



NEWS

United States
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Black Hills National Forest
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Williams Spring Volunteers Discover Ancient Artifacts

Sundance, Wyoming-The Forest Service “Passport In Time” program has successfully completed work for the summer on the Williams Spring Archaeological project.

The Williams Spring site, located about 15 miles south of Beulah, Wyoming, uncovered artifacts spanning 8,000 years of human occupation in the northern Black Hills National Forest. The artifacts are thought to have been from early big game hunters.

This year’s goal was to conduct an intensive block excavation in order to learn about prehistoric adaptations to the Black Hills over time at this unique site.

“What makes this site unusual in the Black Hills, you can find these kinds of points at other sites but we find them all together here,” said Dave McKee, Black Hills National Forest Archaeologist. “So this was a very key site or spot for people to come for many many years.”

Recovered artifacts include a variety of paleoindian, archaic, and late prehistoric projectile points.

“They were actually bringing in large hunks of stone and actually making their tools here,” said Michael Page of the University of Wyoming. “A lot of the stuff I’ve been finding right now looks like they are making tools here. They didn’t necessarily come here with a whole bunch of tools, just to sharpen their tools so we would just find tiny flakes. We are finding great big flakes.”

The site is a long-term archaeological research partnership between the Black Hills National Forest and the University of Wyoming. In the summer of 2000, test excavations and geological studies were conducted at the site by the university and a volunteer crew.

Forest Service “Passport In Time” volunteers worked along side field students and university faculty who are the leading experts in northern plains archaeology. Specifically, volunteers excavated, mapped and recorded artifacts from block and test excavation units.

“Growing up in Wyoming you go out into the hills you find an arrowhead. Your first question is how did it get here, why is it here and what else is around here. Then when we heard about “Passport In Time” and had an opportunity to work with professionals and learn more about it was just made to order for us,” said Passport In Time volunteer Eva Peden of Lander, Wyoming.

This year a large portion of the project funding was provided by the Crook County Wyoming Resource Advisory Council (RAC). The RAC is providing funding in support of resource protection and education opportunities.

You can learn more about the Forest Service “Passport In Time” program by visiting <http://www.passportintime.com>.

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Interviews on tape:

Dave McKee, Black Hills National Forest, Archaeologist

“And what makes the site unique is that then threw time from 9000 years on we find all different kinds of projectile points styles, spear points, atlatl points, bow and arrow points. What makes this site unusual in the Black Hills, you can find these kinds of points at other sites but we find them all together here. So this was a very key site or spot for people to come for many many years.”

Eva Peden, Passport In Time Volunteer, Lander, Wyoming

“Growing up in Wyoming you go out into the hills you find an arrowhead. Your first question is how did it get here, why is it here and what else is around here. Then when we heard about “Passport In Time” and had an opportunity to work with professionals and learn more about it was just made to order for us.”

Rory Becker, University of Wyoming

“You always get the question well what do you do.....Archaeology. Oh dinosaurs...well no I don't do dinosaurs. They say what in the world does an Archaeologist do for the national forest. Why in the world do we need that? So you try and explain cultural heritage and we are trying to protect things. It's public lands and it's all our history.”

Michael Page, University of Wyoming

“A lot of the stuff I’ve been finding right now looks like they are making tools here. They didn’t come here necessarily with a whole bunch of tools and they were just sharpening their tools you just find tiny flakes. We are finding great big flakes. They were actually bringing in large hunks of stone and actually making their tools here.”

B-Roll:

- 1) **WS Archaeological Site**
- 2) **MS Shooting location of site with azimuth**
- 3) **CU Shooting location of site with azimuth**
- 4) **MS Shooting location of site with azimuth**
- 5) **CU Recording location of site**
- 6) **WS Rear view of site**
- 7) **MS Holding location point**
- 8) **Misc Volunteers searching for artifacts – finding spear points and flakes from tool making**
- 9) **CU Stone recovered from site**
- 10) **Misc Volunteers searching for artifacts**

Videographer: Gary C. Chancey/Black Hills National Forest