

Archaeological Survey in Chehalis Territory

by Adrian Sanders and Morgan Ritchie

During the pre-contact period, the Harrison River was a major cultural and economic area within the lower Fraser River region and an important transportation corridor linking the coast and interior. Early ethnographers recognized the importance that this waterway and its people had on the coastal-interior interaction sphere (e.g., Boas 1894/5, Hill-Tout 1905). However, despite this early anthropological interest, very little is known about this region archaeologically. Investigations conducted in the summer of 2005 were the first time that detailed archaeological surveys and excavations have been done within traditional Chehalis territory, apart from a limited survey by Wilson Duff in 1949, and a pictograph survey of the Harrison watershed by Sandy Lucs and Joyce May in 1976. Encouragement of this research by the Chehalis Indian Band and the subsequent identification of several pit-house villages have brought the region to the attention of Northwest Coast archaeologists. Though the research at Chehalis has only just begun, it has the potential to make a substantial contribution to the current understanding of pre-contact societies.

During a six and a half week period this past summer (May 26th – July 10th 2005), Adrian Sanders (UBC) and Morgan Ritchie (SFU) carried out archaeological surveys on Chehalis IR5, IR6 and adjacent crown lands. This volunteer project was undertaken for the Aboriginal Rights and Title Department of the Chehalis Indian Band, located on the Harrison River in southwestern British Columbia (80 km east of Vancouver). Our

goals were (1) to identify and record all archaeological sites within the designated survey area (Figure 1) for the Chehalis Indian Band, (2) to register these sites with the British Columbia Archaeology Branch, (3) to address the issue of contemporary archaeological research at Chehalis and to place this within a context of community heritage awareness and benefits, and (4) to attempt to understand these newly discovered archaeological sites and features in terms of regional settlement patterns, site composition, and residential household units. Much of Chehalis traditional territory has been unaffected by urban development and agriculture that has destroyed or compromised many cultural sites in southwestern British Columbia. This makes it an ideal location to understand and preserve the rich cultural heritage that has been lost in other areas. Because no significant archaeology has occurred in the Harrison Lake watershed, all inferences regarding pre-contact Chehalis society must be derived from ethnographic accounts and archaeology conducted in the surrounding areas. The ethnographic legacy at Chehalis is integral to the ongoing research, but it is also insufficient, and must be combined with archaeology to provide a more thorough understanding of pre-contact society. Being familiar with ethnographies and oral tradition is essential to understanding the archaeological record at Chehalis. Our observations from the sites within our survey area on the Harrison River will be discussed, with a focus on Higelem that clearly represents the antiquity of the Chehalis people and their attachment to a particular site. Excavations of

Figure 1 (Above). The Harrison River archaeological survey area, between Morris Creek and the Chehalis River.



Figure 2. The Harrison River survey area.

pithouses at this site have enabled us to get a more informed perspective on activities that occurred on a household level and how the habitation area relates to the rest of the site.

Orientation: Aboriginal Day, June 21st, 2005.

It was a beautiful day, the sun sparkling on the water of the pristine Harrison River. We waited, along with Chehalis Heritage Advisor Gordon Mohs, at the John Mack Slough site, located on Chehalis IR5, for the arrival of nearly 300 RCMP officers and 'high risk' aboriginal youth who were participating in the

'Pulling Together' canoe journey. They were all to be provided tours of the site. It was striking how eclectic this context was for the inaugural public showcasing of this recently located, culturally sensitive community heritage site. The expedition's presence in the traditional territories of the Chehalis, along with their interest in establishing a connection with the community, paralleled nicely with Chehalis' recent efforts to raise community and public awareness of Chehalis heritage through archaeological research. Upon the arrival of the "Pulling Together" expedition, dozens of Chehalis community members greeted those in the canoes with a

History of Research in Chehalis Territory

Ethnographic research among the Chehalis dates back over a century, beginning with the work of Franz Boas, who spent several weeks interviewing Chief George Stsee'lis and his wife, between 1891 and 1894. Boas documented myths, legends and other aspects of Chehalis oral history and produced two important works from this research: *Indianische Sagen von der Nord-Pacifischen Küste Amerikas*, (*Indian Myths and Legends from the North Pacific Coast of America*), and *Fifth Report on the Indians of British Columbia*. Based on his research, Boas suggested that Chehalis' occupation of the region must indeed have been ancient, on the basis of both physiological evidence and oral history.

Boas' research among the Chehalis was followed shortly thereafter by that of anthropologist Charles Hill-Tout. Hill-Tout is generally recognized as writing the 'definitive ethnography' of the Chehalis, *Ethnological Report on the Stsee'lis and Skaulits Tribes of the Halkomelem Division of the Salish of British Columbia*, 1904, although this is not recognized by the Chehalis themselves (Gordon Mohs,

James Leon, personal communication, 2005).

