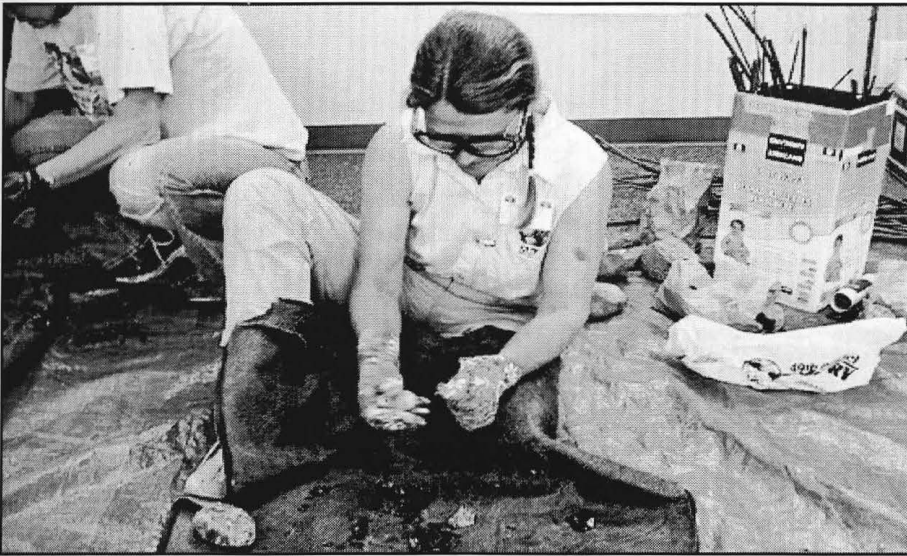


ASBC NEWS

Discover Archaeology – A Point of Contact

Julie Cowie



ASBC member Pat Knowles trying her hand at knapping.

Since 2002, the ASBC Nanaimo Branch has been conducting grass roots heritage conservation education through its "Discover Archaeology Interactive Program." From its small beginnings as a simple hands on display, this event has now grown to be one of our most successful programs to date, seeing almost one thousand participants in seven years. This program has given the Branch the opportunity to really get out from behind the academic veil that archaeology can sometimes hide behind and allow the public to really get their hands dirty...and occasionally a little bloody.

Each year centres on a theme, from seasonality to experimental archaeology, with this year's theme being "A Point of Contact." With British Columbia celebrating its 150th birthday, we wanted to focus our efforts on discovering First Nations' lifeways at the time of European contact, with a focus on basketry, weaving, fishing,

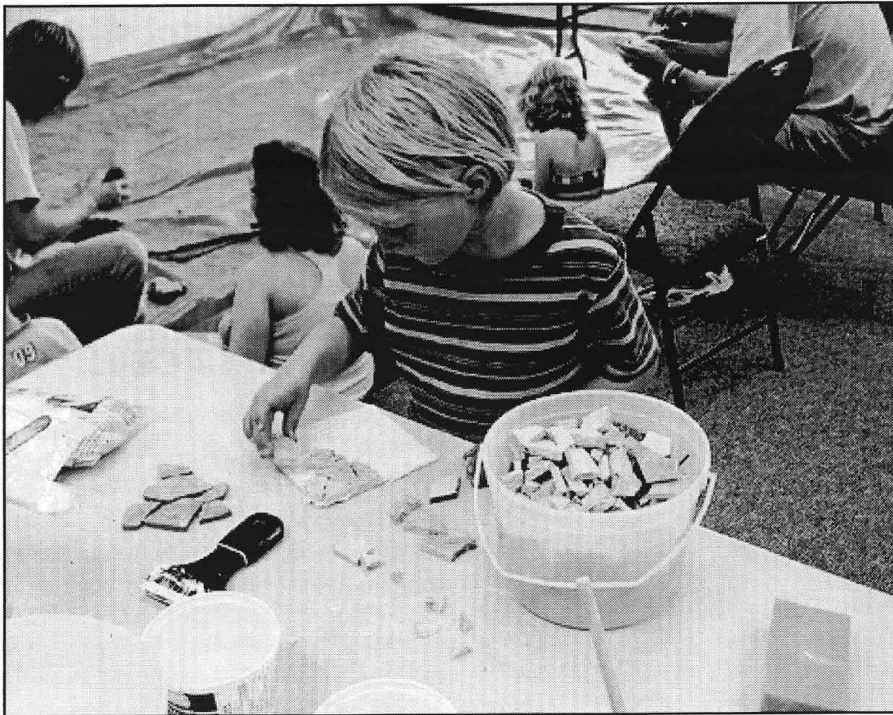
and the impact of that contact on these activities. Even with the wonderful weather keeping most folks outdoors, we saw approximately 70 visitors in a six-hour time span. Most tried their hand at making stone tools or mosaic tile and everyone who attended learned about First Nations' culture and the importance of protecting our collective heritage resources.

