

MYAP NEWSLETTER

MONTANA YELLOWSTONE ARCHEOLOGICAL PROJECT
YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK & THE UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

MYAP '08: BOUNDARY LANDS SURVEY COMPLETE

Monday, August 18, 2008—The second annual season of the Montana Yellowstone Archeological Project was completed between June 18 and July 30, 2008. Under the direction of Principal Investigator Doug MacDonald (Assistant Professor, The University of Montana), the team of 12 undergraduates and four graduate students identified more than 40 archeological sites within a total surveyed area of more than 1,500 acres. The '08 MYAP team recovered hundreds of artifacts which date to between the Early Archaic to the Late Prehistoric and into the historic period, spanning the last 8,000 years. While located further away from the Yellowstone River than the '07 study area, the 2008 study area still yielded dozens of lithic scatters and stone circle sites located above small streams and wetlands, indicating extensive use of a variety of landforms and wild resources by Native Americans in this portion of the Yellowstone Valley. Among the significant historic archeological discoveries were several shell casings associated with the late 19th century attack of the Henderson Ranch by the Nez Perce. Results of test excavations were extremely productive, as discussed on the next page.

Thanks to the 2008 MYAP team, as well as Yellowstone Staff (Ann Johnson, Elaine Hale, among others), which dedicated time and energy to help in the successful field season. The MYAP '08 team is shown in the picture at right.

The 2008 MYAP Team



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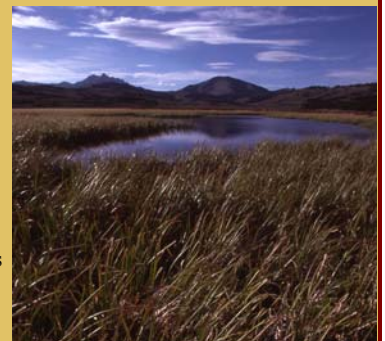
HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 2008 FIELD SEASON

- More than 40 archeological sites identified.
- More than 1,500 acres surveyed.
- Nearly 100 square meters excavated at 4 sites.
- Blacksmith, store, and privy excavated at Cinnabar.
- Three hearths excavated at three stone circles.
- 12 undergraduate students trained.

'09 MYAP MAY BE IN WYOMING!

The 2009 version of the Montana Yellowstone Archeological Project will likely take place in the far northern reaches of Wyoming near the Montana border. The study area will likely include Swan Lake Flat (right) and possibly, Yellowstone Lake. Elaine Hale (Yellowstone FHWA archeologist) has dedicated funding for MYAP to conduct an archeological survey of Swan Lake Flat, while Ann Johnson (YNP archeologist) hopes to secure funding to conduct test excavations at several sites located on the northern edges of Yellowstone Lake. Additional funding will be sought to conduct further excavations at sites in the Boundary Lands in Montana as well.

Swan Lake Flat



MONTANA YELLOWSTONE ARCHEOLOGICAL PROJECT

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A bison chasing a bull elk at the MYAP '08 field camp at Eagle Creek.



A finch spreads its wings in the Boundary Lands



A large obsidian biface recovered at the RJP-1 Site



Excavations at the Blacksmith Shop, Cinnabar.

MYAP '08 EXCAVATES 4 SITES

In 2008, the MYAP crew conducted test excavations at four sites, including Cinnabar (the former train town), a stone circle site (24YE357), a lithic scatter of possible Archaic to Paleoindian age, and an historic homestead. At Cinnabar, the team identified the wooden floor of the blacksmith shop, as well as the privy and the general store. As highlighted on the front page of the July 27th Sunday edition of the Bozeman newspaper, artifacts from the Cinnabar privy included a holy water bottle top, a girdle strap, liquor bottles, and a suspender strap—feel free to interpret that archeological data for yourselves!!! At the Airport Rings Site (see picture below), three hearths were excavated which will provide abundant information regarding the Late Archaic to Late Prehistoric use of hide lodges in the Yellowstone Valley. In one of the stone circles, the MYAP team identified a thick layer of ash in the northeast corner of the stone circle, as well as a charcoal-laden hearth in the center of the lodge, typical of a winter occupation. The working interpretation is that a family lived at the site during a winter storm, burning a hearth day and night to keep warm. Winds battered their lodge from the south-southwest, blowing ash from the fire to the northern edge of the lodge (ash was not abundant exterior of the lodge or in its southern and western portions). Charcoal from the hearth will be radiocarbon dated to indicate when the lodge was occupied during prehistory.



'08 MYAP Excavations at the Airport Rings Site. The Yellowstone River is in the Background. View Northeast.

MYAP '08 FIELD CAMP AT EAGLE CREEK

Due to high water at the Indian Creek field camp in Yellowstone, the '08 MYAP field team was forced to take up residence at the Eagle Creek campground in Gallatin National Forest. Eagle Creek is located approximately 2.5 miles from Gardiner, Montana, within beautiful uplands above the Yellowstone River. Wildlife seen in and near camp included wolves, elk, bison, pronghorn, and marmot. Sadly, two of the wolves were run down by a jeep, with MYAP crew providing information regarding the perps to forest rangers. Also, the resident bull bison at

one point chased off an intrusive bull elk less than 50 meters from several of the crew's tents (see picture, above left). Overall, the proximity of the camp to Gardiner resulted in greater time spent in survey and excavation, as reflected in the tremendous amount of work completed by the '08 team. Overall, we thank Gallatin National Forest for letting us camp in Eagle Creek. We all came to appreciate the beauty of the Gallatin forest. Thanks!



View of MYAP '08 field camp at Eagle Creek. Mammoth Hot Springs is visible in the Background.