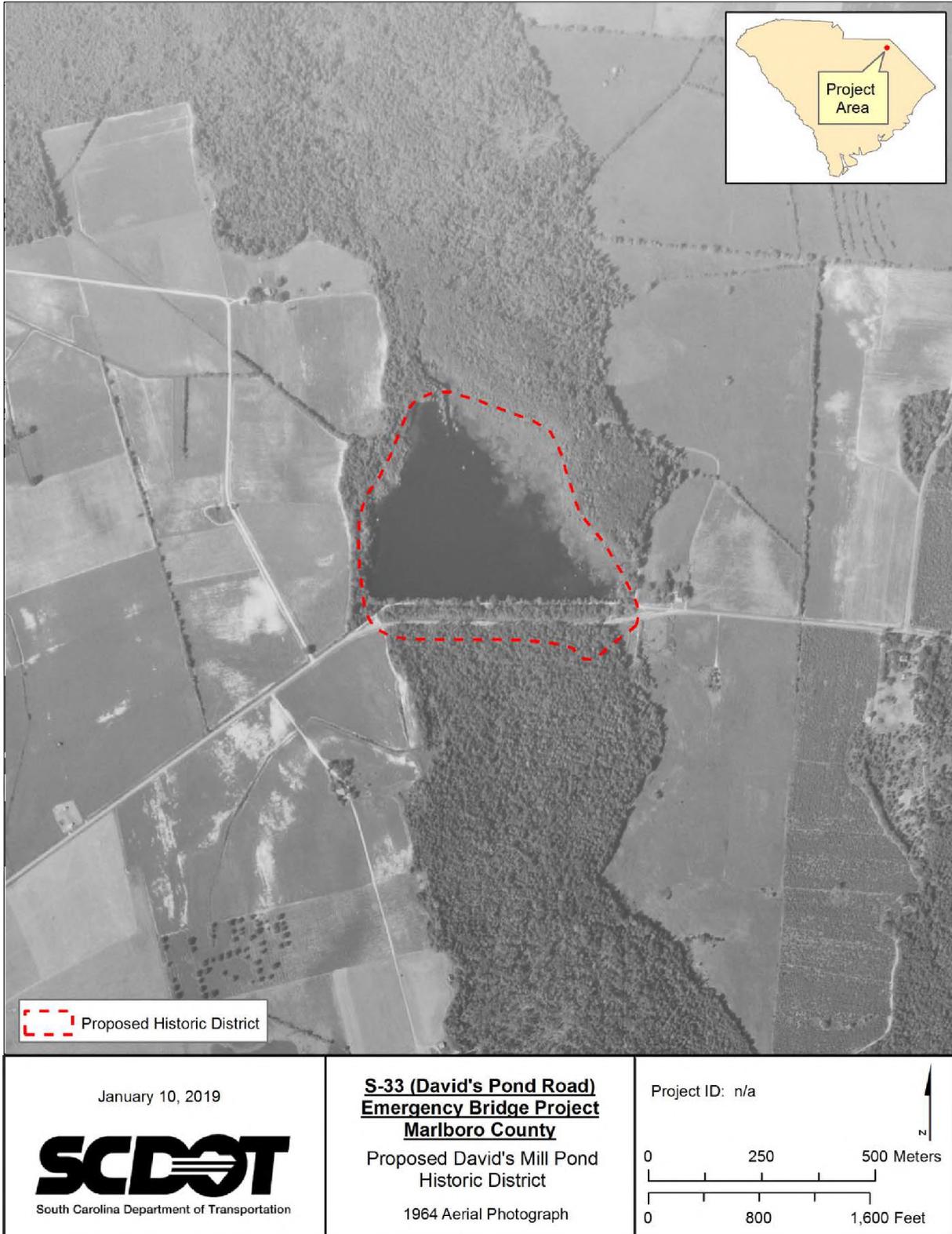


Figure 8. 1964 Aerial Photograph of Marlboro County Showing Location of Proposed David's Mill Pond Historic District (USGS 1964).

