

CONFERENCE ON NEW ENGLAND ARCHAEOLOGY

38th Annual Meeting / April 22, 2017 / Portland, ME

Schedule

8:30 Registration and coffee

Morning Session: Archaic Studies in New England

- 9:00 Nathan Hamilton: The Middle Archaic in Western Maine
- 9:30 Brian Jones and Brianna Rae: The Rediscovery of the Schwartz Site: Terminal Archaic Social Ceremony in Windsor, Connecticut
- 10:00 **Jess Robinson and Scott Dillon:** Cultures of the Early Holocene in the Far Northeast
- 10:30 Break

10:45 Dianna Doucette: Behind the Scenes: Getting to Middle Archaic

- 11:15 Christopher Donta: Archaic Continuity and the Narrow Point Tradition
- 11:45 John Cross: Unpacking Archaic Baggage
- 12:15 Lunch (on your own)
- 1:15 Business Meeting and Poster Session

Afternoon Session: Discussion Forum

1:45	Transition: Moderator:	Stuart Eldridge Kim Smith		Position Paper	
	Discussants:	Scott Dillon	Cathy Labadia		
		Stu Eldridge	Jonathan Patton	Posters	4
		Edna Feighner	Jess Robinson		
		Eric Johnson	Chris Sockalexis	Abstracts	ł

Research

The Grey Mare: Archaic Studies in the 20th and 21st Centuries

Jess Robinson, PhD (State Archaeologist, Vermont Division for Historic Preservation) and Scott Dillon (Survey Archaeologist, Vermont Division for Historic Preservation)

In the 2008 issue of the SAA Archaeological Record, Sassaman pronounced that "like the Old Grey Mare who had passed her prime, the old Archaic of cultural evolutionism has been put to pasture by the anomalies of new discoveries and critical analyses (Sassaman 2008:6)." Certainly, Sassaman and colleagues have made notable discoveries and theoretical advances in the Southeast and Midcontinent about the peoples occupying the broad sweep of time that archaeologists still doggedly refer to as the Archaic (see Ritchie 1938). Yet, because many of those studies are predicated on the documentation of insipient or independent monumentality or long-distance material exchange, archaeologists in the Northeast are limited in the ways we can integrate those constructs locally.

The relative lack of academic research addressing the Precontact Native peoples of the Northeast generally, and the Archaic Period specifically, has meant that most of the insights (and sites) of the Archaic Period are explored within the parameters of Cultural Resource Management (CRM) reviews. These studies are critically important and often represent incredible methodological and analytical achievements, but their typical myopic focus on specific projects or individual sites, their unwieldy format, and their restricted dissemination (by statute or habit) has limited their impact on current scholarship. Moreover, however much graduate programs and the preeminent spokespersons of archaeology stress the discipline's movement beyond strict Processualism, this is still the paradigm wherein most CRM studies are situated. Caldwell's old Primary Forest Efficiency (1958) model still holds sway, privileging and focusing on environmental adaptations through time (see Sassaman 2010:9).

Even Northeastern culture-historical constructs are not nearly as solid as was presumed a generation ago. Our own experience with colleagues collating all the reported radiocarbon dates from Vermont (with associated diagnostic artifacts) has demonstrated that the chronological and spatial foundation upon which most other interpretations are built is flimsy indeed (F. Robinson et al. 2016). Dates from some of our most critical "type" sites exhibit internal inconsistencies and/or enormous error ranges that make our continued reliance upon them problematic (see Taché and Hart 2013). Other states are no different in this regard. Employing proper calibration procedures are also very important when interpreting radiocarbon dates, but this exercise is only haphazardly employed. Finally, the cumulative Archaic site radiocarbon data reported throughout that Northeast (at least those dates that have emerged from CRM reports into accessible publications) is not overly large, especially given the diverse cultural expressions and different environmental niches that characterize the area.

Regarding this last point, Robinson (2003, 2008) has repeatedly noted that there are interesting coeval differences between the northern and southern and eastern and western (coastal/interior) portions of the Northeast that have not been adequately explored.

