A Letter from the President of the Council for Minnesota Archaeology

Looking for the Silver Lining in 2020

Hello fellow CMA members.

It has been a tough, long year on everyone.

In many ways our lives and livelihoods were turned upside down in 2020. We all stepped up to deal with the initial impacts of the lockdowns and figuring out our “essential” status. When we carefully took to the field, we donned PPE and tried to figure out how to work in a pandemic. Luckily, much of our work happens in 15m intervals, but having every crew member drive to projects led to a lot of long, lonely, drives (and sometimes lost team members). I also do a lot of public-oriented field projects and presentations. These turned into zoom meetings and left much to be desired.

When we thought we were getting a handle on things, we began to realize how slowly the rest of the world was working. Timelines stretched out or ground to a halt. We did what we could remotely and had to become increasingly comfortable with not being able to check sources ourselves, but leave it to others. Once intimate, engaging, classrooms felt anything but. As we began to realize this was not going to go away, and the field season would be swept into increasing uncertainty, we struggled to come to terms with this new, hopefully short lived, reality.

However, we also grew closer together as a community. Because our organization is spread throughout the State and beyond, it has always been hard to meet quorums for physical meetings. This is especially true with the loss of some of our north stars (Pat Emerson and Fort Snelling itself). However, with our new Zoom potential – suddenly we have ample folks to get things done. The CMA list serve is also more active than ever, membership (especially student membership) is up, and we have the capability to access some CMA archives online. I have also felt more emboldened to reach out to others in the field to ask for help, especially when I need a report they authored, or am working on projects near where they have previously been. We may not be able to physically meet, or gather for major events, but we have some great victories for our community which we should highlight.

To this end, we will be having our 2021 CMA Conference and Annual Meeting virtually. Jennifer Rankin, from MNHS, is leading the committee to host the event. Look for more information in the days and weeks to come. The event is planned for the end of February and I am looking forward to giving a talk on the use of Matterport 3D technology to document archaeological sites, historic properties, and more of our work.

Thank you to everyone who has already paid their 2021 dues, worked tirelessly on the Executive Team this year, and to each of you. When I reached out, you answered.

Thank you, and I look forward to seeing you all in 2021.
Thank you to everyone who has already paid their 2021 dues, worked tirelessly on the Executive Team this year, and to each of you. When I reached out, you answered.

Thank you, and I look forward to seeing you all in 2021.

Jeremy Nienow, CMA President
T: 651-295-3744 | jeremy.nienow@gmail.com

A Letter from the Vice President

CMA Members,

Despite the trials of the past year, I am excited to report the council has continued to grow in membership and stay connected through our virtual meetings. We may not be able to do much in person for a while but be assured your officers are taking this time to work on strengthening the CMA behind the scenes so we can emerge from this season more organized and with renewed conviction. This includes keeping on top of our (now virtual) meeting schedule, creating an online networking and data sharing space using the new Google Drive, auditing existing systems to locate and address gaps and issues, and now planning the CMA’s first ever virtual symposium for February of 2021 to help us adapt with the times.

Since the previous newsletter, I would like to congratulate three new members: student member Elias Droessler (University of Minnesota - Morris), and full standard members Amy Ollila and Amy Mann. Prior to his membership, Droessler already greatly contributed to the CMA by scanning in a large portion of the CMA Archives to be saved digitally, and more easily shared with the council. Ollila and Mann are both experienced archaeologists with established histories of work in Minnesota, and Ollila is already on the committee helping plan the 2021 CMA Symposium. I am excited to welcome all three new members of the council.

Laura Koski, MSc, RPA
ljoreenl@gmail.com
An Update from the Secretary Treasurer

Fellow CMA Members,

While many organizations have faced severe challenges in 2020, I can report that the CMA is doing well in terms of active membership and finances at the start of the new year.

Looking back on my notes from February 2020, we had 35 current members. By the end of 2020, we had 49 current regular and student members. At the start of 2021, we already have 23 current members with several more mentioning their dues are on the way to us. Speaking of dues, we accept payment via PayPal or check. Please contact me at the email below for a digital invoice if you wish to pay electronically with PayPal. If you wish to pay by check, please mail it to our address listed above. We have had issues with delivery of our mail to the Kellogg Center box so please write the address exactly as shown to help ensure it arrives.