In 1949, Wilson Duff, another notable anthropologist, conducted archaeological and ethnographic research among the Chehalis, albeit only for a period of a few weeks. This research arose at a time when Duff was participating in an archaeological field school at Whalen Farm, located on the southwest shore of the Lower Fraser River, under the guidance of Dr. Charles Borden (father of BC archaeology). Duff was interested in investigating the cultural heritage of First Nation communities along the lower Fraser River, including the Chehalis (Borden in Abbott 1980:89-90). Duff's research at Chehalis inspired him to conduct additional research among the Sto:lo communities of the lower Fraser, which subsequently resulted in the publication of his highly referenced monograph, *The Upper Stalo Indians of the Fraser Valley, British Columbia* (1952). Duff's main archaeological contribution to the Chehalis was documenting the location of several house-pit villages, although none of these was ever officially recorded and registered with the Heritage Branch.

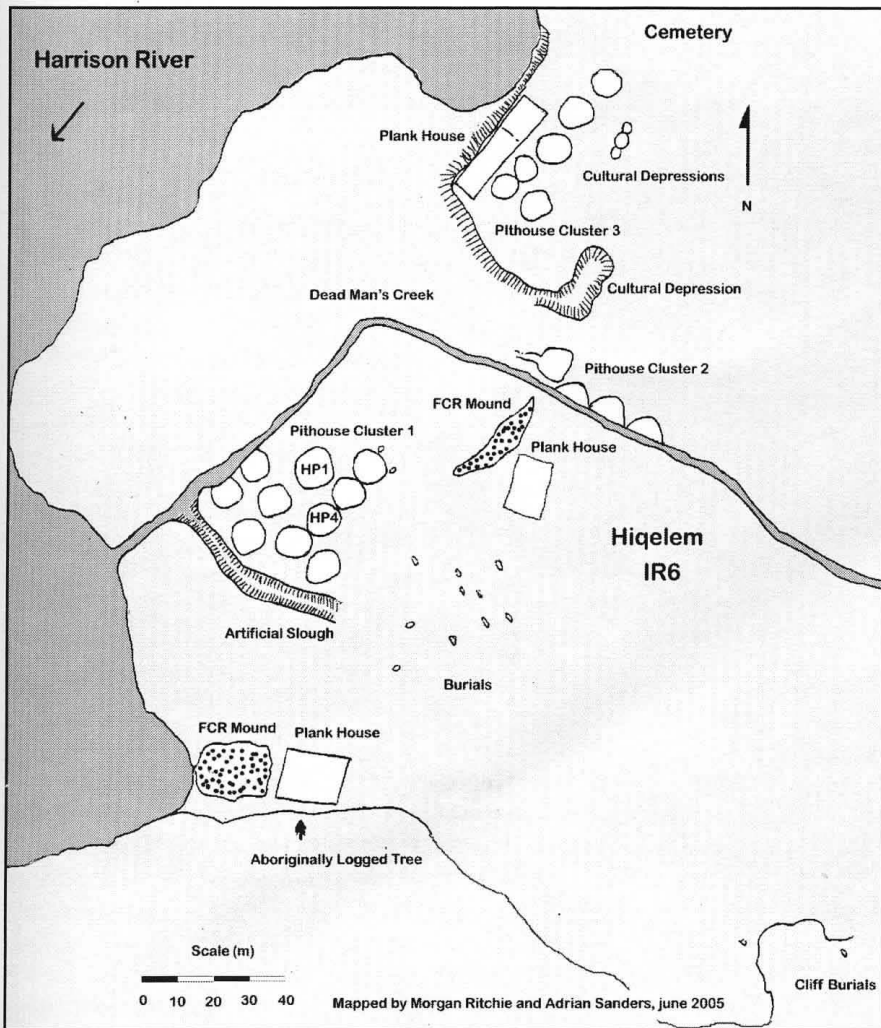


Figure 3. Higelem village and burial complex, by hip-chain and compass map.

traditional welcome that included drumming and songs. It was a powerful image, resembling how we could only imagine the Chehalis ancestors would have welcomed visitors centuries and millennia ago. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of this event was the blending of past and present. The archaeological record is the present, as much as it is Chehalis' pre-contact history, and an integral part of Chehalis' community heritage and identity.

Analysis of Ethnographic and Archaeological Contributions

Prior to this summer's regional survey and excavations, the archaeological component has largely been neglected in inquiries related to Chehalis pre-contact history. All previous researchers produced strictly anthropological interpretations. This is problematic because contributions from ethnographers using the historical ethnographic approach present definite limitations re: any discussion of developmental patterns of Chehalis social complexity from a vertical dimension of time. The primary benefit of these ethnographies remains the documentation of cultural patterns particular to the colonial era in the Fraser Valley. Notably, in this regard, between European arrival on the southern coast of British Columbia and the ethnographic period, many events occurred that irreversibly altered the lifeways of populations in the region.

