

Evening with Our Ancestors

What is Archaeology?

Archaeology is the study of human society, primarily through the recovery and analysis of the material culture and environmental data that they have left behind, which includes artifacts, architecture, biofacts and cultural landscapes.

There are different perspectives on archaeology; non native views see archaeology as a learning tool to learn about the history of the people that inhabited the land as well as protection and management of archaeological resources by removing by excavation and placing in an institution such as a museum.

First Nations people have a particular connection to the past, to our ancestors and the things they leave behind, archaeology can seem intrusive, disrespectful and destructive but it can also be beneficial by locating these sites and documenting them for educational use by the First Nations.

There are also different views on what is considered a significant archaeological resource.

Stages of Archaeological Assessment

Stage 1: background study and property inspection

The archaeologist determines whether there is potential for archaeological sites on the property. He or she reviews geographic, land use and historical information for the property and the relevant surrounding area, visits the property to inspect its current condition and contacts the ministry to find out whether or not there are any known archaeological sites on or near the property. A Stage 2 assessment is required when the archaeologist identifies areas of archaeological potential.

Stage 2: property assessment

The archaeologist surveys the land to identify any archaeological resources on the property being developed. For a ploughed field, he or she will walk back and forth over it looking for artifacts on the surface. In forests, overgrown pasture areas or any other places that cannot be ploughed, he or she will dig parallel rows of small holes, called test pits, down to sterile subsoil at regular intervals and sift the soil to look for artifacts. He or she may use other strategies if properties are paved, covered in fill or have deeply buried former topsoil (such as floodplains or former sand dunes). The archaeologist will help determine whether any archaeological resources found are of sufficient cultural heritage value or interest to require Stage 3 assessment.

Stage 3: site-specific assessment

This stage is for all archaeological sites that may be of cultural heritage value or interest. The archaeologist accurately determines the size of the archaeological site, evaluates its cultural heritage value or interest and, where necessary, makes recommendations for Stage 4 mitigation strategies. To this end, he or she conducts further background research and fieldwork that expands the information gathered in Stage 2. He or she maps the spatial limits of a site and acquires further information about

the site's characteristics by excavating one-metre by one-metre square test units across the site. Based on circumstances, some sites, for example ones that have been paved or are deeply buried, may require specialized methods of assessment.

Stage 4: mitigation of development impacts

This stage involves implementing conservation strategies for archaeological sites that are of cultural heritage value or interest. Determining the best approach for conserving the site may include reviewing possible strategies with the development proponent, the municipality or other approval authority, Aboriginal communities, and other heritage stakeholders.

Conserving archaeological sites that have cultural heritage value or interest does not mean stopping development. Conservation can involve putting long-term protection measures in place around an archaeological site to protect it intact. The site is then avoided while development proceeds around it. This is called protection 'in situ' and is always the preferred option for mitigation of development impacts to a site. If protection is not viable, mitigation can involve documenting and removing an archaeological site, through excavation, before development takes place.

Law & Archaeology

There are formal obligations by the Federal and Provincial governments to plan for and protect archaeological resources. These obligations arise from international treaties, federal policy and statutes as well as provincial policies and statutes. The laws on archaeological resources do change from place to place; currently Ontario is the only province in Canada that does not automatically protect archaeological resources from being destroyed.

Federal Legislations that recognizes archaeological resources are:

- *Cultural Property Export and Import Act*
- *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*
- Parks Canada Policies

Provincial Legislation that recognize archaeological resources are:

- *Ontario Heritage Act*
- *Cemeteries Act*
- *Funeral, Burials and Cremation Services Act*
- *Public Lands Act* – Administered by MNR
- *Environmental Assessment Act*
- *Planning Act*

Where do First Nations fit into the process?

