

# 'Archaeology isn't just moving dirt'

ARCHAEOLOGY continued  
from page 14

that would tell us more about the activities that happened there?," says Harrelson.

These next generation archaeologists have been working the old school site together. They started by walking the perimeter and seeing what they could see before using ground penetrating radar to obtain a little deeper picture of the landscape.

The first step in the process was creating a detailed map and finding the outlines of the demolished school house. The students pored over aerial photographs and decades-old maps as well as pictures from a drone before flagging a dozen or so 5-meter square plots. They then removed the topsoil and began to see what they could find.

"We peel back the sod to get a sense of what artifacts are at the surface of the site," says Gonzalez. "That can give you a much better understanding of what is below the surface. Once we do the surface collection, we analyze everything and then we put it back into the ground exactly where we found it."

Gonzalez says that in the past archaeologists would have just taken everything.

Tribal member Sharrah McKenzie, a senior archaeology student at Portland State University, who has joined the group for the summer dig, found a piece of glass that she was eager to show Gonzalez before placing it in a brown paper bag labeled on the outside.

Gonzalez says the small piece of clear, ribbed-glass was most likely "Depression" glass or "penny" glass that was widely used in the 1920s and '30s. Gonzalez says it could have been a jelly jar or possibly a lighting cover.

"Sweet," says McKenzie as she returned to the sifter.

Reducing the impact on the land and finding answers to the questions that are most important to the community are extremely im-



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

**This piece of brick was unearthed while Sharrah McKenzie and her digging partner, Scott Adams, a University of Washington anthropology student, were digging.**

portant to Gonzalez and the Tribal Historic Preservation staff.

"It's equally important to remember exactly what was lost when people came here," says Gonzalez. "That is a period in history, especially in archaeology, that there really isn't a lot of knowledge about. For archaeologists, Native Americans ceased to exist in the early 20th century."

Graduate student and teaching assistant Ian Kretzler found a piece of chalk that most likely came from one of the classrooms that used to be on the site.

Kretzler has been working with Edwards on a mapping project since last August.

"I feel very lucky to be a part of this group and this project," says Kretzler. "It's a unique opportunity to interact with and teach students a way of doing archaeology that is not often what they see in archae-

ology classes."

Gonzalez says she wants all the students to come away from the field school with a larger understanding of what it means to conduct archaeology in modern times.

"Archaeology isn't just moving dirt," says Gonzalez. "It's working with people and it is understanding the local history in a really nuanced way. That is the goal that I have for them above and beyond anything else. It's a really big shift. We can

keep doing archaeology the way it has been done or we can do it in a way that makes it relevant to Tribal communities."

As a Tribal member, Harrelson says the best part of this collaboration is that it fits into a "deep" connection to place.

"We, as Tribal people, are inheritors to that," says Harrelson. "There is a sense of belonging and connection to place that is in unto itself medicine." ■

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