European and American influences in the Fraser Valley

are punctuated by three notable events; the first of these being the smallpox epidemic of 1782, which resulted in fatality rates of up to two thirds of the native population (Carlson 2001:77), or a conservative minimum of one third population loss during the smallpox epidemic of the 1770s (Boyd 1990:135, 137-138). The second was the establishment of the Hudson's Bay trading post at Fort Langley (1827-30) and the gold rush of 1858, which saw both the introduction and development of a new 'economic order' and a massive influx of non-natives to the region, notably miners, who traveled along the Fraser and Harrison Rivers in the tens of thousands (Douglas 1983:64, Maclauchlan 1998). Both of these events had significant impacts on traditional aboriginal lifeways.

Third, between the time of the gold rush and what we might call the 'ethnographic era' (1890-1950), the Chehalis experienced, as part of their changing identity, the creation of reserve lands, the banning of social, economic, and spiritual practices as they were prior to European contact, and the missionization of its members through the residential school system. In light of this colonial history, past anthropological involvement with the Chehalis community is limited in its time-depth perspective and in its ability to provide insight into patterns of social organization during the pre-contact era. Patterns of cultural continuity and change in Chehalis social organization can best be understood through the application of interdisciplinary comparative methods.

Chehalis IR6 2005

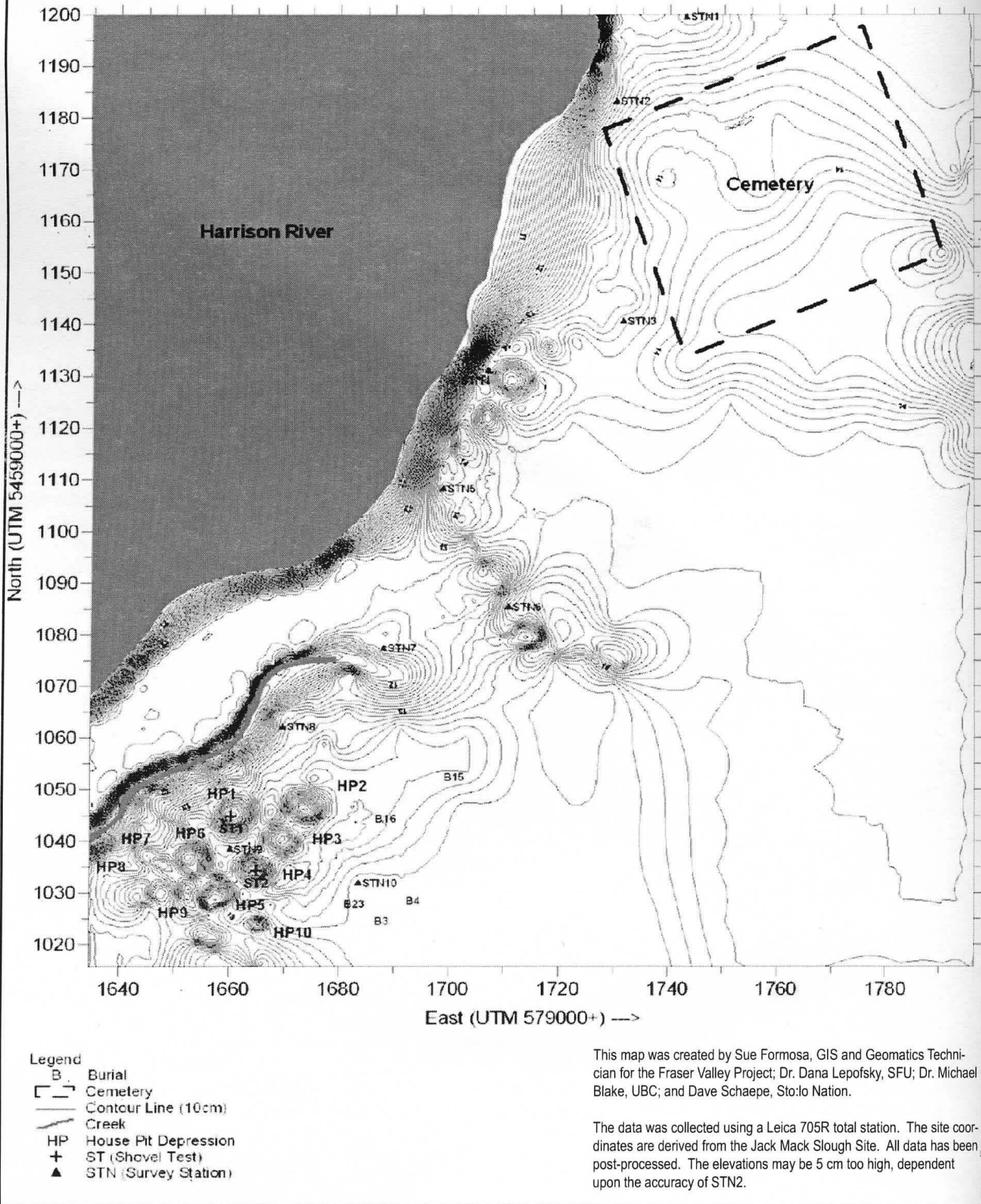


Figure 4. Higelem village and burial complex GIS map.