Instead, typically, diachronic change has been accentuated, even though this might now be the least interesting topic to explore regarding Archaic Native peoples. Robinson's own incredible research on the Moorehead Burial Tradition makes clear that there is remarkable continuity and endurance in some cultural expressions over nearly five thousand years (Robinson 1992, 1996, 2003, 2006; see F. Robinson 2011; Trigger 1990). The interplay between the possible early emergence of territoriality, sub-regional cultural differences juxtaposed with the endurance of lifeways in particular areas over time, and the eventual disruptions of that long-term patterning (such as through the emergence of the Susquehanna Tradition) could form one critical locus of future research.

Dr. Dena Dincauze's research (e.g. 1968, 1975, 1976) still represent landmarks that are referenced in nearly every publication dealing with the Northeastern Archaic Period. That is a testament to her diligence, insightfulness, and willingness to synthesize data from a variety of sources and geographic areas. Like Dr. Brian Robinson, we should emulate those attributes and work to move beyond her early (but essential) research toward more nuanced histories of the diverse peoples of the Archaic.

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Afternoon Session: Forum Questions

- This question is in response to recently proposed H.B. No 6217 in CT by Rep. Storms: In today's political climate, what should cultural resource managers and State Historic Preservation Offices be doing to ensure the continued protection of cultural resources within New England? What is the best way to reach our representatives and should each state host its own community action day?
- What are the perceived failings of recent graduates entering the workforce, largely in CRM or regulatory roles? There is a long perceived notion that many students have very little understanding of the legislation and regulations guiding the preservation of cultural resources in this country; is there anything being done to bridge this gap in knowledge?
- How will a decreased EPA affect Section 106 within the US and specifically, New England?
- Considering DAPL for a moment: what regional effects of Appendix C have occurred and how can we, if possible, tighten legislation to abide by Section 106 for the project as a whole?
- Can we discuss the individual state legislation similar to Federal 106 and perhaps what we can do to aid in strengthening these laws in case of the reduction of federal regulations?
- One of the best ways ensure cultural preservation laws is to engage the public. What, if anything, is each state or region currently doing to do so (including Archaeology month)? Should we perhaps be planning community action items to further garner interest?
- Considering declining graduate programs from the academic perspective, the perception that there is nothing interesting in this region, or nothing worth funding, seems to have had a big impact on hiring. In the last few years, two Connecticut colleges have set out (at least according to their job postings) to hire a northeast archaeologist, and ended up with people who work in other regions. Where can students go to get archaeological training and education, and if they do go to any of the schools that still have undergrad and grad programs, will they even be offered more than a handful of cursory courses on our region? Will they even hear about CRM? Should some of us in professional CRM and/ or regulatory positions be reaching out to work with departments and try and offer relevant courses?
- Can a collector truly be considered "responsible" under our existing ethical code? And does it matter?



Posters

Abigail Gamble, University of Massachusetts at Amherst Cached and Found: Biface Caches and Stone Tool Manufacturing in the Northeast

John M. Kelly, Public Archaeology Laboratory, Inc. Getting the Whole Picture: New Data and Interpretations from the Harrison Gray Otis House in the West End of Boston.

Janice Nosal and Jennifer Poulsen, Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology Updated Inventory of Northeast Archaeological Sites.

Yuka Oiwa, Smith College

Buried Tracks: How the Archaeology of a Railroad Servicing Facility Contributed to Knowledge of 19th-Century Railroad Engineering

Cassidy Ross, Hampshire College

ASAPP: Archaeological Site Avoidance and Protection Plan

Zachary Singer, University of Connecticut

Intrasite Spatial Patterning and the Paleoindian Record of Eastern North America

Anthony Viola, University of Southern Maine

Maine Public Archaeology, Cultural Heritage, and Tourism: The Presumpscot River from Sebago Lake to Casco Bay

Presentation Abstracts

Unpacking Archaic Baggage

John Cross, Bowdoin College

The concept of the Archaic in Northeast archaeology has a long history, which means that it is a term freighted with the cumulative assumptions that have characterized the discipline over the years. These include the initial (pre-radiocarbon-era) assessment of a short time depth to the region's human history; the expectation that the native peoples of the region were vanishing following centuries of devastation, dislocation, and disruption by disease, warfare, the fur trade, and relentless encroachments by Europeans; and that similarities and differences in material culture across space and/or though time defined units of culture, language, adaptation, and genetic affinity. In honoring the memories and legacies of Dena Dincauze and Brian Robinson today, we recognize the ways in which

Presentation Abstracts continued

they challenged orthodoxies. Because of their work we can see more clearly the obstacles that remain in achieving an archaeology that is both rigorous and is worthy of the people who lived in the past and those who are counted among their descendants.

