

Engagement Incentive Grant Application - 2016
**“Bringing Archaeology Home:
Interpreting Central Plains Tradition Lifeways through Interactive Programming”**

Project Description

“Bringing Archaeology Home” is a collaborative outreach project between Kansas State University and the Flint Hills Discovery Center (FHDC). Its goal is to integrate archaeological knowledge gained through University research into enhanced public education through the City of Manhattan’s Flint Hills Discovery Center. This will transform scholarly knowledge into public programming that will expand citizens’ understanding of this region’s cultural diversity through time and encourage civic responsibility through archaeological stewardship. To complete this initial seed project, we request \$9,977 with a match of \$20,133 by K-State and the FHDC.

Background and Need

Research by K-State’s archaeology faculty in the Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work has contributed to understanding of this region’s human past since the mid-1960s. Knowledge gained through this research has been shared at many different levels including through professional venues; University classes; and local public presentations, newsletters, and exhibits. The most ambitious of the latter is the Winds of the Past gallery at the Flint Hills Discovery Center developed through extensive collaboration between museum designers and K-State archaeology faculty. Since opening in 2012, the FHDC education staff has created formal educational programs to address their mission to “inspire people to celebrate, explore, and care for the Flint Hills.” A gap exists, however, in existing programming, specifically in expanding public understanding of the past Native peoples of the Flint Hills as explored through the Winds of the Past gallery. This project initiates what is planned a series of educational programs that will fill this gap and enhance engagement between the University, FHDC, local schools, and general public.

The venture proposed herein initiates the “Bringing Archaeology Home” project with development of the first of a series of programming modules. Each unit will be designed to integrate different sets of archaeological materials in the Winds of the Past gallery into public outreach and in-house programs that will address a) regional cultural diversity through time, b) archaeology and its value for understanding our human past, and c) civic responsibility through archaeological stewardship. These topics are often overlooked yet vital to an educated, inclusive, and empathetic citizenry. Through the planned programs, participants will engage with archaeology to develop knowledge and awareness of cultures different than one’s own through place-based exploration of the cultural history of this region. Inquiry-based exploration of actual archaeological data within a scientific framework will guide students and adults to cultural knowledge and the basis and validity of that knowledge. The understanding gained of both cultural diversity and archaeology will allow participants to understand the value of these and, importantly, the need for and role of citizens in stewardship of our cultural past. These directly address and expand on the FHDC mission to inspire people to celebrate the cultures of the Flint Hills through time and care for its cultural resources.

The first module in the planned series of archaeology-based programs will focus on interpreting the lifeways of the Native peoples of this region between about AD 1000 and AD 1400, what archaeologists term the Central Plains tradition. During this period, the inhabitants of this area lived as farmers, hunters, and gatherers of a wide variety of local resources while living in sedentary farmsteads scattered along stream valleys. This lifeway is in contrast to the stereotypical view of horse-mounted, bison-hunting nomads commonly held of Plains Indians. Exploration of the Central Plains tradition provides a useful point of departure for understanding how there are different ways to live in the same region we call home and ways of living that do not fit our traditional stereotypes. Specifically, this program will engage participants in interpretation of past lifeways through observation, classification, and contextual mapping of archaeological finds from a prehistoric house floor. Inference, discussion, and case studies will deepen understanding of past lifeways, the methods and goals of archaeology, and the civic

responsibilities of citizens in protecting the archaeological database from which we gain cultural understanding and appreciation.

The Central Plains tradition project will serve as a model for developing additional or expanded evidence-based programs for the Flint Hills Discovery Center. Linkages with Project Archaeology, a national educational initiative “dedicated to teaching scientific and historical inquiry, cultural understanding, and the importance of protecting our nation’s rich cultural resources” will be explored and outside funding sought for additional units. The success of future proposals will be enhanced through successful completion of the first “Bringing Archaeology Home” project. Possible sources of future funding might include National Park Service Historic Preservation Funds, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and others.

Engaged Activities and Timeline

Phase I (July-Dec 2016) – Planning and Research:

The educational approach and learning outcomes for the planned program module will be established by the project personnel. We anticipate employing Understanding by Design (McTighe and Wiggins 1998) as a guide to our development process. We will identify desired outcomes, guiding questions, and educational standards to be addressed. Kansas Public Archaeologist Virginia Wulfkuhle, who has played a vital role in developing similar educational materials with the national Project Archaeology program and for the State of Kansas, has agreed to serve as a consultant in this process. Professional educator and College of Education Instructor Jill Wood has also agreed to share her expertise in the planning and development stages.

