



THE DATUM POINT

Newsletter of the
NORTHERN VIRGINIA CHAPTER OF THE
ARCHEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF VIRGINIA

Chapter Website – www.nvcasv.org

February 2010

FROM THE PRESIDENT – JOHN KELSEY

I've talked with several members about doing one or two field trips a year to complement our normal monthly meetings. During months when there is a field trip, we would not conduct our normal meetings. As you can imagine, there are many opportunities to see and do interesting things in this area. Knowing how much we all like to drive around here, I expect the field trips would be weekend activities done within reasonable commuting distance of Fairfax County. I would like to get your views on this. If you have suggestions for possible trips or other comments -- positive or negative -- on the idea, please let me know. You can get in touch with me at jkelsey@cox.net.

During the past month, your chapter colleagues have been busy in the lab and helping Mike Johnson with a survey of Fountainhead Regional Park in preparation for new trail work. Fortunately, the weather has generally cooperated, and the findings were interesting and potentially very important. See Mike's summary later in this issue. Come spring, we hope to begin serious work on the McCue property at Colchester, with possible side trips to southern Virginia to do further work at Paleo sites along the Nottoway River.

The details of the 2011 Fairfax County budget will be released on February 23, at which time we'll find out what the impact is on County archaeology. Remember that the Supervisors can still reshape the budget, so keep those cards and letters going. Expect public hearings in March and April.

See you in the field.

**February's speaker –
Patrick O'Neill (again!)**

**Chapman's Mill, or the old stone
structure you see from I-66 west of
Gainesville!**



Mill in background, possible slave quarters in front

The lower portion of Chapman's Mill was constructed in the mid-1700s, making it one of the earliest industrial structures on the western Virginia frontier! Rebuilt at least twice, the mill is not rated as the tallest standing dry laid building in the western hemisphere. Slaves operated the mill before the Civil War, a huge BBQ was held there during the Civil War as the beef stored there was destroyed by the retiring Confederate forces so the Union Army would not get it.

The Northern Virginia Chapter has been asked to investigate the potential for outbuildings and other archaeological remains in lieu of the construction of a parking lot by the mill preservation group Turn the Mill Around Campaign.

FOUNTAINHEAD REGIONAL PARK SURVEY

– FIELDWORK

We completed the survey and the preliminary results will be in the next Northern Virginia Chapter-Archeological Society of Virginia, *Datum Point*. In summary, we identified 81 new archeological sites.

The only diagnostic points were recovered by Maggie Johnson (Late Archaic Bare Island point) and Chris Ramey (Middle Archaic Rice Lobed-like point).



We also identified 68 stone piles and tested one of them. No artifacts or features were associated with the tested pile, indicating that they were due to clearing agricultural fields. As soon as the weather relents we will attempt to test another pile in another area. This will be to confirm the initial assessment.

We were able to map and the previously recorded Mayhugh Cemetery. That included mapping graves and recording tombstone etchings.

Lab - We are nearly done with our cataloguing of Neha site artifacts. The weather forecast for the next two weeks is not good for field work so we will be in the lab on both Saturdays and Tuesdays during the regular hours.



Marker from Mayhugh Cemetery

FOUNTAINHEAD REGIONAL PARK BIKE TRAIL SURVEY – PROJECT UPDATE

A hearty crew of committed volunteers braved the dead of winter to climb up and own some of the most rugged terrain in Fairfax County to survey proposed improvements to a bike trail system in the park, which is located along the southern boundary of the County. The old trail system was designed by trail bikers and has resulted in severe erosion and some environmental damage. So the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority (NVRPA) had an expert, bike trail, consulting firm, Trail solutions, come in and redesign the trail system. The result will be 7.5 miles of trails.

The crew included CK Gailey, Diane Schug-O'Neill, Maggie Johnson, Chris Ramey, Becky Garber, John Kelsey, Gene Silva, and Jackie Cuyler. This provided the opportunity for Avocational Certification members to acquire hard-to-get field survey hours. More importantly it provided them and Certified Technicians to practice what they have learned in a totally new area.

Almost no previous detailed archeological survey work has been done on the uplands above the Occoquan Reservoir. This project was seen as a huge opportunity to fill in a gap in our archeological knowledge. We were rewarded handsomely.

