

Minnesota Archaeological Society

Summer 2021

Published Quarterly



Progress on the Grand Meadow Chert Quarry — An Update

Three recent articles* in Vol. 77 of *The Minnesota Archaeologist* introduced the Grand Meadow Chert Quarry in southeastern Minnesota, and traced the use and impact of the significant gray chert that was extracted from that site over thousands of years. Now, forty years after it was first identified for the archaeological record, efforts are underway to open the GMC Quarry to the public in 2023 for a self-guided walking tour.



Drone view of the GMC Quarry, courtesy of MW Co Soil & Water Conservation District

A special three-way partnership has formed to develop a long-term preservation plan and an interpretive program for sharing the quarry's stories with the public. The Archaeological Conservancy (TAC), which purchased a 15-acre portion of the original 170-acre quarry in 1994 for permanent preservation, has begun working in collaboration with two local organizations: the Prairie Island Indian Community (PIIC) and the Mower County Historical Society (MCHS). Together they are providing stewardship and a "Dakota-centric" interpretive program for the open-pit mine, which originally may have had over 2,000 original pits. Only 88 pits remain, fully preserved within 8 acres of woods. A Cultural Landscape Report is currently being prepared by the firm of Quinn Evans, who will also be creating the construction documents for the walking trail within the woods, and for visitor parking. Grants from the Minnesota Historical and Cultural Heritage Legacy funds managed by the MN Historical Society are making that possible, along with the initial planning and development of the interpretive materials. At least ten bilingual Dakota/English informational panels will be spread out along the pathway, with much more information available online in a downloadable Visitors Guide. There will also be a pair of 8-minute videos produced for teachers to use in classrooms, or for students to view on the bus ride to the site.

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Letter from the President

By Dan Wendt (MAS Board President)

The letter from the MAS President is intended as a vehicle to inform the general membership of the Minnesota Archaeological Society of recent Board of Directors activities. The following is a brief recap of the events, discussions, and decisions that transpired during the past quarter and future plans.

We plan published Volume 78 of the Minnesota Archaeologist in the fall of 2021. The volume will be memorial for Professor Guy Gibbon from the University of Minnesota who's career focused on Minnesota and Midwestern Archaeology. We are currently editing and finalizing content for the journal. The volume was originally slated for publication in 2019 so all members 2019 to current will get a copy. Volume 79 is being planned for 2022. Thank you for your patience. We are working hard to catch up.

In June we were excited to participate in a trail clearing project at the Grand Meadow Chert Quarry. The project is being coordinated through the Mower County Historical Society and MAS is one of the supporting partners. Several MAS members participated in the removal of buckthorn and the creation of a route for what will become an interpretive trail over the next year. Please see more about the project in Tom Trow's update in this newsletter.

September is Archaeology Month in Minnesota. September 25th will be a key event for the Minnesota Archaeological Society with Archaeology Day at Mille Lac Kathio State Park. Follow our website and facebook page for updates on the Archaeology Month schedule of activities around the state.

We are looking forward to having our annual meeting at 7pm on September 24 coordinated with Archaeology Month. The meeting will be conducted virtually. We are excited to have Kevin Brownlee Curator of Archaeology at the Manitoba Museum share a talk about Manitoba Archaeology. We will also present the 2021 Hill Lewis Award recognizing Larry Furo's contributions to Minnesota Archaeology. We will also share progress on defining our mission and thoughts on how MAS can reach for new ways to share our energy and enthusiasm, advocating for Minnesota's archaeological heritage. Follow our Newsletter, Facebook and Web Page for updates on the meeting and opportunities to get involved in Minnesota Archaeology.

MAS Board

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- Danielle Kiesow, *Minnesota Archaeologist* Editor

Mission Statement

After several months and discussions, the board worked together to update the Minnesota Archaeological Society's mission statement. The board is excited that the new statement helps represent what we hope to accomplish through the organization.

Sharing, preserving, and honoring Minnesota's richly diverse archaeology and heritage through publication, education, and outreach.

***The Minnesota Archaeologist* - Call for Papers**

If you recently presented at the biannual Council for Minnesota Archaeology Conference, have a paper ready, or are looking to publish an article on Minnesota or Upper Midwest archaeology, *The Minnesota Archaeologist* is currently looking for submissions to add to our article queue for publication in 2022 and 2023. We accept original research both in longform or shorter "Research Notes," book reviews for newer Midwest archaeology/anthropology publications, discussions on a recent volunteer project or experience, and student research. Please keep your article to no longer than 10,000 words, 10 figures, and 5 tables. A new style guide for *The Minnesota Archaeologist* was recently published for prospective authors in January, and can be accessed on the MAS website at mnarchsociety.org/mnarch.html or you can email the Lead Editor, Danielle Kiesow, directly at editor@mnarchsociety.org and Danielle will send you the style guide over email. We look forward to reading and publishing your work!

