



MVAC at the  
University  
of Wisconsin -  
La Crosse  
1725 State Street  
La Crosse, WI 54601

[www.uwlax.edu/mvac](http://www.uwlax.edu/mvac)

The electronic supplement of *Archaeology News* is published three times each year to inform MVAC members of new finds and upcoming events. Members who would like a hard copy of the supplement mailed to their homes can contact me at (608) 785-8454 or [dowiasch.jean@uwlax.edu](mailto:dowiasch.jean@uwlax.edu).

Enjoy the newsletter!  
*Jean Dowiasch, Editor*

## *Electronic* **Archaeology News**

Volume 22 Number 3, Online Supplement

Winter 2005

### **Hidden Below the Surface- Archaeology on the Northern Wisconsin Reservoirs**

*Ryan Howell, Research Archaeologist*

While traditionally focused on the archaeology of the Mississippi River and the Coulee Region, for more than a decade MVAC has conducted large-scale and on-going compliance and research archaeological activities along the shorelines of several man-made reservoirs built within the Upper Wisconsin River Valley in Oneida, Marathon and Lincoln Counties. These activities have been sponsored by the Wisconsin Valley Improvement Company (WVIC) of Wausau, Wisconsin. WVIC is a private company that oversees the management and maintenance of the reservoir system that supplies hydro-electric power to much of central and northern Wisconsin.

Most recently in 2003-2004 MVAC archaeologists have been conducting investigations on "inundated sites," archaeological sites that are typically beneath the waves of the reservoirs and lakes in the WVIC system. These sites can only be accessed for brief periods when the reservoirs go through a draw-down cycle, usually in late fall and winter. Combining wet "lake-bottom" digging conditions with inclement weather and unpredictable scheduling makes working on these inundated sites a logistical and operational challenge to MVAC staff and field crews. It is not uncommon to return to a site after a weekend's break, only to find that the site is now under 3-6 feet of water and inaccessible for further research!

However, the inundated sites do offer several advantages for archaeological study. First, the wave action and erosion along the shorelines of the reservoirs often exposes large amounts of artifacts on a beach-like surface where they are easily mapped and collected. Also because the sites that

MVAC is investigating have not been well documented before, they are often surprisingly intact and important research sites that have, quite literally, been hidden "below the surface" and missed by many archaeological surveys in the area.

-continued on p.2



*MVAC Archaeologist Ed Swanson excavates at site 47Li44 near Tomahawk, WI in November of 2004. This site has produced prehistoric copper artifacts and, along with its neighbor on the Spirit River, site 47Li53, may contain a Late Paleoindian (ca. 8000-5000 B.C) component making it one of the oldest sites in northern Wisconsin.*

-continued from p. 1

An example of just such a site would be the Du Bay Boulder Site on the Big Eau Pleine Reservoir in Marathon County, a site that had been originally reported as a “small lithic artifact scatter” after its initial detection in 1989. However, the 2004 MVAC investigations at the site revealed it to be a medium-sized prehistoric quarry site, where Native Americans gathered quartz for use in the production of arrowheads, scrapers and other stone-tools. The first quartz quarry site known in north-central Wisconsin, the Du Bay Boulder site offers archaeologists a chance to better understand prehistoric Native American technology, trade and economy in the region and throughout northern Wisconsin.



*Spearpoints from 47Li-44. On the left a rolled conical copper point, possibly of Middle-Late Archaic age. On the right, a Agate Basin/Scottsbluff point made of Hixton Silicified Sandstone and dating to the Late Paleoindian Period.*

MVAC archaeological research in the Upper Wisconsin River Valley will continue into the 2005 season with several small and large-scale contract projects in and around the Wausau and Tomahawk areas. MVAC continues to explore and develop a better understanding of the archaeology, history and prehistoric Native American cultures of northern Wisconsin.



*MVAC student archaeologist Eric Gilmore, braving the November cold and rain to map the Du Bay Boulder prehistoric quarry site in Marathon County. The residual boulders of quartz are surrounded by broken prehistoric stone tools and manufacturing debris.*



### Consider becoming a member of MVAC

MVAC's innovative public education Program brings the excitement of archaeology to children and adults throughout the area. Become a member of MVAC and receive our newsletters, which report on programs, current research, upcoming events, and volunteer opportunities. Also, as a member, you will receive reminders of special “members only” events. Please remember that your contribution is tax-deductible.

Yes! I want to support the Mississippi Valley Archaeology Center Programs!  
Enclosed is my contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Membership Categories

**Patron.....\$1000 +**  
**Benefactor.....\$500-999**  
**Supporting.....\$100-499**  
**Contributing.....\$50-99**  
**Active.....\$25-49**

Please make checks payable to UW-L Foundation, Inc. for MVAC and send to MVAC, 1725 State St., La Crosse, WI 54601. Gifts to the UW-L Foundation for MVAC qualify as charitable tax deductions to the full extent of the law as applied to the individual circumstances of each donor. You can increase your gift's value if your employer has a matching gift plan. Check with your human resources office.

