

Minnesota Archaeological Society

Spring - Summer 2025

Biannual Publication



Minnesota Archaeology Month 2024

By Mandy Wintheiser, Membership & Communications

September was Archaeology Month in Minnesota and the Minnesota Archaeological Society made sure to celebrate! We participated in several events throughout the state and hosted our annual meeting and dinner at the end of the month. We were invited by the Minnesota Historical Society and Minnesota State Parks & Trails to share information and help with demonstrations; we brought copies of the Bound By Earth documentary to each event along with newsletter copies, membership information, and journal copies.

The first event we attended was at Historic Fort Snelling. The activities and demonstrations included pottery making and atlatl throwing. MAS President Dan Wendt demonstrated flint knapping and shared a lot about stone tool technology. These activities were a fun hands-on way to explore how materials we find in the archaeological record were actually made.



MAS President Dan Wendt flint knapping at Historic Fort Snelling. Photo Courtesy of Mandy Wintheiser



Jennifer and Alexandra at the MAS table at Historic Fort Snelling. Photo Courtesy of Mandy Wintheiser

Next, we were at Jeffers Petroglyphs. Activities here included seed sorting, making stratigraphy vials, twisting nettle cord, and more flint knapping. These activities offered a lot of information on plants in archaeology and what we can learn from them. The stratigraphy vials were a fun take home example of how archaeological sites can be formed.

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A perfect day at Jeffers Petroglyphs. Photo courtesy of Mandy Wintheiser.

Letter from the President - March 2025

By Dan Wendt (MAS Board President)

The letter from the MAS President is intended as a vehicle to inform the general membership of the Minnesota Archaeological Society of recent Board of Directors activities. The following is a brief recap of the events, discussions, and decisions that transpired during the past half year and future planning.

We were proud to send out 2024 Volume of the Minnesota Archaeologist which was a memorial volume to Doug Birk. Doug Birk was remembered by his peers in Minnesota Archaeology for his passion for archaeology and historical research. There are seven great articles that highlight Minnesota Archaeology in the spirit of Doug Birk. Congratulations to our Senior Editor, Danielle Kiesow for completing her sixth volume of the Minnesota Archaeologist. Danielle will be passing the editor role to a new editor. The 2025 journal will be dedicated to Steve Mulholland and will be edited by Susan Mulholland. The volume will focus on topics of flint knapping, lithics, copper, historic trade axes and the fur trade which were all topics that Steve loved. The 2026 journal will be edited by George Holly and the articles lined up cover the archaeology of Western Minnesota. Danielle has set us up very well for this transition and we are very grateful to Danielle for her outstanding work as editor.

September was our annual meeting and archaeology month. MAS was involved in five weekends of activities in support. Programs included Archaeology weekends at Historic Fort Snelling, Split Rock Lighthouse, Jeffers Petroglyphs, and Mille Lacs Kathio State Park. The programs are important to remind the public about the complex and interesting history of Minnesota and that the archaeology under our feet is worth protecting.

We had shocking news last fall with the passing of one of our board members, John Reynolds. We have a memorial in this newsletter recognizing his service to the board and passion for cultural resource management, his people, and their language. We were honored to have his service on the MAS board and will miss his presence.

In February, we helped sponsor the Council for Minnesota Archaeology (CMA) biennial conference at the University of Minnesota. The two-day event brought together archaeologists and the community from around the state of Minnesota. There were posters and talks that covered research and the history and archaeology of Minnesota. It was great to see old friends and meet new ones. Many thanks to the CMA for the opportunity to participate and contribute.

Deb Palmer has let us know that after nearly 45 years of participating on the MAS Board she will be retiring from the board. She has served in a variety of roles on the MAS board. Her latest role has been to manage our web site and provide information on archaeology from around the state. She will be passing her role to Valerie Warfel. We are excited to learn more about Valerie and her talents as an Archaeology Illustrator. Please follow MAS on our Website, Facebook, and watch for announcements of online lectures.

MAS Board of Directors

- Dan Wendt, President
- Jasmine Koncur, Vice President
- Mara Taft, Secretary
- Justin Olson, Treasurer
- Erin Fallon, Newsletter Editor
- Valerie Warfel, (New) Social Media & Webpage
- Selena Bernier, Outreach
- Jennifer Rankin, Journal Team
- Mike Michlovic, Outreach & Journal Team
- George Holley, *Minnesota Archaeologist* (New) Editor
- Mandy Wintheiser, Membership & Communications

Mission Statement: *Sharing, preserving, and honoring Minnesota's richly diverse archaeology and heritage through publication, education, and outreach.*

REQUESTS:

Call for Papers & Peer Reviewers

George Holley & Danielle Kiesow, The Minnesota Archaeologist

If you recently presented at the biannual Council for Minnesota Archaeology Conference, have a paper ready, or are looking to publish an article on Minnesota or upper Midwest archaeology, The Minnesota Archaeologist is currently looking for submissions to add to our article queue for publication in 2026 and beyond. We accept original research both in longform or shorter "Research Notes," book reviews for newer Midwest archaeology/anthropology publications, discussions on a recent volunteer project or experience, and student research. Please keep your article to no longer than 10,000 words, 10 figures, and 5 tables. Please review The Minnesota Archaeologist Style Guide on the MAS website before submitting your article to George Holley at holley@mnstate.edu

If you are interested in peer reviewing articles, please contact George Holley (holley@mnstate.edu).

