



Mississippi Valley Archaeology Center

at the University of Wisconsin - La Crosse

2010 Annual Report





Joseph A. Tiffany

"Our thanks for your continued support, time, energy, and money in helping to make MVAC a success."

-Joseph A. Tiffany

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From the Executive Director

MVAC had a very productive year. We conducted field studies in Minnesota and Iowa as well as Wisconsin. This summer MVAC hosted a prestigious National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Summer Seminar for teachers from around the country. Project Directors Bonnie Jancik, Kathy Stevenson and Jim Theler were successful in obtaining funding from NEH for another Summer Institute in 2011. Both the University field school, under MVAC Board Member Dr. David Anderson, and MVAC's public field school, directed by Connie Arzigian, shifted to a site complex in Holmen where we hope to work for the next several years. This fall MVAC hired a new architectural historian, Mr. Farid Sabongi. He brings much experience to MVAC and we are very happy to have him on board.

Although Jim Theler says he is retired, we keep him busy! Jim and I have been working on bone and shell tools from an important Central Plains tradition earth-lodge site in southwest Iowa. Jim continues to work with our students on a regular basis, assisting them on their research projects as well as helping us manage our comparative faunal materials.

MVAC is a sponsored research and education unit of the Sociology and Archaeology Department of the UW - La Crosse. The services we provide in public education, research, curation and site preservation are done with minimal direct university support. If we are to survive, MVAC must generate its own income. MVAC's long-standing record of achievement in our surrounding service area is due to a dedicated, hard-working professional staff. Your continued support is a must if we are to provide the educational and research services expected from MVAC. Please share with the community and friends the importance of what MVAC does. Our thanks for your continued support, time, energy, and money in helping to make MVAC a success.

MVAC Staff



L-R: Farid Sabongi, Joe Tiffany, Kathy Stevenson, Wendy Holtz-Leith, Marcee Peplinski, Jean Dowiasch, Connie Arzigian. Back: Bonnie Jancik, Vicki Twinde-Javner, Mike Bednarchuk.

2010 Award Recipients

James P. Gallagher Award: Prairie Sand & Gravel, Inc.

This year's James P. Gallagher Award is being given to Prairie Sand & Gravel, Inc., headed by Blair Dillman (President) and his son Brad (Vice President), in recognition of their cooperative and constructive approach to integrating archaeology with their upcoming development projects. Over the past several years, the Dillmans have shown initiative in seeking MVAC's help with key upcoming projects in Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin. Prairie du Chien is the location of many important prehistoric and historic archaeological sites, and the Dillmans' proactive approach has ensured that appropriate archaeological work has been conducted well ahead of actual construction time.



Kathy Stevenson and Mike Straskowski monitor heavy equipment work at an archaeological site owned by Prairie Sand & Gravel, Inc. in Prairie du Chien.



Public Field Survey on the Trocinski fields.

Regional Archaeology Award: Todd and Andrea Trocinski Family-

Every spring, we face the challenge of trying to persuade farmers to let several dozen people, including children, hike across their newly planted fields looking for artifacts. For more than 10 years, we have at least one family that we could count on, and their participation has made the MVAC spring field survey a wonderful experience for several hundred people over the years. Andrea and Todd Trocinski have not only let us walk their fields, but Andrea and their children are right out there with us, with sharp eyes out for points and ceramics. Andrea has also shared what she's found in her own yard, and talked to us about what others in the area have found, helping us to put together a richer picture of the past. We thank them for their support over the years with this Regional Archaeology Award.

Archaeology Education Award: Bill Gresens

Bill Gresens has been an avid supporter of MVAC's Public Education Program since it began in 1991, and was involved in archaeology education through the La Crosse Area Archaeology Society before it became a formal MVAC program. As the former UW-L Grants Officer, Bill was extremely helpful in researching funding sources, writing proposals, providing matching funds, and assisting with travel to grant-related conferences. Bill has been a field supervisor during the Public and High School Field Schools since time began, and has also worked with teachers in the field on several professional development projects. Since 2001, Bill has reviewed over 100 archaeology fiction books for MVAC's on-line book review page. He continues to write reviews and present his findings to the public and the NEH Summer Scholars. Bill's passion for archaeology is obvious whether he is helping out at the artifact show, surveying in the field, or working in the lab. For all his help in the past, present, and future, we are please to honor Bill Gresens with the Archaeology Education Award.