Our account balance has remained nearly where it was this time in 2020. As of January 2nd, 2021, our account balance is $5050.00. The main expenses this year were for maintenance to the website for $550 (I'm looking into why it was so high this year), catering for our February 2020 gathering at St. Cloud State University for $250, and postage for the fliers we sent to regional institutions to promote our Riaz Malik research grants for $22.

As always, if you have membership status or other questions related to the CMA, please contact me and I can help make sure the matter is addressed. I hope to see many of you for our online conference in several weeks.

Fred Sutherland, Ph.D., RPA
Fsuthy@gmail.com

Announcements

Letters Regarding Quarry Development Efforts Near Jeffers Petroglyphs

The Council for Minnesota Archaeology passed a motion to contact representatives of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and the Cottonwood County Public Works expressing our concerns regarding quarry development activities near the Jeffers Petroglyphs Historic Site. The letter in its entirety is provided on the following page. Copies were also distributed to the Office of the State Archaeologist and the State Historic Preservation Office.
To:  
Minnesota Pollution Control Agency  
520 Lafayette Rd  
St. Paul, MN 55155

December 21, 2020

To Whom It May Concern,

The Council for Minnesota Archaeology has been apprised of two recent quarry development efforts, specifically the Red Rock Quarry and the Lorentz Quarry projects, within Southwest Minnesota’s Red Rock Ridge near the Jeffers Petroglyphs Historic Site in Cottonwood County. Archaeological sites in this region are of great importance both to the Native Peoples who created, used, and still use them today, and to the archaeological community. The preservation of these sites represents good cultural resource stewardship and continued goodwill toward Native American communities. The two quarry development projects are in the same cultural landscape where at least one burial cairn, three boulder outlines in the shape of a man, a buffalo head, and a kite-shaped astronomical observatory have been identified. The ultimate size of this cultural landscape and the Jeffers Petroglyphs Site are unknown and research in the last several years suggests it is far larger than previously thought. These sites are at least 8,000 years old and perhaps older, which could mean they span the entire human history in this part of North America. The potential of similar Native American cultural resources in these development areas is exceptionally high given similar environmental settings.

The Council for Minnesota Archaeology is a non-profit organization comprised of archaeology professionals dedicated to promoting archaeological research and interpretation in Minnesota. As an organization, the Council rarely comments on development activities within the state of Minnesota; however, given the now ongoing development efforts in Cottonwood County, and the apparent limited concern given to known, important cultural resources, we find it necessary to register our concern for these invaluable cultural properties.

The Council for Minnesota Archaeology specifically requests archaeological examination of the Lorentz Quarry Project be immediately initiated, continued, and completed; and current development efforts be paused to give the archaeological community and related stakeholders a chance to complete their cultural resource work.

Sincerely,

Jeremy L. Nienow, Ph.D., RPA  
President, Council for Minnesota Archaeology  
328 W. Kellogg Blvd.  
St. Paul, MN 55102
Mower County Historical Society Seeking Firm for Cultural Landscape Report

Tom Trow

The Mower County Historical Society in Austin is seeking a firm to create a Cultural Landscape Report for the Grand Meadow Chert Quarry (21MW8) in southeastern Minnesota. The county will have its own archaeologist under contract for related research, writing, photography and on-site monitoring for preservation and protecting the archaeological integrity of the site. The successful firm can plan to work with that archaeologist, but will need to provide its own landscape architect, and will have experience in creating CLRs and, ideally, will have experience in working on precontact sites in the state. For information and the RFP, please contact Executive Director Randy Forster at director@mowercountyhistory.org or at (507) 437-6082.