This year we partnered with the Nanaimo District Museum who graciously loaned us a variety of artifacts to display. There were artifacts related to weaving, such as a loom, carders for wool, and spindle whorls. Some fine examples of precontact and postcontact basketry were also available. Halibut hooks of traditional and postcontact design effectively showed how metal changed First Nations fishing technology. The Anthropology Department of the Vancouver Island University-Nanaimo Campus, our gold star community partner, provided us with a

variety of lithics, such as mauls and scrapers, as well as bone tools, to round out our assemblage. I brought my own faunal comparative collection for participants to handle and discuss, which ranges from fish to birds to almost a complete cow skeleton. A wide variety of informative posters on First Nations fishing, weaving, and basketry were available for those that would rather browse. Many thanks must be given to Chris Sholberg, Heritage Planner for the City of Nanaimo, for allowing us to use their plotter for our posters. Thanks must also be given to Home Depot and Millizza's Cave for assistance with supplies for this event, as well as the Provincial ASBC for helping with our obsidian costs. My extreme gratitude to the ASBC-NB volunteers who helped out with the event: Daphne Paterson, Pat Knowles, Nola and Kara Nahirnick, Robbee Salvati, Valerie Hannan, and Leanne and Grace Morrison. Without such great volunteers and community partners this program would not be able to continue.

Every year we always provide an opportunity for participants to make something to take home with them, with our main focus being on stone tools and mosaic tile. In the past we have also had pottery reconstruction, blow painting, and creating ceramics. Making stone tools is always a hit with the kids and I even get a few parents who want to try. Through hands on activities we can show the public that the past is very much alive and is worth protecting. If we can teach the public that the past, not just their own but the past of other cultures, has value then we can hope that they will deem it important enough to care about its future.

This event also brings people who are curious about archaeological sites on



Program participant making mosaic tile.

or near their property, curious about what they should do. Others know of sites that are being impacted and don't know what to do. We have also had people bring us artifacts, some genuine...some not. This event has allowed us to have a greater public presence in our community, allowing us the opportunity to educate about heritage conservation in an informal and fun environment.

Planning this event has always been a challenge but we are well supported by the Anthropology Departments at Vancouver Island University and the University of Victoria, as well as the Archaeology Lab at Simon Fraser University and the Archaeology Department at the University of Calgary. All have been gracious to lend us material and without them this event would never occur. The Nanaimo Branch is also grateful for the fiscal and moral support of the Provincial ASBC. Recognition of the importance of this program means a lot to the Branch and we thank all those that have helped us, both past and present.

We are already looking forward to next year and any ideas for themes are always welcome!

(Photographs by Kevin Coates, courtesy of the Vancouver Island Regional Library, Harbourfront Branch)

ASBC Nanaimo celebrates BC's 150th at the VIEX

In conjunction with the 114th birthday of the Vancouver Island Exhibition, the VIEX will also honour British Columbia's 150th birthday by celebrating Agriculture, Farming, Heritage, and Diversity through its entertainment and programs. The Nanaimo Branch has been invited to have an information booth at the VIEX on August 15 to 17th, with the aim of educating the public about local heritage and conservation initiatives, as well as providing information about the Society and programs offered by the Branch. This is a great opportunity for the Branch and the Society to increase their community outreach programs and public presence, as well as network with other heritage groups that will be attending. We look forward to representing the ASBC at this amazing event.

Julie Cowie is the current President of the Nanaimo Branch and has served as its President from 2003 to 2007. She holds a degree in Archaeology from the University of Calgary, with a specialization in lithic and faunal analysis. She is proud owner of Heritage Matters Archaeological Consulting based in Ladysmith, BC.

B.C. Archaeology Forum 2008

~Announced~

October
17th to 19th, 2008

A date has been announced for the upcoming BC Archaeology Forum:

October 17 (friday evening), 18 (sat. meeting), 19th (meeting wrap-up & tours).

The event is being hosted by the Sto:lo Research and Resource Management Centre in association with the Sto:lo Tribal Council and Sto:lo Nation. The meeting will be held at the Richard Malloway Memorial Longhouse in Chilliwack.

We're looking for input on current topics to consider for panel discussions. We would ask that people contact us if they want to present on behalf of their organization.

Contact info for questions is Tracey Joe (SRRMC) - 604-824-5113 (tracey.joe@stolonation.bc.ca).

We look forward to seeing you there!!