

# ARCHAEOLOGY EDUCATION PROGRAM

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**Mississippi  
Valley  
Archaeology  
Center**

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**This year's theme:  
Cultural Resources  
Management**

## **CRM: Step Two- Preparation and Fieldwork**

The theme of this year's Archaeology Education Program newsletter is "Cultural Resource Management." The first issue covered the steps utilized in pre-field planning. This issue will look into the preparation for and completion of field work, followed by laboratory and research work in the Spring issue, and finally write-up and dissemination in the Summer issue. Learning the process taken from the beginning to completion of an archaeological project will help students and non-archaeologists realize there is more to archaeology than just 'digging up bones.'

## **Introduction to Fieldwork**

There are three phases of archaeological fieldwork. Phase I is to check an area for artifacts by either walking over ground to see if artifacts have been brought to the surface by the plow, or if the project area is not plowed, by placing shovel tests in a systematic grid (usually 15 meters apart) throughout the project area. During Phase II testing, one or more units are placed within the project area. A unit is a square usually 2 x 2 meters wide which is dug in levels of 5 or 10 centimeters at a time, until you reach "sterile" soil, below which you don't expect to find any artifacts. A Phase III excavation generally entails having large equipment skim off the top layer, or plow zone, of the project area. Once the top layer is removed, archaeologists look for dark stains called features, which should contain artifacts from a site.

## **Preparation for Field Work**

An archaeologist needs to take several steps before starting an excavation project. First, the archaeologist must contact the client to get as many details about the project area as possible. Some questions which need to be answered include: what level of fieldwork needs to be completed, is the area cultivated, does the landowner know what you will be doing, is the project area marked in any way, and are maps of the project area available?

Before going out to the site, the archaeologist looks at topographic and historic maps on file at the Archaeology Lab and checks the state database for known archaeological sites in and around the project area. The number of known sites in the vicinity gives the archaeologist an idea of what to expect in the area. If digging is involved in the project, Diggers Hotline is called to mark buried telephone lines, gas lines, etc. so nothing is damaged during the excavation.