The crew located 81 new archeological sites. The sites included relocating the Mayhugh Cemetery, which contained approximately 17 graves. This site was later revisited and recorded in more detail. Aimee Wells, CK Gailey and Diane Schug-O'Neill did an excellent job of mapping the graves and recording the grave markers (one pictured). The legible grave markers indicated that at least three of the graves dated to the middle of the 18th century.

Maggie Johnson and Chris Ramey discovered the only datable prehistoric artifacts (pictured). Maggie recovered the Bare Island, Savannah River variant point (left), which dates to approx. 4,500-3,700 BP (Late Archaic) on the Maggie's Point site. Chris recovered a quartz Rice Lobed-like point (left) from a different site called the Chris's Point site. It possibly dates to about 8,000 BP (Middle Archaic).

Sixty-eight unidentified quartz stone piles also were mapped. We tested one by pulling the stones off in quarter sections and doing shallow two-inch level excavations of the ground surfaces under the piles. A sample of the soil was sifted. Numerous possible quartz quarry related flakes and one possible nail fragment were observed. No pits or patterns to the stones were observed. The quartz debitage could have been quarry related, because they were similar to other flakes found around the piles. Preliminary analysis indicates that they probably are historic field piles.

We also mapped several prehistoric quartz quarries and stone lined hearths. The latter probably reflect old historic hunting and fishing camps from before the NVRPA acquired the property.

Although everyone was pretty tired after each day's work, it was an invigorating and productive survey.

FEDERAL CUTS - Important Message from Emily Wadhams, Vice President for Public Policy - February 1, 2010

PRESIDENT'S BUDGET REQUEST WOULD ELIMINATE OR REDUCE FUNDING FOR IMPORTANT HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAMS

In a shock to the historic preservation community, President Obama's 2011 Budget Request – released this morning – slashed funding for several key components of the national preservation program. It proposes to completely eliminate funding for Save America's Treasures and Preserve America grant programs. Perhaps what is most alarming is a White House blog that singles out these two programs as examples of programs that “weren't working well”[1]. Proposed funding for National Heritage Areas is reduced as well. We need your help to reinstate these cuts and make the case for the importance of these programs.

Details of program cuts in the proposed budget include:

- Zeroed-out funding of Save America's Treasures (SAT) program within the Historic Preservation Fund.

- Reduced the National Recreation and Preservation account by \$17 million which includes the elimination of the Preserve America grants and a proposed a 50% cut to National Heritage Areas. We are especially concerned about reductions to Save America's Treasures. It has enjoyed broad, bi-partisan Congressional support, and has played a vital role in successfully saving over 700 of America's most significant places in all 50 states, from Ellis Island to Mesa Verde National Park to Valley Forge to Thomas Edison's Invention Factory. In a statement early today, Richard Moe responded to the proposed cuts, “Over the last decade the Save America's Treasures program has helped preserve some of our most significant historic places through modest grants that leverage private dollars, create jobs and strengthen communities. What's not to like about this

Datum Point

program? It's incredibly short-sighted that the administration proposes eliminating it at a time when it's needed more than ever.”

The National Trust for Historic Preservation is very concerned these important programs, that preservationists have fought hard to create and fund, have taken such a big hit. We will be calling on all of you over the next few weeks to send the message to Congress that these programs are both effective and essential to federal preservation efforts. Please stay tuned to see how you can help in these efforts.

We will be providing more information about additional historic preservation elements of the President's Budget shortly.

Emily Wadhams | Vice President, Public Policy Department, National Trust for Historic Preservation | 1785 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington DC 20036

Phone: 202.588.6078 | Fax: 202.588.6462 | Email: Emily.Wadhams@nthp.org | www.PreservationNation.org

The National Trust for Historic Preservation helps people protect, enhance, and enjoy the places that matter to them. Become our newest member today! Learn more at www.PreservationNation.org.

