

FIELD NOTES

Magazine of the Archaeological Research Institute



In this issue:
Oxbow, Inc. - Preserving our Wetlands

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From the Director

Giving Voices to Those Who Came Before Us

As the executive director of ARI I have three aspects of my position that make all the other parts of running a business more palatable. The first is seeing the mission of our organizations being brought to life by all our dedicated volunteers, ArcheoCorps members and our fantastic staff. The second is creating a culture in the workplace where it is enjoyable to follow your passion as a career or hobby. Third, is telling the stories of our organization to anyone who will listen. Lizz Comer, Engagement and Development Manager, and I recently returned from the storyteller conference (a nonprofit fundraising conference) where I got to spend three days thinking about all the great stories and accomplishments our organization has made in just four and a half years.

One of the challenges in the sessions was to give a voice to someone or something that doesn't have a voice, so that their story can be told. At ARI every member of the staff and our volunteers are giving items, past peoples, and archaeological sites a voice and an avenue to share their lost stories. Our research and purpose for excavations is to find and tell these lost stories and to make them accessible to everyone.

I am excited for you to read this issue and to understand a little better each of the many facets of our archaeological research and how we make it digestible to all. Please join us in finding, understanding, and sharing these lost stories. Help us give a voice to these lost stories of our region's rich cultural past.

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Field Notes

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From the Editor

The Many Facets of Archaeology

Welcome, readers!



In our last issue, we introduced our Archaeo-Corps members, each of whom is responsible for overseeing a particular aspect of our programming and outreach initiatives. Now, with several months under their belts, our ArchaeoCorps associates are fully immersed in their areas of specialization, each contributing to the overall success of our mission. In this issue of *Field Notes*, four of our ArchaeoCorps members tell us what they do and how they welcome readers like you to join in.

Tessa Wilk, our Field Manager, starts us off with an explanation of the kinds of work we do in the field. As Tessa explains, it's not just about digging holes. Much more goes into planning and determining where and why we dig, and what we hope to learn. (Page 4)

Betsy Dulle, our programming manager, fills us in on some of the educational experiences that we offer free-of-charge to interested members of the community. (Page 5)

Emily Ingram, Lab Manager, describes what happens to artifacts after they're bagged up in the field and brought back to the lab. (Page 8)

Blake Hon, Land Stewardship Assistant, tells us about Oxbow, Inc., a very dedicated group of people with whom we often partner in our efforts to preserve and protect the wetlands along the Great Miami and Ohio rivers. (Page 9)

Also in this issue, three members of our leadership team describe their experiences at the first Public Archaeology Conference in the United States. The conference, hosted in September by the Florida Public Archaeology Network in Pensacola, Florida, brought over a hundred archaeologists together to share their experiences and ideas on how to get the public involved in the science of archaeology and to spread awareness of the need to preserve and protect vanishing archaeological sites. (Pages 6, 7 and 10)

As always, we hope you enjoy this issue. If you have any questions about ARI or any suggestions for topics you'd like us to cover in an upcoming issue, contact me at my email address below.

And please keep in mind that ARI is a non-profit organization, funded in part through donations and memberships. Your support makes this publication and our many programs and events possible.

Thank you!

Larry Sandman

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Field Work - More Than Just Digging Holes

By: Tessa Wilk, Field Manager

Archaeology is not just picking a spot and digging a square hole in the ground. There is a lot of research and pre-planning that happens long before we even put a shovel in the ground. It begins with formulating research questions. What are the parameters of our research? And what, specifically, do we hope to learn? Research can come from many different directions, including looking through records, maps, and books, using technology such as magnetometry, or even talking with locals who have knowledge of the area's history. All of this research helps us determine where we should focus our resources to ensure we gather the information needed to answer our research questions. Once we have established an area that we want to explore, we start with survey work such as pedestrian surveys, (i.e. walking the grounds and watching for artifacts or other clues that lie on the surface.), shovel test pits, and auger tests.



ARI team members and visitors doing auger testing and soil screening in search of evidence of a late 18th century military fort known as the "Rowdy Camp."

Survey work helps us determine what artifacts are in the area as well as the distribution, or spread, of those artifacts. This information can direct us to specific spots within the larger area that need further exploration, which includes the more stereotypical excavations of archaeology. Archaeologists excavate sites in square holes called units so we can know exactly where the materials we collect were found. We set up

our unit based on coordinates, then systematically excavate down in 10-centimeter increments, collecting artifacts as well as taking detailed notes of what is happening in the unit itself, such as soil changes.