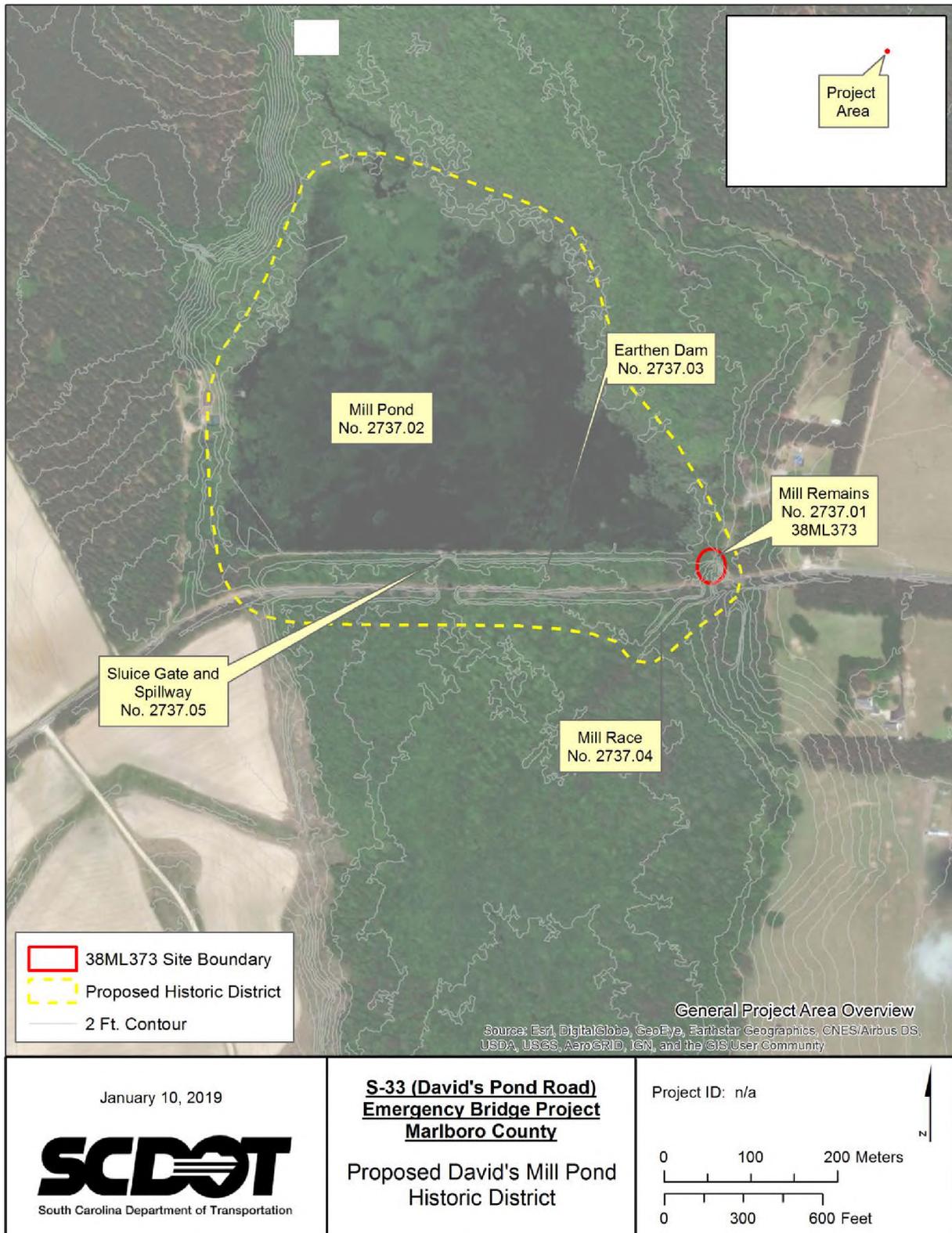


Figure 9. Modern Aerial Photograph Showing David's Mill Pond Historic District Boundary and Constituent Elements.



Figure 10. View of 2737.01 [38ML373] Mill Building Remains, Showing Concrete Wall, Enclosure, and Piers, Facing North.



Figure 11. View of 2737.01 [38ML373] Mill Building Remains, Showing Concrete Channel and Possible Turbine Enclosure, Facing Southwest.



Figure 12. View of 2737.02 (Mill Pond), Facing North.



Figure 13. View of 2737.02 (Mill Pond), Facing Northeast.



Figure 14. View of 2737.03 (Earthen Dam), Facing East.



Figure 15. View of 2737.03 Showing Dam and Sluice Gate Breach, Facing East.



Figure 16. View of 2737.04 (Mill Race), Facing Southwest.



Figure 17. View of 2737.05 Showing Damaged Sluice Gate and Spillway, Facing West.



Figure 18. View of 2737.05 Showing Damaged Sluice Gate and Spillway, Facing North.