## May 2005: Wisconsin Historic Preservation and Archaeology Month

Wisconsin's Historic Preservation and Archaeology Month offers many opportunities to celebrate your community's history and heritage. Statewide events currently planned for Wisconsin's Historic Preservation and Archaeology Month which focus on archaeology include: History of Aztalan, Archaeology in Action, Ancient Atlatl History, Indian Mound Bus Tour, Giants on the Earth: A Visit to Man Mound County Park, and many more exciting activities. For a complete list of events planned throughout the state check out the Events Calendar on the Wisconsin Historical Society's web site at [www.wisconsinhistory.org](http://www.wisconsinhistory.org).



*MVAC's 2004 field survey participants learn about hammering copper during lunch break, thanks to volunteer LeVern DeVries.*

---

### Upcoming Summer Events

Time to plan your summer dig! The following youth classes and public field schools will be offered this summer. Plan now to register early and join MVAC in the field. Call MVAC at 608-785-8454 for a 2005 Events brochure or use the MVAC web site at [www.uwlax.edu/mvac](http://www.uwlax.edu/mvac)

#### Youth classes

July 12 - 13	Introduction to Archaeology, gr. 1-4
July 18	Introduction to Archaeology, gr. 5-9
July 19 - 20	Middle School Field Experience, gr. 5-9
July 21	Experimental Archaeology, gr. 4-6

#### High School - Adult classes

August 1 - 3	Field Experience for adults and high school students
August 1 - 5	Field School for adults and high school students

### MVAC Wisconsin Historic Preservation and Archaeology Month Activity: Field Survey Opportunity

Volunteers are invited to participate in an archaeological survey of local fields to find unreported sites in western Wisconsin. Over fifty people attended last year's survey, so we have added an additional day to accommodate the growing interest in this project. Volunteers will begin the day with an introduction at the UWL Archaeology Center and Laboratories, followed by surveys of local fields (transportation provided from UWL), and washing artifacts back at the lab in the afternoon. Participants are welcome to join MVAC archaeologist Connie Arzigian on one or more of the days listed below.

Dates: Saturday, April 30,  
Sunday, May 1, and/or  
Saturday, May 7, 2005  
Time: 8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Advanced registration is required at (608) 785-8454 or [dowiasch.jean@uwlax.edu](mailto:dowiasch.jean@uwlax.edu).



*Join the MVAC survey in April and May to locate new archaeological sites in western Wisconsin.*

---

### Horicon Marsh State Wildlife Area offers Marsh Melodies program

The last weekend in April has been designated Native American History weekend at Horicon Marsh. Speakers will include former State Archaeologist Robert Birmingham and PdD Candidate Daniel Winkler. There will also be flintknapping demonstrations, atlatl throwing, and a site tour led by Robert Jeske of UW-Milwaukee. More information can be obtained at: <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/wildlife/reclands/horicon/>



## Upcoming Events

Unless otherwise noted, events are free and open to the public. Contact MVAC at (608) 785-8454 for more information.

### **Archaeology in Fiction: an unscientific, highly biased look at my favorite sub-genre in fiction**

Wednesday, February 23, 2005

7 p.m.

La Crosse Public Library, Main Branch

More than 15 years ago **Bill Gresens** gave a presentation to the old La Crosse Area Archaeological Society on "Archaeology in Fiction: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly." The number (and quality) of novels using archaeology as a backdrop or central focus has increased dramatically in the last 15+ years. Bill's talk will feature mysteries, thrillers and horror novels that are part of series or stand-alones; and he will give his subjective and highly biased views of a number of these. Mr. Gresens loves this type of book and often gives high marks to fairly dreadful books. If he gives bad marks to a book, beware - it REALLY is a stinker. The audience should walk away with a few titles that might help them while away some long, cold winter nights.

\*This lecture is co-sponsored by the La Crosse Public Library.

### **Minnesota's Indian Mounds and Burial Sites**

Tuesday, March 22, 2005

7 p.m.

Port O'Call, Cartwright Center, UW-La Crosse

Only a small fraction of Minnesota's 11,000 reported mounds still survive. A number of mounds in the state were excavated in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, but until a recent study was undertaken, archaeologists didn't have answers to even such basic questions as "how many mounds have burials?" or "where in the mounds are the burials placed?" The massive amounts of excavation records had not been synthesized or analyzed to answer such critical questions about the mounds. A five year project was undertaken by speakers **Connie Arzigian** and **Kathy Stevenson** to examine all the records of known excavations of Indian mounds and burial sites in Minnesota. This talk will summarize what has been learned about the mounds, and how this information can be used to help protect the mounds that remain.

### **Artifact Show**

Saturday, April 9, 2005

10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Valley View Mall

Join MVAC at the Valley View Mall to see artifacts representing the area's long history. Local collectors will display their personal collections of artifacts. See artifacts recovered from local excavations. Bring in your own artifacts for help in their identification. Call MVAC at (608) 785-8454 if you would like to display your collection at the 2005 Artifact Show.