Chehalis Creation

When there was still a separation of the five original septs of Chehalis, with three of them residing in the mountains on Chehalis Lake, and the others occupying their present lowland location near the confluence of the Chehalis River with the Harrison River, it is said that a lowland man (Ts'a'tsEmiltQ) built a fishing weir across the river that prevented the passage of salmon to those upriver. The son of the Chief (K'ulk'E'mEHil) of the mountain people (Tciltcaloktel), who was also known as "otter man" (Te Cwometsel) was ordered to swim down river by K'ulk'E'mEHil and break the weir so that the Tciltcaloktel would not famish. This process reoccurred until there was eventually a meeting of the two groups that led to the uniting of all five original septs at the contemporary location of the Chehalis. (Chehalis legend story, personal communication, James Leon, March 2005, Willie Charlie, June 2005. See also: Boas 1895, Hill-Tout 1978, and Duff 1952.)

Present representations of the Chehalis during the pre-contact era are incomplete, due, in large part, to a lack of archaeological evidence. Generally, the Chehalis are lumped together with the Sto:lo to the south, thus marginalizing the Chehalis and their unique history. Notably, pre-contact Chehalis society had an active role in the commerce of the Fraser River interaction sphere, but was also central to an expanded sphere of influence (including social, political, economic and cosmological beliefs and practices) stretching to the north, into the Interior of the province along a nexus of waterways less heavily researched than the Fraser River. The early ethnographers recognized the uniqueness of the Chehalis in this regard, as do the Chehalis people of today, but this has yet to be demonstrated archaeologically.

Applying the ethnographic record

Chehalis offers a unique opportunity to utilize the available ethnographic record, traditional-use studies and other oral histories, in conjunction with the archaeological record. The accumulation of archaeological data will enable a direct comparison between material culture and oral tradition. For example, early ethnographers documented the 'origin story' for the Chehalis and believed this was based on an actual historic event. An abbreviated version of this story is presented here to demonstrate its relevance to the interpretation of archaeological phenomena (see sidebar above). According to Hill-Tout's informants, each of these septs in the origin story was believed to have settled autonomous villages along the Harrison River.

From an archaeological perspective, the ethnographic legacy and oral histories of informants aided us in our regional survey, by providing information that was essential in developing an understanding of prehistoric settlement patterns. We were cognizant of this origin story and conducted our surveys with the belief that at least five contemporaneous village sites could

be located along the Harrison River in the vicinity of present-day Chehalis, in addition to habitation sites predating or post-dating this 'tribal historical' event. Lending credence to this story was the identification of five fish weirs at Chehalis Lake, which are possibly associated with ancestral settlements of the mountain Chehalis people.

