

Between a Rock and a Hard Place

Archeology in a National Recreation Area

Cultural resource managers in the National Park Service are oftentimes caught between the proverbial “rock,” preservation laws or regulations, and the “hard place,” the park’s enabling legislation.

The “rock”: the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470, et seq.), is designed to encourage identification and preservation of the cultural resources of the United States¹ and gives the National Park Service the lead role in this effort.

The “hard place”: Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area (NRA) was established on September 1, 1965, pursuant to Public Law 89-158, “...to provide for public outdoor recreation use and enjoyment of the proposed Tocks Island Reservoir and lands adjacent thereto by the people of the United States and for preservation of the scenic, scientific, and historic features contributing to public enjoyment of such lands and waters....” The park’s mission is to provide outdoor recreation opportunities while conserving the natural, cultural, and scenic resources.

In addition, confidentiality regulations of archeological sites (site location, character, and nature) can often hinder interpretation of these resources to the public. Since America’s bicentennial, the public’s awareness of, and interest in,

archeology has grown steadily. How does the cultural resource manager balance the legal requirements of confidentiality, conservation, and preservation and still respond to and encourage the public’s interest?

Delaware Water Gap NRA lies within the upper Delaware River Basin, a unique drainage system containing the physical evidence of a rich natural and cultural past. This area contains the remnants of the final Pleistocene glaciation that provided an abundant natural environment enticing the earliest North American inhabitants to exploit its resources. These resources supported human occupation continuously from approximately 10,500 BP to the present day. This rich history is preserved in both the historical and archeological record of the park.

There are currently 458 documented archeological sites within the park. The park contains the premier prehistoric and contact period archeological sites in the mid-Atlantic states. Among these sites, several have been placed in a specially designated district based on their unique and nationally significant composition. This district, the Minisink Historic District, received National Landmark status on April 19, 1993. It consists of 1,320 acres of land within the northern portion of the park, in Pike County, PA, and Sussex County, NJ. The landmark consists of 7 contributing and 12 non-contributing archeological properties, and 1 contributing standing structure.

Archeological research in the Delaware River Valley still attracts scholars and local prehistory enthusiasts much as it did the early antiquarians. Research in the 19th century centered on the relics of the past, the study of the artifacts and monuments of ancient times. However, little research was done on the cultures of those ancient populations.²

It was not until late in the first half of the 20th century that serious research was conducted based on the development of chronologies, context, and function.³ During the 1960s and 1970s, federal legislation provided for the preser-

Excavations at Harry's Farm Site c. 1967, by Professor Kraft, Seton Hall University. NPS photo.





Professor Pam Crabtree and NYU undergraduate and graduate students excavating at Fort Namanock. NPS photo.

vation and protection of prehistoric and historic resources and the shift in anthropological and archeological research to cultural evolution.⁴

In the late 1950s, the proposed construction of the Tocks Island Dam stimulated historical and archeological interest in this valley. Historians and archeologists were summoned to identify, record, and salvage data before the valley was dammed. Professional archeologists began their surveys in 1959, and by the mid-1960s, recognized that this area offered an abundant wealth — and well preserved record — of prehistoric occupation.

From 1964 through 1975, under federal government contract, W. Fred Kinsey III, of Franklin and Marshall College, and Herbert C. Kraft, of Seton Hall University, undertook extensive archeological investigations in response to the proposed Tocks Island Dam project. Their work, along with others from the New Jersey State Museum, helped lay the foundation of a cultural history of this region. During the 1980s and 1990s, the National Park Service continued long-term archeological investigations in response to planned development projects and completed a predictive modeling survey in the park.

Academic presence in the park saw a hiatus from 1975 until 1997, when New York University's (NYU) Department of Anthropology was asked to research French and Indian War period fortifications in the park. In 2000, Kutztown University (KU) of Pennsylvania was added to a growing list of academic partners researching various natural and cultural resources in the park. Kutztown University's Department of Anthropology is continuing research of the Brodhead Site begun by Kinsey in 1965.⁵

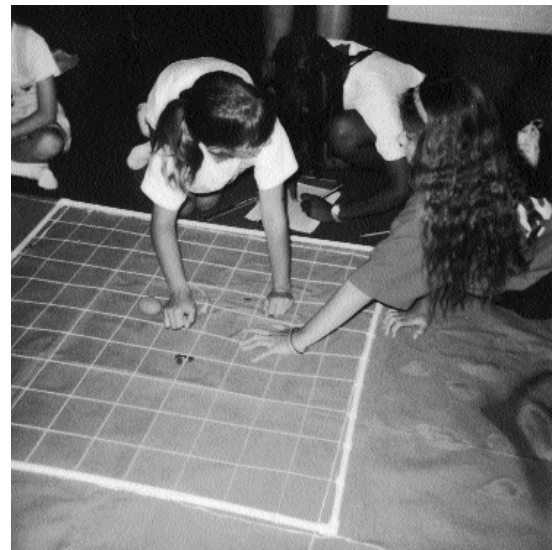
Fifth grade students working with the Outreach Archeology Education Trunk. NPS photo.