First Nations are recognized in these *Acts*:

- *Ontario Cemeteries Act*
- *Ontario Heritage Act*
 - Standards and Guidelines for Engaging Aboriginal Communities in Archaeology – Stage 3 requires the archaeologist to consult with First Nations when dealing with an aboriginal archaeological resource.
- *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*

These *Acts* do recognize archaeological resources but they do NOT properly address the protection and preservation of the sites especially when dealing with First Nations. The *Acts* only seem to provide direction to how to deal with these sites from the property owner side of things. Some *Acts* do not apply on private land so there is lack of protection of sites that are located on private property.

How did Curve Lake become involved in Archaeology?

Under the *Ontario Heritage Act*, there is a requirement for archaeologist to consult with the closest First Nation in proximity (or if able to determine, the closest affiliated First Nation) when an aboriginal archaeological site is disturbed, usually by some sort of development. Due to the rich archaeological potential of aboriginal sites in the territory of Curve Lake First Nation, we receive notifications when these types of sites are uncovered and are asked to become involved with sites by legal requirements put upon the archaeologist.

As First Nations people it is our responsibility to care for our ancestors and their belongings if they become disturbed due to some form of development to ensure the protection and the utmost respect is shown to these sites.

Ongoing Issues with Archaeology

There are various issues that are ongoing with archaeology, some are good and some are not so good.

Currently, we are building relationships with archaeologists working in the area which allows our people to participate on archaeological assessments as field crew members; gaining a better understanding of the stages of archaeology and represent Curve Lake First Nation as a First Nation Archaeological Liaison.

We have been trying to establishing a repository for archaeological materials that are currently being stored in storage lockers or at homes of archaeologists. There has been interest in transferring the artifacts over to First Nations, but without a “proper” First Nations repository the Ministry of Tourism and Culture will not allow a transfer of materials.

Also there have been opportunities to provide input into regulations on archaeology and burials, although it is a difficult process, we are moving in the right direction.

First Nations are moving towards preserving sites instead of removal and reburial on reserve. It is important to recognize that our people were buried in a respectful way and when we begin to remove them to allow for “progress” we are losing our history and connection to that area.

Some of the not so good issues pertain to territories, significance of archaeological resources and media. There are many overlapping territories between First Nations and other aboriginal groups which can cause confusion with who should be consulted when Aboriginal archaeological resources are encountered.

There are debates on the definition of significance and size of a site when dealing with archaeological resources; due to our way of living lightly on the land, the Mississauga tribes leave little evidence behind so it is viewed as if no one occupied that land since the archaeologists do not find a huge village site or ossuary which are normally associated with the Huron Wendat or Iroquoian tribes.

Media can portray First Nations in a bad way which can hinder the processes that take place when an archaeological resource has been uncovered for example, Caledonia or Ipperwash.

Curve Lake First Nation is working hard to address these issues so that archaeological resources are being preserved and protected within our territory.

What are archaeological sites has Curve Lake First Nation been involved with?

Rosedale – this was the very first archaeological site that Curve Lake First Nation was involved with. Anne Taylor, Curve Lake Cultural Archivist, was asked to take this on by Chief Knott.

The archaeological site was located when a subdivision was being developed in Rosedale, Ontario. The construction crew uncovered human remains of a single female which is believed to be from 7,000 to 8,000 BP (before present) along with grave goods. Archaeologist did an assessment of the site and removed the remains which were reburied in Curve Lake Cemetery. All financial cost of the reburial was absorbed by Curve Lake First Nation.

Kollard Collection – came from landowners who developed their house on the Northwest shores of Balsam Lake. The Landowner called Curve Lake to see if we were interested in taking them off their hands. Within the collection of artifacts, there were bone fragments that were identified and consisted of 2 to 3 individuals (1 or 2 children and 1 adult). There was no archaeological assessment done at the landowner’s property. The remains were reburied in the Curve Lake Cemetery.

