

ARCHAEOLOGY NEWS

UBC Excavates at Musqueam, Summer 2007

Marina La Salle, Wayne Point, and Angela Ruggles

This spring, Musqueam Indian Band and UBC collaborated to create the Musqueam-UBC Archaeological Field School, which focused on Musqueam history and was hosted by Musqueam on reserve land. This was a joint field instruction and research project that provided students with archaeological experience and instruction while working in consultation with First Nation officials, elders, and community members.

Musqueam-UBC Relationship Renewal

The relationship between Musqueam and the University of British Columbia is hardly a new one: Dr. Charles Borden began conducting field schools with Musqueam from the 1950s and continued through to the 1970s. In 1972, Musqueam started construction work on a large portion of reserve land that was needed for band housing. The land earmarked for this project was the productive farm fields that bordered Stselax (DhRt-2) and DhRt-4. These midden-rich soils, divided by dirt roads and drainage ditches, had yielded a large variety of farmers' crops over the years. It was on the DhRt-4 side next to the creek where UBC conducted their 1972 field school. The excavation units at this site yielded an unexpected surprise: basketry. Thirty-five years later, UBC was once again at Musqueam, using a wide variety of tools including Global Positioning System (GPS), total stations, percussion corers and Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR).



Lisa Johanson, Rebecca Abernathy and Julie Hollowell using the GPR. Wayne Point, photographer, courtesy of the Laboratory of Archaeology, UBC.

Community events were a key focus, and the majority of field school took place on the reserve. The first day of the field school kicked off with an Elders' luncheon where the students introduced themselves to the Musqueam community. Throughout the duration of the project, several Musqueam community members shared their knowledge and experience with the students. The students were taught to make cedar bark bracelets by Vivian Campbell, participated on a ethnobotanical tour of the area led by Rose Point, a creek walk led by Terry Point, and helped the local school

kids do some real hands-on archaeology during their visits to the hall at 51st Avenue where the field school tent was stationed. Community members were encouraged to come by and see what we were up to, and we received several drop-bys, during which time we heard stories of archaeology that had been done in the past, and areas that we should target. The project ended with a grand finale community event, where the students presented the results of the research with posters and hand-on activities.

As a relationship renewal, a large part

of this project was addressing concerns in practising archaeology today in an ethical and socially responsible manner. To start with, collaboration in the true sense of the word was central to all decisions and directions that the research took, guided by a Steering Committee comprised of Leona Sparrow from Musqueam, Andrew Martindale and Sue Rowley, both from UBC, as well as an Advisory Committee, which operated by consensus to define the research agenda and protocols of the field project to the satisfaction of the Musqueam community and its Chief and Council. Several meetings were held to discuss the issues and address questions of the Musqueam community, which composed the foundation of the research design. One of our greatest resources, however, was Wayne Point, a Musqueam community member who acted as both Liaison and Research Assistant with the field school, and whose experience in archaeology over the last thirty-years and more recent work with the Laboratory of Archaeology (LOA) greatly assisted this project.

The 'archaeology of archaeology' was a core concern in this respect, as Borden and his students created an entire archive of data, most of which has not seen the light of day for decades. Thus, one of the main themes of the 2007 field school was reviving this archival data, re-examining it, and building on it. We were fortunate enough to be guided by several of Borden's students' field notes, one of which stood out as Borden had written 'Excellent!' on the front page of Knut Fladmark's notebook. These served as a model for the UBC students (thanks Knut!!), who contributed their small part to this legacy by compiling field notebooks of their own.

Research in the Field School

The instruction of the field school was organized into four modules, each addressing complimentary research questions through the analysis of different kinds of data.

Module A: Total Station Mapping and Contour Map Creation, GPS and Air Photo Use.

This module was overseen by Sue Formosa, and focused on the production



Sunnydale school kids invade the screening station under the watchful eye of Sue Rowley (UBC). Wayne Point, photographer, courtesy of the Laboratory of Archaeology, UBC.

of georeferenced spatial data and maps of the surfaces of sites using GPS and total stations, which students used to relate features of the landscape from the past to the present. These maps were created in conjunction with the other modules, to include new data on site boundaries, areas under construction, and disturbed archaeological materials, all in relation to modern features on the landscape. Overall the aims of this module were met; however; the datum from Borden's 1967/68 project remains unclear because of an error in the traverse. One of Borden's former students revealed to the students that Borden's strong point was not survey, and yet his error may have created a new generation of excellent surveyors!