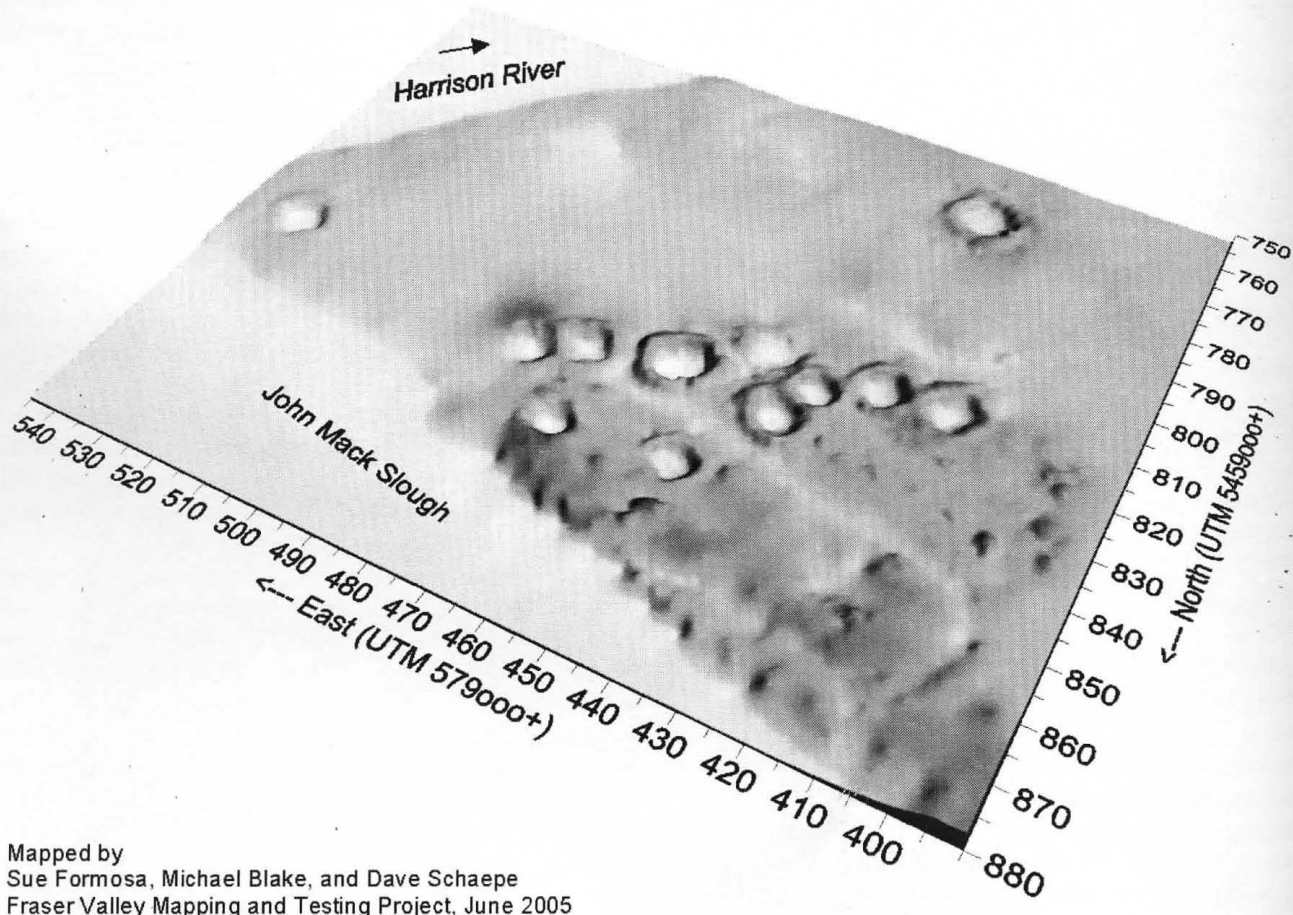
This example, and others like it, suggests to us that ethnographic and oral historic information is fundamental to the interpretation of archaeological material remains. Being aware that in pre-contact times there were potentially two distinct populations in this region should allow archaeologists to account for variations in cultural features and archaeological assemblages that might otherwise go unnoticed. If indeed some of the village sites we identified represent people originating in the mountains, and others, the river people, variations could be apparent in artifact assemblages, burial practices, house structures, village patterning and other socially constructed expressions remaining in the archaeological record.

Archaeological features appear to show an implicit organization on the landscape in relation to naturally occurring phenomena in which cultural meaning likely played a factor. Interpretations of social activities from the arrangement of these features will likely reflect an aspect of how Chehalis understand their universe. An example of this is the proliferation and distribution of burial mounds at Hiquelem, located at Chehalis IR6, which served as a mortuary and residential complex for over a thousand years, and continues to be used as a cemetery to this day. Clearly there is a spiritual significance to this site that makes it more hallowed ground than other locations on the Harrison. It is our belief that knowledge derived from oral histories coupled with traditional use studies is fundamental to our understanding of the landscape and the interpretations we put on it. Equipped with such knowledge, we can interpret the landscape in a more culturally informed manner.

Survey Results

Our regional survey focused on riverfront lands along the banks of the Harrison River, bounded by Morris Creek to the northeast and the Chehalis River to the southwest. Where terrain and freshet conditions permitted, both banks of the Harrison River were surveyed. Localities surveyed were judgmentally determined, based upon topography, potable water sources, accessibility to salmon and the Harrison River for transportation purposes. Chehalis informants, familiar with the location of several sites, also assisted in this survey effort, including: Bob Point, Richard Charlie, Chad Paul, Rocky LaRock, Willie Charlie, James Leon and Gordon Mohs. We believe this assistance highlights the integrity of oral knowledge and the keen interest taken in archaeology and heritage at Chehalis today.

As indicated in Figure 1, preferred habitation locations were along the mainstream of the Harrison River, between the numerous slough channels (used annually by spawning salmon) that run perpendicular to the Harrison. Preference for living along adjacent sloughs appears to have been favored to the extent that at the site of Hiquelem, there are obvious signs that human-made modifications to the landscape occurred (e.g., trenching). We believe these artificial slough channels provided increased habitat for spawning salmon, which could then be harvested by the



Mapped by
Sue Formosa, Michael Blake, and Dave Schaepe
Fraser Valley Mapping and Testing Project, June 2005

Figure 5. Surface map of John Mack Slough village site facing southeast.

site's inhabitants, but also provided safe harbor for canoes off the Harrison, or possible defensive measures.