Editor's Corner

by Danielle Kiesow

Lead Editor, *The Minnesota Archaeologist*

editor@mnarchsociety.org

Did you know that *The Minnesota Archaeologist* is a peer reviewed journal? Do you want to volunteer your time as a peer reviewer? Peer review provides useful feedback and subject matter guidance for the authors, as well as ensures we maintain our high-quality publication. Two peer reviewers are used during *The Minnesota Archaeologist* review process, though a third peer reviewer may be required for more complex papers. We highly encourage membership from *The Minnesota Archaeologist* to volunteer to be peer reviewers. Peer review requires at least 6 weeks of the reviewer's time per article: peer reviewers have 4 weeks to review first drafts, and 2 weeks for the second draft and all ensuing drafts. If you would like to add your name to our list of peer reviewers, please send your name, contact information, and your expertise (topic, time period, region, etc.) to editor@mnarchsociety.org. If we receive an article draft concerning your expertise, you will receive an email asking for your availability.



Share your thoughts on Minnesota archaeology and find out what is happening right now across the state and region on our page.

Progress at the Grand Meadow Chert Quarry... continued

Educators, elders and specialists at Prairie Island and Minnesota's other Dakota communities will be taking the lead on understanding and presenting what happened here. The themes will include explaining why and how the pits were dug, what role the chert had in daily life among those living on the edge of the prairie, the relationship between this chert and the process of hunting and processing bison, deer and elk, and the cultural role this special place may have had among the agricultural villages whose members travelled and probably met here annually in the final centuries before contact. New curricula is already being developed by tribal community educators for elementary-age Dakota youth, and lesson plans for all regional public schools will soon follow.

This project has had the good fortune to be located in Mower County, where the community response to its development has been extraordinary. Recently 25 local volunteers, joined by several MAS members, worked to clear Buckthorn to form a trail through the site. Ongoing maintenance of the trail and site is being contributed by the county's Sentence To Serve program of the DOJ. The eventual removal of all Buckthorn from the woods will be a 6-year process led by the DNR Forestry Division; advice from the local Hormel Nature Center and the local Izaak Walton League is contributing to that effort. The county's Soil and Water Conservation District staff have been contributing assistance with soil and bedrock maps for locating potential sites in the area and expertise on the plant and faunal communities within the woods. They have also provided drone coverage of the site for planning, in both video and still photography. The MCHS has already received unsolicited donations from county residents for the Sustainability Fund, which will cover expenses for needed maintenance and signage replacement far into the future.

There are 5 acres of open grassland at the south end of the woods included in the TAC land, covering what were once additional quarry pits. They were filled in to make that land tillable, but those acres are part of the protected site and are now about to be converted to prairie, providing additional educational opportunities. The local DNR office has offered to donate their expertise, as well as the seeds for the prairie plants. Under their direction, only seeds collected from very local sources will be used, which they are collecting this year. The planting of those seeds will begin next spring, to be distributed by hand by youth from Prairie Island and the other 3 Dakota communities, joined by students from Grand Meadow and other area schools.



The view from within a typical pit, while archaeologist Lee Radzak draws a map. 1980

A great deal of further research is needed to more fully understand the significance of this quarry, and the use of its chert. Some survey work is being done on a limited basis, to better understand the relationship between the 170 acres of open-pit quarrying activities and the lithic workshops that are only just beginning to emerge from around the site, but much, much more is needed. We also have more to discover about the strategies for digging for the nodules, and for reducing their size and weight for transportation. We hope to learn more about the mechanisms for trading stone, whether in raw form or as tools. No dating techniques have been applied yet to the site, and that may help to answer additional questions about the stages of its use.

In June, after the quarry had been dormant for possibly 400 years, a ritual ceremony of gratitude was performed by three PIIC elders. Their song of thanks to the earth with voice and drum may have been a common event here for thousands of years, but it has been many centuries since those sounds, or the smell of the sage they burned while they sang, have been present in these woods.



The new “Talking Circle” for classes and visitors along the trail

The Mower County Historical Society in Austin has created an exceptional exhibit on the Native history of southeastern Minnesota, with a strong focus on the GMC Quarry and numerous points and tools that were made from the chert. While the quarry itself is not yet ready for tours, the exhibit is an excellent introduction to the quarry’s stories, and is once again open.

For further information, please contact the Mower County Historical Society at: director@mowercountyhistory.org, or call Tom Trow at (612) 721-2127.

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Grand Meadow Chert: A Distinctive and High-Quality Chert in Southeastern Minnesota copyright 2020 by the Minnesota Archaeological Society. All rights Reserved.

Modeling Movement of Grand Meadow Chert from Quarry to Use copyright 2020 by the Minnesota Archaeological Society. All rights Reserved.

