Cultural Heritage Trust Program

South Carolina Department of Natural Resources

June 2024
Archaeology News

SCDNR Archaeology Summer Series

Registration is Now Open

Registration is now open for the 3rd Annual SCDNR Archaeology Summer Series! This series of free hands-on archaeology programs is designed for kids ages 4 -18 years old. The series will take place on Saturday mornings in the teaching garden of SCDNR's Parker Annex Archaeology Center (2025 Barnwell St., Columbia, SC 29201) from June 8 - 29, 2024. The series includes Pottery Re-Fit; Experimental Archaeology; Mini Archaeology Excavation Units; and Paper Making, Berry Ink,

Quill Writing and Wax Seal programs. Instruction for each program will be provided by members of the SCDNR Archaeology team. More information about each program and registration can be found here.

Archaeology Community Engagement across South Carolina

Lelia Rice, Community Archaeologist and Education Specialist

One goal of the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) Heritage Trust Program is to educate the public about archaeology and the sites under its protection. As the Community Archaeologist and Education Specialist, Lelia Rice provides children's programming with hands-on activities designed to teach archaeology in the classroom.

Using a pump drill tool consisting of a popsicle stick, a wooden skewer and a piece of string, students drill small Smarties candy to learn how shell beads might have been made 4,000 years ago. To learn how archaeologists mend broken pottery sherds, students decorate a small flowerpot, break it, and then glue it back together again. Such learning activities teach students the science of archaeology when all they might know is the fantasy of an Indiana Jones movie.

"I enjoy teaching students, mainly because I love to see them get excited to learn or to see when it all comes together in their mind. And selfishly, because every time we enter a classroom, they get excited to see us, even if it's just because we offer a small break from their normal day," Rice said about her classroom engagements. "We aren't like a museum where students and teachers come to us for a field trip – we go to their classroom with carts full of exciting things to break up the normal school day."

One of her newer activities requires students to carefully excavate small "dig blocks," little squares made of plaster of Paris and sand with ceramic sherds hidden within, replicating the artifact recovery work accomplished at an archaeological site.

"I always wanted a dig block with artifacts inside, but they only make ones with dinosaurs," Rice said. Children often think archaeologists excavate dinosaurs, but that is the work of paleontologists. Rice's blocks also illustrate an archaeological excavation where artifacts of a broken plate might be scattered across a site. "We recently made dig blocks so that the class had sherds of the same plate in a set of blocks. As the kids broke open their blocks, they see that their friend next to them is breaking one open and notices their sherds match. They start running around the classroom trying to mend the plate at the site, which is the classroom."

During a summer camp held by the South Carolina State Museum, Rice showed children how handmade cordage might be used in several activities of a precontact culture.

“We planned the programs to build off each other, to create a whole view of archaeology,” Rice explained. On the first day, the students made cordage out of natural materials. The students discovered the same cordage could be used in a hand pump drill, for hafting projectile points to sticks, for weaving nets, and for decorating clay pots. “They then used the connection of the cordage as a multi-use tool and related it to our other lessons and then adapted that thinking to the work that an archaeologist does.”

Rice presentations have her travel across the state to attend schools and libraries, often with the assistance of other Heritage Trust staff members. Teachers can now easily book classroom instruction with Rice through the “You Can Book Me” reservation site. Rice represents Heritage Trust at several festivals throughout the state, many related to either science or celebrations of culture. As a member of the Eastern Cherokee Southern Iroquois United Tribe of South Carolina and a descendant of the Mohawk Tribe, Lelia also provides presentations at powwows.

Rice also oversees the SCDNR Archaeology Summer Series, a popular program that offers four Saturdays of free hands-on activities designed for kids from 4-18 years old. The program, now in its third year, is held in the backyard of the Parker Annex Archaeology Center. The program is conducted during the same time Heritage Trust hosts an archaeology internship for college and high school students, giving these students an opportunity to learn about public outreach.

Rice earned Bachelor of Arts degrees in Anthropology and History at the University of South Carolina (USC) where she also worked with the university’s McKissick Museum. She assisted with the museum’s social media outreach, collection management and curation, and even used her embroidery skills to help hang the museum’s collection of quilts. It was at McKissick Museum where she learned about Edgefield, South Carolina vessels, stoneware storage vessels created by an enslaved workforce at several potteries located in Edgefield.

“This was the first time I learned about Dave the potter, because the McKissick Museum has a couple of large Dave vessels,” Rice said. Dave Drake was a famous enslaved potter, known for his high level of craftsmanship and the short pieces of poetry he inscribed on his vessels during a time when it was forbidden to teach those enslaved to write. Drake’s vessels are now in many museums.