Anishnaabe maa yaa wewena guh yeshmono - Brock Street – there has been two documentations of this burial site; once in the 1960’s when a parking lot was being developed. The City of Peterborough at the time removed the remains and placed them in a museum. In 1991, Curve Lake First Nation signed an MOU to transfer the remains to CLFN. The 2nd documentation was in 2004 when the parking lot underwent a refurbishment, a small pocket of bone fragments were uncovered. Curve Lake First Nation and Hiawatha First Nation were notified of the findings by archaeologists. The remains were reburied at the site and not in Curve Lake First Nation. If you go to Brock Street in Peterborough, there is a small grassy area in the middle of the parking lot that is the designated aboriginal cemetery.

Jacob Island – Camp Maple Leaf was developing on the island, construction crew unearthed human remains within the first scoop into the soil. Archaeologist from Trent University conducted the assessment of the site, there were 2 sets of remains identified, adult and child within the disturb soil. More remains were uncovered during the assessment but were left in situ. The site was an important place that was utilized by our ancestors for over 5000 years as determined by the archaeologist but also by Curve Lake member, Doug Williams before any remains were ever discovered. All the remains were reburied at the site and designated an aboriginal burial ground so there will be no development within that area of the island.

Hastings Burial Mounds – Landowner was developing a basement when a human skull was unearthed. Archaeologists were called into conduct an assessment. Curve Lake First Nation along with Alderville First Nation, Scugog First Nation and Hiawatha First Nation were notified and are working together to ensure protection of this burial mound. The assessment is still in progress and is projected to be completed by the summer 2012. The First Nations involved have First Nation archaeological liaisons on site working with the archaeologist to complete the assessment. There have been multiple sets of remains identified at the site and will hopefully be reburied at the site.

The archaeologist that is conducting the assessment was present and provided a more detail presentation with pictures of the artifacts along with descriptions of burial mounds and the history of them.

Also present was Caleb Musgrave from Hiawatha First Nation, Caleb had taken the First Nation Archaeological Liaison training in 2010 in Curve Lake First Nation. Caleb was in attendance to speak about his experience completing the training. He also mentioned how the training helped guide him into university to pursue his Bachelor of Arts in Archaeology. He went on to say how this training opportunity was a life changing experience.

First Nation Archaeological Liaison Training

Due to the requirements by the Crown to consult with First Nations on aboriginal archaeological resources, there have been an overwhelming number of requests for liaisons to be present on site. Curve Lake First Nation along with Association of Professional Archaeologist developed and implemented a one week training course to familiarize First Nations peoples with archaeology and the traditional teaching associated with burials. There were 25 people involved in the training that took place in March 2010 at the Curve Lake Seniors Center; there were community members from Alderville First Nation, Beausoleil First Nation, Curve Lake First Nation, Georgina Island First Nation, Hiawatha First Nation, and Scugog First Nation. Once the training was completed, some of the liaisons were hired on by archaeologist as a part of their field crew. The archaeologists who participated in this training volunteered their time and expertise to help First Nations become more involved in archaeology.

At the start of June 2011, there was another opportunity for training First Nation Archaeological Liaisons that took place in Alderville First Nation. The training was offered to Williams Treaty Communities members; there were 8 representatives from Alderville First Nation, Beausoleil First Nation, Georgina First Nation, and Hiawatha First Nation who participated in the 6 week long training course. The course

was lengthened to 6 weeks to allow for more hands on experience for the liaisons. The liaisons ventured to 3 different sites located in Toronto, Bewdley, and Jacob Island; to experience the different types of sites that may be encountered while conducting an archaeological assessment, again archaeologists that mentored our liaisons throughout the 6 week training course were volunteers. A graduation ceremony was held in Alderville First Nation at the end of July 2011.

Door Prizes went to Mindy Knott, Edith Knott & Emma Taylor.

At the end of the evening, everyone in attendance was thanked for coming and showing such an interest in archaeology and how Curve Lake First Nation has been involved over the past few years.

If you have any questions or comments that you would like to share with us, we would greatly appreciate it. We love to hear feedback from Curve Lake members on how we can better communicate and share information that will benefit us all and make Curve Lake an even better place to live.

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