At the completion of our survey, a total of sixty pithouses were recorded. Additional house features are known at the Wilson Duff #1 site, but access to these was restricted by freshet conditions. Pithouse features were of varying sizes, shapes and depths. Associated with these were cultural depressions and burial mounds of differing forms and dimensions that are always found on the forest side of the settlements. No dates are currently available for sites on the north side of the Harrison, so the antiquity and extent to which these features are contemporaneous is unknown (awaiting date from one JMS pithouse, Schaepe 2005).

The river front land on the north side of the Harrison River is low lying and subject to seasonal flooding. There are fairly continuous concentrations of pithouses along the entire north bank within our survey area. Numerous sloughs running perpendicular to the Harrison provide natural boundaries to distinguish between the pithouse settlements, much as they would have separated them when they were inhabited. Closest to Morris Creek is the Main Beach settlement (Figure 1); it has been the most disturbed of all the sites in our survey area with at least two pithouses having been destroyed according to James Leon of Aboriginal Rights & Title. The destroyed pithouses are reported to have been on the southwestern end of Main Beach. Eight pithouses were located on the northeastern end of Main Beach nestled between a slough

and the Harrison. Six of these pithouses are within 30 metres of each other and 15 metres of the slough channel. The other two pithouses are separated by over 50 metres from the main cluster and from each other. No burial mounds or cultural depressions were found near this habitation.

Across the slough from the southwestern edge of Main Beach is the John Mack Slough site (Figure 1) which is the largest pithouse village in our survey area. Twenty-three pithouses were identified and cleared by the Aboriginal Rights & Title Department aided by volunteers from Kwixwetwelhp, a nearby correctional facility. This site was later mapped by Sue Formosa, Michael Blake, and Dave Schaepe (Figure 5). This settlement also demonstrates the tendency to be congregated near the slough channel rather than the Harrison. Gordon Mohs believes the shallow channel that cuts through the northern side of the site was trenched to more easily exploit the fish that swam into the slough. Only a plankhouse, mentioned to have been located in what remains a cleared area on the bank of the Harrison, would have been situated so as to be highly visible to all that would pass. Burial mounds were found very close to some of the pithouses, though in general they were behind the settlement on the forest side.

West of John Mack is the Phillips site, which is not separated by a clearly defined slough, although the sites are distinct by virtue of being over one-hundred metres apart, across marshy

ground. This site is, however, flanked by a slough channel on its southwest side. There are seven pithouse features, one burial mound, and one cultural depression at Phillips; like at the other sites, the burial mound and cultural depression are located on the forest side of the settlement. The two largest pithouses we encountered on our survey are at this site, measuring approximately 14 metres and 16 metres in diameter, and were comparatively shallow.

A short way down river from Phillips, Billy Harris is clearly delineated from other sites on the shore by sloughs. There are six pithouses, with four of them being rectangular in shape and unlike all the others seen in our survey area. These features are widely spread out, none being within twenty metres of the next. One pit feature in particular was intriguing because it was tiered. The feature was rectangular measuring 11 by 5 metres and was deepest in the middle with the sides ramping up. This site is also anomalous because there are ten cultural depressions of varying sizes and shapes that are interspersed with the pithouses. The one burial mound is found on the forest side of the site.

Further down river is the Wilson Duff #1 site that we were not able to survey, but Gordon Mohs reports that it has at least thirteen pithouses. This site also fits the trend of being located between sloughs. It is near the confluence of the Chehalis and Harrison rivers, marking the southwestern extent of our survey. All the sites on the north side of the Harrison River have a certain degree of uniformity in terms of settlement patterning. Virtually all the pithouses along the northern bank of the Harrison are seasonally flooded, signifying slightly different water levels in the past than exist today.

Also identified in our survey was a small settlement of two pithouses on Government Island. These pithouses were found on the west side of the island ten metres from the rivers edge. They are not perfectly round, but the average diameter is ten metres. The pithouses are over a metre deep and share a rim. Approximately thirty metres upriver a tear-shaped burial mound was located and 20 metres up from there, there is a cultural depression.

On the southwestern-most extent of our survey area, across from the Chehalis delta, we found two burial mounds and two cultural depressions. No settlement has been found anywhere along this side of the river except for Hiqelem which is over a kilometre upriver, and separated by Mt. Woodside. These features are situated on low land just north of a small bay on the Harrison River.

Hiqelem is distinct from all the other sites in the survey area in several major regards. It has an extraordinarily high concentration of both house features and burial mounds. It is separated spatially from the habitation sites on the north side of the Harrison River and occupies a higher elevation preventing the seasonal inundation of water. The abundance of fire-cracked rock and depth of cultural deposits at Hiqelem suggests it has a far greater antiquity and perhaps longer, or more permanent seasonal dwelling patterns.

