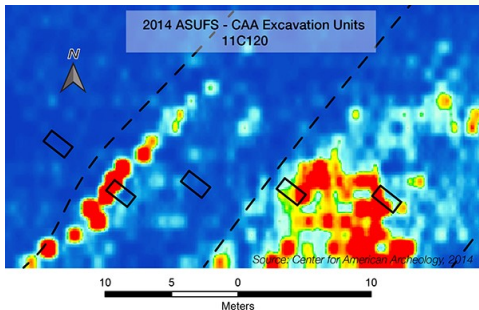




The Prehistoric Times

Golden Eagle Site Project Preliminary Results

The CAA Research Program embarked on a new excavation project at the Golden Eagle site in the Summer of 2014. Golden Eagle is a large Middle Woodland (50 BC - AD 400) site that includes several mounds. A large ditch and earthen embankment encloses site. It is the only site with such an enclosure in the Illinois River Valley. Golden Eagle has been known since the late 1880s, though very little work has been conducted there. In December 2013, and again in May 2014, CAA archeologists conducted an extensive archaeo-geophysical survey to map subsurface features and the interior of the mounds there—a first for the site. This remote sensing work is a continuation of our efforts to use geophysical methods to document mound sites within the region.



Position of 2014 excavation units relative to ground-penetrating radar data. The excavation grid was rotated 52° west of North to better interpret the subsurface structures.

During the Summer 2014 field season, CAA archeologists and students in the Arizona State University Field School at the CAA excavated five, 1 x 2 meter test units to investigate a portion of the ditch-and-embankment structure first detected using ground-penetrating radar (GPR) in 2013. These are the first units ever excavated at this important site. Units were positioned to investigate subsurface anomalies identified during the GPR survey and to expose in-place ditch-and-embankment sediments. Wall profiles showed alternating deposits of light-colored, yellowish soil and darker, reddish-brown soil. While strongly evident in Square 1, the alternating soil colors become less complex in Square 2, and feather out to the edge of the embankment. The discovery of these layers, along with the radar data, suggest the field crew uncovered an intact component of the embankment. At this time, it's not immediately clear whether soil layering was the result of a natural weathering process operating on different soil types, intentional placement of discrete layers by the

site's builders, or a combination. Future geomorphological work is planned to address this question and others at the site.

The 2014 excavation units also documented the ditch located on the external side of and parallel to the embankment. The ditch was excavated into the original ground surface. A charcoal-rich pit feature (Feature 1) was located at the ditch's external margin. The pit's purpose is not clear, though we do know the prehistoric excavators refilled the pit with charcoal and charcoal-rich sediment. Once refilled, the top of the pit was covered with clayey soil.

Golden Eagle is thought to have been built during the Middle Woodland period, and the internal structures of the mounds there mapped via remote sensing support that the interpretation. Significantly, no artifacts were found in Feature 1 or the excavation units. Charcoal samples from Feature 1 were sent to the Illinois State Geological Survey for radiocarbon dating, and we're currently waiting to see if those results confirm our interpretations.



Feature 1, the charcoal-rich feature identified in Square 2.

CAA Resources

CAA Website & Email:

www.caa-archeology.org
caa@caa-archeology.org

Facebook:

www.facebook.com/CAAKampsville

Twitter:

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Support the CAA by Shopping!

AmazonSmile

Foundation:

www.smile.amazon.com

Choose the Center for American Archeology as your charity. Your purchase of eligible items will generate a 0.5% donation to the CAA!

eScrip Community Cards:

www.escrip.com

In the greater St. Louis metro area, pick up a Community Card at Schnucks Markets, and/or register your debit or credit card and choose the CAA as your charity. For a complete list of participating merchants, visit escrip.com. The CAA's eScrip ID# is 500030324.

Golden Eagle Site, continued

Results from the remote sensing surveys were recently published in *Advances in Archaeological Practice* in an article by CAA archeologists Jason Herrmann, Jason King, and Jane Buikstra. A forthcoming article by Duncan McKinnon, Jason King, Taylor Thornton, Jane Buikstra, and Jason Herrmann will report similar geophysical investigations at the Kamp Mound Group. CAA archeologists presented excavation findings at the Midwest Archaeological Conference in October as well. Unfortunately, published articles are located behind a paywall and not accessible to non-subscribers. We're working on free public reports of our recent work to be posted on our website in the near future.

The ASU-CAA Field School, CAA High School Field School, and CAA Adult Field School will return to Golden Eagle for additional fieldwork in 2015. Enrollments are open for all three programs. Visit our website (caa-archeology.org) and sign up to participate in this historic project!

Seeds of Change Program Update

As reported in our Spring 2014 edition of *Prehistoric Times*, the Education Program received \$10,000 from Monsanto Funds for our new *Seeds of Change* program. This program funds public schools with at least 45% or more of their student body on free or reduced lunches to attend place-based learning sessions that teach grade-school students about the processes of plant domestication. Students learn about the 7 plants forming the Eastern Agriculture Complex, phenotypic changes to this plants as humans store seeds, sow and tend fields, and harvest plants (i.e., the Adaptive Syndrome of Domestication), and changes made to the environment as first American and later European, African, and Asia Americans modified the landscape to better suite agricultural production. The STEM-based sessions align with Next Generations Science Standards and attending students learn to use scientific instruments not necessarily available to them at their schools. In sum, this program taught 541 students from area schools including: Calhoun Elementary/Junior High



Student from Calhoun Elementary examines plant materials during Seeds of Change program activity.

School (52% low-income students), Hardin, IL; Northwestern Junior High School (57% low-income students), Palmyra, IL; West Junior High (70% low-income students), Belleville, IL; and Roxana Junior High (63% low-income students), Roxana, IL. Students attending the program got a peek of the many scientific applications used by archeologists to better form a long-term understanding of what it means to be human.

About the CAA

The Prehistoric Times is the official newsletter of the Center for American Archeology. The CAA is a 501c3 not-for-profit research and education organization based in Kampsville, Illinois. The CAA pursues a mission of education, research, and public service in archeology. Its purpose is to discover and disseminate the unwritten story of earlier Americans' lifeways, accomplishments, and changing natural environment. The Center fulfills this mission by supporting integrated programs of archeological investigation, educational outreach and cultural stewardship.