

## Report of the State Archaeologist (Fiscal Year 2017)

February 2018

This report summarizes the activities of the Office of the State Archaeologist (OSA) as directed by Minnesota Statute 138.38 which states that the State Archaeologist complete a report of activities “annually and also upon leaving office.” This report covers FY2017 (July 2016 through June 2017).

The Office of the State Archaeologist is housed in the Community Services Division of the Department of Administration. The Office of the State Archaeologist (OSA) has two staff members, and leases office space from the Minnesota Historical Society (MHS) at the Fort Snelling History Center.

### Introduction

The Office of the State Archaeologist (OSA) strives to preserve archaeological sites and un-platted burials, encourage communication between state agencies, foster collaboration between the archaeological and tribal communities, assist with development planning, and promote archaeological research and education in Minnesota (Figure 1). We work with developers, tribal representatives, governmental agencies, educators, and the public to identify, preserve, and interpret our archaeological resources.

Between July 2016 and June 2017, 128 new archaeological sites were entered into the OSA site files. Archaeological sites are recorded in all 87 Minnesota counties, and dozens of previously unknown sites are discovered each year.

### Statutes and Duties

The Field Archaeology Act (MS 138.31 - .42) established the position of State Archaeologist in 1963. The State Archaeologist is a state civil service employee appointed by the Commissioner of Administration. Currently, Amanda Gronhvd serves as the Minnesota State Archaeologist, and Bruce Koenen serves as the Research Archaeologist for the Office of the State Archaeologist.

The Office of the State Archaeologist manages the State’s archaeological sites on behalf of the citizens of Minnesota. Two statutes primarily define the duties of the State Archaeologist; the Field Archaeology Act (MS 138.31-.42), and Private Cemeteries Act (MS 307.08).

#### Field Archaeology Act (MS 138.31-42)

The Field Archaeology Act (MS 138.31-42) established the position of Minnesota’s State Archaeologist and gives the state “the exclusive right and privilege of field archaeology on state sites, in order to protect and preserve archaeological and scientific information, matter, and objects” (MS 138.32). In other words, the State Archaeologist is charged with managing

Minnesota's archaeological resources located on public (non-federal) land for the citizens of the state. The Field Archaeology Act defines the duties of the State Archaeologist as:

- Sponsoring, engaging in, and directing archaeological research within Minnesota; (138.35 Subd 2 [a])
- Cooperating with state agencies, the Minnesota Historical Society, and the University of Minnesota to preserve, protect, and interpret archaeological sites and data; (138.35 Subd 2 [b and f])
- Protecting and encouraging the preservation of archaeological sites located on private property; (138.35 Subd 2 [c])
- Identifying, protecting, and preserving archaeological sites and data; (138.35 Subd 2 [d and e])
- Reviewing proposed development plans on public land, and making recommendations for the preservation of archaeological or historic sites;
- Disseminating archaeological information; (138.35 Subd 2 [g])
- Approving licensing of qualified individuals to conduct archaeological projects on state sites; (138.35 Subd 2 [h]) and (138.36 Subd 2)
- Informing and partnering with the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council (MIAC) when development is proposed in areas thought to contain American Indian archaeological, historic, or religious sites; and (138.40 Subd 3)
- Enforcing the *Field Archaeology Act* (138.35 Subd 2 [i]).

#### **Private Cemeteries Act (MS 307.08)**

The Private Cemeteries Act protects all human burials and burial grounds that are more than 50 years old and are located outside officially platted, recorded, or identified cemeteries. This statute applies to cemeteries located on public and private property. Duties assigned the State Archaeologist under the Private Cemeteries Act include:

- Assessing whether a specific location is a "burial" or "burial grounds"; (307.08, Subd. 3a)
- Granting permission for disturbances, posting, and signage within non-Indian cemeteries (307.08, Subd. 3);
- Collaborating with MIAC to help protect, preserve, and manage the burial grounds, if the individuals within the cemetery are ethnically American Indian; (307.08, Subd. 7)
- Maintaining unrecorded cemetery data; (307.08, Subd. 11) and

- Reviewing development plans which might impact unrecorded burials to help determine whether known or suspected cemetery sites are not within proposed development projects (307.08, Subd.10).

The State Archaeologist is given additional duties in rules implementing Minnesota Water Law (MS 103F), the Minnesota Environmental Policy Act (MS 116D), the Coroner and Medical Examiner law (MS 390.25, Subd. 5), and the Legacy Amendment Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund (MS 129D.17).

In addition to the duties outlined in Minnesota Statutes, the Office of the State Archaeologist also:

- Helps guide the *Statewide Survey of Historical and Archaeological Sites*;
- Assigns official state site numbers to archaeological sites;
- Maintains archaeological site files, burial files, and archaeological research documents and reports;
- Fosters collaboration and research between professional archaeologists, tribal communities, governmental agencies, and the public;
- Provides education to and answers questions from the public regarding archaeological resources; and
- Offers training opportunities to the archaeological professional community.