The site of Hiqelem has a total of twenty pithouses, three plank house platforms and an undetermined number of burials. As is apparent in Figure 3, the site can be divided into three pithouse clusters separated from one another by distance and either Dead Man's Creek or an artificial slough. A fourth habitation

area consisting of a plankhouse is 40 metres to the southwest of Pithouse Cluster 1 and separated by an artificial slough. On the slope beside the plank house is an aboriginally logged cedar tree.

It may be that a distinction between the habitation areas in terms of political, social and economic cohesiveness is completely unwarranted, but the relationship is unknown and for purposes of analysis dividing them is preferable. There are 10 pithouses in Cluster 1 and are so close to one another that many of them are sharing rims. Pithouses 2, 3, 4 and 5 in Figure 5 run linearly and have low rims separating the house units, about half a metre lower than those of the exterior rims. Phenomena like this lead us to suggest that household units were likely arranged to share a common roof and floor space. Pithouse 4 was excavated because it is of an average size for this cluster (7.2 m diameter) and is part of the intriguing linear feature of pithouses. Pithouse 1, where the other excavation was conducted is bigger than the rest at 8.5 metres in width and over 2 metres in depth, and unlike many of the others, has a distinct rim of its own. Plankhouse 2 lies approximately thirty metres to the east of this cluster. Pithouse Cluster 2 is located to the northeast of Cluster 1 and is situated on the bank of Dead Man's Creek. It is composed of four pithouses, three of which have been subject to erosion from Dead Man's Creek that has changed course. The same three pithouses are aligned linearly and share rims. Pithouse cluster 3 is northwest of cluster 2 and is comprised of six pithouses behind Plankhouse 3 which is on the bank, approximately 3 metres above a bay of the Harrison River. These pithouses are linear, but do not share rims. Three deep, circular cultural depressions with shared rims are associated with this cluster and run roughly parallel to the line of pithouses.

Within the south coast region of British Columbia, burial mounds have been dated between 1400 and 800 BP (Lepofsky et al. 2000). Those we recorded range in size from a metre in diameter to several metres in diameter and over a metre in height. Most mounds are rectangular or teardrop-shaped. The burial mounds are characterized by the presence of small to medium-sized stones (in the range of 20-cm to 40-cm diameter) embedded into the perimeter, and many appeared to be composed of rich anthropogenic soils, characterized by concentrations of fire-cracked rock. It has been suggested that variation in burial mound size can be interpreted as a reflection of the relative social status of the individual (Lepofsky et al 2000).

The nearby archaeological site of Scowlitz located at the confluence of the Harrison and Fraser Rivers offers a useful local analogy of the burial patterns observed at Hiqelem (IR 6). At both sites, large concentrations of burial mounds were identified in near proximity to the pithouse features, a pattern similar to several other Chehalis sites (e.g., John Mack slough site), and both note the utilization of a mountainside locations for burials. At Hiqelem, burial mounds were found to extend as far back as one hundred and sixty metres from the house features near the river, some were even found on the slope of Mt. Woodside. Although time did not allow for the recording or mapping of all the burial features at Hiqelem, two day's reconnaissance provided us with enough information to infer that Hiqelem is an extensive and rich mortuary complex and significant habitation site likened to that of Scowlitz (Oakes 2002).

Features not analogous to anything at Scowlitz include two

large mounds identified at Hiquelem (Figure 3), which appear to be comprised largely of fire-cracked-rock. One of these measured 17-x-20 metres, the other, 25-x-10 metres. The function of these features is unknown. One possibility is that they are burial mounds or mass burials, composed of the sites occupational debris. Another is that they may be refuse piles associated with nearby habitation features. Drs. Michael Blake and Dana Lepofsky, upon visiting the site, suggested that the large flat areas adjacent these two mounds may have been plankhouse structures. The large flat areas are relatively devoid of fire-cracked rocks when the rest of the site is scattered with it.

The Hiquelem site locality has significantly more burial mounds than any other site within the survey area. The fact that this area (IR6) continues to be used as a cemetery suggests a continuity of relationship to the landscape by the Chehalis people. To Chehalis people, the Hiquelem area is sacred, so much so, that many people from the community tend not to visit. To us, this site exemplifies how Chehalis social identity is configured around an intimate relationship between the individual and their ancestors' spiritual presence, within a familiar ancient landscape, which provides the common element linking the Chehalis to their past.

Excavations

Archaeological test excavations (20-cm by 20-cm test units) were conducted at Hiquelem by ourselves, Dr. Dana Lepofsky (SFU) and two of her students, Steve Hamm and John Sheppard in order to obtain soil samples and charcoal for radiocarbon dating. Both test units yielded evidence of multiple house floors and were rich in calcified bone, seeds and other organic matter. A more thorough analysis using flotation and microscope techniques found that salal berries dominated the flora assemblage and salmon was the most commonly utilized fauna. Both these resources can be harvested and preserved through the winter months. A full report on findings has been prepared for the Chehalis Band (Dana Lepofsky et al. 2005).