Archaic Continuity and the Narrow Point Tradition

Christopher Donta, Gray and Pape, Inc.

The Narrow Point tradition extends across a wide area of eastern North America, and its signature point type is one of the most frequently found in Archaic contexts in New England. Decades of research on the relationship between Narrow Points and other types of the Late Archaic Period has not yet produced a consensus regarding their use and origins. However, data collected in recent years add significantly to this discussion, in relation to associations with features and dated contexts. This paper looks at radiocarbon dating of Narrow Point or Small Stemmed features across southern New England to document the connections between this point type and others during this complex time period. The onset of the Narrow Point tradition is increasingly being linked with Middle Archaic sites and technology, indicating long-term continuity of settlement across the Late Archaic and into the Woodland period. Other Late Archaic tradition types occur only as additions to a Narrow Point base, and likely represent technological supplements, not incursions of people. These data address questions as to the origins of Algonquians in New England and their relationships to the greater Northeast during the Archaic.

Behind the Scenes: Getting to Middle Archaic

Dianna Doucette, Public Archaeology Laboratory, Inc.

As Dena Dincauze astutely noted in her 1993 *Centering* article, "We have not begun to wonder enough, or examine closely enough, to ask the right questions. It is time to go looking for the centers of pre-contact northeastern societies, the cores of their existence." From northeastern to southeastern Massachusetts, from the Heath Brook Site in Tewksbury to the Annasnappet Pond Site in Carver, and beyond, the quest for grasping what Middle Archaic components mean has been inspired by many people behind the scenes. In New England, where the archaeological record is dictated by preservation, evidence of highly advanced knowledge of the landscape, environment, and creative ingenuity left by the native inhabitants is often overlooked. I discuss the importance of using a multidisciplinary approach involving specialized soil analysis in tandem with lithic analysis and ethnohistorical data, to look beyond the long established projectile point typologies and feature designations so often described in the literature as Archaic period cultural traits. Although we have come a long way, there are still many clues to be found outside the test pit.



The Middle Archaic in Western Maine

Nathan D, Hamilton, PhD, University of Southern Maine

Archaeological investigations at Amoskeag Falls on the Merrimack River of New Hampshire provided the opportunity to establish a deep geological and chronological sequence of Holocene human occupation in New England. The Neville site report provided an opportunity for regional correlations of material culture and strategic search for related sites of the Middle Archaic period. Western Maine riverine and lacustrine locations have produced significant samples related to the Neville and Stark point styles and related assemblages. The Rumford Falls impoundment required a mitigation plan for the FERC relicensing of the hydro facility in the 1980s and 90s. Several deep stratified deposits included Middle Archaic lithic assemblages and associated flora and fauna. The deposits have been radiocarbon dated between 8000 and 5500 uncorrected years BP. The Middle Archaic in Western Maine reveals intensification in the use of Mt. Jasper and Ossipee rhyolites and minor use of materials from the Munsungun and Boston Basin formations. The discussion will include the research contribution by Dena Dincauze and Brian Robinson.

The Rediscovery of the Schwartz Site: Terminal Archaic Social Ceremony in Windsor, Connecticut

Brian Jones and Brianna Rae, University of Connecticut

The Schwartz cremation burial site was exposed in 1973 during construction in Windsor, Connecticut. Dena Dincauze was one of the professional archaeologists who visited the site and helped to document some of its features. Her notes are some of the few remaining records associated with the archaeology conducted there. While the associated objects were brought to State Archaeologist Douglas Jordan at UConn, the collection was later largely forgotten and remained unpublished. Heather Cruz's 2014 evaluation of the Terminal Archaic period in Connecticut noted that much of the Schwartz Site assemblage appeared to be missing. Cleanup work at an off-campus UConn storage facility in the spring of 2016 resulted in the relocation of the remaining assemblage. This paper summarizes recent efforts to document this important site and highlights some preliminary implications of its analysis.

