

# SCRAP

## *Summer Field Schools 2019*

A recent emphasis, by the New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources (NHDHR), on completing state-sponsored archaeological field schools and volunteer-based surveys on state-owned lands is maximizing efforts directed toward teaching archaeological field methods and increasing public awareness by also directly contributing to the inventory, documentation, and management of archaeological deposits on state-owned lands in New Hampshire. Investigations such as these are contributing interpretive data that can be used by state land managers in the creation of interpretive displays to be placed in park facilities and signage to adorn trail systems, campsites, and other recreational areas as well as inform interpretive programming. Newly informed interpretive displays, signage, and programming not only create more interest in, and awareness of, archaeological resources on state-owned lands, but also aid land managing agencies in providing outstanding educational and inspirational experiences that in turn are likely to increase visitor attendance and revenue.

In 2019, the New Hampshire State Conservation and Rescue Archaeology Program (SCRAP), led by NHDHR staff, conducted archaeological field investigations at three locations in New Hampshire. These investigations focused on identifying, documenting, and interpreting Native American deposits at Livermore Falls State Forest, Pillsbury State Park, and Bear Brook State Park. A brief summary of the findings



from each of the investigations is provided below.

### **Livermore Falls State Forest, Holderness**

The Livermore Hollow Site (27-GR-236), located within Livermore Falls State Forest, was initially excavated primarily to investigate post-contact archaeological deposits associated with a 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century industrial complex and associated residential occupation. However, during the initial excavations, a somewhat substantial pre-contact archaeological deposit was also identified. The 2019 SCRAP investigation at Livermore Falls State Forest focused on the pre-contact Native American deposit. This deposit consists of sherds of broken Native American ceramic vessels, chipped-stone tools and the chipping debris associated with the manufacture and maintenance of stone tools, bone fragments associated with mammals and fish likely procured and processed on site, and a hearth feature exhibiting fire-cracked rock (FCR), fire-altered rock (FAR), charcoal, and a fish bone.

The Native American ceramic sherds identified at the site appear to come from

relatively thick-walled, grit-tempered vessels exhibiting a smoothed-over and/or cord-marked surface treatment. Vessels exhibiting these characteristics are generally attributed to the Early Woodland period, indicating that the Pre-Contact deposit, or at least portions of it, likely date to roughly 3,000 to 2,000 years ago. Archaeological data suggests that Early Woodland subsistence practices focused on hunting, fishing, and gathering near large lakes and streams. This coincides well with the location of this site on the banks of the Pemigewasset River.

The chipped-stone artifact assemblage is dominated by chipping debris or flakes, the byproduct of stone tool manufacture and maintenance. This indicates that the manufacture and maintenance of stone tools was an important activity at the site. Despite this fact, few stone tools were discarded on site. Stone tools that were discarded on site can be best characterized as expedient flake tools and crudely fashioned bifacially worked stone. One of the tools observed at the site appears to be an expediently made spoke shave fashioned from a chert flake. It is likely that more formal tools were manufactured and maintained on site as well, but were retained for later use elsewhere.

Observations of the chipped-stone assemblage indicate that stone tools were crafted from a myriad of raw materials including rhyolite, hornfels, quartz, crystal quartz, and chert. A number of flakes exhibit the exterior surface of their parent nodule or cobble, demonstrating that the material used was likely picked up on site in the form of small cobbles. Additionally, with the exception of the chert material, which represents a very small portion of the assemblage, the chipped-stone raw materials utilized on site are locally available. The more exotic and higher quality

material, chert, may be more well represented in small sized flakes at the site, the result of stone tool maintenance, as tools made of high quality exotic material are generally held onto, or curated, and maintained longer than those made of poorer quality, local materials. The 2019 investigation at the site sought to sift a portion of the excavated soil matrices through a 1/8-inch mesh screen to test this theory. The results of the ongoing laboratory analysis will be forthcoming.

The hearth feature exhibiting FCR, FAR, charcoal, and a fish bone, was excavated as part of a 2-meter by 3-meter excavation block. The feature was bisected and excavated separately from the surrounding matrix. Well preserved charcoal was collected from between and directly beneath the FCR/FAR. Excavation of the surrounding matrix found lithic debris and Early Woodland period potsherds at the same level as the hearth feature. The matrix below the hearth feature level was found to be archaeologically sterile. Analysis of the charcoal collected from within the hearth feature yielded AMS dates of 2,750 to 2,710 CAL Yr. BP (800 – 770 B.C.), consistent with an Early Woodland period occupation. The charcoal was found to represent a shrubby plant species likely belonging to the genus *Vaccinium* in the family Ericaceae. There are 13 species of this genus native to New Hampshire and all are perennial shrubs or subshrubs (blueberry [7 species], cranberry [2 species], lingonberry, deerberry, velvetleaf huckleberry, and dwarf bilberry). In summary, the environmental setting and archaeological findings associated with the hearth feature suggest that approximately 2,800 years ago, fish caught in the adjacent Pemigewasset River were cooked or smoked upon a platform of rocks that had been placed upon a bed of hot

coals generated by the burning of locally available perennial shrubs.

### **Pillsbury State Park, Washington**

The 2019 SCRAP investigation at Pillsbury State Park was carried out to determine the presence or absence of pre-contact archaeological deposits along the relatively flat, well-drained areas perched on the south shore of Butterfield Pond. Prior to the 2019 SCRAP investigation, no archaeological sites had been identified within the 5,000-acre state park. Furthermore, the survey area falls in Sullivan County, an archaeologically underrepresented portion of the state. As of 2018, only 59 archaeological sites had been identified in the county.

Three pre-contact archaeological sites (27-SU-69, 27-SU-70, and 27-SU-71) were identified during the initial testing at Pillsbury in 2019, which focused on “The Narrows” and former stream confluences. Native American artifacts identified include chipped-stone tools and the chipping debris associated with the manufacture and maintenance of stone tools as well as FCR and FAR. Additionally, a potential hearth feature was identified and preserved in place for future excavation planned for the summer of 2020.

### **Bear Brook State Park, Allenstown**

Bear Brook State Park comprises nearly 10,000 acres of land in southeastern New Hampshire. The 2019 SCRAP investigation at Bear Brook State Park was carried out to determine the presence or absence of pre-contact archaeological deposits along a relatively flat, well-drained terrace overlooking the confluence of Bear Brook with the Suncook River. Based on several factors including environmental conditions and known history, it is likely that the park

contains numerous pre-contact and post-contact archaeological sites, particularly in areas adjacent to water resources and/or transportation corridors such as former trails and roadways. However, prior to the 2019 SCRAP investigation only three archaeological sites had been documented and recorded in the park, one pre-contact site and two post-contact sites.

One archaeological site (27-MR-434) was identified during the initial testing along the Suncook River in 2019. The site contains both pre-contact and post-contact components. The post-contact component, increasing in density with increased proximity to a cellar hole located 60 meters from the terrace edge, consists of ceramic vessel sherds, window glass fragments, square nails, and a kaolin pipe stem fragment. The pre-contact Native American deposit, appearing to be more dense near the edge of the terrace, consists of chipping debris associated with the manufacture and maintenance of stone tools, calcined bone, a Late Woodland period ceramic vessel sherd, FCR, FAR, and a potential hearth feature. The hearth feature was preserved in place for future excavation planned for the summer of 2020. The 2020 investigation in Bear Brook State Park will continue to focus on the identification and documentation of pre-contact archaeological resources along the Suncook River.

