



NWIAS NEWSLETTER

Northwest Chapter of the Iowa Archaeological Society

Winter 2022 - 2023



Greetings and welcome to the Northwest Chapter of the Iowa Archaeological Society!

My name is Mark Anderson, and I am very happy to be the new archaeologist at the Sanford Museum. I recently accepted the position in early October following a six-month hiatus due to the departure of Quinn Black and the melee that was the Covid-19 year. We have had one regular meeting on Wednesday 9 November just to get things going again. I know our regular meeting time is the first Wednesday of the month so I will see if we can't keep to that schedule starting in February 2023. So here is a short bio about me.

I recently retired from a 35-year professional archaeology career where I spent most of my time researching and excavating sites here in Iowa. I began my university career at the University of Oregon in Eugene and completed a double major in Anthropology and Geology at Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana. I then stayed to be a Teaching Assistant and do my Graduate work. My first job in archaeology was at the Iowa State Historic Preservation Office in Des Moines during the winter of 1985-86. I participated in a pilot program by the National Parks Service to create the working version of the National Archaeological Bibliographic database (NABD). This was a 5–6-month project where me and another archaeologist (Blane Nansel) read every cultural resource management report done to date and created bibliographic entries for all 2,500 + reports. That project was deemed a success and some version of NABD now exists in most state archaeology offices.

I then spent about a year-plus working at Bachman's greenhouse and growing range facility in Lakeville, Minnesota, as well as doing some volunteer fieldwork as opportunities allowed. I moved to Tipton, Iowa, in the fall of 1987 and applied for work at the University of Iowa's Office of the State Archaeologist. I thought I would start as a crew member but when I arrived for my first day, I was handed a project folder, car keys, and a travel advance. When I said I was here to be crew for the project I was told that "no", you're here to run the job! So, I spent 22 months bidding on projects of all kinds and sizes, winning the contract, and carrying the project to completion. It was sometimes hectic, always challenging, and a very rewarding learning experience where I never had a down day. (continued on Page 2)

Highlights of this Issue:

1. Mark's Bio
2. Article on the Storm Lake Project
3. Soil Screening from the Crocker Site, 13CK71
4. Atlatl Building Event
5. 2023 Fieldwork Opportunities

Winter 2023 Meetings

(continued from page 1) After this time, I had the opportunity to apply for a position with the Highway Archaeology Program, which I got, and my 32-year career was now full-time permanent. I had the pleasure of working across the state on many very interesting projects. I ran projects from a couple of acres to well over a thousand, oversaw crews of 2 to 20+, and authored over 300 technical reports varying from 20 to 400 pages. My last large project was during the 2016-17 season leading a crew of 20+ excavating several large blocks at the Dixon site, 13WD8, located just south of the town of Anthon. The Dixon site is an Oneota occupation of some tens of acres dating to the 1300's CE and is primarily ancestral to the Ioway, Oto, Ponca, Ho-Chunk, and Sioux Nations. The project was motivated by severe erosion of the Little Sioux River with the excavated blocks affording the Iowa DOT access for the construction of a roughly 1500 ft long rip-rap wall to protect the site and Iowa Highway 31 from further damage. That project had a crew of more than 20 on any given day, took roughly 118 days on-site, and is the largest excavation ever conducted by the OSA, to date. I continued to perform surveys for both the Highway Archaeology Program and the Contracts Program at the OSA and retired at the end of June 2019.

I chose Storm Lake as my retirement destination after falling in love with the lake while working on numerous projects in the area. I live south of the lake with my two mini-Australian Shepards, Marley and Bruce. I have two adult children, my son Trevor is a professional chef in Memphis, TN, and One of my career specialties is lithics, the manufacture of stone tools, and their experimental uses. I throw a mean dart using an atlatl and we will have a built-your-own atlatl event later next spring. I am also a dedicated swimmer, I have kept tropical fish for all but 10-12 years of my life, I like to hunt and fish, feed the backyard birds, and take photos. So, I'm very glad to be here in Northwest Iowa and I very much look forward to meeting you all at our regular meetings, working with many of you on lab and field projects, and getting the NW Chapter active and engaged with Iowa Archeology.

Sincerely, Mark



Mark Anderson is the new
Sanford Museum Archaeologist

Storm Lake Culture History Project
Fall 2022-Spring 2023
Mark L. Anderson

Storm Lake is one of the beautiful natural lakes found in northwest Iowa. At four square miles surface area and depths to 20 ft, this lake is a great resource for its modern occupants and visitors alike. It also home to thousands of years of prehistoric peoples who relied on the varied and bountiful resources of this northwest Iowa prairie lake.