Module B: Artifact Screening and Cataloguing

Marina La Salle led this component of the field work, which focused on screening several large mounds of disturbed archaeological material that had been trucked in from the Stselax village site (building on Bill Angelbeck's work of 2002), after which the students catalogued the artifacts using the Laboratory of Archaeology's comprehensive database. Of course, this module relied

heavily on Wayne Point's vast experience with screening and artifact analysis – as usual, anyone who tried screening for the first time was hooked. The research question for this module was to test the theory of discontinuity between the Marpole and Stselax periods through artifact analysis and typological comparison, and our results, combined with Angelbeck's findings, suggest that the artifacts do not support this model, but indeed are remarkable for supporting a model of continuity in cultural occupation of this area.

Module C: Ecofacts, Flotation, and Faunal Analysis

This module was supervised by Angela Ruggles, who led students in the flotation and subsequent analysis of archived bulk and faunal samples from Borden's 1968 excavations of DhRt-3, a Marpole site. A large component of this module was faunal analysis, since the bulk samples were too small to recover floral remains. This module was designed to expand our existing knowledge of Marpole subsistence, testing some of the assumptions that are long-held but with little supporting evidence. Most of this work took place at the "base camp," allowing students a break from what few days of rain we had.



Hugh (Heewoo) Jin in the midst of faunal analysis. Wayne Point, photographer, courtesy of the Laboratory of Archaeology, UBC.

Data were processed from four different excavation units and the results show a wide range of species; however, salmon and sea mammal were most common.

Module D: Archival Mapping, Surface Survey and Sub-surface Exploration through Coring

Andrew Martindale led this component of the field project. The focus was to compile a history of land use and settlement from several data sources, including landscape survey, sketch-mapping, coring, and archived maps from Borden's work. There were two main goals in this endeavour: (1) to determine the extent of the remaining in-tact archaeological material from DhRt-3, and (2) to retrieve datable carbon samples from the lowest components of the Stselax village site, testing the long-held theory that the village was only occupied from ca.600bp. Being that these sites are underneath contemporary settlements, many of the 45 cores were taken from the backyards of both community members and land-leasers, involving willing participants in the archaeology of the reserve. Results from this module showed that very little of DhRt-3 remained intact but the ancient beach-line and southern boundary of the site were estimated. For DhRt-2, the objective was achieved as intact components were recovered for

radiocarbon dates.

GPR Module: Ground Penetrating Radar

Francis Jones, a UBC geophysicist from the Department of Earth and Ocean Sciences, joined the project on two separate occasions to teach the students how to use GPR. This equipment is very attractive to community members and archaeologists because it can map the subsurface without disturbance. The equipment was used at the upper cemetery to successfully locate unmarked graves. It was also used at the old preschool to look for a lost carved stone and although it was not found, the subsurface was successfully mapped.

Ethnographic Component

Throughout the six weeks that UBC students were doing research with Musqueam, someone else was doing research on us. Julie Hollowell, a post-doctoral fellow in the Department of Anthropology at UBC, spent the field school following students and instructors around and helping with all the various tasks, in an effort to observe how this field school was addressing contemporary social concerns about research. She managed to interview all of the students, instructors, and several members of the Musqueam community, putting together a picture of what was

working, what wasn't, and where to go for next year. Julie was a great addition to the team, offering a unique perspective, and was never afraid to get her hands dirty — thanks so much Julie!

Conclusions

Overall, the Musqueam-UBC field school was a great success. We were able to accomplish many of the research goals, and foster a real sense of partnership between the UBC students and Musqueam. Already ideas for next year are being discussed, including bringing in a language component to address place names and translate archaeological jargon, and delving even further into Borden's archived records including old photographs of the Musqueam reserve. Also, a handful of the students who participated in the field school are undertaking research projects to provide further analysis on the Borden material.

One of the most pressing issues that came out of this field school was the need to preserve and protect the archaeology that remains at Musqueam, and specifically to address the Stselax midden mounds. There is still much work to be done on this one area alone, and it may take years to complete. At the time of the field school, the only thing protecting these midden mounds and their contents was a bees nest discovered by one of the students – happily no one was stung. Musqueam did say however that they would hold off construction in this area for the time being until the archaeology could be addressed. As Wayne Point put it, "I have come to realize that these sites speak volumes about the past but they need a loud voice today for their protection."

The 2007 field school brought the Musqueam community and UBC researchers and students together to renew a relationship that had waned, establishing a solid foundation for future collaborative research. Thanks to everyone who helped in this process!

Wayne Point is currently employed as a Research Assistant/Technician with the Laboratory of Archaeology at UBC. Marina La Salle is pursuing a Masters of Arts for archaeology at UBC, which Angela Ruggles just completed her MA (congratulations!).