The author pointing out artifact concentrations in the ground at the suspected site of a 19th century boarding house. Artifacts such as brick fragments and ceramic sherds were found at consistent levels in the soil.

As field manager, it is my job to ensure the archaeology being conducted follows the guidelines and laws required of an archaeological excavation. It is important that our work is accurate and ethical as archaeology is a destructive science. Once we disturb the ground, we can't put anything back exactly as it was, meaning we lose the context, the key to the information we gather from our excavations. For this reason we have to ensure the proper paperwork is being recorded and checked, photographs are taken throughout the process for documentation, and any artifacts are carefully bagged and tagged to be taken to the lab for analysis.

Since we are a public archaeology organization, we encourage the public to come and join us in our survey and excavations to see exactly what it is we do during our exploration. ARI offers the opportunity for you to come dig in the field with us and learn all of the different points of archaeological fieldwork. We will provide you with all of the tools you will need, background information to help understand what you are finding, as well as training on how to excavate properly. Stop on by our front desk, give us a call, or check out our website at www.exploreakari.org to book your chance to come dig as an archaeologist.

Educational Experiences at ARI

By Betsy Dulle, Educational Programming Manager

Let me introduce myself. I'm Betsy Dulle and as a programming manager, I support the Director of Educational Programming, Samy Norris. I am passionate about the work we do at ARI and want to share some of the exciting things going on here. I am tasked with assisting in the planning, coordinating, implementing, and evaluating the programs offered at ARI. All programs at ARI are accessible and accommodating to any visitor's needs. Moreover, due to our amazing sponsors, members, and donors, most of our programs are free of charge. These programs are created specifically for both adults and children interested in learning more about archaeology and local history.

Are you or your children interested in becoming an Archaeologist for a day? At ARI, you can do just that via our adult or junior field experience programs. Through these field experiences, you can get your hands dirty as you embark on an archaeological dig with real-life archaeologists. And no, Indiana Jones will not be one of them. If the field work doesn't entice you, don't sweat! We also offer indoor lab experiences for both adults and juniors. During the lab experience, visitors will get to clean and sort artifacts. Both the lab and field experiences can accommodate small or large groups.



Finding historical-period artifacts in the "dig box" is a popular part of the junior field experience.

Have you ever dreamt of throwing an atlatl or playing the ancient game of Chunkey? Curious what an atlatl and Chunkey are? If so, I would recommend signing up for a field experience where you will get to do both. Our Experimental Archaeologists will "show you the ropes" and send you home with new skills.



Visitors of all ages enjoy putting their skills to the test on our atlatl range.

If I still have not piqued your interest, let me tell you about ARI's Great Miami Archaeological Tour. This tour is a one-of-a-kind experience that takes visitors on an interactive journey through Lawrenceburg and its neighboring communities. Visitors will get a multifaceted look at the local history and archaeological significance of the area. This tour includes a stop at Shawnee Lookout where participants will be tasked to hike a short trail whilst learning about its significance..



A visit to the 2000-year-old Miami Fort earthwork is a highlight of the Great Miami Archaeology Tour.

If you are an educator, we offer class field trips off site (at your school) or on site (at our facility) where your students will get a variety of experiences.

The programs outlined above are just a snippet of the activities offered at ARI. If you are interested in joining us or learning more about the experiences, volunteering, or becoming a member, check out our website. I hope to see you soon!

Reports on the First Public Archaeology Conference

The first formal public archaeology conference was held in September in Pensacola, Florida, where it was hosted by the Florida Public Archaeology Network. Three members of the ARI leadership team, (L-R: Louis Herzner, Samy Norris, and Rachel Sharkey) attended the conference and represented one of the youngest and most active organizations dedicated to making the world of archaeology accessible to the general public. We asked each of the three ARI participants to give their impressions of the conference. Their enthusiasm for the gathering of public archaeologists from several states and their recognition of the opportunity for progress in the future through cooperation with like-minded organizations is reflected in their reports.