Recently, the Iowa Geologic Survey has been reconsidering the origins of the lake since it is clearly not a part of the most recent glacial advance into Iowa, known as the Des Moines Lobe. This glacial advance was part of the Wisconsinan Period where ice sheets advanced across the continent once again creating the characteristic landscape of flat to rolling topography, many marshes, bogs, and lakes, and poorly organized drainageways seen in the north-central area of the state. The Des Moines Lobe is considered an “out-of-sync” advance as it began after the maximum advance of the Wisconsinan ice which was roughly 22-16,500 years BP. The Des Moines Lobe began to advance to the southeast out of Minnesota after 16,000 along with a similar out-of-sync advance called the James Lobe in South Dakota. Ice sheets entered Iowa roughly by 15,000 BP and reached its southernmost extent at the current location of the city of Des Moines, Iowa, by roughly 13,800 BP. Several additional advances and retreats occurred during the Late Pleistocene period including the Altamont, Clare, and Renwick, and Algona advances. All ice of the Des Moines Lobe had completely left the state by roughly 11,500 BP.

The location of Storm Lake is roughly 2 miles west of the Bemis Moraine in south-central Buena Vista County. The lake’s position indicates that it is older than the most recent glacial advance and appears to reside on an earlier ice advance into northcentral Iowa. This issue, along with several others, is why the Iowa Geologic Survey is currently researching the lake’s actual origins and age. A comprehensive understanding of the historic, and more importantly, prehistoric occupations of the Storm Lake basin would add significantly to the understanding of the prehistoric occupation of northwest Iowa. Therefore, this research project is focused on gathering, organizing, and reporting on the human occupation within and immediately surrounding the lake basin.

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Hence, I am asking for help from the Northwest Chapter of the Iowa Archeological Society. I would like to learn about sites our members know of in this area. This would include an initial presentation on what we already know about the area followed by artifact show and tell events featuring collections from this area at our regular Sanford Museum meetings, recording of any of these sites that might be new finds, and making plans for spring visits to any of these sites or other locations that members have on their radars.

I look forward to working with you all on this research project.



This ground-breaking research was conducted at the University of Iowa. From the landowners who notified researchers at U. Iowa, to the professional / volunteer crew that excavated the remains, to the interdisciplinary team that analyzed and published the results, this is a one-of-a-kind collaborative project. If you're not interested in the scholarly article be sure to click the live links below to learn more....

Congratulations to EES Emeritus Professors Holmes Semken, Dick Baker and Art Bettis, and Paleontology Repository Collections Manager Tiffany Adrain on the publication of "*Paleobiology of Jefferson's Ground Sloth (*Megalonyx jeffersonii*) derived from three contemporaneous, ontogenetically distinct individuals recovered from Southwestern Iowa, U.S.A.*" in the latest issue of [Journal of Vertebrate Paleontology \(v. 42, issue 1\)](#).

This multi-authored paper is the culmination of a huge collaborative project with the University of Iowa's Museum of Natural History (UIMNH), Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences, and Office of the State Archaeologist, based on a unique *Megalonyx* site discovered in 2001. The study focuses on Iowa's environment 106,000 years ago, description of the most complete skeletal remains of the species, and the first direct evidence of a *Megalonyx* family group with extended supervised juvenile care. The excavations and research involved extensive collaborations between many interdepartmental UI staff, faculty, students (of whom five are authors), and volunteers coordinated by UIMNH which played a vital role in organizing and managing the recovery, lab preparation, preservation, curation, and research on the sloth. The research team says any future work on Ice Age Ground Sloths will reference this University of Iowa study.

The sloth specimens, donated by landowners B. and S. Athen, and D. and L. Tiemann, who were so encouraging of student involvement, are housed in the UI Paleontology Repository and can be viewed online at the [Iowa Digital Library](#). Excavation diaries and photos are available on the UIMNH website: [Tarkio Valley Sloth Project](#). The UIMNH mascot "Rusty the Giant Ground Sloth," a life-size model of *M. jeffersonii*, is on display in Macbride Hall - Rusty merchandise is available!



Illustration of Giant Ground sloth

University of Iowa's Rusty the Giant Ground Sloth

Further Notes:

Membership Dues

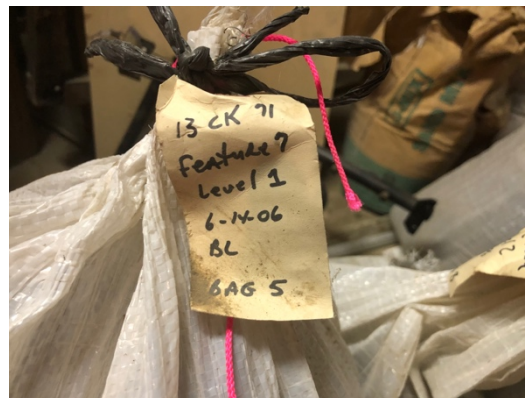
I would like to try to get everyone on a January and June payment schedule. This will make record-keeping much easier on my part. It should also help you with a more concise reminder of when your annual membership is due. We have a PayPal account so you can pay through that option but I will always accept checks or cash. And remember, dues are only \$5.00 per year!! Explicit instructions for using Paypal will be coming in January.

