

## **Announcing the *Aboriginal-Archaeological Liaison Initiative*: A partnership between the Williams Treaty Nations and the APA**

The APA and the Williams Treaty Nations have entered into a profound, long-term partnership with each other in 2010. The philosophy is to facilitate more First Nations and archaeologists working together towards a more enlightened archaeological practice. The broad goals for 2010 are: to train First Nations community members to initially become part of archaeological field and lab crews and ultimately to act as Liaisons between the archaeological crew and their community, particularly on Stage 3 and 4 investigations; and to facilitate relationship building between heritage practitioners (archaeologists, municipal heritage planners and heritage boards, heritage consultants, etc.) and their Williams Treaty neighbours and raise the traditional cultural awareness of those practitioners. Adequate financial support has been graciously received from the government of Ontario to carry out various phases of this initiative.

### **Step 1: The Liaison Training Session – Curve Lake First Nation, March 8-12**

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The first major accomplishment has been achieved in the form of an in-class training session that brought more than a dozen trainees from 6 of the 7 communities together with Elders and licenced archaeologists. Hosted by Curve Lake First Nation, this significant gathering included member representatives from Beausoleil First Nation, Georgina Island First Nation, Scugog Island First Nation, Alderville First Nation, Hiawatha First Nation, and Curve Lake First Nation. Although there were no trainees from Mnjikaning/Rama First Nation present, community member Ned Benson actively participated in several days of the training program thereby enhancing its delivery.

The program was held over the course of a 5 day period and included classroom type delivery as well as experiential activities. Learning was facilitated through both Indigenous and Western methodologies including prayer, song, oral history, lectures and workshops. Elders Doug Williams, Mark Phillips, Arthur Otskinau Horn, and Ned Benson facilitated and delivered the cultural and spiritual Teachings for this program while volunteer archaeologists from the APA including Laurie Jackson, Cathy Crinnion, Nick Gromoff, James Conolly, Mike Henry, and Alistair Jolly presented the archaeological components. The training program itself was composed of diverse and intensive learning sessions.

These sessions covered topics such as: the cultural and spiritual significance of archaeological materials (artifacts) and burials, repatriation, the importance of relationships and representation, archaeological theory, time periods and horizons, culture history of Ontario, archaeological landscapes, soil types, GPS technology, field methods, artifact identification, and current legislation and policy affecting archaeological practice in Ontario.

### **Step 2: Gaining Field Experience for the Liaison Trainees**

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The critical piece of learning that could not be accomplished in early March will take place at the end of May. Since the participating Williams Treaty Nations are spread geographically from Rice Lake to Georgian Bay, the group of Liaison Trainees will be divided into two groups to experience Stage 2 test pitting and pedestrian surveys and artifact recovery, and other methodologies such as Stage 3 test units and grid set-up as opportunities arise.

The Liaison Trainees will then be available for hire onto archaeological field crews. Given the future direction that archaeology is taking in Ontario, with Aboriginal engagement and involvement at least at the Stage 3 and 4 levels of investigation, the APA encourages its members and all licenced archaeologists to deepen the relationships they have already begun with appropriate Aboriginal communities by incorporating the Liaison Trainees in field projects this season. Refer to the attached map to determine which of your projects fall into traditional Williams Treaty Nation territory, and contact Cathy Crinnion, APA Executive, for information about how to retain a Liaison Trainee.

## Step 3: Cultural Awareness Training for Archaeologists and Other Heritage

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### Practitioners

Plans are being put into place for a Fall 2010 workshop on Cultural Awareness led by Anishinaabe Elders for archaeologists, municipal heritage planners, and other related sectors. In addition, the continuing dialogue between the Williams Treaty communities and Elders and the APA will be vital to the production of an educational/information kit that will be shared with archaeologists, municipalities, schools, etc. to further mainstream society's understanding of cultural practices as they relate to modern First Nations and Metis communities and to the understanding of past material culture.

### Questions?

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