Cultures of the Early Holocene in the Far Northeast

Jess Robinson, PhD (State Archaeologist, Vermont Division for Historic Preservation) and Scott Dillon (Survey Archaeologist, Vermont Division for Historic Preservation)

Although archaeologists such as Brian Robinson and Dena Dincauze have made notable contributions toward our understanding of the cultures of the Early Holocene in the Far Northeast, recent examinations by the authors have raised questions about the timing and spatial extent of some of the complexes defined in previous generations. Specifically, this paper will examine the age and extent of select archaeological sites attributable to the quartz uniface (Maritime Archaic), Late Paleoindian St. Anne/Varney, and bifurcate-based complexes across the Far Northeast, and what the patterns or lack thereof suggest about these Native American lifeways and/or the potential contemporaneity and contact between these groups.



Janice Nosal and Jennifer Poulsen

Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University

Collections staff at the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology at Harvard University have recently completed a two-year IMLS (Institute of Museum and Library Services) grant focused on the cataloging and documentation of its archaeological collections. During the grant period, staff updated over 20,000 object records, representing hundreds of thousands of individual objects. Several prominent archaeological sites from the Northeast have been fully catalogued, inventoried, and photographed and are now available for research. These sites include:

•Neville Site, Manchester, New Hampshire: Notable for augmenting knowledge of northeastern habitation by over 3000 years and for service as lithic type-site for Middle Archaic stone tool technology. The site features stone tools and Native American earthenware as well as historic artifacts from recent site occupation.

•Whaleback Site, Damariscotta, ME: Extensive early Woodland oyster shell midden excavated in 1886 as an effort by Peabody Museum staff to record information in the wake of large-scale commercial shell mining. This site highlights sea-level change and ecological transformation in coastal Maine. The site also features a robust collection of decorated Native American earthenware, bone points and harpoons, and faunal remains.

•Silverheels and Ripley sites, New York: Two Late Woodland to early Contact Period (1500-1700) Seneca village and burial sites.

These collections (and many others) are now accessible through the Collections Online database found on the Peabody Museum's website and in-person through scheduled research visits. For research inquiries, please contact Peabody Museum Research at pmresearch@fas.harvard.edu or use the online Research Request Form found at https://www.peabody.harvard.edu/node/44.



Gemma-Jayne Hudgell, Ph.D., RPA

Northeast Archaeology Research Center, Inc.

The view from Norway Bluff: Controlled archaeological surface collection of a Native American chert quarry site, Township range T9 R9, Piscataquis County, Maine

The Norway Bluff Quarry Site, 155.19/94 ME, represents one of the known sources of Munsungan chert, a fine-grained, high quality material valued for stone tool manufacture through the Native American occupation of the northeast. While Munsungan cherts are perhaps best known for their red coloration, the Norway Bluff variety can be boldly striped gray and black, or grades into various homogeneous grays.

The site is located along the ridgeline of Norway Bluff, a formidable 2,285 ft mountain in north-central Maine that directly overlooks Munsungan Lake. Improvements to the trail to the summit, previously regarded as a walking trail, for the purposes of construction of a Customs and Border Protection Radio Communications Tower Facility inadvertently affected significant archaeological deposits at the site. A controlled surface

collection was subsequently undertaken by the Northeast Archaeology Research Center, Inc. as a Post-Review mitigation of adverse effect for Section 106 compliance. The survey included GPS and total station mapping, analysis of surface artifacts, and collection and curation of a small reference sample of 100 artifact specimens, in order to more precisely determine the limits of, and impacts to, the site.

Over 4,000 pieces of debitage and more than 300 lithic tools were recorded, mapped and analyzed within an impact area of approximately 0.35 acres. The site likely extends to the limit of level ground on the ridgeline, about 3.10 acres, and so the area surveyed represents about 11.5% of the site area.

