Who We Are

John F. Doershuk, State Archaeologist and Director of the University of Iowa Office of the State Archaeologist

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- OSA Mission Statement
- Advisory Committee
- Indian Advisory Council

- Academic Activities
- Office and Staff Achievements
- Pandemic Perseverance
- Support Iowa Archaeology with Fun Stuff
**Academic Activities**

**Lara Noldner**  
Bioarchaeology Director  
Instructor  

**First-Year Seminar: A Tour of Biological Anthropology**  
Students explored the diverse field of biological anthropology and learned about many of the ways that knowledge of human biology can inform us about how people have evolved, migrated, and adapted to the many regions of the world we now inhabit.  
[Fall 2020, 15 students]

**John F. Doershuk**  
State Archaeologist  
Instructor  

**CRM Archaeology: Practice and Practicalities**  
This online course immersed participants in the practical aspects of Cultural Resource Management archaeology, laws, regulations, and practice.  
[Spring 2021, 12 students]

**Field Archaeology**  
Iowa Lakeside Laboratory  

The 2021 Lakeside Laboratory archaeological field school included 11 students from UI, ISU, and DMAAC (Des Moines Area Community College) who investigated a portion of 13DK143 at Mini-Wakan State Park and discovered two intact rock oven features along with numerous ceramic sherds and well-preserved animal bones. The summer 2022 Lakeside field school will investigate 13DK9, the Abbie Gardner Sharp Cabin site.
Lake Delhi Grant

A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was created to resolve Section 106 compliance issues remaining from the 2010 Lake Delhi Dam catastrophic failure. MOA signatories include several Tribes, the Lake Delhi Recreational Association, State Historical Preservation Office, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management Division, and OSA. Under the MOA, OSA is charged with developing Lake Delhi as a case study for improved Section 106 compliance and Tribal consultation. In addition, OSA will develop public information signage to be placed at key locations to educate about Lake Delhi heritage, and a conservation easement protecting four archaeological sites will be established.

Wall Ridge Publication

Published in August 2020, Household Economy at Wall Ridge: A Fourteenth-Century Central Plains Farmstead in the Missouri Valley (edited by Stephen C. Lensink, Shirley J. Schermer, and Joseph A. Tiffany, The University of Utah Press) is the culmination of nearly four decades of research since site 13ML176’s discovery in 1983 under the auspices of the Iowa DOT annual contract, and data recovery excavations the following year under partial sponsorship of the Office of the Mills County Engineer. This book presents the most thorough research to date pertaining to a Glenwood locality lodge site, including radiocarbon dates; examination of functional use of the lodge space; and the sites’ smoking pipe, lithic, faunal (including bone and stone tools), botanical, and ceramic assemblages. This book will be a touchstone for future research on Central Plains tradition sites.

“Connected for Life” Grant Benefits Senior Citizens

Director of Strategic Initiatives, Elizabeth Reetz, coordinated the development and submission of a grant proposal that was awarded $222,327 from the Institute of Museum and Library Services under the Coronavirus Aid, Relieve, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. OSA partnered with the Stanley Museum of Art, Pentacrest Museums, and University Libraries to develop the project, Connected for Life: Object-based Digital Programming to Foster Active Minds for Senior Living Communities. Over two years, the four UI partners will create synchronous, virtual outreach programs for older adults across Iowa and a centralized web portal to share content with the public.
At the start of FY 2021, OSA had been operating in pandemic shutdown mode for over three months. With the exception of key curatorial staff, most OSA employees worked from home. A shared office calendar helped staff to sign up for shifts to get work done at the office as needed while ensuring we did not exceed the maximum capacity allowed for health and safety. OSA shifted to teleconference communication and collaboration, including the large monthly staff meeting. All online academic courses, professional conferences, and public outreach went virtual, which allowed OSA staff to improve their presentation skills and conscientiously work toward creating visually and auditorily accessible content. The receipt of the CARES grant through the Institute of Museum and Library Services provided an opportunity to purchase audio-visual equipment to improve the clarity, accessibility, and quality of digital outreach.

