

Conemaugh River Lake Receives Archeological Research Expertise

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The Anthropology Department of Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP) has partnered with USACE on Conemaugh River Lake property due to its cultural richness. A few field studies have been conducted by the university in the past.

Earlier this year, Professor Ford contacted USACE with a proposal to conduct an archaeological field school near the old site of Newport Village, which was settled by Europeans in the late 1700s near the Conemaugh River. After obtaining all necessary permits and real estate instruments, 17 IUP students spent six weeks in the summer learning archaeological field techniques such as creating shovel test pits, excavation units and geophysical surveys. During their lab, they dug up pieces of stone debris that showed humans were at this location as much as 8,000 years ago.

Artifacts were transported to the IUP archaeology lab to be cleaned and cataloged according to Department of the Interior standards. The students are studying the artifacts during the Fall 2019 and Spring 2020 semesters. Once processed, the artifacts will be curated with USACE and a report

will be provided to Conemaugh and the Pittsburgh District Office.

Additional projects have been identified and both entities are looking forward to working together in the coming years. At present the organizations are working towards formalizing their research relationship with a MOU.

“A group of students and professors from Indiana University of Pennsylvania discovered something unexpected while working on an archaeological dig near Blairsville Borough—artifacts from 8,000 years ago. Anthropology professors Ben Ford and Bill Chadwick oversaw 17 IUP students for six weeks while they dug, mapped and explored Newport Village, which thrived from 1790 to 1820 near where Black Lick Creek meets the Conemaugh River.”

“IUP Digs Into Blairsville, Find Artifacts 8K Years Old,”

WESA-FM (Pittsburgh's NPR News Station), August 28, 2019



Dr. Ford teaches on-site to a group of IUP students.