

Minnesota Archaeological Society

Fall 2022

Triannual Publication



Archaeology Month 2022 Recap

By Selena Wimmergren, MAS Outreach

We celebrated Archaeology Month 2022 every Saturday in September at five sites affiliated with the Minnesota Historical Society, four of which are operated under the stewardship of the Minnesota Historical Society. The main purpose of Minnesota Archaeology Month is to promote public interest in Minnesota archaeology and the role it plays in understanding the state's rich cultural heritage. These events offer a chance for Archaeologists to engage with the public and share ongoing archaeological work.

The Minnesota Archaeological Society, Office of the State Archaeologist, Minnesota Historical Society, and Minnesota Department of Natural Resources hosted several in-person events around what we currently refer to as the state of Minnesota. The Dakota name for where we live is *Mni Sota Makoce*, “where the land reflects the sky” or “cloudy tinted waters”.

The start of Minnesota Archaeology Month kicked off at the Historic Forestville site in Southeastern Minnesota on Saturday, September 3rd. Historic Forestville is located within Forestville/Mystery Cave State Park. The site includes the five original standing buildings which remain from a once prominent town. Throughout the state park are foundations where buildings once stood. Visitors to Forestville on Archaeology Day were able to participate in an excavation of a root cellar floor of one of those previously standing buildings and/or watch the excavation in progress conducted in collaboration with Hamline University. Other activities at Forestville included pottery making and the ever-popular atlatl/spear-throwing demonstration.

On Saturday September 10th, Archaeology Month activities were held at Historic Fort Snelling in St. Paul. Historic Fort Snelling is a National Historic Landmark which resides on Dakota homeland, known as Bdote, with history spanning over 10,000 years. Visitors can learn a multitude of stories of different people who resided and still reside in this area. The event included activities for visitors such as atlatl/spear-throwing, pottery making, artifact sorting, artifact drawing, flintknapping, and more. Collaborators included the Office of State Archaeologist, MN DNR, Science Museum of Minnesota, University of Minnesota Anthropology Department and Liberal Arts Technologies and Innovation Services, Council for Minnesota Archaeology, and Hočokata Ti.



Historic Fort Snelling photos courtesy of Mandy Wintheiser



Dan Wendt, MAS president, flintknapping at Historic Fort Snelling

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Letter from the President - November 2022

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 planning.

We are in the process of mailing Volume 79 of the Minnesota Archaeologist, which is focused on Fort Snelling at Bdote. There are eight great articles that highlight the ecology, precontact archaeology of Bdote, and post contact military archaeology of the Fort. Danielle Kiesow, the Editor of the Minnesota Archaeologist, has now completed her fourth volume since joining the editorial board and third volume as Senior Editor.

September was Archaeology Month. MAS participated in Archaeology Day events at Forestville State Park, Fort Snelling, Split Rock State Park, Jeffers Petroglyphs and Mille Lacs Kathio State Park. We were fortunate to experience the best of changing fall weather across the state. In many of these venues we had record attendance and participation in events that spanned from pottery making to atlatl/spear-throwing. A big thank you to Jennifer Rankin, MNHS Archaeology, for stepping forward to organize Minnesota Archaeology Month.

MAS had a special event and tour of Mille Lacs Kathio State Park Archaeology on September 24th. We had an excellent lecture and tour of the park by former MAS Board Member and Archaeologist, Jim Cummings. He discussed the ongoing public archaeology program at the park and the unique archaeology of Petaga Point. This central point in Minnesota has a central role in understanding the broader history of the region.

Our fall zoom lecture series has included two great lectures. In September, we had a lecture by Emeritus Professor George Holly, from the University of Minnesota Moorhead, on the inset valley phenomena as a key to unlocking the story of the Red River Valley. The Red River Valley is fed by numerous rivers that cut into the bordering Lake Agassiz beach ridges creating oases of timber, shade vegetation, and other resources for early inhabitants. In November, Danielle Benden and Robert Boszhardt discussed the expat Mississippian Community at Trempealeau and examined why they might have journeyed 500 miles north from Cahokia. These lectures have become a virtual gathering point for our community to discuss regional archaeology topics, thanks to Michael Michlovic for planning and Mandy Wintheiser for moderating these meetings. Please check our YouTube channel for these archived meetings.

We have postponed presenting the 2022 the Hill Lewis award to January at the Northern Lakes Archaeological Society Meeting. This year's recipient is North Shore Historian Todd Lindahl. Todd has connections with Lake County Historical Society and Northern Lakes Archaeological Society. He has a strong interest in documenting North Shore logging camps, mines, railroad encampments and depots. Watch for upcoming announcements on our Facebook page and website.

We are looking forward to the 2023 Council for Minnesota Archaeology Conference and will forward details as they become available.