By summer 2020, UI permitted OSA staff to resume fieldwork activities, with some restrictions. Initially, travel was limited to day trips by individuals in personal vehicles with minimal public stops and no direct face-to-face contact. Each project archaeologist maintained their own set of field equipment, which they retained in their vehicles versus the shared equipment shed to prevent potential transmission of the virus. By October, small field crews were sharing vehicles based on mutual agreement to travel together with masks.

Even as the pandemic winds down, it is now apparent that tele-conferencing is here to stay! OSA began learning how to run hybrid meetings and presentations beginning with the job talks for candidates interviewed for the Research Collections Director position and hopes to continue this set-up moving forward.
By the Numbers

- **52** staff members and adjunct researchers worked for OSA during FY 2021.
- **61** years the OSA has served Iowa and Midwest region as a UI research center.
- **2,006,548** US dollars OSA received in support from sponsored grants and contracts.
- **1%** is how much gifts and endowments contributed to the OSA budget.
- **30,739** archaeological sites recorded by the end of the fiscal year.
- **40** collections were newly accessioned during the fiscal year.
- **2,600+** people engaged through OSA and archaeology events.
- **1,569** volunteer and student hours contributed to OSA projects.

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Many OSA staff members mentor students and train and supervise student workers, interns, and other volunteers. The OSA actively supports undergraduate and graduate student use of its archaeological, osteological, and comparative collections; scholarly documents; electronic databases; scientific instrumentation; and laboratory space for degree-related research. These resources contribute to the educational experience of students in diverse UI departments including,

- Anthropology
- Art & Art History
- Biology
- Classics
- Earth and Environmental Sciences
- Geographical and Sustainability Sciences
- History
- International Relations
- Law
- Native American & Indigenous Studies, and
- Museum Studies.

In FY 2021 the OSA facilities, collections, and staff provided classroom enrichment and workplace experience for a total of 11 faculty, staff, and students and one member of the public who worked to log 1,569 hours at the OSA contributing to project activities.

Participating Institutions:

- University of Iowa
- Cornell College
- University of Wyoming
- University of South Florida
- Iowa Archeological Society

**Students and Volunteers, Fiscal Year 2021**

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<td>Mason Koelm</td>
<td>University of Iowa</td>
<td>International Relations; Criminology, Law, and Justice (Anthropology minor)</td>
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<td>Natasha Andersen</td>
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<td>Tayla Bahr</td>
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**Public Volunteers/Independent Researchers**

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<tr>
<td>Cynthia Strong</td>
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<td>Keva Tomas</td>
<td>Cornell College</td>
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<td>Sydney Swift</td>
<td>Cornell College</td>
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<td>Wesley Vanosdall</td>
<td>University of Wyoming</td>
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<td>Lizzy Bews</td>
<td>University of South Florida</td>
<td>Research, UI-SC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Andy Schaver</td>
<td>University of Iowa</td>
<td>Carver College of Medicine</td>
<td>Research, UI-SC</td>
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<td>Katherine Beydler</td>
<td>University of Iowa</td>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>Patrick &quot;Pat&quot; Collison</td>
<td>Iowa Archeological Society</td>
<td>Research</td>
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**Total Hours:** 1,569

Watch a short video of UI students contributing to archaeological research at the OSA

Cornell College pXRF ceramic analysis team led by Professor Cindy Strong (students Keva Tomas and Sydney Swift)

In memoriam: OSA lost a dear friend and enthusiastic volunteer with the passing of William "Bill" Moore.

Pat Collison volunteering at 13PM7.

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Research

Archaeological and Architectural Investigations

Collections

Technology
The OSA conducts both contract and grant-funded research involving archaeological and architectural history studies statewide. These projects, regardless of funding source or sponsor, generate important new knowledge on Midwestern prehistory and history, and they form the basis for many staff publications, professional and public presentations, and student and faculty research projects.

**Infrastructure Surveys**

**Archaeological Testing at 13LN352 with Aerial Thermography**

**Grants for Additional Work at 13PM7**
Infrastructure Surveys

The OSA conducted over 300 archaeological and architectural projects in FY 2021, significantly contributing to the enhancement of statewide economic development. In addition to desktop evaluations, 60 projects were for communication, 25 for development, 23 for recreation, 7 for roads and bridges, 15 for wetlands, and 45 for water improvements.