From Muncie to Pensacola-Spreading the Word of ARI & Public Archaeology

By Rachel Sharkey, Director of Public Archaeology



In September I was fortunate enough to be able to represent ARI and the hard work we do at back-to-back conferences, the annual Preserving Historic Places Conference (held in Muncie, Indiana this year) and the first ever Conference on Public Archaeology, hosted by the Florida Public Archaeology Network in Pensacola, Florida.

Preserving Historic Places is Indiana's Statewide Preservation Conference, cohosted each year by Indiana Landmarks, Indiana Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology, and Indiana University. The conference rotates locations each year to communities with a heavy focus on historical preservation. I participated in a session on Public Archaeology, where I introduced ARI and discussed the types of programming, events, and outreach we do as an organization and the effectiveness of those activities.

I was honored to be invited to speak with veterans of public archaeology including Christy Brocken of Strawtown Koteewi Park Hamilton County, Indiana (visithamiltoncounty.com) and Darlene Applegate of Living Archaeology Weekend (livingarchaeologyweekend.org).

From Muncie, ARI descended upon Pensacola where Samy Norris, Louis Herzner, and I attended the first Conference on Public Archaeology. Our primary goals were to get ARI's name out into the public archaeology world and to find inspiration from more established organizations. We left with those things and so much more. We came away realizing that although we are a young organization compared to many of the places participating in public archaeology, we are very much on the ball and in some ways ahead of the game. Our open-door policy, community engagement, and (as Louis will discuss) work with veterans make ARI a leading contender in effecting public archaeology in our region.

On a personal level, attending these conferences was a source of validation in my role as Director of Public Archaeology. I now have a year under my belt with the organization and I am committed more than ever to ARI and making the archaeology we do public and accessible to the community.

Educational Aspects of the first Conference on Public Archaeology

By Samy Norris, Director of Programming

Stepping out of a formal education role and into an informal educator role was a big switch for me. I taught in classrooms in Illinois and Ohio for 12 years before coming to ARI. In 2020, I began a Master's program through Miami University's Project Dragonfly and my focus is on incorporating traditional and Indigenous ecological knowledge into mainstream curriculum and conservation efforts. It was this program along with my growing frustration with the systems of public education that brought me to ARI in 2022.

I was so excited to learn from people around the nation about their foray into public archaeology. I've felt like I'm playing catch-up for the past 18 months with ARI, and I was enthusiastic about learning with and among other informal educators. The conference showed me that we are getting a lot of what we do at ARI absolutely correct!



Public archaeology needs to focus on bonding and bridging to create a sense of belonging. By involving the community through outreach to classrooms, including community research questions, and our activities that make archaeology accessible and the knowledge attainable, ARI is right there in the upper echelon of what public archaeology can be.

But that doesn't mean I didn't come home with ideas! I took pictures of ideas I'd love to recreate in our learning center and created some new plans for our "River of Time" introduction. Our speaker series will definitely look different in 2024, as I'd love to bring in community members and make it more of a Story Series about our community. There are also new learning activities in the plan to take to schools and to give to educators.

The questions I walked away from the conference with were the biggest rewards. Moving forward, ARI needs to be asking what does the community want out of archaeology and our research? How are we authentically involving descendant communities? How are we creating membership opportunities for the public, descendant communities, and our local communities? And overall, how can we use all of this to build and tell a fuller and richer story of our community?

Takeaways from the first Conference on Public Archaeology

By Louis Herzner, Archaeology Coordinator



On September 21st-23rd, 2023 ARI sent Rachel, Samy, and me to Pensacola, Florida to attend the first Conference on Public Archaeology hosted by the Florida Public Archaeology Network (FPAN). The conference was attended by over a hundred public archaeologists from all around the United States, all of whom were eager to share their experiences with public archaeology. An icebreaker was held Friday evening at which the speaker, Jennifer McKinnon from Eastern Carolina University, discussed her work identifying Hellcat airplanes shot down during the World War II Battle of Saipan. Dr. McKinnon partnered with Task Force Dagger, a non-profit organization that works with U.S. Special Forces Veterans. Many of these veterans are scuba certified and are being taught how to conduct underwater archaeology to identify the sunken airframes and recover the remains of the pilots so they can be reunited with their families. I felt this was a great start for the conference.

On the second day, our team split up to attend different conference panels. The first panel I attended was titled "Building an Alliance of Site Stewardship; Expanding the Definition of Us and Lessening the Definition of Them."