“We were moving the vessels into a stoneware exhibit and Mark Smith, the curator, put it on the cart and said ‘hey, stick your head in there and smell it.’ It smelled disgusting because it had residue of lard and fat that it used to store. They didn’t want to wash it out because someone could later do lipid analysis.” Lipid analysis can reveal the contents that were once stored in the vessels.

Edgefield has now become a focus of Rice’s studies as she pursues a Master of Arts in Public History with a concentration in museum management at USC. Heritage Trust maintains a collection of more than 600 Edgefield vessels manufactured at the Joseph Gregory Banyham pottery located in Trenton on what is now the Horse Creek Heritage Preserve.

“My thesis will focus on him, his pottery and the property,” Rice said. The pottery collection includes whiskey stackers, cream risers, beehive jugs, poultry waterers, and churns. Banyham’s successful businesses included the pottery, a tannery, and a gristmill. As part of her masters, she plans to design traveling exhibits to share her knowledge and the vessels with the public. “I’m hoping to eventually make a traveling exhibit because we currently have 600 vessels and we want to share those with the public. By May 2026 I’ll have a masters and an exhibition plan.”

Image features Lelia Rice cataloging the Edgefield pottery collection. Image courtesy of Reece Spradley, SCDNR.

Focus on Heritage

Daws Island Heritage Preserve

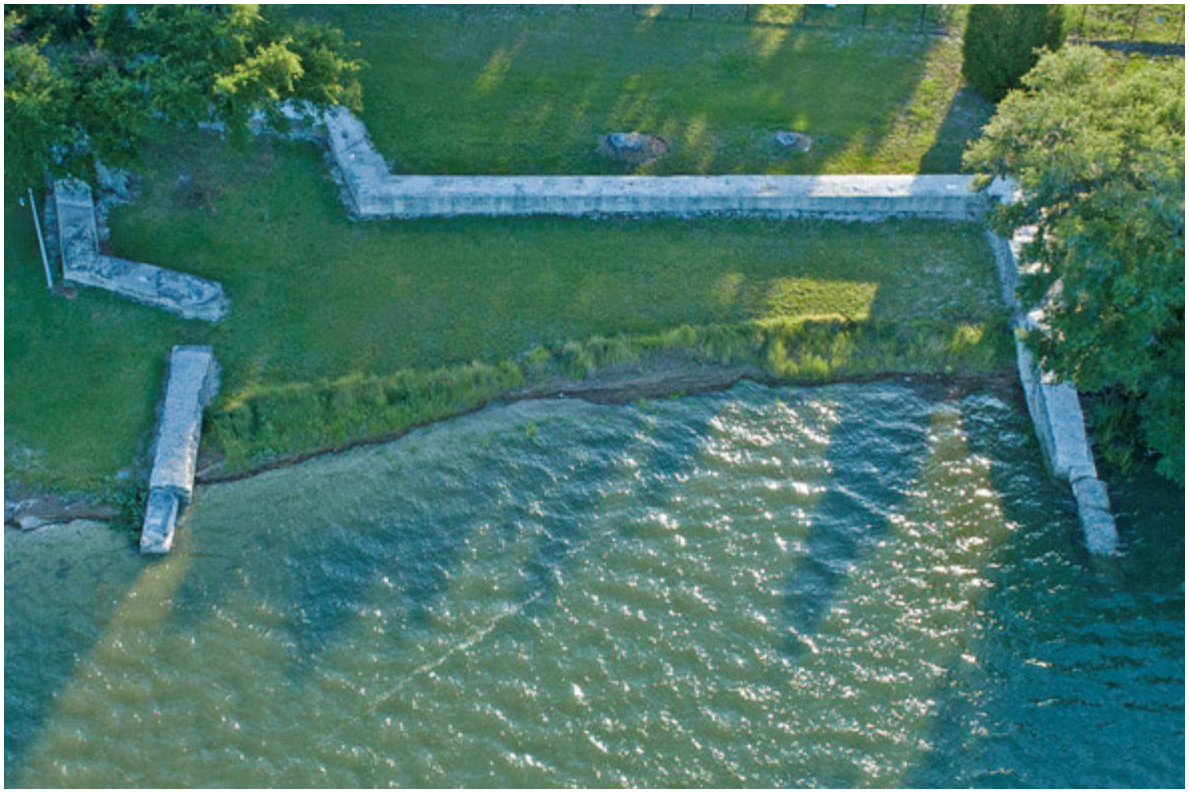
Located in the Port Royal Sound in Beaufort County, South Carolina, Daws Island Heritage Preserve is bounded on the east by the Broad River and on the west by Chechessee River. The South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) Heritage Trust Program acquired this 1,881-acre island property in 1997 to protect and preserve shell mound sites created by the Indigenous people who once lived in this area. Acquisition of the preserve was made possible by a grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Coastal Wetlands Improvement Act Program, a donation from the Daws Island Partnership, and funds from SCDNR's Heritage Land Trust Fund.