Iowa Department of Transportation

FY 2021 marks 51 years of contracted services with the Iowa DOT for archaeological investigations and 32 years of historic architectural evaluations. A total of 98 Phase IA Cultural Resource Evaluation reports was submitted, along with eight Primary Roads reports pertaining to three Phase I historic architectural surveys, three Phase I archaeological surveys, and a Phase I and II archaeological testing project. The OSA also provided interpretive content for use at a Glenwood culture, Native-American-themed rest area in western Iowa as a no-cost special project.

Excellence in Archaeology and Historic Preservation Award

In June 2021 the State Historical Society of Iowa Board of Trustees recognized the Dixon Site Riverbank Stabilization Project [STPN-031-1(41)--2J-97] as the best archaeology or historic preservation project at the local or state level completed during the previous calendar year. The Iowa DOT’s Location and Environment Bureau served as project/nomination lead in accepting this prestigious award. The award recognizes the roles of 13 other project partners as well, including the OSA, the Indian Advisory Council at the OSA, the Upper Sioux Community, the Iowa Tribe of Kansas and Nebraska, Ponca Tribe of Nebraska, Otoe-Missouria Tribe, Peoria Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma, Prairie Island Indian Community, Omaha Tribe of Nebraska, Spirit Lake Tribe, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Rock Island District (USACE), the Iowa SHPO, construction contractor LA Carlson Contracting, Inc., and site landowner John Dixon.
Archaeological Testing at 13LN352 with Aerial Thermography

During the fall of 2020, archaeological testing and a thermographic study was conducted at site 13LN352, a possible pre-Civil War homestead. The site is positioned across property boundaries and only a small portion of the site was able to be investigated by traditional archaeological test units and auger tests. The aerial thermographic study was conducted with a small uncrewed aerial system (sUAS), or drone, equipped with a thermal camera. Both the thermal analysis and archaeological investigations confirmed extensive disturbance with very little of the site intact within the property boundaries. In addition to hundreds of small artifacts, one intact limestone feature was found that may represent a structure footing.
Grants for Additional Work at 13PM7

As a result of greater than expected integrity and excellent data recovery from features sampled late in 2019, additional grant funds were secured from the Iowa Science Foundation, Department of Cultural Affairs Historical Resource Development Program, and the UI Arts & Humanities Internal Funding Initiative to pursue 13PM7 research during FY 2021. Funds supported geoarchaeological soil coring and magnetic gradiometry survey at the site along with sUAS (drone) based photogrammetry and thermography. Lab-based analyses by noted experts in mammalian, fish, avian, and shell remains were also supported, along with archaeobotanical, lithic, and ceramic analyses. Thin section petrography slides were prepped for distinctive ceramic rim sherds which were also subjected to pXRF data collecting. These studies continue into FY 2022.
The OSA continually adds archaeological materials and related documents to the State Archaeological Repository and provides materials for local, regional, and national exhibition and research purposes.

48 collections accessioned this fiscal year
7 collections loaned this fiscal year
282,930 total records,
93% available digitally on iArc

New Collections Director Hired

OSA initiated a search for a new Research Collections Director to succeed John Cordell after his retirement in 2020. Three candidates visited OSA for the final rounds of interviews and gave public presentations focused on their research and career experience. The position was accepted by Caroline Parris, a PhD candidate from Tulane University, at the end of June.

Loans

The OSA's artifact collection continues to contribute to vital public outreach and research endeavors. While this year did not see any new loans for exhibits, seven loans of archaeological or comparative material were initiated. One notable project using materials from the OSA's artifact collection is being undertaken by Ariane Thomas, a graduate student at the University of Iowa. Ariane's research focuses on the analysis of prehistoric canids, or dogs.

Collections

The OSA has added 48 new collections from across the state to our repository. One of the most exciting is the well-preserved and varied materials recovered from the 13PM7 feature salvage. The 13DK143 Iowa Lakeside Laboratory field school again generated several cubic feet of materials that student volunteers are busy processing.

A whistle made from a swan humerus, from 13PM7.

Meghan Schilla with a collection from site 13DK143.
Research Technology

OSA's commitment to conducting and disseminating modern high-quality archaeological research requires a significant investment in research technology. From maintaining complex databases, to deploying a suite of scientific instruments and equipment, to supporting an array of Internet and other social media, the OSA’s involvement in research technology covers the gamut of twenty-first century breakthroughs in archaeology. In FY 2021 responsibility for hosting online access to the Iowa Site File returned to OSA using UI servers.