Volume 77 of The Minnesota Archaeologist to be Published in January

Danielle Kiesow

The upcoming issue of The Minnesota Archaeologist will be reaching members in early January, with a number of articles that may be of interest to CMA members. Volume 77 opens with a memorial to Patricia Emerson and her many legacies to Minnesota archaeology. An in-depth analysis of the geology involved with the Kensington Runestone, adding to Michlovic's 2010 article in Volume 68, offers definitive proof that the stone was carved close to the time it was found, and must be a hoax. A multi-year excavation of a Mississippian earthwork in Trempealeau and its meaningful finds are discussed in the third article of this volume. The final three articles provide a comprehensive introduction and discussion of the Grand Meadow Chert Quarry and Grand Meadow Chert (GMC), as well as a statistical analysis for modeling where people used GMC across what we now know as Minnesota. These three articles are the first description and research papers to be published about the GMC Quarry and Grand Meadow Chert since 1981. The cover image of this volume shows enhanced lidar imagery taken of the Grand Meadow Quarry. Volume 77 is made possible with additional support from the Patricia Emerson Memorial Fund.

Make sure to renew your MAS membership or update your mailing address at info@mnarchsociety.org so you don’t miss your chance to receive your copy.
Council for Minnesota Archaeology Symposium

Call for Sessions, Papers, and Posters

Where: Virtual, Online (Zoom)*

*The conference will be primarily “live” with some pre-recorded components. Additional details to come.

When: February 26-27, 2021

The Council for Minnesota Archaeology is announcing a call for sessions, papers, or posters for its biennial symposium, to be held virtually on February 26-27, 2021. The symposium is open to all researchers at any stage of their career, whether academic, students, CRM or community archaeologists, to present recent research on any aspect of Minnesota or Upper Midwest archaeology.

Paper and poster abstract submissions should not exceed 200 words, with papers not to exceed 15 minutes in length. Posters will be presented between sessions and available online. Individual abstracts can be submitted to either: Bruce Koenen (bruce.koenen@state.mn.us), Amy Ollila (amy.ollila@mnhs.org), and/or Jennifer Rankin (jennifer.rankin@mnhs.org), no later than January 31, 2021.

Send any session requests and inquiries, conference format (including pre-recording options), and presentation questions to Jennifer Rankin (jennifer.rankin@mnhs.org), Program Chair.

Student Paper Prize: There will be a student paper prize award of $250 if a sufficient number of student submittals are received.

Council for Minnesota Archaeology – An organization dedicated to promoting archaeological research and interpretation in Minnesota.
The Douglas A. Birk Papers at SCSU Now Available to Researchers

Rob Mann, SCSU

In 2018 the Department of Anthropology at St. Cloud State University (SCSU) acquired the Douglas A. Birk Collection. The Birk Collections consists of an extensive research library containing over 2,000 books, journals, and archaeological site reports; the archaeological materials from site 21MO20, an 18th-century fur trade post listed on the National Register of Historic Places; and Birk’s professional papers—the Douglas A. Birk Papers.

SCSU is proud to announce that the Douglas A. Birk Papers are now available to researchers. An online finding aid is available here (http://libsys.stcloudstate.edu/archon/?p=ollections/findingaid&id=216&q=). As many in the CMA know, Doug worked as an archaeologist in Minnesota for several decades and over the course of his career became an expert on fur trade history and archaeology, the early European exploration of the upper Mississippi River valley, the missionization of Native peoples in Minnesota, the logging industry, and the early railroad system in Minnesota.

Overview of the Douglas A. Birk Papers:

- **Extent:** 45 linear feet of paper and 123 Gigabytes of born-digital material.
- **Record types include:** fieldwork, field notes and field journals, correspondence, maps, illustrations, research notes, manuscripts, reports, photographs, audiovisual material.
- **Earliest records:** Birk's hand drawn maps and notes on logging railroads from the late 1950s.
- **Subjects and geographic areas:** Prominent topics include the archaeological record of sites within the Little Elk Heritage Preserve, especially 21MO20; Minnesota's Colonial, Territorial, and early Statehood periods; John Sayer; Zebulon Pike; Protestant missions; precolonial mounds; historic communities; historic transportation routes; artifact studies; and sites relating to the fur trade in Minnesota.
- **Access:** The collection is open to the public by appointment only. SCSU COVID-19 protocols for campus visitors are in place until further notice (Link for protocol information: https://www.stcloudstate.edu/emergency/covid19/campus-visitors/default.aspx).
- **Access:** Remote access to digital content is available upon request, pending approval.
- **Restrictions:** Portions of the collection are restricted. For example, archaeologically sensitive information such as site locations are not available to the general public.