Although no temporally diagnostic artifacts were identified, detailed attribute analysis and the presence of Norway Bluff chert material on other dated sites throughout Maine and the northeast demonstrate that the quarry was utilized through the Paleoindian period, ca. 9,000-7,000 B.C., and the Ceramic period, ca. 1,000 B.C.-A.D. 1550. Distinctive banded Norway Bluff chert has been identified at sites at least 500 km distant from the source.

Artifact scatters at the site represent an overlapping series of lithic reduction episodes from a number of different visits over a wide span of time. However, it is still possible to discern a few individual in situ activity areas, some of which were associated with fire hearths. Various activities are demonstrated, including quarrying for raw materials as well as lithic workshop tasks related to specific stages of artifact manufacture. Resource processing is also demonstrated, which most likely means that small groups of people were using this as a short -term, task-specific campsite and conducting simple subsistence tasks such as butchery and cooking.

As part of the overall Munsungan chert lithic resource, Norway Bluff material appears to have been an important and possibly also task-specific resource, and Native American use of this beautiful location likely reflected that fact through repeated and celebrated visits.

(From left panel) View southeast from Norway Bluff Mountain, Piscataquis County, Maine. Mount Katahdin is visible in the right hand distance.





Large crude bifaces recovered from the Norway Bluff Quarry Site, 155.19/94 ME, at the U.S. CBP Radio Communications Tower Facility Access Trail area on Norway Bluff, Piscataquis County, Maine.

Gemma-Jayne Hudgell, Ph.D., RPA Northeast Archaeology Research Center, Inc.

Archaeological Investigations on the Otter Creek: Weybridge and New Haven, Addison County, Vermont

The Northeast Archaeology Research Center, Inc. (NE ARC) has been working on behalf of Green Mountain Power Corporation (GMP) to complete a number of CRM studies along the Otter Creek as part of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission relicensing of the Otter Creek Hydroelectric Project. The Otter Creek is the longest river wholly contained within the state of Vermont, running from the southern Green Mountains into Lake Champlain, and has served as a major travel route and resource base through all periods of Native occupation of the area.



VT-AD-1558

Among other tasks, between 2013 and 2015 NE ARC conducted phase III data recovery excavations within the project, in order to mitigate the adverse effects of erosion within three National Register eligible Native American archaeological sites: VT-AD-350, VT-AD-1550, and VT-AD-1558. GMP has fully supported these studies and encouraged public participation via successful Public Outreach programs, including "open house" events during the excavations and local presentations. Visitors included middle and high school students, community colleges, home-school families, area residents, and volunteers from the Vermont Archaeology Society.

All three are multicomponent sites, and information gained through diagnostic artifacts and cultural features suggests they were utilized for lithic reduction, tool refurbishment and subsistence processing in the seasonal round of many groups of people over time utilizing the Otter Creek.

Site VT-AD-350 is located on a high terrace overlooking Huntington Falls, the third major set of falls along the Otter Creek, and represents a relatively undisturbed, strategic landform intermittently utilized, minimally, from the Late Archaic through the Late Woodland/Contact periods, likely as a portage and habitation area.

VT-AD-1550 is located about a mile upstream at the confluence of the New Haven River, and occupies a low, broad point bar formation currently in use as a commercial campground. Its current use reflects that of the past, with some Late Archaic artifacts recovered from deeply buried flood sediments, and a more substantial Middle to Late Woodland period occupation on a higher terrace.

Site VT-AD-1558, another two miles upstream, sits on an elevated river terrace a few hundred meters downstream of Paper Mill Falls, the fourth major set of falls on the river. It is similar to VT-AD-1550, with deeply buried Archaic material and shallower Woodland period activity, but also contains a rare collection of 19 broken and discarded Neville-type projectile points, diagnostic of the Middle Archaic period, which is relatively rare in Vermont.

Data from these investigations suggest distinct patterns of use for the Otter Creek

Valley and its resources through time. Middle and Late Archaic period activity, ca. 7,500-3,000 B.P., commonly focused on reduction of local quartzite river cobbles into bifacial preforms and refurbishment of hunting kits. Site use in the Woodland period, ca. 3,000-800 B.P., was oriented less towards tool manufacture and more to subsistence processing, with these "upper river" sites differing markedly from "lower river", broad floodplain sites of the same period, which preserve evidence of horticulture.

