



NEWS RELEASE

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February 8, 2000

Artifacts and video will introduce archaeology

Indiana fourth grade students will use three educational tools—The Archaeology Learning Kit, a video of the archaeological excavations at a prehistoric Native American Village site in southwestern Indiana, and an interactive session with one of Indiana's leading archaeologists—to learn about archaeology when they tune to the Vision Athena Network on May 18 at 10:00 a.m. (EST).

Teachers will have materials (information sheet, word list, preservation work sheet, etc.) to introduce students to archaeology. The kit will contain real artifacts such as pottery fragments, stone tools, food remains, and construction materials which students will learn to identify by reference to an already completed catalog. Each of the artifacts is a clue about how people lived in the past. Students can learn about the locations where the artifacts were found and which artifacts were found together, by studying maps and the catalog. Using this contextual information, students will develop their interpretations of the several cultures represented in the different levels of the site, and how use of the site changed over time.

Cheryl Ann Munson, archaeologist with Indiana University's Department of Anthropology, will lead the interactive session. She also will talk to the students about the importance of preserving archaeological sites and materials, which continue to be lost to erosion and modern construction.

Munson teamed with teacher Teresa Branson (Marrs School, Mt. Vernon), and IU research assistant Jocelyn Turner to design the kit.

"Students told us they wanted to hold and look closely at real artifacts, but we wanted this exercise to lead to more than speculation ("What is it?") or polite appreciation ("Ahhhhh.)," Munson explained. "We want them to see that artifacts are more than objects. They can be clues, sometimes the only clues, about people who lived before us." To help students learn about scientific archaeology, the kits include some of the same research tools that archaeologists need to use in the lab – catalogs, maps, and records – when they interpret their discoveries.

The video features highlights of fourth grade field trips to visit Munson's archaeological research project at the Hovey Lake site in Posey County. The video was produced in cooperation with the University of Southern Indiana (USI) Learning Network. Production of the video, as well as the archaeology learning kits, has been supported by a grant from the Indiana Humanities Council and contributions from faculty and staff at IU and USI.