Bill Gresens

Archaeology Education Program

2010 Highlights

- More than 155 presentations were given by MVAC staff this past year, reaching more than 6,400 people.
- The Artifact Show was attended by over 2,000 people who viewed artifact collections from MVAC and 18 area collectors.
- Thirty-two participants joined the Public Field Survey in celebration of Wisconsin's Archaeology Month.
- The Public Field School was held in Onalaska, and was attended by 16 adults and high school students.
- Archaeological displays at Riverside Museum and the UW-L Archaeology Center and Laboratories were well attended this past year.
- Last year MVAC's educational staff presented at three educational conferences.
- MVAC classes & field schools assisted at archaeological sites in the area.
- Survey respondents rated MVAC staff and resources as excellent and 100% said they would use MVAC's services again.
- Seven grants were received to do special educational projects.

The Public Outreach Program appreciates the continuing support of MVAC members and the Board of Directors, fellow colleagues, and faculty and students from the UW-L Archaeological Studies Program.



2010 Public and High School Field School in the Holmen area.

Teachers from across the nation came to La Crosse to participate in a unique learning experience this summer. MVAC and UW-La Crosse hosted a three-week Summer Institute for Teachers titled "Exploring the Past: Archaeology in the Upper Mississippi River Valley."



NEH Summer Scholars experiment with a pump drill.

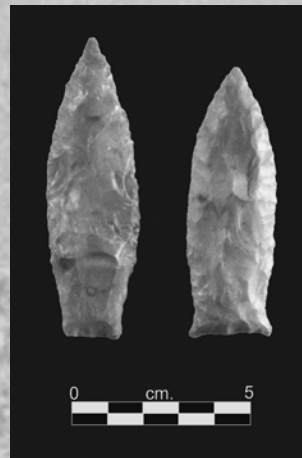


NEH Summer Scholars at the entrance to Larsen Cave.

Contracts Program

MVAC's contracts staff had a productive and eventful year that included staff changes and a wide range of successful contract projects. After Robert "Ernie" Boszhardt retired, long-time MVAC affiliate Kathy Stevenson became MVAC's new Projects Director in February 2010. Architectural historian Renee Hutter left MVAC in February, and in August, Farid Sabongi became MVAC's new Senior Architectural Historian. Thanks to Farid's extensive historic preservation experience, MVAC's expanded capabilities now include adaptive reuse, structural evaluations, downtown redevelopment design, and other services.

Kathy and Farid joined MVAC contract staff—Connie Arzigian, Jean Dowiasch, Wendy Holtz-Leith, Vicki Twinde-Javner, Mike Bednarchuk, Mike Straskowski, and others—in conducting a variety of contract projects that ranged from surveys of timber-sales parcels to surveys and monitoring of highway construction projects. Clients included federal agencies such as the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and Natural Resources Conservation Service, state agencies such as the Wisconsin and Minnesota Departments of Transportation, and numerous corporate and private clients. MVAC is looking forward to continuing its business relationships with these agencies and corporations as well as its work with the Ho-Chunk Nation and other Tribal communities.



Paleoindian/Archaic projectile points found while monitoring in Prairie du Chien.



Mike Straskowski works on cleaning a mid-19th century limestone well found while monitoring for the new USH 18 Bypass in Prairie du Chien.



Wendy Holtz-Leith (left) and Matt Sitek surveying a farmstead depression in Fergus Falls, MN.

Background image: Surveying in Olmsted County, MN for a grant received from the Minnesota Historical Society.

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Flintknapping demonstration provided by Bob Keiper at the 2010 Artifact Show.

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Thanks to the many volunteers who helped MVAC over the past year. Your participation keeps our public outreach programs moving forward.

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