



Archeology Program

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



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NPS NEWS

Virgin Islands National Park Opens Archeology Laboratory

Virgin Islands NP has announced the opening of the Educational Center and Archeology Laboratory at Cinnamon Bay. Displays showcase artifacts found on St. John, St. Thomas and Hassel Island. Virgin Islands NP Cultural Program Manager Ken Wild has led archeological investigations in the park for more than 30 years, and in many respects, the new laboratory is the sum of his career working in the territory.

Artifacts come from excavations at Lameshur Bay, Tutu, Hassel Island and various plantation investigations around the district. The oldest artifacts were found at Krum Bay, St. Thomas, and are about 1,000 years old, although the center chronicles the human existence on the islands going back about 3,000 years. Visitors can follow the rise of the Taino Indians, the fall of the Taino as Spanish explorers arrive, the European colonists, up to the Danish settlers and the post-emancipation era. An exhibit on maritime history in the Virgin Islands is also a key element at the center.

The Educational Center and Archeology Laboratory is open from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, with docents providing guided tours. The center may also be open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekdays if the archeologist and interns are working in the laboratory.

From story by Aldeth Lewin, Virgin Islands Daily News Staff



Ken Wild shows off one of the new display cases in the Educational Center.

National Historic Landmarks Committee Recommends Archeological Site for Designation

On February 11, 2015, in Washington, DC, the National Historic Landmarks Committee of the National Park System Advisory Board voted to recommend the designation of the archeological First Peoples Buffalo Jump in Cascade County, Montana, as a National Historic Landmark (NHL). The National Park System Advisory Board will convene in May to consider this nomination, and the other recommended properties, and make its own recommendations to the Secretary of the Interior.

The Landmarks Committee also discussed and gave its support to the recently completed Labor Archeology Theme Study.

Heartlands Conservancy Wants Cahokia Mounds to Become National Park Service Unit

The Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site has been so hurt by Illinois funding cuts that a nonprofit society has turned to the public to pay for brochures for visitors. The Cahokia Mounds Museum Society set up a plea on the fund-raising site, gofundme.org, to raise \$7,500. To date, it has surpassed its goal, that will cover printing of about 200,000 brochures, said Lori Belnap, executive director of the society.

Cahokia Mounds is run by the state-funded Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, which pays for operations, salaries, utilities and equipment. Chris Wills, public information officer for the agency, said the state cut the agency's fiscal 2015 funding for historic sites by \$1.1 million, or 20 percent, from 2014.

That left \$4.9 million to operate 56 sites this year. When the agency was created 29 years ago, it received \$4 million to operate 41 sites, Wills said.

Governor Bruce Rauner has proposed having the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity absorb the Historic Preservation Agency and administer Cahokia Mounds and other sites under the Bureau of Tourism. Legislative approval would be required.

The Heartlands Conservancy is seeking to have Congress place the mounds under the auspices of the NPS. The conservancy recommends designating a Mississippian Culture National Monument/National Historical Park. Under a tentative plan, the state would still control Cahokia Mounds, but it would get increased national recognition. Ed Weilbacher, vice president of Heartlands, cited a large number of governmental and private endorsements, including from the legislature. Heartlands is trying to raise \$100,000 in 2015-16 for the state historic site.



Monks Mound, Cahokia

The Cahokia Mounds Museum Society operates a gift shop in the interpretive center and raises about \$300,000 a year. Belnap said revenue has suffered from shortened operating hours and some curtailed activities. Outdoor areas are open to the public every day. In September, the interpretive center started closing on Mondays and Tuesdays, two months earlier than the usual winter break. It may continue that way until the fiscal year ends on June 30. If that happens, Belnap said, the society's funding problems will worsen.

The society pays for educational programs including Kids Day in May and Archaeology Day in August plus other programs, research, and promotions. It also is working to acquire 1,000 acres to expand the 2,200-acre protected state site.

From Story by Margaret S. Gillerman

NPS Chief Paleontologist Heads to Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument

Tule Springs Fossil Beds NM is so new, established only in December 2014 that it doesn't have a permanent superintendent. That's one reason why Vince Santucci, NPS Chief Paleontologist, went to Nevada at the beginning of March to be the acting superintendent after the site was transferred from the BLM. Tule Springs is a window into the last Ice Age in the present-day desert outside of Las Vegas. It brings a small, but enticing, possibility that fossilized human remains are buried next to those of ancient bison, camels, and even lions.

“We didn’t have a dedicated park for the Pleistocene before Tule Springs. Not only does this monument include that gap in the fossil record representation of the National Park System, but also it’s probably one of the very, very interesting time periods for the history of life,” said Santucci. “The paleoclimate in southern Nevada during late Pleistocene would have supported a lush and verdant wetlands.”

Assisting in standing up a National Park unit is only the latest in a number of important projects that Santucci has tackled. Long a proponent of research to support resource management needs, he was the lead for a team that developed the first NPS paleontological monitoring plan. Santucci and his team developed protocols for monitoring fossil site stability, and the impacts of varying lake levels of Western lakes. Through this project, the team discovered and documented a number of new fossil localities and added them to the list of monitored sites.

Another significant project that Santucci has been involved with are the bioblitzes, that help monitor climate change. He points out that bioblitzes invest much energy in collecting information about a millisecond of geological time. Incorporating paleontological data into our picture of shifting animal and plant populations gives scientists a much better understanding of the dimensions of climate change. Santucci asks how can we manage our resources, if we don’t know what is there? Paleoblitzes can give climate scientists more longitudinal data for better management. And the data can be added to Faunmap, which is an NSF-funded project to create an online resource that maps fossil species. Santucci points out that Faunmap includes Late Pleistocene contexts, and urges Paleoindian archeologists to go online and check it out.