### **Specific Measures During Fiscal Year 2017**

- Archaeological licenses issued: 78
- Development projects reviewed: 138
- Archaeological site forms reviewed: 373
- New archaeological sites added to the site files: 324
- Archaeological reports reviewed: 163

### **Online Access and Electronic Files**

#### OSA Portal

The Office of the State Archaeologist continues to work with MnGeo and MnDOT to develop a secure website for accessing Minnesota's archaeological site information, and streamline the archaeological site form submission process. Phase I of the OSA Portal was completed in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of Fiscal Year 2017 (FY17). During the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter of Fiscal Year 2017, process of entering the backlog of archaeological sites began. This process should be complete by the

end of September 2017 (FY18), at which point the Portal will be made accessible to both the public (limited access), and professional archaeologists (full access).

The OSA Portal will ultimately allow tiered access to site information, and will serve as a tool during the development planning process, and in the protection of archaeological sites and burial sites.

The first stage of tiered access will include a public page, and professional levels of access. The public version of the Portal will allow individuals to view the number of recorded sites in a one square mile section, but will not include information about the site or its specific location. The professional level will allow archaeologists to create, edit, and submit site forms on-line, and will give access to:

- A site map with shape files showing site location;
- Site information; and
- Scanned versions of archaeological site forms.

### OSA Burial Files

The OSA houses hundreds of files relating to cemetery and burial sites in Minnesota. These files include irreplaceable information dating from the 1800s through today. Until recently, only one paper version of these files existed. However, during FY17 all the OSA burial-related files were scanned and electronically backed up. This not only allows for more efficient access to the files, but also preserves the files in the event of a disaster (e.g. fire, flood).

## **Collaboration**

The Office of the State Archaeologist and Minnesota Indian Affairs Council (MIAC) continue to collaborate on development reviews, projects, and education. The OSA and MIAC consult on all potential American Indian cemetery sites prior to and during initial investigation, as per MS 307.08 Subd 7. This process has streamlined burial investigations by opening lines of communication between state agencies and tribal entities.

The OSA and MIAC are also updating the procedures for implementing Minnesota's Private Cemeteries Act with the intent to include tribal representatives more closely and consistently in managing archaeological resources that are potentially of American Indian origin.

In addition to collaborating with MIAC, the OSA continues working with the State Historic Preservation Office to clarify and streamline the Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) review process. Specifically, the OSA and SHPO have developed a process for reviewing and coordinating comments on proposed development EAWs. This process allows reviews to proceed more smoothly and assists agencies, developers, and the public with acquiring necessary construction and development permits. When these proposed projects have the potential to impact American Indian archaeological or burial sites, the MIAC is also included in the process.

## Legacy Grants

### Historic Human Remains Project

During FY17, the OSA received a Legacy Grant from the legislature to address the human skeletal remains held by the OSA and in storage at the Hamline University Osteology Lab. The collection consists of approximately 98 individuals, all of whom are believed to be Euro-Americans. Some of these remains were acquired when an individual burial was unearthed, while others were found when unrecorded or forgotten cemeteries were impacted, resulting in the disturbance of numerous burials. The purpose of the grant is to identify as many of the individuals as possible and return them to their relatives, or communities of origin.

### Statewide Survey of Historical and Archaeological Sites

In 2008, the voters of Minnesota approved a constitutional amendment that increased the state sales tax by three-eighths of one percent for 25 years. A portion of this revenue goes to the *Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund*, which is dedicated to the preservation of the state's arts and cultural heritage. Out of this funding, the *Statewide Survey of Historical and Archaeological Sites* was initiated.

Representatives from the Minnesota Historical Society, Minnesota Indian Affairs Council and Office of the State Archaeologist serve as the Statewide Survey's Oversight Board. Six projects were managed by the Oversight Board between July 1, 2016 and June 30, 2017. These include the Minnesota Radiocarbon Dating Study, Lac Qui Parle County Survey, an Archaeological Survey of the Fort Snelling Area, , Pope County Survey, Dakota County Survey, and Minnesota's Archaic Tradition Study.

## OSA Sponsored Workshops

The OSA sponsored a workshop titled *Osteology for Archaeologists* twice in FY17; once in March and once in May. This free, 2-day course gave cultural resource professionals an overview of human osteology from an archaeological perspective.

The course provided archaeologists tools to help determine whether a bone is animal or human, and taught attendees about methods used to determine the person's age at death, biological sex, and ancestry. Dr. Susan Myster from Hamline University taught the workshop, which was conducted in collaboration with the Hamline University Department of Anthropology and Osteology Lab. Professional archaeologists and tribal representatives very positively reviewed these workshops.