These university students and other volunteers serve a dual purpose at the park. They allow us to take on larger projects in a world of diminishing fiscal and human resources while, at the same time, providing an opportunity to engage the public in understanding both the “how to” and “why” of archeology.

Between 1994 and 2001, 201 volunteers donated 10,505 hours assisting in archeological excavations at sites including the McDade Recreational Trail, Trach/Shoemaker House, Bushkill Boat Access, Foster-Armstrong House, and Schneider Farm.^{6,7} These volunteers were students, professional archeologists, amateur archeologists, teachers, and retired persons and ranged from 12 to 77 years old.

The popularity of archeology not only draws committed volunteers but, unfortunately, also attracts the criminal element. Between 1995 and 2001, there were 134 illegal surface collecting cases and five ARPA (Archeological Resources Protection Act of 1979, 16 U.S.C. 470aa-mm) cases in the park.

To combat this increase in illegal collecting, the park implemented two major programs in 1995. A 40-hour ARPA class for all Law Enforcement Park Rangers raised awareness of archeological resources and provided tools to help the park staff enforce the law. In addition, an Outreach Archeology Education Trunk was developed for 4th- through 6th-grade students to promote upper Delaware River Valley archeology in the area's school districts. The trunk simulates a portion of a Late Woodland habitation site



Archeological Technician Lori Rohrer and three middle school students excavating a test unit at the Foster-Armstrong House. NPS photo.



excavated in the park during the late 1960s. Cultural features (i.e., post molds, storage pits, and hearth outlines) were painted onto a light brown canvas tarp with a site grid painted over it. Late Woodland period artifacts, recovered from illegal collectors, are placed on the tarp near the features or at a location of a special activity. The program introduces the students to the study of archeology and the prehistory of the valley by recording, analyzing, classifying, and interpreting the gathered evidence.

During the last decade, the park's emphasis on interpreting the upper Delaware River Valley's prehistoric and historic sites and collections has helped raise public awareness of conservation and preservation. The interpretive services branch offers well attended programs throughout the year, ranging from campfire programs about the Lenape, the native people, to a spring lecture series by natural and cultural resource professionals discussing current research in the park. A hands-on activity booklet, "Junior Time Traveler," has also been developed for children.

We share information on the park's archeological wealth through these and other educational programs and through the availability of publications like the Kraft and Kinsey monographs in the park's visitor centers. But we also realize that the information we provide, not to mention the vast quantity of data that is only a click away on the Internet, can be used by those who see a different value — a market value — for these resources.

The approach we have developed to the "rock" and "hard place" conundrum identified at the outset of this article is to respect both. Respect the need to keep silent about the specifics of archeological sites to deter those who would do them harm. At the same time, respect

the right of the public to know — and our responsibility to teach — about these publicly owned treasures. By sharing some, but not all, information, we can stimulate an interest in archeology and develop an understanding of the importance of these resources. When our visitors are our partners in preservation, we have huge allies in fending off the illegal collection of surface archeological materials, illegal metal detector prospecting, and illegal excavation of prehistoric and historic resources.

We need their help. The protection of 70,000 acres, 458 sites, and one landmark district is too much for any one archeologist.

Notes

- 1 Michael A. Mantell, "The National Historic Preservation Act" in *Managing National Park System Resources: A Handbook on Legal Duties, Opportunities, and Tools*. Michael A. Mantell, editor. (Washington, D.C.: The Conservation Foundation, 1990), 99-106.
- 2 Jay F. Custer, *Prehistoric Cultures of Eastern Pennsylvania*. Anthropological Series Number 7. (Harrisburg, PA: Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1996), 39-40.
- 3 Ibid. p. 57.
- 4 Ibid. pp. 81-82.
- 5 Fred W. Kinsey III, *Archaeology in the Upper Delaware Valley, a Study of the Cultural Chronology of the Tocks Island Reservoir*. (Harrisburg, PA: Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1972).
- 6 John R. Wright, "Archeological Investigations at the Peter Trach/Jacob Shoemaker House: A View of Settler Life", Proceedings of the 1995 Delaware Water Gap 30th Anniversary Symposium. November 18, 1995. (East Stroudsburg, PA: R.K.R. Hess Associates, Inc.), 31-41.
- 7 John R. Wright, *Archeological Investigations South of Randall Creek and South of Bushkill Access and Additional Archeological Investigations of the Stoehr Site, 36 Pi 148, Bushkill Access in the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, Lehman Township, Pike County, Pennsylvania*. (Bushkill, PA: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, 1997).

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