This was an informative panel focused on archaeological sites in Arizona and California. Two public archaeology groups spoke on the subject of training volunteers as site stewards to monitor remote sites and ensure they were not being looted or destroyed.

Welcome to the ARI Lab

By: Emily Ingram, Lab Manager

After we excavate in the field, all the artifacts go back to the lab and get cleaned, analyzed, and documented. Our staff and volunteers are always working in the lab, processing samples and entering data into our databases. We currently have open artifact samples from three different sites, Rowdy Camp, Boarding House, and Osprey Lake.

In the lab we look at the artifacts and identify them in as much detail as we can. The first step is to wash the artifacts; then we sort them based on typology – a process called “rough sort.” During the rough sort process artifacts are identified, weighed, and counted into predetermined categories such as animal bones, chert flakes, or pottery sherds. Artifacts that can be further identified will get “fine sorted” and we catalog as much detail as we can about them.

Figure 1 shows our current drying shelves and all the open samples. Many of the trays have washed artifacts that are waiting to be rough sorted. The two shelves at the bottom hold our finished “flotation samples” that are currently drying and waiting to be bagged. Flotation samples are batches of dirt that are taken from the field and brought to the lab for further analysis.



Figure 1

Figure 2 shows our FLOTE-TECH tank that we use to screen these samples. Flotation samples are important because this process reveals smaller artifacts that archaeologists often miss in the field. Usually, flotation samples can reveal tiny objects such as seeds or straight pins. In the field, archaeologists screen through a ¼" size screen. Our FLOTE-TECH tank uses cheesecloth to catch all of the smaller artifacts.



Figure 2

Figure 3 shows a group of middle school students having a lab experience. During our lab experiences you work alongside our archaeologists on a real archaeological project. We have many artifact bags from different sites that need to be washed and sorted.



Figure 3

Currently we offer two lab experiences at ARI. The adult lab experience is available to individuals who are twelve and older and the junior lab experience is tailored to those who are younger than twelve.

Come visit our lab and experience what it is like to process our archaeological samples. No experience is needed.

Oxbow INC.

Protecting and Advocating for Our Local Wetlands

By: Blake Hon, ARI Land Stewardship Assistant

This October I had the pleasure of sitting down with Jon Seymour, Oxbow Board President and Julie Rizzo, Oxbow Land Steward, to discuss all things Oxbow and ARI. For those who are not familiar with the organization, Oxbow, Inc. is a land trust that owns the Oxbow Nature Conservancy, specifically to protect the wetlands located where the Great Miami River empties into the Ohio River. Jon has served as board president of Oxbow, Inc. for 20 years. Julie's role as Oxbow's land steward is to maintain the Oxbow lands. Julie is one of two Oxbow employees. The Oxbow is mostly volunteer run and has never had to take any federal or state grants.



Julie Rizzo, Oxbow, Inc. Land Steward, clearing harmful invasive plants to encourage the growth of native species.

When Jon was asked about the most rewarding part of his job, he responded, "Seeing the Oxbow Nature Conservancy as it currently is. When I took over the presidency, we owned half the land that we currently own." Additionally, the organization has been able to expand working with Hamilton County Great Parks.

Julie and Jon both spoke about how important Oxbow land is locally, explaining that flood plains are critical to our environment, and preservation of our cities. Additionally, Jon mentioned the importance of education in conservation, and how people often put our economy ahead of the interests of nature. Jon stated that often, while delivering presentations to inner city residents, many of the children would observe the stuffed animals that were displayed and question whether or not they were truly alive. Jon finds it fulfilling to see children in awe

of things we often take for granted, such as the feel of bird feathers.

The Archeological Research Institute has had the privilege of working with Oxbow, Inc. for several years now, and when asked why it is critical for conservation and archeology to collaborate, Jon answered, "For me, we are all after preservation, protection, and truth. We (Oxbow, Inc.) are looking at how the land is functioning today; ARI is looking back at a sliver of time where another group of people were looking at things the exact same way."

Julie spoke about the similarities of the two disciplines and discussed the importance of the research being done in paleobotany in relation to land stewardship. She explained that having data that shows what the land may have looked like thousands of years ago can give land stewardship direction on how to restore the land in the future.



Jon Seymour, Oxbow Board President, Leading a tour of the Oxbow wetlands.

It was amazing to be able to converse with such driven individuals and gain deeper insight into the critical work being done by the organization. The relationship between Oxbow and ARI can only grow in the future, and it is encouraging to imagine all the wonderful things to come.