The Birk Papers were processed by Barrett Codieck, Project Archivist. He was assisted by SCSU graduate students Jackson Rohde, Jacqueline Lizotte, and Kylee Glenn. This project was financed with funds provided by the State of Minnesota from the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund through the Minnesota Historical Society. For questions or further information, please contact Rob Mann, Associate Professor of Anthropology and Director of the Douglas A. Birk Collection via email (rmann@stcloudstate.edu) or telephone (320) 308-4181.
Minnesota Archaeology Research Grants

Riaz Malik Research Grant Program
2020-2021 Academic Year

Applications are Accepted on a Rolling Deadline

The CMA offers semi-annual research grants to support projects advancing the study of Minnesota archaeology. Examples of appropriate uses include specialist analytical costs (such as a radiocarbon date or time on a scanning electron microscope), or laboratory or field supplies intended for a specific research project (bags, vials, chemicals, etc). The monetary amount of each grant awarded is determined by the selected applications and the availability of funds. Based on the program's history, awards have typically not exceeded $800. If the project requires more than $800, we still encourage you to apply. Student projects have priority. If no viable student applications are received, the grant is available to CMA members.

Required for application:

- Description of research project, with role of Research Grant defined
- Detailed budget and schedule
- Letter of support from applicant's academic advisor (for student projects)

Electronic submissions are welcome (a single PDF file is preferred). Applications will be reviewed by the grants committee, and recommendations forwarded to the full CMA membership. Funds will be made available to successful applicants as soon as possible after the notification.

Send applications to:
David Mather – National Register Archaeologist
State Historic Preservation Office
50 Sherburne Avenue/ 203 Administration Building
Saint Paul, MN 55155
david.mather@state.mn.us

Deadline for receipt of applications: Applications are accepted year-round. Please contact David Mather for more details.

Requirements: It is expected that grant recipients will publish their results in the CMA Newsletter, The Minnesota Archaeologist or other suitable format.

Riaz Malik came to Minnesota as a student of Elden Johnson at the University of Minnesota. He made significant contributions to investigations at Mille Lacs, Prairie Island, along the Rainy River, and elsewhere. As part of the Minnesota Trunk Highway Archaeological Reconnaissance Survey, he co-directed the data recovery investigations at the Bradbury Brook site (21ML42), pictured above. Riaz passed away in 1993.
Research Briefs

Saint Cloud State Field School 2020

Rob Mann, SCSU

As 2020 opened, I was scheduled to teach SCSU’s summer archaeological field school. We had 16 students signed up when we received the news from our system (Minn. State) that due to the COVID-19 pandemic there would be no face-to-face course instruction for summer 2020. This was quite an issue for us since we require our undergraduate students to take a field school as part of their undergraduate degree. We offer both an ethnographic and archaeological field school, each one taught every other summer. Once it was known that it would not be possible to hold our archaeological field school in 2020, we committed to making sure our students could both get hands-on archaeological field experience and meet their degree requirements. This was especially important for those students who needed this sequence of classes to complete their degrees on time.

Our solution was an online Research Methods in Archaeology course I taught during the second summer session. While no substitute for hands-on instruction, the class was designed to introduce archaeological field methods to our students. In the fall semester, I taught Archaeological Field Methods. This class had both a classroom/lecture and field component. The fieldwork took place on six Saturdays at three project areas within Morrison County. The focus of the field work was archaeological survey methods (pedestrian survey and shovel testing). Students were required to attend five out of the six Saturday sessions. Concurrently, I taught Anthropological Analysis and Interpretation, a mostly online class with a laboratory component that allowed students to process, identify, and analyze materials recovered from the survey class for their final class projects.

