

The Cove Site: 47DR-428



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Discovery on the Peninsula

The Cove site (47DR428) is located in Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin on property owned by Crossroads at Big Creek. Site 47DR-428 was discovered after Crossroads removed honeysuckle from a .1-hectare plot. The 2-hectare site is adjacent to Big Creek where the creek forms an estuary into Sturgeon Bay. It is predominantly a Late Woodland occupation, but also has yielded some Middle Woodland artifacts. Since 2016, archaeology at the site has been a teaching experience for adults, elementary, and secondary school students in northeast Wisconsin. Approximately 132 square meters have been excavated, yielding 21 features, including a keyhole-shaped structure. Fauna, lithic microwear, and protein residue analysis indicate utilization of fish, deer, turtle, beaver and rabbit. Four radiocarbon samples of food residues from grit tempered, cordmarked ceramics range from cal. AD 775-1150. Charred twigs date to cal. AD 1522-1640, but no early Contact period artifacts have been recovered.

- Lithic Debitage N= 5319, density= 66 flakes/m² excavated.
 - Materials are local Silurian chert (97%), and Maquoketa chert (2%).
 - Knappers used free-hand and bipolar reduction strategies.
 - Flake:tool ratio= 90:1.
 - Tools N=54; includes edge only, unifaces, bifaces, and multifaces.
 - Most hafted bifaces are reworked/recycled.
 - Bipolar multifacial cores made from beach and/or glacial cobbles.
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- Ceramics N= 1729. All grit tempered.
 - Generally small, often exfoliated due to taphonomic factors.
 - Surface treatments include cordmarking, incised over cordmarked, fabric impressed, incised, stamping.
 - Types recovered include North Bay, Heins Creek, Point Sauble Collared.

Test Units and Features



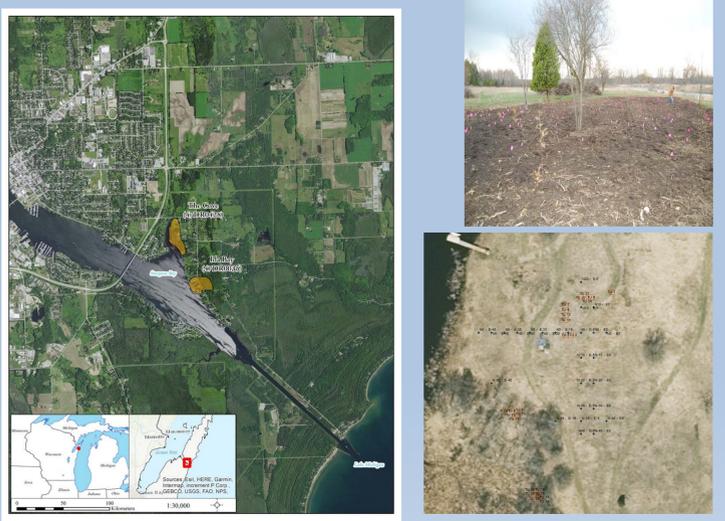
Coring at The Cove



Test units showed significant variation in stratigraphy; particularly the appearance of a thick red clay. We used an auger to gain a preliminary view of the strata underlying the site. The aerial map shows that the red clay rises and falls in cycles as one goes from west to east. Our working hypothesis is that the clay represents different lake levels from ca AD 500 to the present.

Choke Point Hypothesis

The Door Peninsula occupies a unique setting between Lake Michigan and the Bay of Green Bay. Prior to the 1872-1881 shipping channel being cut through the peninsula to join Lake Michigan and the Bay of Green Bay, there was a 1.3-mile (2.1-kilometer) wide stretch of land that separated the lake from the bay. This narrow stretch of land would have been the ideal location to ambush animals as they migrated north and south across the peninsula. If animals such as deer, elk, bears, rabbits and others did not swim across the bay, they would have funneled and even been driven through this narrow section of land for quick dispatch by First Peoples waiting in ambush. The funnel could have been narrowed in order to force the animals to follow a predetermined path during the summer or early fall months. A funnel within the choke point would also have had good visibility from rock outcrops and sand dunes and also provided sufficient cover for concealment. The topography and limestone outcrops could have also served to funnel game and offer elevation opportunities for acquiring such game. Trails could have been made to minimize the size of the funnel for the deer to follow thereby creating a predictive path of least resistance. Also, a funnel complete with bedding areas and food-sources would assist in the successful acquisition of game. Wetlands which are abundant in the area would have been another draw for game. The funnel could have been maximized in the effectiveness by blocking escape routes and diverging multiple paths down to one.



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