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

MAS Board

- Dan Wendt, President
- Jasmine Koncur, Vice President
- Mara Taft, Secretary
- Mike Nowak, Treasurer
- Erin Fallon, Newsletter Editor
- Mandy Wintheiser, Membership, Social Media & Communications
- Deborah Pommer, Social Media & Webpage
- Jennifer Rankin, Journal Team
- Mike Michlovic, Outreach & Journal Team
- Selena Wimmergren, Outreach
- Justin Olson, Outreach
- Danielle Kiesow, *Minnesota Archaeologist* Editor

Meet a Board Member: Deborah Pommer



MAS Board Position: Social Media & Webpage

1) Background: Deb grew up in South Minneapolis and enrolled at the University of Minnesota in 1968. She took a hiatus from school for a few years and returned to graduate in 1989 with a BA in Anthropology. Deb was a Student Support Specialist, at the University of Minnesota, in the Office of the Registrar. She retired from the University of Minnesota in 2013.

2) Reason(s) why you wanted to be on the board? Deb has always been interested in Archaeology. She joined the board because she wanted to help contribute to the field of Archaeology in Minnesota. Deb also wanted to increase her understanding of customs and cultural artifacts of the people who have called Minnesota their home. She first attended MAS monthly lecture meetings in the late 1970's or early 1980's. These meetings were held in one of the older post buildings at Historic Fort Snelling. In the past, Deb has held the MAS Board positions of secretary and treasurer.

3) Hobbies & Interests: Deb's other interests include genealogy (focusing on her Norwegian and Slovak relatives); following the activities of her 3 grandchildren; being a servant to her 17 year old cat; and playing the World of Warcraft video game. Deb's father was a "rock hound" and a number of her childhood experiences were spent looking for agates and other rocks. She has a habit of keeping her head looking down at the ground because there are so many interesting things to find in the dirt.

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On Saturday September 17, two events at two different locations took place. One of the Archaeology Month events was hosted at the Split Rock Lighthouse in Two Harbors, Minnesota. Split Rock Light Station was constructed in 1910 and operated for half a century, guiding freighters to a safe passage through the rough waters of *Gichigami*, the Ojibwe name for Lake Superior. Unlike previous events, this year it was held indoors



Jacob Bernier, MNHS, demonstrating pottery making at Split Rock Lighthouse. Photo courtesy of Selena Wimmergren.

within the visitor center due to heavy rain. Visitors were still able to participate in some fun activities including pumpkin carving with stone tools and pottery making. Some other collaborators were the Council for Minnesota Archaeology, Superior National Forest, and Hamline University.

The other Archaeology Month event on September 17 was hosted at the Jeffers

Petroglyphs site in Southwestern Minnesota. Jeffers Petroglyphs is a site that holds roughly 5,000 rock carvings, which are significant to Indigenous peoples as they were created by their ancestors. On Archaeology Day visitors were able to take part in flintknapping, pottery making, atlatl/spear-throwing, and the Chunkey game, a game that has been played in the region for over 1000



Visitors flintknapping at Jeffers Petroglyphs. Photo courtesy of Jasmine Koncur.

years. Dr. Ron Schirmer from Minnesota State University-Makato demonstrated drone use in archaeology and gave a riveting talk.

Editor's Note: See the following page for a recap of the final Archaeology Month event.

2022's Minnesota Archaeology Month would not have been possible without the collaboration of many individuals, groups, and organizations. Thank you to all the partners who supported and participated in the events throughout the month and graciously shared their archaeological knowledge with the public. We are grateful to share the wide range of work and dedication to Minnesota archaeology and we look forward to future events.

Save the Date: 2023 CMA Conference

The Council for Minnesota Archaeology is announcing a call for sessions, papers, or posters for its biennial conference, hosted this year by the Minnesota Historical Society.

The conference is free and open to all researchers at any stage of their career, whether academic, students, CRM or community archaeologists, to present recent research on any aspect of Minnesota or Upper Midwest archaeology.

Where (for in-person sessions): Historic Fort Snelling Plank Museum and Visitor Center, 200 Tower Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55111

When: Friday, February 24th & Saturday February 25th, 2023

To learn more schedule details and to register visit: <http://mnarcheology.org/2023-conference/>

Archaeology Month Recap Continued...

Mille Lacs Kathio Archaeology Day and MAS 2022 Annual Meeting

By Bob Suchanek

September 24th was a very busy day. I hitched a ride with Dan Wendt to Mille Lacs Kathio State Park and helped set up tables for the annual day devoted to archaeology. This remarkable park, with over 30 identified archaeological sites, is an ideal place to consider the lives of people that have called this place home for thousands of years.

It was a bit cloudy and cool that day, but the weather didn't keep archaeology fans from coming. Activities included the always popular atlatl/spear throwing, clay pot making, corn boiling with fire heated rocks, a stone tool knapping demonstration, and talking with people about archaeology and the Minnesota Archaeological Society.