Of course, the ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic required that we also develop protocols and best practices to help keep everyone safe. These included mandatory masks worn at all times on site, social distancing, a handwashing station with soap and water, and plenty of disinfecting wipes.
The Morrison County Archaeological Survey Project was designed to locate and document previously unrecorded archaeological sites and field check and update previously recorded sites. We developed a research design and set of research questions for each project area. Our first survey area was targeted in an effort to locate sites associated with the 19th-century village of Belle Prairie, multiethnic community consisting of French Canadian, Native American, Méts, and métis individuals, as well as Anglo-American individuals. According to Fisher (1972:85-86) a “tide” of French Canadian settlers came to Belle Prairie between 1850 and 1870. This community was also home to the Frederick Ayer Mission, a ca. 1850 mission and school for Native American children (Ayer Mission Site-21MO107), as well as being an important stop on the Red River Trail. At Belle Prairie we conducted a pedestrian survey of a recently plowed agricultural field situated on a terrace above the Mississippi River. Here we recorded the presence of a mid-nineteenth century to very early twentieth-century domestic site (Figures 1-3). Historical records (see Warner 2006) suggest the site was occupied by the Coe family. Orin A. Coe reportedly came to Minnesota in 1838. In 1844 Coe went to Red Lake as a missionary. In 1849 he visited Belle Prairie, probably with Frederick Ayer, and in 1853 or 1855 Coe settled in Belle Prairie. He was primarily engaged in farming at Belle Prairie. The Coe family occupied this property until about 1911, a date that comports well with the archaeological materials recovered.

Our second project area targeted the 19th-century trading community of Aitkinsville, established by fur trader William Aitkin in 1848. Aitkin ran a trading post and operated a Mississippi River ferry. In addition, Aikin opened a hotel and other businesses included a saw mill, flour mill, and “grog shop” (see Warner 2006:181). In 1856 the community was renamed Swan River and had a cemetery, post office, and school. By 1880 the community was abandoned. A cultural resources survey in the immediate vicinity of Aitkinsville/Swan River (Mulholland et al. 2001) recorded the Blanchard Site I (21MO182). This site is described as “a surface find with two pieces of quartz debitage recovered from an eroding surface. The area of the site has been extensively impacted in the past by road construction activity and an unknown depth of surface sediment has been removed” (Mulholland et al. 2001:47). The 2001 survey located no materials associated with a potential 19th-century occupation of the area. Upon discussions with the property owner, we discerned a portion the Blanchard site unlikely to have been disturbed by the impacts described by Mulholland et al. (2001). Here we established a 5 meter shovel test grid and were able to excavate a total of 11 STPs. Our shovel tests confirmed intact deposits at the Blanchard site and we recovered a small
amount of quartz debita and a possible quartz core. Unfortunately, there was little evidence of Aitkinsville/Swan River. Although we did recover a few machine-cut square nails, it seems likely that the historic community was located south and east of our project area.

The third target of our survey project was the Swan River Indian Village site (21MO16). This site was placed on the NRHP in 1973, in part because it represents “one of the few documented and identifiable locations of an Ojibway village on the Mississippi.” The village encountered by famed explorer Joseph Nicollet in 1836, who noted that it was “a camp where the women and children stayed while the men were hunting in a nearby area.” The NRHP form also notes that the “site has yielded much flaking debris and both grit and shell tempered pottery,” suggesting that the site has multiple components, including both precolonial and colonial period occupations. In 2001 a portion of the site was shovel tested as part of the previously mentioned cultural resources survey project (Mulholland et al. 2001). This study recorded positive STPs and recovered 369 pieces of lithic debitage, a single ceramic body sherd, and at least one biface fragment (Mulholland et al. 2001). The surveyors noted that “neither the northern or southern boundaries are well defined” (Mulholland et al. 2001). The survey located no materials associated with a potential 19th-century Ojibwe occupation of the site locale.

Unlike the two previous project areas, we were able to return to the Swan River Indian Village project area on four consecutive Saturdays. Because of this we were able to establish a larger STP grid (with STPs at 5 m intervals) and excavate a total of 22 STPs. We recovered chert and quartz debitage along with one small chert biface.

