

Archaeological Survey begins excavation project at Hugh Butler Lake

October 7 2010, By Alan Osborn, Dana Ludvik



Archaeological field crew members conduct systematic, small-scaled excavations near Spring Creek in Frontier County. From left: Bruce Jones and the crew members are Bill Altizer, Steve Reynolds, and Les Hossick (University of Nebraska State Museum Courtes

The University of Nebraska State Museum's Nebraska Archaeological Survey began archaeological investigations in September at several prehistoric sites at Hugh Butler Lake in Frontier County.

Test excavations are being conducted at five prehistoric archaeological sites within the boundaries of the reservoir, which is impounded by Red Willow Dam. This testing program is built upon recent archaeological surveys within the reservoir area carried out by the Nebraska Archaeological Survey in 2007 and the Denver Museum of Nature and

Science in 2005. The sites chosen for investigation probably range in age from 700 to 5,500 years before present. The reservoir is managed jointly by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission and the Department of Interior's Bureau of Reclamation.

"The purpose of this program is to obtain sufficient information about these archaeological resources in order to evaluate their scientific potential for further research and to make recommendations to the Bureau of Reclamation for protecting these sites in the future," said Alan J. Osborn, research associate professor and curator of anthropology at the museum, and director of the *Nebraska Archaeological Survey*.

Past archaeological investigations at Red Willow and Medicine Creek reservoirs and neighboring lands administered by the Bureau of Reclamation have made significant contributions to knowledge and understanding of Native American life throughout the Great Plains region. The Nebraska [Archaeological Survey](#) is a part of the museum's archaeology and anthropology program.

Support for this fieldwork, which will continue seasonally through 2015, is provided through a grant from the Department of Interior's Bureau of Reclamation under a new five-year cooperative agreement with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. These investigations will enable archaeologists to assess the scientific potential of cultural resources within this area of the Great Plains.

Bruce Jones, who formerly worked as an archaeologist for the National Park Service, is the assistant field director for the survey. Crew members include archaeological consultants Bill Altizer, who received his master of arts degree in anthropology at UNL, and Steve Reynolds, who has worked for six years on the University of Nebraska at Omaha's Bethsaida Project in Israel.

Osborn's research interests include Paleoindian adaptations, the Younger Dryas Cold Event, poison hunting strategies, and prehistoric ceramics and cooking technology. He teaches courses at UNL for both the Great Plains Studies Program and the Department of Anthropology. As part of the museum's "Sunday with a Scientist" series for children and families, he will discuss his research about "killer beans" and innovations in prehistoric Pueblo cooking technology on the Colorado Plateau Nov. 21 at Morrill Hall on the UNL City Campus.

Provided by University of Nebraska-Lincoln

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