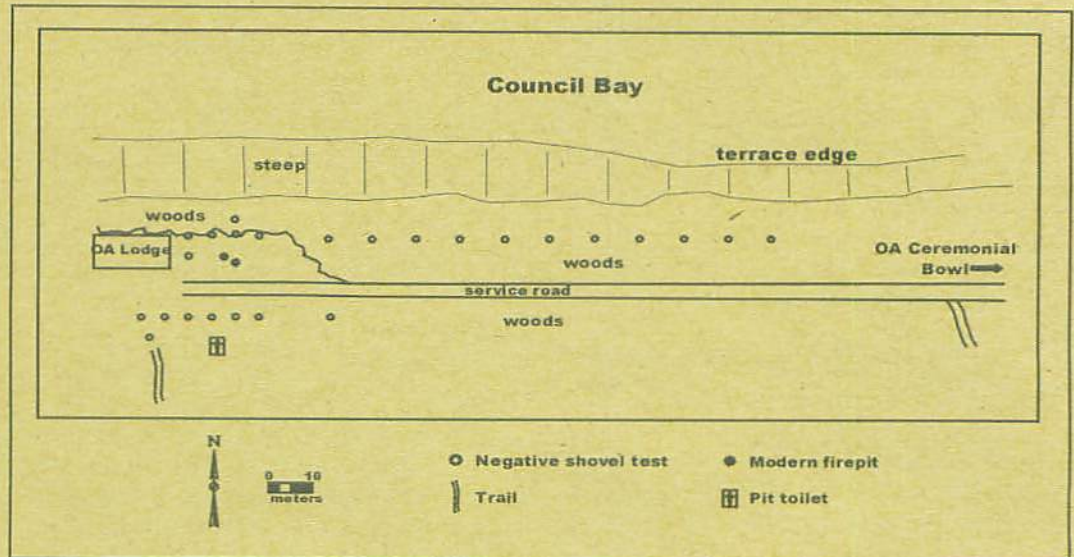
## **In the Field**

Sometimes a client will meet an archaeologist at the project area to discuss the fieldwork. Looking over the project area, the archaeologist identifies those areas which need testing as well as those which won't be tested. Disturbed areas such as cut ditches along roadways or steep slopes (not a likely camp site) won't be tested. Once these areas are established, the archaeologist and crew begin walkover survey, shovel testing or excavations. No matter which type of work is done, the archaeologist needs to take detailed notes about the type and texture of soil, depth to sterile soil, where artifacts were found and at what depth, what type of tools were used and who assisted in the excavations. On the project map, an archaeologist needs to accurately note where digging was completed, why certain areas weren't excavated, and place any landmarks on the map to help the client and future archaeologists identify where the excavation took place. What happens to the artifacts after the excavations will be discussed in the next issue.

# CRM Activity

While archaeology is considered a science, there are steps in the archaeological process which require math, history, art, and writing skills. The following scenario will cover some of these areas.

Use the map at right to answer the questions below about the project area.



This project was conducted at a site in Trempealeau County, WI. Shovel test holes were placed along the terrace edge to see if artifacts were located below the ground surface. Use the map above and the information on the first page of this insert to answer the questions below.

1. What is the name of the body of water north of the terrace?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. How many negative shovel test holes were placed in the project area?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. How far apart are most of the shovel tests from each other?

\_\_\_\_\_ meters

4. Why didn't the archaeologist place any shovel test holes in the area south of the water?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. How many modern firepits are marked on the map?

\_\_\_\_\_

6. What direction would you go to get to the OA Ceremonial Bowl?

\_\_\_\_\_

## Answers

(1) Council Bay

(2) 25

(3) 10

(4) N.A. wouldn't have lived on steep slope.

(5) 2

(6) east

# Archaeological Resources

## Book Reviews

**Title:** Archaeology

**Author:** Dennis B. Fradin

**Publisher:** Childrens Press, Chicago

**Age Range:** 7 - 10

This children's book discusses the general process of archaeology and its history, famous archaeological discoveries, and different kinds of archaeologists. Includes a glossary and index.

**Title:** Indian Mounds of Wisconsin

**Author:** Robert A. Birmingham and Leslie E. Eisenberg

**Publisher:** The University of Wisconsin Press

**Age Range:** 15 - adult

A comprehensive overview of the Indian mounds built by ancient Native American societies in Wisconsin. This book incorporates the most recent research on these intriguing earthworks. Also included is a travel guide to sites that can be visited by the public.

**Title:** Iowa's Archaeological Past

**Author:** Lynn M. Alex

**Publisher:** University of Iowa Press, Iowa City

**Age Range:** adult

A synthesis of Iowa's archaeological past, from Paleoindian discoveries to early historic sites. An introduction to archaeology begins the book and is followed up by a section on stewardship.

## Web Sites

### UW-Madison Library

<http://www.library.wisc.edu/libraries/SpecialCollections/Lapham/index.html>

I. A. Lapham's works were first published in 1855 and are now available online. *The Antiquities of Wisconsin* contains detailed maps of mound groups, as surveyed prior to the destruction of thousands of mounds in Wisconsin.

## Places to Visit

### Devil's Lake State Park

An Ice Age unit where 500-foot bluffs flank a 360-acre lake. Prehistoric Indians once inhabited the park and constructed a number of effigy mounds in the shape of birds and animals. In more recent times, Ho-Chunk (Winnebago) Indians had a summer fishing village along the north shore of Devil's Lake and a winter camp on the southeast shore. S5975 Park Rd, Baraboo 53913-9299. (608) 356-8301; TDD (608) 356-4274.

### Wyalusing State Park

This beautiful state park overlooks the Mississippi and Wisconsin rivers 500 feet below. Both effigy and conical mounds are preserved at the park, with trails leading to the Spook Hill Mound group and more. 13342 Cty. Hwy C, Bagley, WI 53801; (608) 996-2261. <http://www.wyalusing.org/>

*These book reviews, websites, and places to visit can be used as supplemental information for your lessons. Let us know if you have found any great resources we can share with our readers.*