The materials recovered during the Morrison County Archaeological Survey Project are currently being analyzed by the field school students as part of their final papers in the Anthropological Analysis and Interpretation class. I anticipate the several students will showcase their research at the upcoming 10th Annual MN State Conference of Undergraduate Scholarly and Creative Activity. From there, I am hopeful that some will also present their research at the 2021 CMA Conference and compete for the Student Paper Prize. As I write this it is finals week at SCSU. It has been semester like no other and I am extremely proud of how our students rose to the challenges that came our way over the course of this semester. While they were cheated from having a “full blown” archaeological field school, they made the most of each of our field work opportunities. Under sometimes trying and stressful circumstances they consistently exceeded my expectations for enthusiasm, professionalism, and diligence in the field. All this while also showing patience, grace, and kindness to each other.

References Cited

Fisher, Harold L.

Mulholland, S.C. Mulholland, S.L. Mulholland, J.R. Shafer and R. Donahue

Warner, Mary E.
2006 A Big Hearted Paleface Man: Nathan Richardson and the History of Morrison County, MN. Morrison County Historical Society, Little Falls, MN.
Star Island Fire History
Sean Dunham on behalf of the Star Island Fire History Partnership

The University of Minnesota (UMN), in partnership with the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe (LLBO), Leech Lake Tribal College (LLTC), and the Chippewa National Forest (CNF), has embarked on a fire history project on Star Island (Windigomineis in Ojibwemowin). This partnership brings diverse perspectives and knowledge that will enhance our understanding of the island from ecological, cultural, and historical contexts. This project has been made possible, in part, through a grant from the Minnesota Historical Society Heritage Partnership Program.

Star Island, located in Cass Lake (Gaa-zagaskwaajimekaag), is within the LLBO Reservation and the CNF. The island was chosen for this study for a variety of reasons, including: its old growth red pine stands; its historical and archaeological evidence for human occupation over the past 5000 years; and the island’s likely isolation from larger, regional fire events on the mainland.

The fire history is being reconstructed by examining annual tree rings (dendrochronology) preserved within fire-scarred red pine stumps as well as core samples collected from living red pine (bapakwanagemagoog). The trees are a unique window to the past, like artifacts or texts, documenting trends relating to climate, fire, and cultural activity. Fifty-five samples have been collected from the island and nearly half (27) have been processed and dated so far. We have developed a tree-ring record that extends back to the 1670s with fire-scar evidence for thirteen unique fire years between 1747 and 1902. The mean fire-free interval of these samples is 24.4 years with variation ranging between 5 and 101 years from individual stumps. No fires are apparent in the tree-ring record from ~1670 to 1745 or after 1902.

Review of the data reveals an increase in fire events between 1774 and 1866. Most striking is a cluster of four fires between 1790 and 1813 that were recorded on most of the sampled stumps (these are called synchronous fire events). These four fire years produce a mean interval of 10.3 years and 16 of the stumps included scars from at least 3 of these fires. There is another cluster of four fire years between 1830 and 1866. The 1866 fire is synchronous
whereas the other fires are asynchronous in that these fires affected less than half of the sampled stumps and appear restricted to particular areas of the island.

The pattern of fire history, particularly the short fire intervals between 1790 and 1866, is likely the result of intentional, local human ignitions as opposed to lightning or climactic driven events. The fire record also corresponds with broader historical trends associated with Ojibwe settlement in the Cass Lake area. Fire activity increases with the easing of tensions with the Dakota in the later 18th century and ends following state and federal efforts to relocate Ojibwe to the White Earth Reservation in the late 19th century. Additionally, we have archeological and historical evidence of an Ojibwe community on Star Island, often referred to as Ozaawindib’s village, during this period of high fire activity.

An important goal of this partnership is to share knowledge in order to better investigate and understand the interactions between traditional Ojibwe cultural practices and Star Island’s vegetation patterns. One of the questions we are considering is how the fire history relates to the Ojibwe occupation and use of the island and how this pattern may help us better understand the broader cultural relationship with the landscape in northern Minnesota.

