

FRAP

The Farmington River Archaeological Project

The Farmington River has been a vital resource for inhabitants of its valley for more than 10,000 years. The natural resources available in the valley have been key to the settlement and survival of people here for all of that time.



Run from the Department of Anthropology Department here at Central Connecticut State University, the

Farmington River Archaeological Project (FRAP) is in an ongoing archaeological survey that has resulted in the discovery of more than 250 archaeological sites in the Farmington River Valley. These sites represent the remnants of ancient villages, quarries, burial grounds, fishing grounds, hunting territories—in essence, the communities of the past inhabitants of the valley.

Central students as well as those from other institutions across the United States have participated as part of our archaeology field school (Anth 450) for three or six credits. The work accomplished by these students as part of their archaeological training has contributed immeasurably to our understanding of the ancient past of southern New England.

The Soapstone Quarry

Our most recent research has focused on a nearly 3,000-year-old soapstone quarry located in Barkhamsted, Connecticut. Charcoal found in association with soapstone

quarry remnants has been dated to 2730 \pm 30 BP (Beta-341471). We will be back at the quarry in the first summer session of 2013 (May 28-June 28).

Students can register for Anth 450 to participate in the prehistoric archaeology field school. For more information, contact Professor Ken Feder (feder@ccsu.edu).



There are a number of soapstone sources in southern New England that were quarried by the aboriginal inhabitants of our region. Many aboriginal quarries have been destroyed by modern quarrying and development and are, therefore, lost to archaeologists. The quarry remnants along the Walt Landgraf Trail in Peoples State Forest are largely intact, having been preserved by their location in a state forest. At a number of places along the trail, large soapstone boulders can be seen with remnants



of bowl bases still visible, affording an excellent opportunity to investigate aboriginal soapstone bowl quarrying and manufacturing techniques. A large number of quarry tools including end picks, cleavers, and scrapers were recovered in our 2011 field season.



Our proposed strategy for our archaeological field work in Summer 2013 includes:

1. Mapping of all in-place quarry remnants.
2. Photographing all in-place quarry remnants.



3. Small-scale excavation of 1-meter-square units in the vicinity of those quarry remnants. These excavations will involve scraping soil levels down with small, hand-held trowels. All soil will be passed through 1/8th inch mesh hardware cloth.
4. Shovel-dug test pits in the areas between those places where quarry remnants are visible on the surface.
5. Shovel-dug test pits placed more broadly in the area around the location of the quarry remnants.

Check back here at the end of the summer for more an update on the results of our 2013 excavations. Better yet, join us this summer and be a part of the team of archaeologists excavating the ancient quarry site.

