

Crossroads CRM Provides Applied Experience for NWCC Field School Students

Rick Budhwa and Jocelyn Franks

In the summer of 2012 students from Northwest Community College (NWCC), in partnership with Crossroads Cultural Resource Management, participated in a cultural resource management (CRM) field school that focused on the management of both tangible and intangible resources within North Central B.C.. Several local cultural and archaeological sites were visited over the course of this three-week field school. Most importantly, students gained invaluable experience from several high profile past and current Crossroads CRM projects.

In Hagwilget Canyon, located near Hazelton, B.C., community members gave a tour of the old village site. There are two designated archaeological sites in Hagwilget Canyon and dozens more in the area. In 2011 a high profile archaeological excavation took place in a burial ground (which had been disturbed by industrial development in 2006). Students from that year's field school had the opportunity to participate in the excavation and gain valuable work experience, working alongside professional archaeologists and community members. During the 2012 summer season, the CRM field school returned to the site of the excavation and students were given exposure to that project, with the assistance of some of the community workers who had been involved in the excavation process.

The field school also visited K'san, which is an interpretive Gitksan museum in Hazelton, B.C. Moving from longhouse to longhouse on a tour of the past through the present resonated with many of the students. They were able gain an understanding of lives both pre- and post-contact as well as experience some of the strong traditions that continue to live on in First Nations cultures today.

This field school also included Moricetown Canyon. Here, students were welcomed onto the territory by traditional drumming and singing, which included an exposure into the vibrant traditional lifeways of the Wet'suwet'en. Moricetown Canyon introduced students to traditional



Figure 1. Rick Budhwa in primary excavation trench. Hagwilget Village burial ground excavation. Photo by Jocelyn Franks

smoke houses and fishing methods. Moricetown Canyon was another site of an archaeological excavation by Crossroads CRM. Students were given an overview of the specifics of the project (another disturbance on a burial ground) as well as an understanding of the archaeological processes that are utilized in these cases. A few of the students expressed interest

in volunteer opportunities and were able to spend some of their time after the field school volunteering on the excavation in Moricetown Canyon.

Other sites that provided hands-on experience for students included Gitanyow (where some of the most impressive totem poles in B.C. reside), Battle Hill (a national historic site), the newly constructed

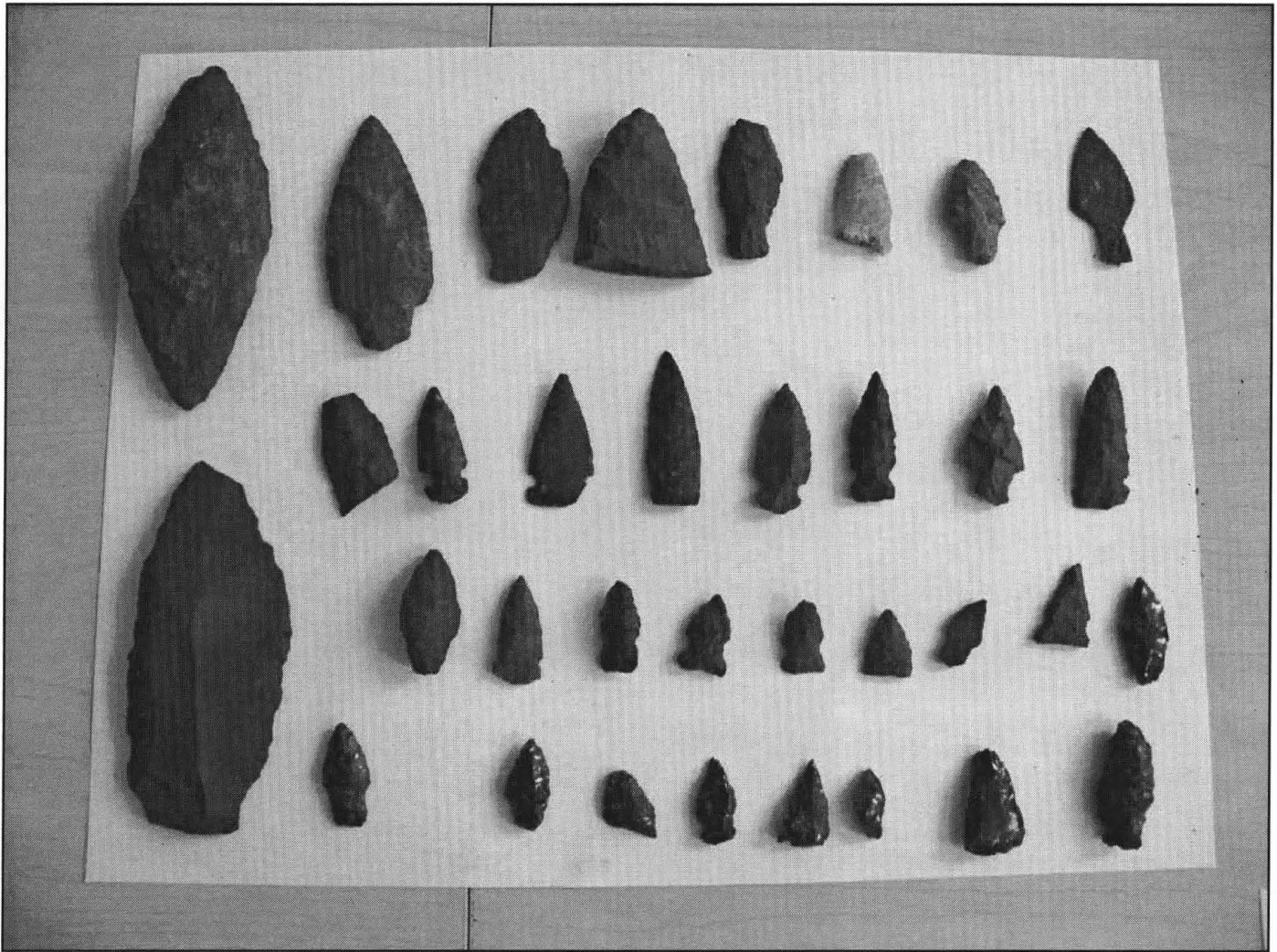


Figure 2. Various projectile points from Moricetown Canyon. Photo by Jocelyn Franks

Nisga'a museum, and Kitselas Canyon (where students learned the importance of cultural tourism).

In order to provide students with a comprehensive perspective of CRM, a historical visit to the old town site of Aldermere was included in this field school. Aldermere, once a bustling stop on the telegraph line, is located just outside of Telkwa, B.C. The historical perspective allowed students to see that CRM is a holistic discipline that encompasses more than just archaeological work.

Most importantly, this field school has illustrated to students a greater under-

standing of true cultural resource management, beyond just archaeology. Students left this field school with an understanding of the challenges First Nations face balancing traditional and contemporary land use practices. This is the ninth year that Crossroads CRM has collaborated with NWCC to provide students with a unique experience in the field of CRM. Each year our collective experience has contributed to better practices within cultural resource management. Our sincere gratitude to all of the First Nations who have guided us on this journey. For more information please visit: CrossroadsCRM.com.

Rick is the principal of Crossroads Cultural Resource Management and teaches anthropology, archaeology, history and First Nations studies at Northwest Community College.

Jocelyn is a cultural resource specialist for Crossroads CRM and is also a CRM instructor for the School of Exploration and Mining at NWCC.