Iowa Site File

Most archaeological sites are recorded in the Iowa Site File as a result of cultural resource surveys conducted by professional archaeologists. Some, however, are reported by landowners, avocational archaeologists, and other non-professionals. Contact the Site Records Manager (319-384-0735).

Significant steps were initiated in FY 2021 (and continue in FY 2022) to decolonize key terms used in recording sites in the Iowa Site File. These changes require considerable programming and database restructuring but are important advancements in the way data are collected and interpretations about the past are framed.

Fiscal Year 2021 Numbers

601 new site shapes in site file
30,739 total sites recorded in Iowa
165 data searches
507 registered I-SitesPro users
(261 Full / 224 Basic / 17 Courtesy / 4 Academic / 1 Partner)

Field and Laboratory Technology

Many of OSA's research endeavors require the use of highly specialized scientific technology in both the field and laboratory setting, including robotic laser transit with data recorder, high resolution GPS units, tablets for mobile data collection, and small drones (UAS) to fly over archaeological sites to create surface models and for infrared thermographic analysis.

Website and App Development

During FY 2021 the OSA maintained portals for the Plains Anthropological Society and the Midwest Archaeological Conference, Inc. as well as support for I-SitesPro, I-Sites Public, I-SitesGov, Iowa Archeological Society, Ancient Trails in Iowa, and Paleocultural Research Group of Colorado.
In Memoriam: Don Wanatee

This year saw the passing of Don Wanatee. Among a myriad of other achievements, he was an important contributor to Iowa's burial laws and therefore the OSA's Indian Advisory Council and Burials/Bioarchaeology Program. As a lifetime member of the Council, he was a constant guide and will remain a driving force for the OSA in preserving the past, honoring Native communities past and present, upholding our responsibilities for ancient burial site protection, and the respectful treatment of ancient human remains.

NAGPRA Work

This year the Bioarchaeology Program completed one of five reburials of ancient human remains in collaboration with 26 tribes that trace their heritage to Iowa, and the schedule was set for the four subsequent reburials to occur in FY 2022.

Mason Koelm assisted Jennifer in compiling a draft summary of possible NAGPRA items from 86 of 468 sites represented in the OSA’s collections that are not under the Bioarchaeology Program’s purview. He was also accepted to the UI College of Law!

Repatriations to the Seminole Tribe of Florida and the Osage Nation in Missouri are still on hold due to the pandemic!

Other Projects

The Bioarchaeology Program carried out its usual work with landowners who serve as site stewards, and local, state and federal agencies in upholding our responsibilities for ancient burial site and inadvertent discovery investigations and reporting, and the protection of sites potentially impacted by development.

An Emergency HRDP Grant was secured in collaboration with the Iowa Archeological Society to assess any damage to burial mounds caused by the August 2020 derecho; 17 of 35 mound sites within the path of 100+ mph winds were inspected. Many sites had downed trees and limbs; uprooted trees impacted mounds at two sites but no human remains were disturbed; guidance on dealing with tree fall and damaged mounds was provided to landowners in coordination with our Indian Advisory Council and Tribal Partners.

OSA Bioarchaeologist Jennifer Mack spent three weeks assisting with the forensic identification of victims of the Champlain Towers condominium collapse in Surfside, FL.

Bioarchaeology Program staff also provided support services for two non-ancient remains-related cases in Benton and Muscatine Counties at the request of law enforcement.

UI Stanford Collection (UI-SC) Research and Documentation

UI Student Natasha Anderson continued adding osteological profiles to the database for the UI Stanford Collection.

A NSF grant for complete documentation and creating a 3D library of the UI-SC was submitted.
Strategic Initiatives

The OSA provides resources and opportunities that encourage the understanding, appreciation, and stewardship of Iowa’s archaeological past. Events took place primarily virtually, reaching over 1,400 people live. Almost 1,300 people continued to watch outreach talks after the livestreams aired.

