Project Archaeology Receives National Conservation Award

Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar announced in September, 2011, that Project Archaeology was one of 17 organizations to receive a Partners in Conservation Award. The award is presented to organizations which have achieved exemplary conservation results with community engagement and local partnerships. In presenting this year’s awards, Secretary Salazar said “The Partners in Conservation Awards demonstrate that our nation’s greatest conservation legacies often emerge when agencies and citizens from a wide range of backgrounds come together to address shared challenges. I am pleased to recognize the efforts of dedicated people from across our nation to conserve and restore our treasured landscapes, address water issues and forge solutions to complex natural resource issues through good government and strong partnerships.”

Crystal Alegria, Montana Project Archaeology coordinator, and Jeanne Moe, National Project Archaeology lead for the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) received the award from Secretary Ken Salazar at a ceremony held this fall in Washington, D.C. Four of the winning projects, including Project Archaeology, are partnerships with the BLM. “It was an honor to receive this award on behalf of the entire Project Archaeology program and all of our national partners,” Alegria said. “This award recognizes all of the important work we are doing together.”

Jeanne Moe commented, “We have been working on archaeological conservation for more than 20 years — that’s what it takes in terms of time to make a difference.”

Award Ceremony in Washington DC. Mike Poole, Trevor Needham, Jeanne Moe, Ken Salazar, Crystal Alegria, and Robert Towne (left to right).
The Mississippi Valley Archaeology Center (MVAC) at the University of Wisconsin—LaCrosse (UWL) will be offering its fourth National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Summer Institute for Teachers this July 9-27, 2012. The Institute, entitled, “Exploring the Past: Archaeology in the Upper Mississippi River Region,” will explore how human cultures adapt to complex and ever-changing environments.

The Institute activities will include classroom discussions, demonstrations, and presentations. Classroom learning will be supported by field trips and hands-on experience with excavation and laboratory techniques and the use of Native technologies. During the Institute the NEH Summer Scholars will complete individual projects that adapt the Institute’s content to their unique teaching situations. Participants receive a copy of Intrigue of the Past to assist with the design of their projects. The teachers are also directed to their Project Archaeology State Coordinator for assistance in exploring what resources are available in their own areas. Some of the projects created by past NEH Summer Scholars can be found on-line at: http://www.uwlax.edu/mvac/Educators/LessonPlans.htm#NEH.

Information about the 2012 Institute can be found on-line at: http://www.uwlax.edu/mvac/neh.htm. The application deadline is March 1, 2012.

Incorporating Project Archaeology into Teacher Professional Development

By Bonnie Jancik (Wisconsin)
Hello Everyone,

The National Office recently hosted the second biennial Leadership Team Retreat here in Bozeman, Montana in October. Eight Project Archaeology coordinators, six currently serving members (Joelle Clark, Ranel Capron, Gail Lundeen, Gwynn Henderson, Virginia Wulfkuhle, and Maureen Malloy) and two new members (Lynn Alex and Sarah Miller), spent the week hammering out the final version of our new Strategic Plan, amending our guidelines to expand the Leadership Team, planning a new curriculum unit on migration, and developing state specific marketing plans.

The Leadership Team learned new ways to interpret museum exhibits that utilize inquiry at the Museum of the Rockies. The team also received an update on the collaborative inquiry project at the Absaroka Agency project by doctoral student Shane Doyle. Virginia Wulfkuhle (Kansas) and Gwynn Henderson (Kentucky) are rotating off the Leadership Team, so we thank them for their service the past five years!

The Annual Project Archaeology Meeting will be held in conjunction with the Society for the American Archaeology (SAA) conference in Memphis, Tennessee on Wednesday, April 18, 2012. Everyone is welcome to attend a full day of professional development for archaeology educators and work sessions to advance Project Archaeology goals. We are offering facilitator training on April 19 at the SAA conference. Our 2012 Biennial Coordinator’s Conference will be held October 29 – November 2 at the National Conservation Training Center (NCTC) in Shepherdstown, West Virginia. Please plan to attend! We look forward to seeing you at the an upcoming Project Archaeology meeting.