Past excavations of the Daws Island Shell Ring Complex have revealed the island was in use by Indigenous people as early as 12,000 years ago and as recently as 800 years ago. Indigenous peoples constructed shell rings along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts of the Southeastern United States from 3,000 to 5,000 years ago. In the area known as the South Atlantic Blight, the coastline that extends from North Carolina to the Florida Keys, shell rings are circular or c-shaped, and range in size from approximately 40 to 100 meters in diameter.

On Daws Island, the people left several shell rings and c-shaped rings. These large mounds were constructed predominantly of oyster shells, but also included whelks, arks, ribbed mussels, periwinkles, and animal bones. While shell and other material make up these shell rings, the center of a shell ring, also called the plaza, appears purposefully free of shell. Twenty-six shell rings have been recorded in South Carolina and SCDNR caretakes approximately one-third of them. These cultural sites with an unknown function have greatly eroded from high tides and coastal erosion.

The site can only be reached by boat. Visitors should note that the island is surrounded by a dense marsh which makes it difficult to access the island. Additionally, the island contains sensitive roosting and nesting areas for various birds. Visit the SCDNR's Heritage Trust website to learn more about Daws Island Heritage Preserve and other preserves, view documentary films, and download lesson plans and activities.

Image features Daws Island Heritage Preserve. Image courtesy of Meg Gaillard, SCDNR.



Heritage at Risk Survey and Interviews

Seeking Public Participation

From now until Saturday, August 31, 2024, you are being invited to take part in the PhD research project called *While I Breathe, I Hope: Heritage at Risk in the Southeastern United States, South Carolina as a Case Study*. This study is being done by Meg Gaillard, SCDNR archaeologist and PhD student in the School of Archaeology and Ancient History at the University of Leicester.

There are two ways you can participate in this research project. The first way you can participate is by answering questions in an online survey that can be accessed here. The survey is intended to understand how cultural resources and the loss of cultural resources are important to you. The survey contains 25 questions and will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. The survey will close at 11:59 p.m. EST on Saturday, August 31, 2024.

The second way you can participate is through an interview. In-person interviews will take place at Fort Frederick Heritage Preserve located at 601 Old Fort Road, Port Royal, SC 29935 from Wednesday, July 24 - Monday, July 29, 2024 (9 a.m. - 4 p.m. daily). Walk-up interview participation is welcome, and registration is not required. Similar to the survey, interviews are intended to understand how cultural resources and the loss of cultural resources are important to you. Interviews contain 16 questions.

If you are not able to participate in an in-person interview, you may participate in an online independent written interview that can be accessed here.

If you have any questions about this project or would like more information about how to participate, please email Meg Gaillard at mcg35@leicester.ac.uk.

This project is funded by an American Friends of the University of Leicester PhD scholarship award and the SCDNR Heritage Trust Program. The University of Leicester Ethics Review number for this project is 43446. Image features Fort Frederick, and is courtesy of Jamie Koelker, Koelker and Associates, LLC.

Fall 2024 Archaeology for Kids Programs

Registration Now Open

Are you a teacher, homeschool parent, librarian, or community organizer interested in booking an archaeology program for kids from August - November 2024? If you answered yes, then register now for a free Archaeology for Kids program! Archaeology for Kids programs are provided by the SCDNR Archaeology team for free to schools, libraries, and community centers anywhere in South Carolina. The number of available programs is limited, so register here today. Questions about Archaeology for Kids programming? Please email ArchaeologyOutreach@dnr.sc.gov.

50th Anniversary Poster Contest

South Carolina Heritage Trust Program

Calling artists to help us celebrate the 50th anniversary of the South Carolina Heritage Trust Program! We are looking for artists of all ages to create posters (maximum size: 11" x 17", horizontal or vertical) celebrating your favorite South Carolina heritage preserves.

There are two categories for the poster competition: Kids (K-12) and Adults (18+). You can use any medium you like to create your poster: digital, pastels, oils, paints, colored pencils, or crayons. Once you finish your artwork, please complete the poster competition application and upload a high resolution (300 dpi or greater) scan or photo of your artwork as part of the application here.

The poster competition will close on Tuesday, December 31, 2024 at 11:59pm EST. Judges for the competition are made up of South Carolina Heritage Trust Program staff. Three posters from each category (kids and adults) will be selected to receive a prize package. Winning posters will be published in *South Carolina Wildlife* magazine. Prize winners will be contacted on or before Monday, March 3, 2025.

Image features an artist painting at Botany Bay Plantation Heritage Preserve / Wildlife Management Area. Image courtesy of Meg Gaillard, SCDNR.

Questions about archaeology events and programs? Please visit the Heritage Trust website, or email ArchaeologyOutreach@dnr.sc.gov.