If you would like to learn more about Oxbow Inc., follow their latest schedule of activities and view their outstanding photo album, visit them at: www.oxbowinc.org or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/oxbowinc.



The next workshop I attended was titled "Interacting with the Past, Using Online and In-Person Games to Teach Archaeology and Heritage." In this interesting workshop, the speaker discussed her post-doctoral work developing games that can be used to educate the public about the importance of archaeology and history. The session leader demonstrated a "who-done-it" game reminiscent of "Clue." At the beginning of the game, each player is secretly assigned a character to play. Each player's bio has information about the character and a list of answers hinting at both guilt and innocence. Only the guilty party knows that they are guilty. The players ask questions, hoping to identify the culprit. It was a fun game and well put together. We see great potential in the use of games as learning tools.

The last workshop I attended that day was titled "50+ Public Outreach Hacks to Borrow or Adapt." The speaker was very informative, and we were able to borrow or adapt a number of ideas from this workshop.

The following day I attended a panel titled "Value Add and Force Multiply, Working with Veterans in Archaeology". The panel was headed by Dr. McKinnon from ECU, members of Task Force Dagger, members of New South Archaeology, and others. Dr. McKinnon discussed her experience with working with veterans to identify and recover remains from sunken WWII sites.

New South discussed their Veterans Curation Program and how they have worked to provide opportunities for veterans to learn curation and help the Army Corps of Engineers curate their collections.

As the director of ARI's VALOR (Veterans Archaeological Learning Opportunities & Research) program, I was invited to speak about how we have worked to make field archaeology accessible to veterans. During the question-and-answer portion of this panel, one of the attendees asked if there was a veteran's archaeology support network. I answered that there currently is not, but we could start one. After the panel, several veterans and I stayed after to make that happen. We created a Facebook Page called "Veteran's Archaeology Network." We also discussed working with Task Force Dagger to provide terrestrial archaeology methods for their veterans.

Overall, I would say we got a lot of good information from the Conference on Public Archaeology. We also learned that ARI is doing a lot of great work! We had several groups interested in our programming and our approach to public archaeology. The next conference will be in 2025 and I'm looking forward to learning at the next.



Junior Archaeology

Connect the Dots

We found this picture of a famous archaeologist in the attic, but it's faded and needs to be restored. Can you help by connecting the dots and coloring it in so we can identify the mystery archaeologist?

Latest Happenings at ARI

By: Samy Norris & Molly Cowan

With 2023 Field Season in the rear view we are looking forward to what lies ahead for ARI in 2024. As we await the next field season, lets take a look back on how the end of 2023 has been going here at ARI!



Programming Manager, Betsy Dulle, at Dearborn County Ag Day.



Happy Hour History in October, featuring Greg Monzel from Persimmon Herb School. Learning about fall foraging.



Experimental Archaeology Manager, Forrest Schmitt, honing his skills at atlatl carving.



ARI staff, volunteers, ArchaeoCorps members, and United Way volunteers teamed up to make site tear-down a huge success this year!



ARI's field trip to Butler County Historical Society with ArchaeoCorps members and volunteers. We are so excited to grow our partnership with them!



Archaeological Research Institute



ARI Calendar of Events

December 2023

9th.....Rock, Fossil, and Artifact Identification Day 10:00am-2:00pm

14th.....Youth Archaeology Club 4:30pm-6:30pm

16th.....Youth Archaeology Club 10:00am-12:00pm

ARI Closed for the Holidays December 17th through January 1st

January 2024

13th.....Rock, Fossil, and Artifact Identification Day 10:00am-2:00pm

18th.....Happy Hour History-ARI Speaker Series: Samy Norris - Intro to Archaeology 6:30pm

February 2024

10th.....Rock, Fossil, and Artifact Identification Day 10:00am-2:00pm

Have you considered becoming an ARI Member?

ARI is a non-profit organization, dedicated to making archaeology accessible to the general public. By becoming a member, you will be supporting our efforts to protect archaeological sites, to educate the public through tours, lectures, and hands-on experiences, and to train the next generation of archaeologists through certifications, internships, research projects and certified field school. It is through the generosity of people like you that we are able to provide most of our services free of charge. For information on how you can become a member, check us out at: <https://exploreari.org/membership/>



Become a member today!