



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

www.uwlax.edu/mvac

**This year's theme:
Native American
use of the
Mississippi River**

This year we continue publishing our MVAC Education newsletter in a digital format. Each issue will include content information, lesson plans and resources for teachers to use in their classrooms. The digital newsletter format will be issued three times a year.

*Content information for this year's topic comes from **Twelve Millennia** by James L. Theler (UW-La Crosse) and Robert F. Boszhardt (MVAC).*

Please let me know if you have comments on the newsletter's content and/or suggestions you have for new material to include. Contact me at dowiasch.jean@uwlax.edu or (608) 785-8454. Enjoy the newsletter!

Jean Dowiasch, Editor

Archaeology Education Program

Volume 22, Number 3

Winter 2005

Introduction

As a result of the Mississippi River formation, the Driftless Area was divided into four basic land forms/biotic communities. In prehistoric times, each landform would provide different resources, which in turn would be utilized by the early Native cultures.

Driftless Area Landforms

Bedrock Uplands: Ridgetops were covered in prairie grass, which was maintained by periodic (primarily accidental) fires. The ridgetops would have been used as a lookout for other people or animal herds.

Steep-sided Interior Valleys: Cooler and damper north and east-facing slopes harbored stands of deciduous trees such as oak, hickory, maple, basswood, ash and birch. The mix of prairie and forest found in these valleys was an ideal habitat for elk, deer, and small game.

Outwash Terrace: The terraces were covered with lush prairie savannas with a scattering of oak trees. These areas provided little food, aside from some roaming buffalo, but provided ideal habitation sites overlooking the floodplain.

Floodplain: The floodplains provided a wealth of food for the early Native Americans from spring through fall. In addition to the animals available: fish, waterfowl, mussels, muskrat, etc.; edible plants such as roots, shoots of cattail, and wild rice were utilized. The Oneota culture used the floodplain for growing beans, corn, and squash. In addition to the food sources, the floodplains provided access to fresh water which was used for personal hygiene, cooking, and transportation.

Prehistoric Animal Remains

Archaeological investigations give clues to the type and number of animals used for food, clothing and tools by the early people of the Upper Mississippi Valley. The statistics and generalizations that follow were recorded by Dr. Jim Theler after his analysis of 32 archaeological sites in the upper Midwest. See Appendix A of *Twelve Millennia*.

Birds: A total of 51 species of bird bones were recovered, including Canadian geese, ducks, ravens, and red-winged black birds.

Fish: 35 species of fish were recovered, with catfish the most common (some of which weighed in over 50 pounds!). Fish were most likely caught by seining or trapping. Other species include freshwater drum, northern pike, and black bullhead.

Freshwater Mussels: 39 species of mussels were found at seasonal (summer) sites. One site contained over 1 million shells. Species of mussels recovered include giant floater, wartyback, and slippershell.

Mammals: A total of 44 species of mammals were represented at these sites, with deer being the most numerous. Bones were also found from bison, dog, black bear, elk, muskrat, beaver and others.

Turtles: 9 species of turtles were found, with Snapping Turtles being the most widespread. Scorch marks on the exterior shells indicate the turtles were most likely cooked in the shell. Other species include the wood turtle, painter turtle and softshell turtle.



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The activity on this page will help students examine how Native Americans used the food resources available to them.

Answers

top section

Birds: 51; canadian goose, ravens

Fish: 35; catfish, northern pike

Fr. Mussels: given

Mammals: 44; deer, muskrat

Turtles: 9; snapping, softshell

bottom section

1. G; 2. L; 3. E; 4. F; 5. K; 6. I, 7.

D; 8. C; 9. B; 10. J; 11. H; 12. A

Animal Remains at Archaeological Sites

Lesson Plan

Fill in Columns 1 and 2 in the table below using the information from page 1 of this issue. In Column 3 list as many examples of species types as you can. One example is done for you.

Type of Food	Number of species found at sites	Examples
Birds		
Fish		
Fr. Mussels	39	Giant Floater, Slippershell Mussel
Mammals		
Turtles		

Animal remains and their uses

Early Native American cultures hunted animals for food, but also used other parts of the animal for tools and decoration. Animal bones, hides and muscles were used for clothing, jewelry and string. Match the list of animal parts in the left-hand column below with the item in the right-hand column it may have been used for. One example has been completed for you.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ___ 1. Deer tendon (muscle) | A. Rasp, musical instrument |
| ___ 2. Turtle shell | B. Hammer/baton |
| ___ 3. Goose wing bone | C. Sewing needle |
| ___ 4. Mussel shell | D. Garden hoe |
| ___ 5. Beaver incisor | E. Whistle |
| ___ 6. Deer hoof | F. Small spoon |
| ___ 7. Buffalo shoulder blade | G. String |
| ___ 8. Fish bone | H. Cap |
| ___ 9. Elk antler | I. Part of a rattle |
| ___ 10. Black bear tooth | J. Necklace |
| ___ 11. Muskrat hide | K. Woodworking tool |
| <u>A</u> 12. Buffalo rib bone, carved | L. Bowl |