MAS Hill-Lewis Award 2025: Call for Nominations

The Hill-Lewis Award is given annually by MAS to a living avocational archaeologist who has made outstanding contributions to Minnesota archaeology. The MAS Board is seeking nominations for the 2025 Hill-Lewis Award. Please forward your nomination to Dan Wendt, MAS President at Wendt001@gmail.com. The 2025 submission deadline is June 1st.

Nominees for the award should have made important contributions to our knowledge of Minnesota archaeology (prehistoric or historic) through original research or publication, collaboration with professional archaeologists, site stewardship, site preservation, public outreach, or exceptional K-12 teaching. Nominees do not have to be members of the Minnesota Archaeological Society. Nominators should submit a nomination letter detailing the nominee and their accomplishments, as well as at least one letter of support for the nomination. The Hill-Lewis Award will be awarded in September at our annual meeting during Archaeology Month.

The Hill-Lewis Award epitomizes the MAS goals of increasing public involvement in archaeology and in promoting the stewardship of the unique and irreplaceable archaeological record of Minnesota.

Have an idea for the next newsletter?

We would like to hear from you! Send your MAS and archaeology related news and notices to info@mnarchsociety.org.

*For archaeology news, events
and more ... follow us on
social media!*



2024 MAS Annual Meeting and Dinner

By Mandy Wintheiser, Membership & Communications

The Minnesota Archaeological Society Annual Meeting was held during Minnesota Archaeology Month in September, was a big success! In 2024, we held our annual meeting at the Oliver Kelley Farm. It was a fun venue to visit and a chance to get outside the Twin Cities a little bit. We had about 30 people in attendance.

We were able to have some social time and catch up with members to start the evening. A delicious dinner provided by Winna Wota featuring bison sandwiches, wild rice, vegetable soup, and pumpkin bars. After tons of tasty food, we held our annual business meeting where the board went over some of MAS's accomplishments and activities over the past year, including the publication of our annual journal and many public outreach events. The MAS board celebrated our 2024 Hill-Lewis Award winner, Dr. George Shurr. Dr. Shurr, a retired geologist, has been a long-time advocate for archaeological studies in southwestern Minnesota and neighboring areas. His blog, titled "Land at the Edge of the Sky" features numerous entries expanding on the archaeological resources of the Rock River region.



MAS members listen to board updates during the 2024 annual meeting. Photo courtesy of Mandy Wintheiser.

Finally, attendees listened to a fascinating lecture from Dr. Amanda Butler titled "Mississippian Missionaries: Bundling a Cahokian Religious Movement" which examine the establishment and dissemination of the Cahokia-Mississippian religion. It was such an interesting lecture and opened up some great conversations as the evening wrapped up.



Dr. Amanda Butler presenting at the 2024 MAS annual meeting. Photo Courtesy of Mandy Wintheiser

MAS would like to thank all those who attended for helping us to enjoy a great evening of socializing together, enjoying delicious food, learning about archaeology, and for your support of MAS! We hope to see you at the next annual meeting in September 2025.

Council for Minnesota Archaeology Biannual Conference Review Feb. 21-22, 2025

There were three organized sessions at the 2025 CMA Conference; they covered a range of topics including historical archaeology at an urban site in Minneapolis, precontact archaeology at a famous site in Southern Minnesota, and decolonizing Minnesota archaeological practice. The session abstracts are included below.

Decolonizing Minnesota Archaeology, beyond compliance

Organizers: Kat Hayes (University of Minnesota), Sigrid Arnott (Archaeo-Physics)

The development of Indigenous Archaeologies and the enactment (and update) of NAGPRA have done much to bring decolonial or anti-colonial approaches to the field of archaeology. This session brings the focus to what it would look like to decolonize locally by going beyond or outside traditional academic attitudes transferred to CRM compliance.

Presentations will focus on disruptive and decolonial changes to address training and accreditation; typologies, chronologies, contexts and their legacies; methods and concepts of evidence; data sharing and sovereignty; land, artifact and information ownership; jurisdiction, and other relevant topics. We hope to address how archaeology can move beyond the typical scope of state and federal compliance frameworks through Tribal archaeologies both within and beyond trust lands, land-back approaches, Indigenous frameworks and knowledge production, and community-based collaborative stewardship programs.