From Pithouse 1, a date of 1090 \pm 40 BP (1070-940 cal BP; Beta 208884) was obtained from a depth of approximately 48-cm below surface. Excavation of this unit was terminated at 75-cm below surface (Figure 6). The basal level of occupation was not reached so this date is not indicative of the actual antiquity of the site, but provides a minimum date. However, based on this evidence, it would appear that the habitation features were contemporary with the burial mound complex at the site.

Because the excavation units were so small, living floors were difficult to distinguish, but a worked piece of slate lying horizontally in Pithouse 1 was a very distinctive indicator. The slate has been ground on two sides and looks like it would have fit nicely into a larger, interconnected flagstone floor. This feature has not been identified anywhere else in the Fraser Valley to our knowledge (Lepofsky et al. 2005). Alternately, Willie Charlie, the owner and operator of Sasquatch Tours, recalled his grandfather describing a cooking mechanism that was composed of similar pieces of worked slate.

A radiocarbon date recovered from Layer II of Pithouse 4 produced a date of 550 \pm 40 BP (540-460 cal BP; Beta 208883). This late date is important because it indicates that the site was occupied up until quite recently. The faunal assemblage in this unit was analyzed even more closely than Pithouse 1 and has



Figure 6. Excavation profile from pithouse 1 at Hiquelem showing depth of testing.

yielded evidence for a more diverse diet, including single specimens of sturgeon, rainbow smelt, pacific staghorn sculpin and eulachon.

In accordance with the rest of the site, the upper zone of both pithouses had an abundance of fire-cracked-rock extending approximately 10-cm to 20-cm below the surface. These deposits suggest that the function of the site changed and the pithouses were no longer used for habitation.

On July 27, 2005, another test excavation was carried out on Pithouse 1 by Dr. Heon-jong Lee of Mokpo University in S. Korea and Adrian Sanders. Our intension in visiting the site of Hiquelem was to gather soil samples and charcoal samples for the purpose of obtaining an absolute pollen diagram and AMS radiocarbon dates. The absolute pollen diagram will help reconstruct the paleo-environment of the Hiquelem site and requires its pollen count to correspond with radiocarbon ages. This endeavor was successful, with the samples having been sent to the Mokpo research facility in S. Korea to be analyzed by Dr. Jeong Chulhwan. Information ensuing from this research will support the ongoing archaeological investigations at the Hiquelem site and will contribute to the increasing breadth of understanding of the relationship the Chehalis had with an ancient landscape along the banks of the Harrison River.

Contributions to the Chehalis Community

As noted in our introduction, one of our goals was to address the issue of contemporary archaeological research at Chehalis and to place this within a context of community heritage awareness and benefits. As noted by Chehalis Heritage Advisor, Gordon Mohs, the benefits are many.

The identification, recording, mapping, and analysis of archaeological sites and features, through projects such as ours, will help the Chehalis Aboriginal Rights and Title Department in the development and implementation of their Community Heritage plan, including proposed heritage parks and trails. Additionally, archaeological research will assist technical and professional staff at Chehalis in protecting and claiming critical heritage properties, which is part of the mandate of the Chehalis Aboriginal Rights & Title Department. Archaeological research

is also expected to provide ongoing educational benefits to the Chehalis Community School. For example, this summer, a group of Chehalis youth volunteered their time to assist in clearing brush from several archaeological sites, and assisted us in the survey and mapping of the Main Beach site. In this process they learned feature recognition skills, compass use, mapping techniques, and an appreciation for Chehalis archaeological heritage. Finally, our research is also expected to be of assistance to Chehalis Band businesses involved in cultural tourism endeavors (e.g., Sasquatch Tours) through the identification of possible additional visitation sites and knowledge about Chehalis prehistory that can be shared with visitors to Chehalis territory.

Conclusion

The importance of the Harrison waterway and the role of the Chehalis people in context of the prehistory of the Gulf of Georgia culture area have yet to be fully demonstrated. However, this is rapidly changing through ongoing archaeological-based research investigations. Moreover, despite the inability of ethnographies to elucidate the prehistory of the Chehalis people, they remain integral to the archaeological research, notably in linking the Chehalis people to their landscape in a physical and spiritual sense.

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A long-time resident of Vancouver, originally from rural Manitoba, Adrian Sanders has left a career as an electrician to pursue anthropology. Now in his fourth year of study at UBC, where he is completing his honors degree in anthropology, Adrian plans to pursue archaeology both academically and practically. His honors thesis is on the spatial analysis of housepit features along the Harrison River. In maintaining a balanced approach to academic life, Adrian seeks adventure around the world and at home in the great outdoors of BC.

Morgan Ritchie of Port Coquitlam is completing his BA in archaeology at SFU where he looks to continue his study as an MA student. Morgan is well on his way to pursuing his dream of applying archaeological research to world travel, as he has already spent summer field seasons working in Georgia in the American Southeast and in Ecuador.

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