BC Field Schools

This summer contains a diverse range of archaeology field schools being offered at British Columbia's postsecondary institutions—just the University of British Columbia (UBC) alone offered four different field schools this year. These field schools can be taken by university students for credit and often have special days set aside for public visitation. This year's options range from testing of 2,400-year-old pithouse villages to foreshore surveys and even excavation at a historical logging camp. Field schools are being held on the west coast of Vancouver Island, on the province's north coast, and even in Nunavut and China, but most of the work is being conducted in the Greater Vancouver and Fraser Valley region.

Perhaps the most interesting item on the menu is the Fraser Valley Archaeological Project entitled "Stó:lo Identity in the Past." The project, headed by Dr. Dana Lepofsky of Simon Fraser University (SFU), is entering its second season this summer. It is a large multidisciplinary project that brings together several researchers from different institutions. The objective is to investigate shifting interaction and changing social identities among the Coast Salish Stó:lo of the Lower Mainland. The SFU field school, led by Dr. Lepofsky is teaming up this season with (1) David Schaepe, Stó:lo Nation Archaeologist; (2) Michael Lenert and Anthony Graesch from University of California-Los Angeles (UCLA); and (3) Dr. Michael Blake's UBC field school. Historian Keith Carlson of the University of Saskatchewan is another member of the large research team. This summer, they are excavating at Katz and Welqamex, pithouse village sites in the vicinity of Hope (SFU, UCLA) and archaeological mapping of other sites in Stó:lo territory (SFU, UBC). Some of the objectives include creating 3-D maps and collecting samples for radiocarbon dating. The regional scope of the project is crucial for improving the veracity of archaeological inferences about site-level changes in social, cultural, and political interaction.

Closer to the coast, Stan Copp is heading the Langara College field school in the pit polder region of Maple Ridge, while Bill Angelbeck lead the main UBC field school into the Gulf of Georgia to test and survey prehistoric defensive sites. Historical archaeology is the focus at Capilano College, where Robert Muckle will excavate a Japanese logging camp during the sixth season of the Seymour Valley Archaeology Project. In other corners of the province, Eric Forgeng's North Island College field school is working in Port Alberni this year, and David Archer is directing the Northwest Community College's field school in the Dundas Island Group, north of Prince Rupert.

Beyond the province, Dr. Sue Rowley and Dr. Zhichun Jing, both of UBC, are taking students to the Arctic and to China, respectively. Major Northwest universities south of the border are offering field schools in Idaho (University of Oregon) and in South East Asia (University of Washington).

Rastko Cvekic

Field School Details


When: seven weeks in May and June.

Contact: Robert Muckle (bmuckle@capcollege.bc.ca).

Web: http://www.geocities.com/bob_muckle/index.html

Langara College, Vancouver, in association with Katzie First Nation: Foreshore surveying of Pitt Lake and excavation of the Carruthers site (15 credit hours).

When: May 9 to August 5 (six weeks in the field).

Public Visitation: in negotiation with the landowner, individual visits are welcome.

Contact: Stan Copp (scopp@langara.bc.ca) and Tanja Hoffmann.

Web: http://www.langara.bc.ca/anthropology/archaeology/index.html

North Island College, Vancouver Island: Eric Forgeng (eric.forgeng@nic.bc.ca) will be instructing a field school in Port Alberni.

Note: For more information about these sites, see the feature article, "Archaeological Heritage in the Gulf Islands," by Eric McLay, which appeared in The Midden last year, issue 36(3/4).
Northwest Community College, Prince Rupert:
Excavations in the Dundas Island Group near Prince Rupert.
When: May 9 to July 15 (in the field from June 6 to July 8).
Public Visitation: groups of 5-10 can contact David Archer for more information
Contact: David Archer (darcher@nwcc.bc.ca; 250-624-6054 [local 5799])

Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, in collaboration with Stó:lo Nation:
Excavation of pithouse villages in the central Fraser Valley.
When: May 2 to July 29 (two months in the field).
Credits: 15 credits for Anth 433, 434, and 435.
Public Visitation: to be determined with the Stó:lo Nation.
Contact: Dr. Dana Lepofsky (dlepofsky@sfu.ca; 604-291-5403).
Web: http://www.sfu.ca/archaeology/dept/fschool/fs2005/index.html

University of British Columbia, Vancouver:
UBC will be offering four different field schools this summer. For further information, contact Patricia Ormerod (cbarc@interchange.ubc.ca; 604-822-2567).

UBC 1: Survey and Testing of defensive sites in the Gulf of Georgia.
When: May 24 to June 30.
Contact: Bill Angelbeck (angelbec@interchange.ubc.ca).

UBC 2: Archaeological mapping in the central Fraser Valley.
When: May 24 to June 24.
Contact: Dr. Michael Blake (tmblake@interchange.ubc.ca).

UBC 3: Survey and excavation at Anyang, capital of the Shang Dynasty, China.
When: May 28 to July 31.
Contact: Dr. Zhichun Jing (jingzh@interchange.ubc.ca).

UBC 4: Survey and excavation in Nunavut, in collaboration with the Inuit Heritage Trust.
When: 4.5 weeks in July.
Contact: Dr. Sue Rowley (srowley@interchange.ubc.ca).

ASBC Nanaimo Branch Proposes
Nanaimo Chinatown Heritage Park

This proposal was developed in response for the need to protect the heritage resources in the area known as Chinatown, situated between Machleary and Pine Streets, in Nanaimo, British Columbia. Currently, the area is slated for development and looting of archaeological deposits is well documented. Previous development of the area has impacted the site, destroying vital information and links to Nanaimo’s past. Chinatown has played an important part in the development of Nanaimo and preserving it would allow future generations the opportunity to explore and celebrate the area’s rich history.

In addition, the Cat Stream, an extremely sensitive salmon-bearing watercourse, runs through this area, which is presently overrun with invasive species, such as Himalayan Blackberry, and is threatened by garbage, the build up of silt, and water contamination. Without restoration efforts this area of the stream may be completely overrun with non-native species, limiting its salmon habitat potential. Removal of these species and riparian vegetation replanting may serve to improve the quality of fish habitat in the Cat Stream. Other areas of the Cat Stream have been successfully restored, bringing community groups together such as the Friends of the Cat Stream, Fairview Elementary School, and the Nanaimo Chapter of Trout Unlimited Canada.

The Archaeological Society of British Columbia – Nanaimo Branch proposes the establishment of a heritage park in this area that would allow for protection of the archaeological deposits, as well as protecting the fragile balance of the Cat Stream.

Paths marked with plaques depicting the history and natural features of the area would allow for educational and tourism opportunities. There is currently a proposed expansion to the Hecate Lodge (see above map, outlined in pink) to the north before the City of Nanaimo for approval. The ASBC-NB proposed that the area be transformed into the Nanaimo Chinatown Heritage Park in lieu of development. Few parks are found in Harewood and residents would have the opportunity to enjoy this green space and learn about the history of the area in which they live.

The current political climate in Nanaimo supports the creation of green spaces within city limits. The construction of this park could be linked to the adjacent Old City Quarter and would allow a space for local families, schools, and visitors to enjoy Nanaimo’s natural beauty and rich historical past.

In conclusion, the establishment of the Nanaimo Chinatown Heritage Park would serve to protect Nanaimo’s rich historical and ecological uniqueness, while increasing the value of the property both visually and economically. The Archaeological Society of BC – Nanaimo Branch is currently enlisting the support of interested parties and welcomes any comments or questions about our proposal.