GADSBY'S TAVERN MUSEUM - Gadsby's Tavern Museum has a chance to win \$250,000 to restore their Ice Well through this online initiative from Pepsi. - **But they need your help.**

It's easy -- sign up to vote and then vote every day in February for this project. <http://www.refresheverything.com/GadsbysIceWellRestoration>

submitted by - Ruth Reeder, Museum Educator Alexandria Archaeology Museum, 105 N. Union St., #327, Alexandria, VA 22314 ruth.reeder@alexandriava.gov, 703/746-4399, fax: 703/838-6491, www.AlexandriaArchaeology.org

**THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF
WASHINGTON, D.C.**

**A ONE DAY SYMPOSIUM ON THE
ARCHAEOLOGY OF OUR NATION'S
CAPITAL**

Presented in partnership with the National Museum of Natural History's Department of Anthropology & The Archaeological Conservancy.

Saturday, February 27th, 2010
Smithsonian Institution National Museum of Natural History - Baird Auditorium
1pm-4pm

Opening Remarks - Dr. Stephen Loring, Dept. Of Anthropology, NMNH and Andy Stout, Eastern Regional Director, The Archaeological Conservancy

The Archeology of Washington D.C. - Dr. Ruth Troccoli, City Archaeologist, Washington D.C.

Bold, Rocky, and Picturesque: the Archaeology of Rock Creek Park, a Wooded Refuge in the Nation's Capital - Dr. John Bedell, Senior Archaeologist, The Louis Berger Group, Inc.

Death, Dogs and Monuments: Excavations at Historic Congressional Cemetery - Dr. Laurie Burgess, Associate Chair, Dept. of Anthropology, NMNH

Gardens abounding in much gay and Variagated Foliage: Understanding George Washington's Upper Garden - Dr. Esther White, Director of Archaeology, Mount Vernon

Lost in Time: the Boy in the Iron Coffin - Deborah Hull-Walski, Collections Manager, Anthropology, NMNH, Dr. David Hunt, Collections Manager for Physical Anthropology, Dept. of Anthropology, NMNH

For more info contact:

Andy Stout
Eastern Regional Director

The Archaeological Conservancy
Eastern Regional Office
8 East 2nd St, Suite 101
Frederick, MD 21701
(ph) 301.682.6359
(cell) 240.285.2617
(fax) 301.682.7073
www.americanarchaeology.org

MAP SITE

from Diane Schug-O'Neill

This is cool, may not be the 1st of its kind, but it MIGHT be! Wish more maps were like this (especially for DC)

<http://www.thezoomablemap.com/>

well worth a look...

**Archaeology releases
the past from the
purgatory of time!**

NVC/ASV CHAPTER OFFICERS

President	John Kelsey	jkelsey@cox.net 703-922-8107
Vice-Presidents	Will and Wilke Nelson	wn01@cox.net
Treasurer	C.K. Gailey	treas@nvcasv.org
Corresponding Sec.	Maggie Johnson	stillmaggie@cox.net 703-455-6902
Recording Sec.	Felicia Glapion	glapfk11@yahoo.com
Editor	Patrick O'Neill	patrickloneill@verizon.net 703-249-9593

Fairfax County Archaeologists (FCPA)

Chapter Sponsors call 703-534-3881

Elizabeth Crowell	elizabeth.crowell@fairfaxcounty.gov
Mike Johnson	michael.johnson@fairfaxcounty.gov
Richard Sacchi	richard.sacchi@fairfaxcounty.gov

Other Public Archaeological Programs in N. Va.

Mount Vernon	Esther White	ewhite@mountvernon.org
Gunston Hall	Dave Shonyo	archaeology@gunstonhall.org 703-550-0441
Alexandria Museum	Pam Cressey	pamela.cressey@alexandriava.gov 703-838-4399 (information)

NVC/ASV MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name: _____
Phone (H): _____
(W): _____

ADDRESS: _____

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Individual (\$15) _____
Student (\$5) _____
Family (\$17) _____

New _____

Renewal _____

Return to:
NVC/Archeological Society of Virginia
2855 Annandale Rd.
Falls Church, VA 22042

*Chapter members should join our parent organization,
the Archeological Society of Virginia.
asv-archeology.org*

**The Chapter meets at 7:30p.m. on the second
Wednesday of each month at the James Lee
Center at the above address.**

EVERYONE IS WELCOME!!!!

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Falls Church, VA 22042

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