During the first part of Phase I K-State archaeologists Drs. Lauren W. Ritterbush and Brad Logan will research archaeological data of Central Plains traditional lodge sites. Detailed spatial analysis of one or more suitable datasets will document in detail the distribution of materials and activities associated with past household activities, thus, adding to our scholarly knowledge of these Native societies. These data will then be used for the planned evidence-based learning program.

Phase II (Jan-March 2017) – Programming Development

Phase II will see the development of programming material including interactive lessons and related supplies (e.g., artifact illustrations, observation and classification activities, reconstructed floor plan). Assessment tools will also be developed. In anticipation of testing these materials in late spring, contact will be made with local school districts, teachers, and other organizations.

Phase III (March-June 2017) – Testing

The lesson module will be tested through outreach and in-house programs with public, private and tribal schools as well as other groups including homeschool organizations. Piloting will allow us to fine tune the module and evaluate the lesson relative to our objectives, educational standards, and the needs of K-12 classes and the interests of other audiences. The initial progress report will be prepared by the end of June 2017.

Phase IV (July-Nov 2017) – Refinement and Marketing

Revisions of the lessons, resources, and assessments will be made based on initial testing of the Central Plains tradition program. Marketing staff at the Flint Hills Discovery Center will develop a marketing plan and institute that early in the academic year in order to advertise the program to local schools and other entities (e.g. home schools, adult education programs).

Phase V (Nov 2017-June 2018) – Implementation

The goal for implementation is to engage more than 150 students with the revised program through outreach to schools and field trips to the Discovery Center by the end of the 2017-2018 academic year. Adult programming will also be considered based on demand. The final project report will be prepared. Funding options for future program development will be considered. Summary of the project and final outcomes will be presented through relevant academic publications or conference presentations.

Accomplishment Benchmarks

January 2017 - Delivery of research material to program development team

April 2017 - Completion of draft program materials

June 2017 - Complete test of program with 100 students

July 2017 - Submit initial progress report

December 2017 - Complete revised program and marketing plan

June 2018 - Program delivered to 150 students

July 2018 - Submit final project report

Collaborative Partners

- Lauren W. Ritterbush, Associate Professor of Anthropology/Archaeology, Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work, Kansas State University (PI)
- Brad Logan, Research Associate Professor of Anthropology/Archaeology, Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work, Kansas State University (Collaborating Researcher)
- Stephen Bridenstine, Public Program Coordinator, Flint Hills Discovery Center (FHDC PI)
- Daniel Schapaugh, Education Specialist - History & Culture, Flint Hills Discovery Center
- Megan Berry, Marketing Coordinator, Flint Hills Discovery Center
- Virginia Wulfkuhle, Public Archeologist, Kansas Historical Society & State Project Archaeology coordinator
- Jill Wood, Instructor of Elementary/Secondary Social Studies, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, College of Education

Impact

This project translates University research into easily accessible learning materials and serves as an important service to the community through outreach. At K-State, research into Central Plains tradition lodge spatial analysis will be conducted providing greater insight into late prehistoric Native household activities and structure. This will expand our existing understanding of local Native societies in this region while also providing real-life data for the proposed evidence-based learning activity. FHDC education staff will be involved in the research to provide first-hand experience with archaeological research and the discovery process that they can carry into this and future educational programs.

The Discovery Center currently offers eight on-site and off-site education programs covering such varied topics as engineering, ecology, geology, pioneer settlement, agriculture, and economics. The addition of this initial module will fill a critical hole in this line-up. It will place the prehistory of the Flint Hills front and center for students through interactive evidence-based activities and encourage them to think deeply about time and culture in the place they call home. It will expand knowledge of regional cultural diversity and generate empathy for people past, present, and future. It will become part of regular FHDC programming, available to all school groups and community organizations, and funded through earned revenue. Furthermore, FHDC staff will record observations and inferences made by students involved with these activities and share those with the archaeological researchers as a means of encouraging public-professional interaction.

This project continues almost a decade of close collaboration between Kansas State University and the Flint Hills Discovery Center with the potential to strengthen these professional and community ties. By combining the exceptional scholarship at K-State with the programming expertise and infrastructure of the FHDC, this project will maximize its outcomes and create momentum necessary to grow this project beyond the initial grant period.