

# SFU to Investigate the Harrison River Valley for Field Season 2007

Morgan Ritchie

During the 2007 field season, the Simon Fraser University archaeological fieldschool will be hosted by the Chehalis First Nation on the Harrison River in southwestern British Columbia. Sixteen undergraduate students and one Chehalis community member will spend June and July helping to collect data for Morgan Ritchie and Chris Springer's Masters research. Ritchie's and Springer's research is part of the Fraser Valley Project directed by Dana Lepofsky and other researchers. The Fraser Valley Project has been investigating identity and interaction at pre-contact settlements along the Fraser River from Scowlitz, at the mouth of the Harrison, to Xelhalh, near Yale in the Fraser Canyon. The inclusion of the Harrison River is a logical extension of this project because the people on the two rivers were closely related culturally, linguistically, through marriage, and by trade. In addition,

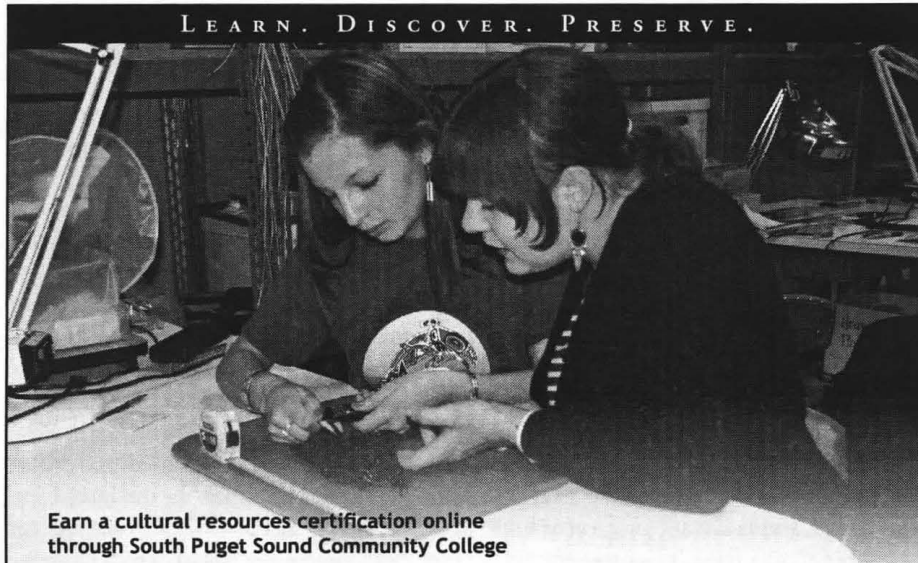
the people on the Harrison, like those studied on the Fraser, were in an intermediary position between coastal and interior culture areas.

Morgan Ritchie's project is an archaeological survey of the ancient cultural landscape of the Harrison River Valley. Three major stages of his research in which students will be involved are: (1) survey, which he began during the summer of 2005 with Adrian Sanders; (2) total station mapping of settlements; and (3) test excavations to obtain radiocarbon samples for the purpose of establishing whether settlements were contemporaneous. Morgan intends to integrate the archaeological features with place name information and other culturally important places for a better understanding of how the landscape was conceptualized and constructed.

Chris Springer will be directing the excavation of a housepit feature near the

confluence of the Chehalis and Harrison Rivers. The purpose of this excavation is to examine how cultural identity and household organization are associated with the form and contents of the housepit. A preliminary test excavation conducted during the summer of 2006 demonstrated that this housepit would be ideal for the proposed research; at least three floors and associated house features were identified.

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Straits Salish peoples as expressed through the placement of their ancestors on the landscape and how this reflects social and economic relationships between individual families, among and between villages, and with the larger world around them. Moving beyond these individual sites, Darcy's research will also address the placement of burial cairns across different types of landscapes and the distribution of cairns and mounds throughout the region as a whole. Preliminary fieldwork will be conducted this summer on southern Vancouver Island and the adjacent islands.