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Note to editors: Brian Sutton is a graduate of Olathe South High School. One student participating in the project has requested no publicity.

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K-STATE FIELD SCHOOL EXCAVATING ARTIFACTS FROM 1,500 YEARS AGO

MANHATTAN — Kansas State University students and faculty are stepping back into history this month as they excavate 1,500-year-old artifacts near Leavenworth, according to Brad Logan, director of the 2006 Kansas Archeological Field School, and associate research professor of anthropology at Kansas State University.

Students from Southern Methodist University, the University of Singapore and 14 K-State students are learning archeological field methods under the direction of Logan as part of the archeological field school. The class began June 5 and continues through June 30.

Students live near the site where they work and learn full time. Lauren Ritterbush, associate professor of sociology, anthropology and archeology at K-State, said, "Students are required to live together during this class because during a real-life situation they would be in remote areas with no other option."

Students will get hands-on experience in the initial data collection phases of archeological research, Ritterbush said.

The first of the phases is archeological survey — identifying a location of any past human activity. Then students take part in archeological excavation, finding the artifacts and noting where they were found in relation to one another. Finally, students will be involved in the initial stages of interpretation, Ritterbush said.

The New-McGraw site, where the field school is located, is in the Stranger Creek valley, which has yielded evidence of occupation during the Plains Woodland period (500 AD-1000 AD). In June 2005 chipped stone tools, pottery and hearthstones were exposed at the site after a flood by an adjacent stream.

"We were really impressed when we first saw the site, there were artifacts just laying all over the ground," Logan said.

The purpose of the field school is to excavate artifacts and other evidence of past activities that may make the site eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

(more)

"This is the fourth grant for research in Stranger Creek, the others resulted in four sites placed on the register," Logan said.

The school is funded in part by a grant from the Historic Preservation Fund, and matching funds from K-State. The grant is from the Kansas State Historical Preservation Office, which is a part of the Kansas State Historical Society. This is the fourth grant K-State has received for field school projects.

Daniel Keating, Fort Scott, a May 2006 K-State graduate in anthropology, serves as field and teaching assistant for this year's archeological field school.

K-State students enrolled in the class include:

From Haddam: Bryan Frye, sophomore in anthropology.

From Manhattan: Andrianna Elliott, senior in anthropology; Brian Sutton, junior in anthropology, history and international studies; Dawn Murphy, sophomore, major undeclared.

Eric Skov, junior in anthropology and sociology, Olathe; Allison Daniels, junior in sociology, Ottawa; Adam Bohannon, junior in anthropology and psychology, Overland Park; Tegan Modica, senior in anthropology, Parsons; Elizabeth Shirley, senior in anthropology, Topeka.

From Wichita: Mary Burke, junior in anthropology; Raina Hanley, sophomore in anthropology; Sarah Loepp, junior in anthropology; Trent Smith, 2006 graduate in anthropology and sociology.

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