Excavations and Insights at 21HE571, Wadaag Commons

Organizer: Jeremy Nienow (Nienow Cultural Consultants)

Beginning in 2023, Nienow Cultural Consultants (NCC) worked with Redesign, Inc. on the development of a .44-acre housing complex, Wadaag Commons, located at 1900 East 22nd Street in Minneapolis' Seward Neighborhood. Over the course of a year, NCC completed literature review, survey, evaluation, and mitigation efforts within the parcel which once represented four individual residential, business and industrial lots. Archaeological efforts resulted in the identification and excavation of 50 features and over diagnostic 9,000 artifacts recovered from postholes, foundations, ash pits, trash pits, and privy vaults. This session will discuss a wide range of topics related to the overall project including excavation methods and techniques; lot use, change and depositional practices; as well as insights from overall artifact and feature analysis related to the people who inhabited this part of the Twin Cities from the 1880s through the 1940s.

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Photos from presentations in the Wadaag Commons Session

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We also participated in Archaeology Day at Mille Lacs Kathio State Park (see below). The month wrapped up with our annual meeting, dinner, and lecture. See page 4 for a full recap! Besides our in person events, we added more of our past lectures to our YouTube page; be sure to check them out soon. We're already thinking about what this year will bring. Make sure to check our webpage and social media for announcements about Minnesota Archaeology Month 2025!

Mille Lacs Kathio State Park's Archaeology Day 2024

By Erin Fallon, MAS Newsletter Editor/Park Naturalist

The Minnesota Archaeological Society, St. Cloud State University's Anthropology Collective, and MNDNR Parks & Trails co-sponsored Archaeology Day at Mille Lacs Kathio State Park on Saturday, September 28th, 2024. It was a beautiful fall day, that kind of felt like summer due to the high being in the 80's. Fall colors, gorgeous weather and people's curiosity drew over 400 visitors to the annual event. Ongoing demonstrations and displays allowed people to interact with presenters from various organizations. We had our wonderful regulars: MNHS with a children's pottery activity, SHPO and MLBO THPO completing a cooking demonstration, SCSU Anthropology students at the atlatl range and park staff leading Archery in the Park. New this year, we had Archaeo-physics talking to people about ground penetrating radar and geophysical surveys. Visitors got an opportunity to get up close and touch some of their space-age-looking equipment. We hope to have them back again next year.



SCSU students running the atlatl range demonstration. Photo courtesy of MNDNR.

Park visitors participating in the Archaeo-physics demonstration. Photo courtesy of MNDNR.



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12,000 Years at Lake Benton: Multi-disciplinary Investigations at the Pedersen Site **Organizer: Ed Fleming (Science Museum of Minnesota)**

The Pedersen site, located on Lake Benton in southwestern Minnesota and situated on the edge of the Coteau des Prairies, is one of the rare archaeological sites in the state that contains an occupation history that spans most of the history of people living in Minnesota. The Pedersen site holds a nearly complete archaeological record from the end of the last ice age up to recent times. Lake Benton, formed by glacial outwash, holds a record of the surrounding environment since its formation. Together they provide a nearly unparalleled opportunity in the state to study cultural changes in tandem with environmental changes across a full swath of post-glacial time.

Organized by the Science Museum of Minnesota, a collaborative, multi-disciplinary, multi-institutional team of researchers is investigating the history and archaeology of the Pedersen site and the sequence of climatic and environmental changes in southwestern Minnesota to provide an integrated view of the region's cultural and environmental past.

John Reynolds Memoriam



John-Asher Reynolds, Čhaŋtóžuha Máni, passed away on October 20, 2024, at the age of 42 in St. Paul, MN. A devoted advocate for Lakota language and culture, John dedicated his life to cultural preservation and community engagement.

John served as a board member for the Minnesota Archaeology Society, through his calm and thoughtful demeanor he brought a unique and valuable perspective to the board. His outreach efforts on behalf of the MN Archaeology Society helped bridge the past with the present, ensuring the continuity of knowledge for future generations. Through his work in cultural resource management, he combined academic expertise—earned at Haskell Indian Nations University and the University of Minnesota—with a deep respect for Indigenous traditions.

Photo: John Reynolds doing outreach at Snake River Fur Post. Courtesy of Mandy Wintheiser.

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*New Sustaining members will receive a free copy of the Minnesota Archaeologist 1935—2005 Compendium on a flash drive.

**New Benefactors will receive a free copy of the Minnesota Archaeologist 1935—2005 Compendium on a flash drive, and a seat as an Honored Guest at the Annual Dinner Meeting.

Thank you for supporting the Minnesota Archaeological Society!