Next Steps include: 1.) processing and dating the remaining fire-scar samples, 2.) further discussions with LLBO elders concerning the history and cultural significance of Star Island, and the Cass Lake area, 3.) visiting the island with LLBO elders, and 4.) developing educational and interpretive materials for the project (these steps have been complicated due to the Covid-19 Epidemic). The project will facilitate longer term engagement and interaction between LLTC, LLBO, UMN, and the CNF. This relationship will benefit all participants by forging new pathways toward improving cross-cultural and interdisciplinary understandings of Minnesota’s complex cultural and ecological history.
Alec Anton – Minnesota State University, Mankato

Update to Alec’s Graduate Student Highlight Feature in the Summer 2019 Edition

Since summer of 2019, Alec Anton’s graduate thesis research at Minnesota State University, Mankato has changed in scope and focus due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The research now involves development of a protection plan through the interpretation of archaeological survey and geophysical data collected over the Belle Creek Mounds archaeological site, in northeastern Goodhue County, Minnesota, in collaboration with the Prairie Island Indian Community (PIIC). PIIC recently purchased property—upon which a portion of the Belle Creek Mounds archaeological site resides—and funded three graduate students and staff from Minnesota State, Mankato’s EARTH System Research Laboratory to conduct an archaeological survey of their newly acquired property with PIIC Tribal Historic Preservation Office staff, during the summer of 2020. One aspect of the project seeks to determine whether mounds heavily impacted by agriculture, no longer visible in person or on LiDAR derived hillshades, can be detected using geophysical methods including relative soil resistance, gradiometry, and ground penetrating radar. The project also seeks to contribute to the development of further understanding of the utility of historic source material in relocating mounds and to archaeological knowledge about pre-Contact Period peoples in the Red Wing Locality. Well-supported geophysical mound relocation could prevent future disturbance of associated human remains, important in respecting the ancestors of Native Americans. Following completion of graduate research, a MSc. Degree in Applied Anthropology, and a GIS Graduate Certificate, Anton plans to continue contributing to the protection and development of regional archaeology.

Archaeological Testing at a Historic Logging Camp

Andrew Domine (St. Cloud State University) and Sean Dunham (Chippewa National Forest)

Throughout the 2020 field season, we have been conducting fieldwork for a thesis project at the Wanaki Logging Camp, a historic site located on the Chippewa National Forest. Unfortunately, the project could not take place within the Passport in Time Program as initially intended. Still, with help from the Forest Service, the Leech Lake Heritage...
Sites Program, and St. Cloud State University volunteers, we were able to complete the fieldwork during the 2020 field season.

The Wanaki Logging Camp Site contains seven structural features wonderfully outlined by prominent berms and ditches. We have yet to confirm the camp owner, but we know that the site dates to approximately 1900, as shown on a Mississippi River Commission Survey map from that year. A youth archaeology workshop sponsored by the Chippewa National Forest in 2018 completed a grid of shovel tests over the site. The recent thesis work has built upon the youth project by conducting a metal detector survey as well as excavating shovel tests and formal excavation units. The intention is to identify building functions, understand the loggers’ lifeways, and ultimately understand the various aspects of the loggers’ identity.

The excavations provided plenty of material related to foodways, particularly coming from a kitchen midden. Field observations identified cattle long bones and ribs as well as fish vertebrae and eggshell within the midden. It is interesting to note that the youth event uncovered a T-bone in a separate structure believed to be the foreman’s quarters. Tobacco-related items have a strong presence seen through snuff tins, lids, and tobacco tags. Again, the “foreman’s quarters” stands out, as the youth workshop uncovered a clay pipe fragment in this location. Several eye-catching artifacts were uncovered, including a double-bladed ax head, a pocketknife, and an 1891 penny.

There is still plenty of work to be done. The bone is being prepared for faunal analysis, fine screening and flotation samples are being processed, and archival research is underway with the aid of St. Cloud State University’s Birk Collection. From what we have so far, we are excited to look for patterns in the foodways associated with ethnic identity and how material differences between the bunkhouse and the foreman’s quarters may indicate differences in status and workplace identity.
Updates? Corrections?

Please send any corrections to Anastasia Walhovd at Anastasia.Walhovd@gmail.com.