IAS Spring Meeting

I have invited the members of the Iowa Archaeology Society to spend a Friday evening and Saturday, the last weekend of April, at the Sanford Museum for the 2023 Spring Meeting. Although I have not received confirmation from the Board, I am anticipating a resounding “Yes” reply. So, I am tentatively planning on hosting a Friday evening viewing of the new display here at the museum followed by the standard presentations and business meeting on Saturday. If a field visit to a local site can be arranged, I would like to do that also. I will know shortly so be prepared to be asked for volunteer support as we would like to show all other chapters how we do things in NW Iowa!

Crocker Site, 13CK71, Lab Days

The Crocker Site was test excavated several years ago by Jason Titcomb and many of you may have participated in either the fieldwork, follow-up lab work, or both. Well, it turns out that there are numerous bags of feature fill and other soil samples that remain. I am in the process of inventorying them and then making decisions as to whether we process all or just some of them. I am tentatively looking at a couple of Saturdays, 21 January and 18 February, as possible work dates. Please give me feedback if these dates would work or if there are other days that would be good. I’m not averse to using a weekday if that would work for several helping hands. Thanks for your input.



Atlatl Build

As I mentioned in my bio, I am interested in ancient technology and one of those items I like to use is an atlatl and darts. I would be interested in hosting an Atlatl build day where we would make atlatls for your own personal use. I throw regularly at my home and will also be hosting at least one event next Halloween in conjunction with Cherokee County Conservation. If there is interest, I will gather the necessary materials and we can have a build sometime in later March, April, or May. There might be a small fee for materials but maybe not so again, please let me know if you would be interested.



Fieldwork Opportunities

Since I am relatively new to the Sanford Museum but not to Iowa archaeology, I have decided to feature several 2–3-day fieldwork opportunities rather than a week or so field school. These events would be open to anyone who can join us for one, two, or all three days. I have several land parcels available with good potential for larger-scale research in the future. But for this summer I thought I would like to do some smaller test excavations, similar to Phase I survey methods used in cultural resource management projects. Members of course are welcome, but I would also be happy to include interested high school students. I will have more information on this plan in the Spring newsletter.



Sanford Museum Facebook Page

I started to post archaeology and related topics on the Sanford Museum Facebook page. I would like to get information out on Iowa archaeology but also feature items from the surrounding states and, when interesting and exciting, feature archaeology from other parts of the nation and world. I hope you like reading them and I will gladly accept suggestions from the membership when you see something you think everyone would like. So, feel free to contact me or send me posts or ideas for posts to me at archaeologist@sanfordmuseum.org

Do you have a comment or a question?
Contact me anytime at
archaeologist@sanfordmuseum.org

\$5 Membership Renewal and Donation Form.

Cut out this form and return to the Sanford Museum

Mail to: NWIAS, Sanford Museum, 117 E Willow St, Cherokee, IA 51012

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

EMAIL _____

I would like to support NWAIS with an additional \$ _____

"I think it wasn't just archaeology that bound us together but an appreciation of nature's many facets which we learned from each other. Certainly, new worlds were opened to many of us through this association."

W. D. Frankforter, NWIAS, Vol. X, No. 5, 1962

About NWIAS

The Northwest Chapter was organized as a branch of the Iowa Archeological Society in 1951 and members are pledged to support and further the aims and purposes of the parent organization. IAS was established by interested Iowans for the study and preservation of the prehistoric and early historic sites of the state. Its goals are to further archaeological knowledge and to gather record and publish information of all archaeological remains for the benefit of future Iowans or scientists. All meetings are open to the public and are regularly announced to members. Programs include films, slide presentations, reports, field trips and supervised excavations.

Membership Dues

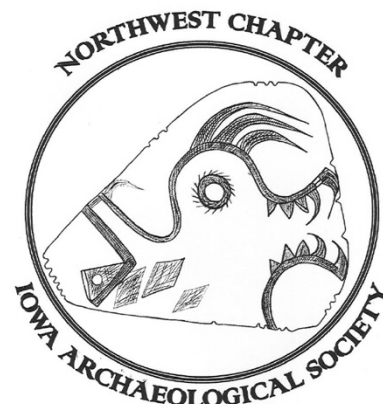
Annual Chapter Dues:
Individual level \$5.00
(Send payment to the Sanford Museum)
Dues are payable in January or June

Iowa Archaeological Society:

Membership in the Iowa Archeological Society is \$30 and not required but is highly recommended. To join the IAS send payment to: Membership Secretary, IAS
Office of the State Archeologist
700 Clinton Street Bldg
Iowa City, IA 52242-1030

NWIAS Officers:

President:
Mark Mertes,
Sibley



If you prefer a printed newsletter please let us know at 712-225-3922