Best regards,

Jeanne Moe
Jeanne Moe
BLM Project Archaeology Lead

Project Archaeology Leadership Team Members receiving their copies of the Partners in Conservation Award (left). Gwynn Henderson and Virginia Wulfkuhle with their Certificates of Completion for serving on the Leadership Team (top right). The Leadership team at the Museum of the Rockies interpreting artifacts from Central America with Nikki Dixon, Museum Educator (bottom right).
For three days this summer, Project Archaeology took 18 volunteers to the Absaroka Agency Archaeological Site in south central Montana. The volunteers came from all over Montana and were from all walks of life. They volunteered for the project due to their interest in archaeology and/or history but they left with an attachment to the place and a new outlook on the history of Montana.

The Absaroka Agency was a distribution point for annuity goods to the Apsáalooke (Crow) tribe from 1875 to 1884. The Apsáalooke people traveled to the agency for beef, flour, sugar, beans, rice, and other staples. The agency included a “Fort” where the agent and employees lived and worked. The fort building also included a sutler’s store, doctor’s office, schoolroom, storeroom for the annuity goods, and a council room. A row of small houses made of adobe was built at the agency and the agent encouraged the Apsáalooke people to live in them. This row of adobe houses was referred to as “doby” town.

Volunteers could excavate one, two, or three days—depending on their availability. Many were able to join us for only one day but some stayed the entire three days. Because it is imperative that participants learn the basics of archaeology and stewardship of sites, volunteers attended a three-hour training session prior to excavating at the agency site. Training sessions were held at the Museum of the Beartooths in Columbus, MT (about 15 miles from the archaeological site). The Museum Director, Penny Redli, gave the volunteers a tour of their exhibit on the agency and grounded them in the history of the place. The remainder of the training session focused on a series of Project Archaeology lessons that introduced the volunteers to the concepts of observation/inference, stewardship, and archaeological ethics. The volunteers left the training with a basic understanding of archaeology and knowledge of how to protect historical and archaeological sites. After lunch we paired each volunteer with an archaeologist, and they began learning how to screen and eventually to excavate.

The archaeological crew was extremely helpful and the volunteers were impressed by their camaraderie and professionalism.

We were lucky to have members of the descendant communities (both Apsáalooke and Euro-American) participate in the project. Their presence enhanced the learning and collaborative nature of the project for the volunteers and made the experience richer for everyone involved (including the crew). One descendant member commented, “For me personally it was an opportunity to understand family history…to learn more about how the Indian way of life was passing. The social structure of the Crow was being forced to adapt to the White ways of life.”

While the project focused on excavation it also gave the volunteers the opportunity to engage with descendant community members. As artifacts were unearthed emotions were also unearthed. As one descendant commented, “we are unearthing more than just artifacts out here today, we are unearthing our history, and things our ancestors used and touched.”

This project moved cultural understanding to a new level. One volunteer said, “I think local folks need to be aware of the events that took place in their own backyard and be sensitive to the hardships and life changing transitions the Crow people endured.” The volunteers appreciated the Apsáalooke cultural perspective of the place and its importance historically and its significance today.

A volunteer summed up his experience by saying, “I don’t know exactly what I thought I would be doing, but really working alongside the professional practitioners and [being] accepted as part of the crew was better than I anticipated. This was a stellar volunteer engagement, and I know that my work was meaningful and appreciated. That feels really good.”
Project Archaeology is an educational organization dedicated to teaching scientific and historical inquiry, cultural understanding, and the importance of protecting our nation’s rich cultural resources. We are a national network of archaeologists, educators, and concerned citizens working to make archaeology education accessible to students and teachers nationwide through high-quality educational materials and professional development. Project Archaeology is a joint program of Montana State University and the Bureau of Land Management.

Save the Date!

2012 Project Archaeology Biennial Coordinator’s Conference

October 29 – November 2, 2012

We are pleased to announce that our 2012 Biennial Coordinator’s Conference will be held at the National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, West Virginia. [http://nctc.fws.gov/](http://nctc.fws.gov/).

The Center, well known for its top-notch facilities and hospitality, is nestled within eastern hardwood forests and Potomac River meadows providing a unique and idyllic setting to foster learning. For more information on the conference or to register, please contact Kathy Francisco at kfrancisco@montana.edu.