Santucci has also been involved in writing regulations to accompany the Paleontology Resource Preservation Act – the paleontology ARPA. The regulations may be released in the near future, which is record time for a law passed in 2010. The law and the regulations will provide stronger protection for the fossil resources found in more than 240 of our national parks.

Kurt Repanshek contributed to this story



Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument

Tribes Supportive of Grand Canyon National Park Buffer Plan

Environmental groups have proposed to designate 1.7 million acres north and south of the Grand Canyon as a national monument. The proposal has been in the works for more than five years, but got nudged into a public spotlight in January when Representatives Ann Kirkpatrick, Raul Grijalva and Ruben Gallego wrote a letter to President Obama requesting he use his authority under the Antiquities Act to create a Grand Canyon Watershed National Monument. Soon after came formal opposition to a monument designation from 27 legislators, including Arizona senators Jeff Flake and John McCain.

The proposed monument lands include thousands of Native American archeological sites, some that date back 12,000 years. It would also encompass places like Antelope Spring, House Rock Valley and the lava-capped Red Butte Mountain that hold sacred value or other significance for Native American tribes.

From story by Emery Cowan, Arizona Daily Sun Staff Reporter



Red Butte, known as Wil Gildwissa to the Havasupai Tribe, is one of the sites within the proposed Grand Canyon Watershed National Monument that holds special significance to Native American tribes. (Photo courtesy of Kim Crumbo/Grand Canyon Wildlands Council)

OTHER FEDERAL NEWS

Advisory Council for Historic Preservation Archaeology Subcommittee Meets

On January 14, 2015, the ACHP's Archaeology Subcommittee met to address a number of issues relating to archeology and Section 106 reviews. The subcommittee has advised staff to add to its online "Archaeology Guidance" answers to the following questions: "When should limited testing be considered an undertaking subject to review under the ACHP's Section 106 regulations?" and "Do archaeological investigations require the retrieval of artifacts?" This guidance will be made available on the ACHP's Web site when complete.

Contact: Tom McCulloch, at tmcculloch@achp.gov

Eastern Oregon Dig Uncovers Ancient Stone Tool

Archeologists have uncovered a stone tool at a rock shelter in the high desert of eastern Oregon that could turn out to be older than any known human occupation in western North America. The find was announced by the BLM, which controls the land on which the site was found.

The tool is a hand-held scraper chipped from an orange agate not normally found in eastern Oregon. It was found about 8 inches below a layer of volcanic ash from an eruption of Mount St. Helens that has been dated to 15,800 years ago. The depth was about 12 feet below the surface.

If the age of the site holds is verified, it will be the oldest site west of the Rockies and another predating the Clovis culture, once generally believed to be the first people to migrate from Asia into North America. The earliest Clovis artifacts are dated to about 13,000 years ago.

Two pre-Clovis sites are well documented and generally accepted by scientists. One is Paisley Cave, located about 60 miles southwest of the Rimrock site. The other is Monte Verde in Chile. Both are dated about 1,000 years before the oldest Clovis sites.

From story by Jeff Barnard, Associated Press



TRAINING AND GRANTS

National Park Service's 2015 Archeological Prospection Workshop

The NPS 2015 workshop on archeological prospection techniques, Current Archeological Prospection Advances for Non-Destructive Investigations in the 21st Century, will be held May 25-29, 2015, at the Tobias-Thompson Complex sites in Rice County, Kansas. This will be the 25th year of a workshop dedicated to the use of remote sensing methods as they apply to the identification, evaluation, conservation, and protection of archeological resources. The workshop will present lectures on the theory of operation, methodology, processing, and interpretation with on-hands use of the equipment in the field.

The lectures will be at the Community Room at the Lyons State Bank in Lyons, Kansas. The field exercises will take place at the Tobias-Thompson Complex sites. Eight sites showcase the Little River Focus of the Great Bend Aspect dating from 1500-1700 AD. The sites have been related to the historic Wichita and may have been among the villages visited by Coronado in Quivira in 1542.

Co-sponsors for the workshop include the NPS Midwest Archeological Center and the National Center for Preservation Technology and Training, the Department of Anthropology at Wichita State University, and the Archaeological Division of the Kansas State Historical Society.

There is a registration charge of \$475.00. Lodging will be at the Lyons Inn and the Celebration Center in Lyons, Kansas. Application forms are available on the Midwest Archeological Center's web page at <http://www.nps.gov/mwac/index.htm>. Payment may be made by credit card through the Friends of NCPTT for non-government employees. Federal employees may pay by check, through a training form (SF-182) or by credit card through the Friends of NCPTT.

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Archeology E-Gram, distributed via e-mail on a regular basis, includes announcements about news, new publications, training opportunities, national and regional meetings, and other important goings-on related to public archeology in the NPS and other public agencies. Recipients are encouraged to forward *Archeology E-Grams* to colleagues and relevant mailing lists. The *Archeology E-Gram* is available on the *News and Links* page www.nps.gov/archeology/public/news.htm on the NPS Archeology Program website.

Contact: Karen Mudar at dca@nps.gov to contribute news items, stories for *Projects in Parks*, and to subscribe.