Since the retreat of the glaciers, this has been a resource rich area. The French name "Mille Lacs" (1,000 lakes) given to the area by European explorers and fur traders, accurately describes the foundation of an ecosystem that has bountifully provided wild rice, fish, waterfowl, beaver, deer and other necessities to the Dakota and Ojibwe peoples that lived here. Many of their ancestors continue to practice these harvesting traditions in what is now Minnesota.

An abbreviated annual meeting was held after Archaeology Day was packed away; just enough meeting time to determine that there wasn't a quorum. Therefore, chatting and snacking on fruit, cheese, and cookies ensued.

The final event for the day was a casual walk and talk around Petaga Point with Jim Cummings, Archaeologist for the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Tribal Historic Preservation Office and Archeologist for McFarlane Consulting. Petaga Point is noted for its diverse artifacts and long history of occupation. Jim pointed out the locations of a Depression-era farmstead and a much earlier indigenous village. The walk ended with a discussion about the ongoing research and plans for future investigations into this important site's past.



Photos courtesy of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Don't miss these upcoming online lectures!

January: The Jeffers Petroglyphs

March: Archaeology at Wood Lake Battlefield

April: Cambria ceramics

Final dates TBD. Further information can be found on our Facebook page or by emailing info@mnarchsociety.org.

Also of Interest ...

Johnson Family Donates Flint Knapping Replicas

by Dan Wendt - MAS President

Rod Johnson's family has donated his collection of stone tool replicas to the Minnesota Archaeological Society for the purpose of furthering Rod's passion for public education and outreach in archaeology. Rod was a longtime leader in MAS serving in board roles including President, Vice President, and Treasurer. However, his passion was sharing his knowledge and skill at making and replicating stone tools, which he would do at events across the state nearly every month of the year. To avoid his replicas being confused for real artifacts he labeled, numbered, and maintained a log for each one. When Rod passed away in 2019, he had documented 1378 stone tools that he had replicated during his flint knapping career. This spring, Rod's wife Dianne and children Heather and Kirk indicated that they wanted to donate the replicas to the Minnesota Archaeological Society. We are happy and grateful to receive the replicated tools and look forward to using them in our public teaching and outreach.

Rod kept a detailed log of his replicas, and it provides an opportunity to glean insights from his 30-year flintknapping career. Like most flintknappers, he was able to pressure flake small arrow size points in the first few tools that he made. In the first 100, he replicated percussion knapped spear points that were a good match to the 2" – 3" stone tools common across the archaeological record in Minnesota. By the time Rod had made 1000 replicas, he was commonly making idealized tools in the range of 4" – 5" in length and had become a master at thinning a large bifacial tool. He learned and made progress throughout his flintknapping career in a logarithmic way - faster at the beginning and slower at the end.

In the collection, there are 120 replicated stone tool styles from across North America and throughout the past 13,000 years. Rod's go-to point style for public demonstrations were simple notched and unnotched triangular arrow points, that replicate Minnesota arrow points from about 800 A.D. forward. In a matter of minutes, he was able to show the process of making an arrow point from start to finish and would amaze audiences at outreach events. Rod also stepped beyond replication with his BIC ("Because I Can") points. They represent the times that Rod would push the limits to expand a skill such as notching and create a unique piece of flint knapping art.



Photo courtesy of the Science Museum of Minnesota



We are very grateful to Rod's family for the donation, and we are honored to continue Rod's passion for public outreach and teaching about archaeology.



Photo courtesy of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Also of Interest Continued ...

Editor's Corner

by Danielle Kiesow - Lead Editor, *The Minnesota Archaeologist*

The Minnesota Archaeologist is currently in transition to a new publisher. Our current publisher only prints the volumes, so the end result that you see – the journal formatting and mailing – are done by hand by Minnesota Archaeological Society board members. We are looking for a publisher that can also handle the journal formatting and mailing to offload these tasks. Formatting the journal is a labor of love, and one that takes patience and technical skills that I do not have. Because of that, I would like to extend my sincerest thanks and gratitude to Mara Taft, MAS board secretary and the sole person who formatted volumes 77, 78, and 79. Mara did wonderful work, and I know both myself and the rest of the MAS board greatly appreciate her time and dedication to produce clean and spotless volumes because they have not gone unnoticed. Mara will retain her position on the board as MAS secretary.

Thank you again for all your work, Mara!

MAS Seeks Treasurer and Web Developer

Are you interested in joining a community of archaeologists and contributing to archaeological outreach and education in Minnesota?

MAS is looking to fill two separate roles: Treasurer (two year board term) and Web Developer (volunteer role, no specific term limit). If you are interested in filling either of these essential roles, please reach out to MAS at info@mnarchsociety.org for more information!



Please remember MAS while you are online shopping for the holidays this year!

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Have an idea for the next newsletter?

We would like to hear from you! Send your MAS and archaeology related news and notices to info@mnarchsociety.org.

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Minnesota Archaeological Society
Kellogg Center, Archaeology Dept.
328 Kellogg Blvd. W.
St. Paul, Minnesota 55102

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Thank you for supporting the Minnesota Archaeological Society!