Excavations along the Otter Creek have resulted in the collection of a wealth of knowledge about the past and allowed the public to participate in the important task of historic preservation.

David Leslie and Sarah Sportman, AHS, Inc.

Underwater, terrestrial, and intertidal core extractions at the Walk Bridge, Norwalk, CT

AHS employed non-traditional survey methods to carry out a Phase IB survey for the Walk Bridge Project in Norwalk, CT. The CTDOT Walk Bridge Replacement Project presented several challenges that made it unsuitable for a traditional Phase I archaeological survey. Norwalk has been heavily industrialized since the mid-19th century and the pervasive ground disturbance, landmaking, and hazardous soil contamination that characterize the project area presented obstacles to typical survey methods such as hand-excavated shovel test pits. Documentary research identified several areas of potential archaeological sensitivity in the APE, including the possible location of a Late Woodland-contact Period Native American fort. To overcome these obstacles and better assess the archaeological potential of sensitive portions of the project area, AHS employed a testing strategy that combined terrestrial geoprobes and underwater and intertidal vibracores. This cost-effective sampling strategy allowed AHS to evaluate the presence of and/or potential for intact soils and subsurface cultural materials; to collect data to reconstruct the local paleoenvironment and paleogeomorphology, evaluate depositional environments, and record changes in historic-period land use; and to provide recommendations for further archaeological investigations or mitigation based on an overall assessment of archaeological potential within the project area.



Vibracore work on the Norwalk River.



Gemma-Jayne Hudgell, Ph.D., RPA Northeast Archaeology Research Center, Inc.

Archaeological Phase III Data Recovery and Public Volunteer Program at the Lamontagne Paleoindian Site (23.38 ME), Auburn, Androscoggin County, Maine

Archaeological investigations at the Lamontagne Paleoindian site, 23.38 ME, have been undertaken as part of an agreement between the Auburn Business Development Corp. and the Maine Historic Preservation Commission. The site is one of a cluster of fluted point Paleoindian sites located in the vicinity of Auburn-Lewiston Municipal Airport, with many, including Lamontagne, identified through Section 106 compliance work related to construction of the Auburn Industrial Park.

With the aid of considerable volunteer effort, involving Maine Archaeological Society members, the Bates College Archaeological Field School and the general public, the Northeast Archaeology Research Center, Inc. completed phase III data recovery excavations over the course of three separate field seasons during 2014, 2015 and 2016.

The site is situated on high, sandy, dune landforms overlooking the deeply incised Moose Brook, and is constituted of two loci. At 320 square meters, Locus 1 is largest, but was possibly scattered by trampling, perhaps through repeated use. Locus 2 measures 130 square meters, and preserves a tight arrangement of debitage representing an intensive lithic reduction area.

Nearly 6,000 pieces of debitage and over 100 tools and tool fragments were recovered. Most were of distinctive red Munsungan chert, a high quality lithic material from 280 km distant in north-central Maine, while some debitage and fragments of transported raw materials are of a local, coarse-grained diabase. Two remnant cultural features were identified, including a hearth and a pit. A sample of fragmentary calcined bone was recovered from each, and likely represents subsistence remains, with identified specimens including possible cervid (likely caribou) and beaver-sized mammal.

Five diagnostic projectile points and point fragments and a suite of associated artifacts, including a large sample of at least 28 channel flakes, demonstrate the presence of Bull Brook-West Athens Hill fluted point technology, representing the end of the Early Paleoindian period, 11,000 to 10,400 B.P. (about 12,900-12,400 cal yr B.P.). This date is supported by radiocarbon analysis of spruce charcoal from the hearth remnant, which returned a date of $10,560\pm30$ B.P. (approximately 12,555 cal yr B.P.).

The site now stands as one of the few well-dated fluted point Early Paleoindian sites in the region, and represents an important contribution to Paleoindian studies, both local and regional, particularly in light of its association with the Auburn Cluster of sites of which it is a part.

The only complete (conjoined) fluted point recovered from the Lamontagne site. Four others were recovered, all of them fragments.