Larry Furo New Recipient of Hill-Lewis Award

MAS is pleased to announce that Larry Furo of Duluth, Minnesota is the recipient of the 2021 Hill – Lewis Award. The award is given annually to an avocational archaeologist who has made outstanding contributions to Minnesota archaeology, by the Minnesota Archaeological Society. Larry’s work in Minnesota archaeology is well known starting with his lifelong interest in the archaeology of northeastern Minnesota and his contributions have carried through decades of projects on regional archaeology.

Larry’s most notable contribution to Midwestern archaeology is his work to replicate and understand the process to make copper tools. He started his instruction under the apprenticeship of Joe Neubauer who was a master blacksmith and skilled at duplicating a wide range of copper artifacts. Larry built on that learning by focusing on replicating natural tools that would have been available to Native Americans and replicating the steps and stages of manufacture to complete a finished tool. The research is in process of editing for publication in *The Minnesota Archaeologist* under the title “*Old Copper Industry Tool and Ornament Replication by Forging with Natural Material Manufacturing Tools*”.

Larry has also shared his copper research in numerous venues ranging from academic to public. He has given presentations at the Northern Lakes Archaeological Society, Copper Conference in Houghton Michigan, Council of Minnesota Archaeologists, Lake Superior



Basin Workshops, Old Brule Historical Society in Wisconsin, and for the DNR at various Minnesota State Parks. He has prepared replica sets for museums and university displays in Wisconsin and Minnesota. Larry is also co-administrator and weekly author of the Old Copper Complex and Ancient Waterways America blog, starting in 2007 and currently with over 3000 members.

In addition to his copper research, Larry has been the President of the Northern Lakes Archaeology Society since 2008 and has been personally responsible for recruiting numerous programs and new society members. Larry has contributed to archaeological research in the Reservoir Lakes area near

Duluth. Most significantly, he shared a significant fluted point find with professional archaeologists and in a subsequent publication (*Current Research in the Pleistocene*, 2009, 26:95-97, S.L. Mulholland, S.C. Mulholland, and L. Furo).

For his efforts in over 25 years, including documentation and analysis at the professional level as well as a consistent outreach to academics, avocationalists, and private individuals, Larry Furo has made a significant contribution to Minnesota archaeology in the tradition of the Hill-Lewis Award. Larry’s motto for his replication work exemplifies his professionalism and commitment:

To “Share, Care and Compare”. Please join us in congratulating Larry on this well-deserved award.



Meet the New Newsletter Editing Team



Jasmine has her B.S. in Anthropology, M.S. in Applied Anthropology and Graduate Certificates in GIS and Museum Studies from Minnesota State University, Mankato. She has been working at the Science Museum of Minnesota for over eight years and has experience working on collections management projects, county wide surveys, field schools, GIS, GPS, paleoethnobotany and public outreach. Her background is focused on the Late-Precontact in the Upper Midwest in the Red Wing Region and the St. Croix Valley. Jasmine is excited to be co-editor for the MAS newsletter because she loves sharing her passion of all archaeology in Minnesota with everyone!



Erin graduated from St. Cloud State University with a degree in Ecology & Field Biology with a Wildlife Biology emphasis. While going to college, she did an internship for Minnesota State Parks where she had her first experience with archaeology. Her work at Kathio and Father Hennepin State Parks as a Park Naturalist has taught her about the rich culture and heritage of the Mille Lacs area. One of Erin's favorite things about her job is that she is always learning; it's also, where she picked up graphic design. She feels like co-editing the MAS newsletter is a great way to meld a few of her interests.

We would like to say a huge thank you to the former newsletter editors, Jake and Nicole Foss, for all the hard work they put in over the years!

UPCOMING EVENT—MILLE LACS KATHIO STATE PARK'S ARCHAEOLOGY DAY

The Minnesota Archaeological Society will be at Kathio on Saturday, September 25 to host displays, demonstrations and activities highlighting archaeology and Minnesota heritage. The event runs from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the park's picnic area.

Archaeological Excavation: The public is invited to observe as archaeologists conduct a small excavation where a previous survey revealed some ancient artifacts.

There is no charge for any of the Archaeology Day activities. A vehicle permit is required to enter Minnesota State Parks. Vehicle permits may be purchased at the park office. Cost of a daily permit is \$7.00. An annual permit, which allows entry into all Minnesota State Parks for one year from the date of purchase, is \$35.00.

Mille Lacs Kathio State Park is located 8 miles north of Onamia, 14 miles south of Garrison, on U.S. Highway 169. For more information, call the park at 320-532-3523.



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Contact Anna Morrow
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*New Sustaining members will receive a free copy of the Minnesota Archaeologist 1935—2005 Compendium on a flash drive.

**New Benefactors will receive a free copy of the Minnesota Archaeologist 1935—2005 Compendium on a flash drive, and a seat as an Honored Guest at the Annual Dinner Meeting.

Send your MAS news and notices to Jasmine, jckoncur@gmail.com
Thank you for supporting the Minnesota Archaeological Society!