

KJ 9-25-18

Archaeology volunteers wanted for Dresden Falls dig

Dig planned weekdays Oct. 1-12.

Beginning Monday, Oct. 1, Friends of Merrymeeting Bay, in conjunction with the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, will conduct a two-week dig at the Dresden Falls archaeology site. The parcel has both prehistoric and historic components as well as unique natural features. Dresden Falls is considered the most important prehistoric site in Maine with evidence of a fishing camp here from 4,500-9,000 years ago as well as a Revolutionary War — vintage structure showing on a 1772 British Navy chart, according to a news release from the Friend of Merrymeeting Bay.

The property was protected by FOMB with partial funding from the Land for Maine's Future program and then donated to The Archaeological Conservancy. Possible buried features of both vintages were detected last year using ground penetrating radar in a survey funded by FOMB. The objectives of this year's dig are to verify GPR data and obtain further information supporting an application to list Dresden Falls on the National Historic Registry. The dig will be tightly controlled by MHPC and ratio of volunteers to MHPC staff will be kept at 1:1 with FOMB experienced volunteers mostly screening.



Andy Heller, left, with Alice Kelley and Jacque Miller conduct GPR survey. Photo courtesy of Ed Friedman

A few individuals will lay out dig areas on Thursday, Sept. 27. Inexperienced volunteers are welcome on Friday, Sept. 28, to remove the sod and plow zone soil from a selected 5- by 5-meter portion of the historic site. This activity will continue down at the prehistoric site on Monday, Oct. 1, while digging below the plowzone begins on the historic site. Brawny yet delicate sodbusters are preferred for the initial ground-breaking and plowzone removal and screening. There is a lot of soil to move. Experienced volunteers only, are requested by MHPC for helping with work below the plow zone.

As usual, a donation is requested since this is a particularly costly dig (FOMB is paying partial MHPC staff costs and for carbon dating of artifacts). Suggested donation is \$50, more is welcome. Each day will be set up with morning and afternoon sessions and there is room for four volunteers per session. Depending on interest, there may be opportunities to stay for the day or return on a second day. Morning sessions run from 8 a.m. to noon and afternoon sessions are from 12:30-4:30 p.m. To schedule and time slot, directions to dig location and more information, contact Tom Walling at 666-5837.

Also, the 22nd annual FOMB Winter Speaker Series begins with Astronomy 101 on Oct. 10, featuring Ron Thompson of Southern Maine Astronomers. Series presentations are generally at Curtis Memorial Library, 7 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month October-May. The