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<th>Community/Public Presentations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Special Interest/Private Lectures</td>
<td>442</td>
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<tr>
<td>K-12 Presentations/Tours</td>
<td>399</td>
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<td>Higher Education Lectures/Workshops</td>
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<td>Exhibit Booth or Outreach Tent</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,695</strong></td>
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- Exploring Iowa Archaeology in the K–12 Classroom
- Bringing Archaeology to Iowa Communities
- Iowa Archaeology on Social Media
A total of 399 K–12 students participated in in-person and virtual archaeology presentations, activities, and tours with OSA staff.

Educators continued their long-time, award-winning Exploring Iowa Archaeology in the K–12 Classroom presentations virtually.

Beyond the classroom, the OSA staff promoted Iowa’s education program successes and contributed to the field education on a national level through:

- Serving as the Society for American Archaeology's Public Education Committee chairperson
- Serving on the Project Archaeology National Leadership Team
- Leading the evaluation of a Project Archaeology curriculum pilot with middle school teachers in Montana

As naturalists across Iowa began to reinstate in-person youth camps and the University of Iowa School of the Wild expanded to several state parks this spring, many educators sought resources for teaching about archaeology and culture. OSA staff compiled an online guidebook, Integrating Archaeology and Environmental Education While Teaching Outdoors: A Guide for Iowa Naturalists and School of the Wild Instructors, which was accessed by over 140 people.
Bringing Archaeology to Iowa Communities

Engaging with the Interested Public through Virtual Programming

The OSA continues to foster strong relationships with heritage preservation organizations across the state. Long-standing in-person annual events such as Project AWARE and the Meskwaki Powwow were canceled due to the pandemic, but OSA continued to expand and improve their virtual outreach. Staff delivered virtual public presentations to the Iowa Archaeological Society, Sanford Museum and Planetarium, Des Moines Botanical Garden, and Facebook and YouTube livestreams. Almost 1,000 people tuned in live for virtual presentations and nearly 1,300 additional viewers caught up with the presentations added to the video libraries on Iowa Archaeology’s social media.

Connected for Life: Object-based Digital Programming to Foster Active Minds for Senior Living Communities

After the IMLS grant was awarded in September 2020, project coordinators from OSA, Stanley Museum of Art, UI Libraries, and Pentacrest Museums immediately began planning and strategizing. During FY 2021, the team purchased all virtual outreach equipment, constructed a draft website, designed a research project with the UI School of Social Work and Center on Aging, and completed pilot presentations to Senior Living Communities in eastern Iowa. OSA completed two for-the-public interactive archaeology resources that highlight high quality imagery of objects in our collections: The 1837 Ioway Map and Beyond Food: Ancestral Native American Use of Deer and Bison.

Iowa Archaeology Month

Iowa Archaeology Month went completely virtual this fiscal year, and the highlight was the “Archaeology Coffee Hour” livestream series. Five esteemed, retired Iowa archaeologists participated in unscripted interviews with younger colleagues. Lynn Alex, David Gradwohl, Dale Henning, Joe Tiffany, and Mike Perry reflected on their archaeological careers and how the discipline has changed over the years. 212 people watched these presentations live and almost 1,000 watched later on Facebook and YouTube.
The education and outreach content on the OSA website remained a vigorous, interactive conduit between the public and the OSA. The OSA’s social media pages were an important venue for disseminating news and program information in FY 2021. Active social media platforms administered by the OSA include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube.

On Facebook, the sum of the total daily reach for FY 2021 equaled 273,619! The sum of total daily reach for Instagram was 6,811. The most popular Facebook post featuring a rock art vandalism incident reached 43,937 people, with 10,586 engagements, demonstrating the platform’s powerful potential in terms of engagement and outreach.

Over the course of the fiscal year on Twitter, impressions (the number of times a user saw an Iowa Archaeology tweet) totaled 39,424. The most engaging tweet, seen by 3,316 people, was part of the Archaeological Institute of America’s International Archaeology Day tweet-a-thon in October.

On YouTube, people watched Iowa Archaeology videos 13,714 times during FY 2021, which is an 84% increase over last year. How to Sew a Cattail Mat, produced by Liz Schultz and edited by OSA in 2004, remained the most viewed Iowa Archaeology YouTube video this past year and has been viewed over 10,300 times. New to YouTube this year was a series of livestream presentations, including the Archaeology Coffee Hour interviews during Iowa Archaeology Month.