

Archaeology High School Credit Course

Deer Island Student Archaeology Project

Northern Lights Heritage Services Inc (NLHS) is pleased to announce the success of the Deer Island Student Archaeology Project.



Map showing the Weir River Site and Deer Island on the Nelson River.

The project was proposed by Dr. Virginia Petch of NLHS as an educational program that would bring together Grades 11 and 12 students from four First Nation Communities.

The curriculum included teaching archaeological techniques and the historical and cultural background of the region.

The credit course was arranged by Mr. Scott Miller, Gillam School, Frontier School Division No. 48 as a School Initiated Curriculum (SIC). The students' home schools were informed of the commencement of the course and the successful completion.

Students were evaluated by 6 tests, a final test, journals, newsletters, field techniques, punctuality and participation.

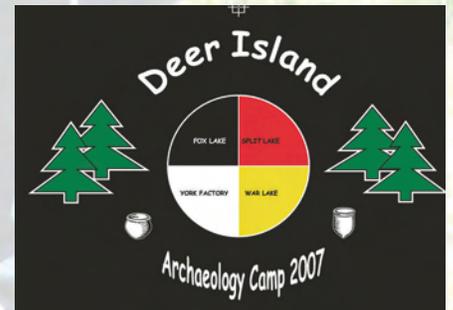
The Weir River site was chosen as the perfect location for conducting the student program as it is an important site within northern Manitoba's cultural landscape. Archaeological evidence shows occupation over several millennia.

Twelve students, three each from Fox Lake Cree Nation, War Lake First Nation, York Factory First Nation and Tataskweyak Cree Nation worked, lived and learned together for six weeks in a remote setting discovering archaeological evidence of ancient life along the Nelson River.

The project began on July 4, 2007 with the arrival of NLHS staff and the high school students to Deer Island Research Camp. Elders from each community rotated their visits, and provided the students with important cultural knowledge. Seven days of intensive orientation and classroom instruction took place. At this time the students learned about the archaeological record and the kinds of techniques that would prepare them for the field work to come.

From July 13 to July 30 students assisted in a formal excavation at the Weir River site. Students practiced their new skills, and excavated the site alongside the trained NLHS staff.

The last week of the project was



**Logo designed by Bailey Saunders
(York Landing)**

a lab component, where the students participated in the initial cleaning and processing of the artifacts.

During this time the students also wrote a newsletter for each of their corresponding communities, relating their experiences from the project.

The Deer Island Student Archaeology Project was a success! Over 6,711 artifacts including faunal material was collected from the Weir River site, adding to the archaeological record. The students were exposed to an alternative career path, provided with the opportunity for capacity building and renewed cultural awareness.

Deer Island Student Archaeology Project

"The five weeks spent out in Deer Island were definitely memorable and a once in a lifetime opportunity that we won't soon forget"...Rachel Anderson (Fox Lake)



Excavation crew.

..."Dr. Petch saw that the Weir River site had excellent potential for teaching students how to conduct an archaeological investigation because of the historical, and continuous Cree occupation of the area"... **Meagan Tanner (TCN)**

..."we had Elders come to Deer Island for a Cultural Awareness Day. They told us a lot of stories about hardship...and about respect, values and beliefs"...**Ellen Wavey (War Lake)**

The Student Archaeologists would like to thank:

- Community Elders
Isaac Beardy (York Factory FN),
Sophie Lockhart (Fox Lake CN), and
Charlie Ouskan (War Lake FN) for sharing their knowledge with us.
- **North/South Consultants** for logistical support
- Cooks:
Christine Wavey,
Martina Beardy and
Amelia Spence .
- Boat drivers:
Randy Naismith Jr.
Jimmie Lockhart Jr.
- Bear guards:
Smokey Redhead,
Kenneth Keeper,
Pat Connell,
Russell Beardy & Clayton Flett.
- NLHS staff:
Dr. Virginia Petch,
Lisa Bobbie,
Emily Linnemann,
El Jacks,
Joleen O'Neill,
Ed Fread,
Amber Zimmerman,
Martina Harvey
- **Frontier School Division No. 48**
- **Manitoba Hydro** for funding the project.

..."we saw some wildlife like birds, otters, mink, seals and a polar bear. It was cool because I never saw these kinds of animals in the wild...we were also respecting the land, cleaning up after ourselves"

....**Sabrina Flett (TCN)**

..."I found the coolest artifact, an arrowhead that was about 2000-1000 years old. I was so happy!"...

..."I had a great time at Deer Island. It was different then what I thought it was going to be. I learned a lot of new things and met a lot of great people"...**Bailey Saunders (York Landing)**

..."When we got to Deer Island we began with one week of training in basic archaeology principles, a few written, and hands on assignments such as practice excavation, shovel testing and a final written examination"

..**Rachel Anderson (Fox Lake)**

Northern Lights Heritage Services Inc. would like to thank all the students who participated in 2007 Archaeological Program.

We hope you enjoyed the time spent on Deer Island and working at the Weir River. You all made this a wonderful experience for our staff.

..."The most interesting finds were probably the projectile points. One was from the Pelican Lake origin and is over 3500 years old."

..**Rachel Anderson (Fox Lake)**



Students excavating at the Weir River site