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Mississippi River Resources

Book Review

Title: *Working with Water: Wisconsin Waterways*

Author: Bobbie Malone, Ph.D. and Jefferson J. Gray

Publisher: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, Madison

Age Range: 4th grade specific, also good for grades 3 - 5

Part of the New Badger History Series published by the WHS Office of School Services. The student text explores the state's waterways from millions of years ago when Wisconsin was covered by a shallow sea, to thousands of years ago when the first people entered Wisconsin, to today's use of waterways for shipping, milling and recreation. Teacher's guides are also available. Look for "Especially for classrooms" on the WHS Web site: www.wisconsinhistory.org/publications

Wisconsin Native American resource box

Materials focus on the Native Americans of Wisconsin, past and present. Through a variety of multi-media materials students can see, read, participate and experience the original people of our region. MVAC will rent out this resource, created for students in grades 4 - 12, to educators on a monthly basis for \$30/month. To reserve the Wisconsin Native American resource box for your classroom, contact Jean Dowiasch at (608) 785-8454 or dowiasch.jean@uwlax.edu



Shell middens like the one at left indicate the extensive utilizations of freshwater mussels in Native Americans' summer diet.

Places to Visit

The Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge, five miles northwest of Trempealeau, offers a unique opportunity to explore a variety of river, prairie, and bottomland forest habitats. There are numerous interpretive hiking trails and a five-mile self-guided circle drive through the refuge that is convenient for autos and bikers. In the forested portion, look for hawks, ruffed grouse, cuckoos, yellow-breasted chat and bluebirds. Grebes, rare double-crested cormorants, bitterns, geese ducks, and osprey all nest in the refuge. There is access for canoers who will enjoy very quiet wetland passages. Only hand-powered boats or those with electric motors are allowed in the refuge. W28488 Refuge Rd. Trempealeau, WI 54661

E-mail: trempealeau@fws.gov

Phone Number: 608-539-2311 Visit the Refuge's Web Site:

<http://midwest.fws.gov/trempealeau>



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Announcements

La Crosse School District Funds

Each elementary and middle school in the La Crosse School District has been awarded \$200 to use toward MVAC resources. Special thanks to Mark White and Sandra Brauer, the district's Supervisors of Humanities for their continued support of this program. Teachers interested in using the funds can contact Jean Dowiasch at (608) 785-8454.

Matching Funds Grant

The UW-La Crosse Foundation has awarded MVAC a \$2,400 grant to help teachers "double their money" when using MVAC's educational resources. Application forms to apply for the grant are on the MVAC web site under the **Educators** section. Teachers who would like more information on this program can contact Jean Dowiasch at (608) 785-8454.

Education newsletters posted thanks to a UWL-Foundation Grant

Fifteen issues of the *Archaeology Education Program Newsletter* have been digitized, saved as pdf files and posted to MVAC's web site. These issues will be useful to educators, parents and the public because of their content information, activities and resources. The topics of the newly digitized newsletter include: historical archaeology, cultural resource management, plant and animal remains and architectural history. The pdf files are linked from MVAC's Educators page (<http://www.uwlax.edu/mvac/Educators/Education.htm>).

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

Wednesday, February 23, 2005
7 p.m.
La Crosse Public Library,
Main Branch

More than 15 years ago **Bill Gresens** presented "Archaeology in Fiction: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly." If anything, the number (and quality) of novels using archaeology as a backdrop or central focus has increased dramatically in the last 15+ years. The audience should come away with a few titles that might help them while away some long winter nights.

Minnesota's Indian Mounds and Burial Sites

Tuesday, March 22, 2005
7 p.m.
Port O'Call, Cartwright Center,
UW-La Crosse

Although more than 11,000 mounds have been reported in Minnesota, only a small fraction still survive. A five year project completed by **Connie Arzigian** and **Kathy Stevenson** examined all the known records of excavations of Indian mounds and burial sites in Minnesota. Their 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, La Crosse

Come to Valley View Mall and see artifacts representing the area's long history. Collectors will display their personal collections of artifacts. View artifacts from local excavations. Archaeologists will be on hand to answer questions. Bring in your own artifacts for help in their identification. Call MVAC at 608-785-8454 if you would like to display your artifacts.

Field School Opportunity

April 30, May 1, May 7
Call MVAC at 608-785-8454 for more information.