

Berry site shows off findings

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Jennifer Frew | The News Herald
Archaeologist Chris Rodning works at the Berry site on Tuesday. The Berry site will open to the public on Saturday for its annual field day.



MORGANTON -- Participants of the 2010 [Warren Wilson College](#) and [Western Piedmont Community College Archaeology Field School](#) labored Tuesday under the bright and hot sun, slowly uncovering and recording evidence of the native town of [Joara](#) and Spanish settlement Fort [San Juan](#).

[Warren Wilson College](#), [WPCC](#) and the [Exploring Joara Foundation](#) open up the Berry site to the public from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday to see the results of the field school's month-long work this summer.

The annual field day includes archaeologist-led tours, demonstrations of native weapons, tool and pottery methods, children's activities and Native American stories from [the Catawba](#) and Cherokee tribes. Refreshments will be available on site.

[Executive Archaeologist David Moore](#) said field school participants have been working digging and sifting through portions of the Spanish compound. Since last year, the workers have uncovered the wall of a house and more posthole locations.

And after several years spent on studying the settlement's houses, the [school](#) is also revisiting the mound, a raised earthen structure where either [the native priest](#) or chief lived, after several years in the hopes of obtaining a [National Endowment for the Humanities](#) grant, [Moore](#) said.

Archaeologists at the Berry site hope to study the relationships between the settlement's buildings and the mound, [Moore](#) said. He first found evidence of the mound in 1986, and in 2003 discovered the area where the mound is located.

The mound served as the focal point for ritual or political activity and not all towns had a mound, [Moore](#) said. But in this area, there are at least six mounds in the area stretching into [Caldwell County](#).

“We’re just trying to get our work done before it’s lost,” [Moore](#) said told a tour group Tuesday. “...This is irreplaceable history.”

The Berry site dates to the 15th and 16th centuries [A.D.](#) and archaeologists believe it represents an ancestral Catawba Indian town that predates the Lost Colony of [Roanoke Island](#). Archaeologists point to evidence indicating the site is the native town of [Joara](#), where Spaniard [Juan Pardo](#) in 1567 built Fort [San Juan](#).

[Pardo](#) renamed the native settlement Quenca, after his hometown in [Spain](#), and archaeologists believe it is the earliest European settlement in the interior of the [United States](#).

The Berry site is located on Henderson Mill Road off N.C. 181. There is a [\\$5](#) entrance fee per car. For more information visit www.exploringjoara.org or call 439-2463.

<http://www2.morganton.com/news/2010/jun/23/berry-site-shows-findings-ar-227015/>