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Sarah Sportman, AHS, Inc.

Preliminary Results from Site 21-85, an Archaic-Woodland Period Site in Canaan, CT

In 2016, AHS, Inc. completed a Phase III Data Recovery investigation at Site 21-85, a Native American site located within the planned access road for a CTDOT railroad bridge replacement project in Canaan, CT. The site is situated on a terrace overlooking the Hollenbeck River on the western edge of Robbins Swamp, less than a mile from the confluence of the Hollenbeck and Housatonic rivers. Robbins Swamp, the largest freshwater wetland in Connecticut, is an important ecological and cultural resource that was a focal

point of Native settlement patterns from the Paleoindian through the Woodland periods. More than 500 sites are identified in and around Robbins Swamp, but the majority have only been surface-collected. The work at Site 21-85 provides the opportunity to investigate pre-contact Native American habitation of Robbins Swamp in terms of

AHS excavated 79m2 and then machine-stripped the topsoil off the remainder of the project area, resulting in the recovery of over 6,000 pre-contact artifacts and numerous cultural features, including hearths, pits, and posts. Several of the features contained heat-reddened soils, lithic artifacts, and botanical remains. Diagnostic materials, including projectile points and Native American pottery sherds, indicate that Site 21-85 was repeatedly occupied from the Middle Archaic through the Late Woodland periods, with the heaviest site use in the Terminal Archaic and Middle Woodland Periods. Lithic, ceramic, faunal, and botanical analyses will be carried out over the next several

months, and will include residue and use-wear analyses. Micromorphological analyses are being conducted on soil samples from five of the features to clarify natural and cultural site formation processes and improve our interpretations of the cultural features, as well as the natural processes that can mimic cultural features.

Daniel E. Mazeau, Cultural Resource Survey Program, New York State Museum

Recently completed excavations at the Engel Farm Precontact site in Albany, NY.

Data recovery excavations were completed at the Engel Farm Precontact site during the summer of 2016. This work was completed by staff of the Cultural Resources Survey Program (CRSP), a cultural resource management program housed at the New York State Museum (NYSM), and follows Phase I and II work conducted by Hartgen Archaeological Consultants, Inc.

Sample of points from EFP sites







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Many thanks are given to the Maine Archaeological Society and the Muskie School for Public Service for hosting the 2017 CNEA meeting.

Research Abstracts continued

The Engel Farm Precontact site is a small lithic site located among the eastern sand dunes of the Albany Pine Bush. Projectile points include complete Bifurcated and Normanskill specimens, indicating discontinuous Archaic Period occupations. An intact buried A-horizon dating to the Paleoindian period was identified through geomorphological analysis. Regrettably, no artifacts could definitively be associated with this surface.

Point damage and tool use-wear suggest the site likely functioned as a campsite during the Archaic period. While interpretations gleaned from the artifact assemblage are still tentative, the flake assemblage suggests that lithic reduction at the site largely focused on final-stage tool shaping and tool curation/rejuvenation. This would be expected, as the site is located at the intersection of two distinct ecological zones, the forested Pine Bush and a wetland located on its eastern margin. However, the site's stratigraphic integrity is largely compromised by the presence of plowzone, the result of over two centuries of post-contact agricultural use. Approximately 97 percent of the site's artifacts were encountered within the plowzone. While tillage destroyed all vertical integrity of artifact-bearing soil layers, and removed the possibility of assigning specific artifact sub-assemblages to potential occupations, possible horizontal distributions and discrete clustering may be still be visible among artifact patterns (Odell and Cowan 1987; Dunnell 1990; Dunnell and Simek 1995). Future analytical endeavors will assess these possibilities.



References

Dunnell, Robert C. 1990. Artifact size and lateral displacement under tillage: comments on the Odell and Cowan experiment. American Antiquity 55: 592-594. Dunnell, Robert C., and Jan F. Simek. 1995. Artifact size and plowzone processes. Journal of Field Archaeology 22: 305-319.

Odell, George H., and Frank Cowan. 1987. Estimating tillage effects on artifact distributions. American Antiquity 52: 456-484.

Landscape of the EFP sites. Photo by Christopher Sobik.