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2026 PAC/SPA PENNSYLVANIA ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRAINING FIELD SCHOOL (5/17-5/23/26)



The Pennsylvania Archaeological Council (PAC) and Society for Pennsylvania Archaeology (SPA) are accepting applications for the new PAC/SPA Pennsylvania Archaeological Training Program in 2026! **Applications are due no later than April 15, 2026.** Early submission is encouraged.

This field school is part of a new public archaeology training program wherein citizen scientists are invited to assist with ongoing archaeological projects while learning cultural history, excavation techniques, ethics, and more from professional archaeologists. The overall program includes the annual field school and various lectures and workshops throughout the year aimed at educating the public on topics such as artifact identification, paleobotany, zooarchaeology, historic ceramics, precontact lithics, NAGPRA, and more! This year's field school will be divided between the Fort Halifax Site and the Shoop Paleoindian Site in Dauphin County and take place between May 17 and May 23. Please see attached documents summarizing the archaeological projects at each site.

Join us for a hands-on, week-long exploration of Pennsylvania's past! This public archaeology field school invites participants of all backgrounds—students, lifelong learners, and history enthusiasts—to step into the role of archaeologist and learn the fundamental skills used to uncover and interpret the past.

Over the course of the week, participants will be split into two field crews that will rotate between Fort Halifax, an 18th-century frontier fort, and the Shoop Paleoindian site, one of Pennsylvania's important early Indigenous locations. Everyone begins together on Day 1 with orientation activities, including introductory lectures, a walkthrough of field methods, and guided tours of both sites. After Day 4, the first crew of participants will shift to the second site to complete their final three days of fieldwork, and the second crew will do the same ensuring that all participants experience both unique archaeological projects.

Participants must attend the entire week of field school including the Introductory lectures and site visits on the afternoon of May 17 and 6 days of fieldwork training from ca. 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM (lunch break ca. 12-1:00 PM) and some evening field lab time/informal lecture TBD. A more detailed schedule will be provided upon acceptance of this field school.

Skills Participants Will Learn

Throughout the week, participants will be trained in the essential methods and techniques archaeologists use every day, including:

- Basic Excavation

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- Shovel testing

Learn how to carefully remove soil layer by layer, recognize features, and work safely and efficiently in a real excavation unit.

- Screening and Soil Processing

Practice screening excavated soil to recover artifacts—sometimes the smallest discoveries provide the biggest clues.

- Artifact Identification

Gain hands-on experience identifying historic and precontact materials such as pottery, stone tools, glass, metal objects, and more.

- Mapping & Documentation

Learn how to map excavation units, record provenience information, and interpret site grids—critical skills for turning discoveries into usable data. Understand how archaeologists organize, label, and document their findings so they can be studied long after the fieldwork ends.

- Archaeological Ethics

Explore the responsibilities archaeologists have to cultural resources, descendant communities, professional standards, and the stewardship of the past.

A Unique, Immersive Experience!

Whether you're considering archaeology as a career, looking to broaden your historical knowledge, or simply eager for a meaningful outdoor community-based experience, this field school offers a supportive, educational environment led by experienced professionals. Participants will leave with foundational archaeological skills, practical field experience, and a deeper appreciation for Pennsylvania's rich cultural heritage.

Program Costs

The program cost is \$150/participant due on acceptance (See instructions for applying below). Seven lunches (5/17-5/23) will be provided and there will be an opening cookout on the evening of 5/17 that is free to participants and staff. Participants will be responsible for their own breakfast and dinners. Details about options for breakfast and dinner will be provided upon acceptance into the program. Participants will also be provided with a basic dig kit for which a deposit of \$50 will be collected. The notebooks included in this dig kit will become part of the site records, but upon return of the rest of the dig kit in good condition each participant will be refunded \$45 at the end of field school. Each participant will receive a field school T-shirt and, upon completion of the week of training, a certificate of completion.

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Housing

Participants are also responsible for their housing, but there are three relatively inexpensive options available to participants.

1. Bunkhouse option: Participants may stay in bunkhouses at Camp Hebron in Halifax PA <https://www.camphebron.org/>, which is close to both field school sites. We have reserved two 12 person bunkhouses (One for men and one for women) for program participants. These bunkhouses have electricity, and bunk beds with mattresses, and come with access to well-maintained shower and restroom facilities. Pack your field clothes, sleeping bag, and personal items and you will be all set. These bunkhouses also are adjacent to an A-Frame shelter, which the field school will be using for lectures, lab work, the opening cookout, and possibly other field camp activities. A bed in one of these bunkhouses is \$45 for 7 nights. This fee is payable to the SPA upon arrival at field school because we have already rented these bunkhouses. This option is strongly recommended for participants.

2. Tent camping option: Project staff will be staying at a Camp Hebron campsite, and one additional campsite has been rented for tent campers. Two tents can be situated on this campsite, and campers will also be using the well-maintained camp facilities although the campsites are not adjacent to the A-Frame we will be using for the field school. If you have camping gear, this option may be appealing. Each tent space for this campsite will be \$20.45/night, payable to Kurt Carr, who has reserved these sites.

2. Halifax Inn option: A block of 5 rooms (double occupancy for up to 10 people has been reserved at the Halifax Inn in Halifax, PA <https://halifaxinn.com/>. Three of them will be rooms with 2 double beds, and 2 will have one bed, either a queen, a king or a full. All rooms have bathrooms and TV and small fridge, microwave and a Keurig as well as access to laundry facilities. This is for those who absolutely can't rough it for a week. We may be able to match roommates for these rooms. Total price with taxes for 7 nights from 5/16-5/23 is \$747.03 or \$106.72/night for any of these kinds of rooms payable to the Halifax Inn. This block is only being held until April 1, and reservations must be made by calling 717-896-8888 and mentioning the archaeological training program.

Scholarship Help

Applicants for this program may apply for a Cowin grant, available from the SPA to help defray their costs. See <https://pennsylvaniaarchaeology.com/awards-and-grants/>. Your request should be submitted to the Chair of the SPA Awards Committee. Amy Covell-Murthy covella@carnegiemnh.org. Clearly indicate that you are requesting assistance to attend this field school. Although there normally is a November deadline for this grant, the deadline will not

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apply to those requesting funds in order to attend the PAC/SPA field school. You may also leave questions concerning what you have done at the site or are contributing to research there and the site director's endorsement blank, but if you have a local SPA Chapter, please do obtain that endorsement. Funds will only be distributed to those accepted to the program. We also encourage you to explore whether your local SPA chapter has any funds to help you attend.

Who can apply?

Applicants must be 18 years of age; capable of physical activity (digging, troweling, shoveling, screening, and kneeling) and be able to work outside for an entire day. Please honestly evaluate your ability to participate in excavation as we cannot guarantee any special accommodation.

Participants must also be current members of the Society for Pennsylvania Archaeology (statewide) for calendar year 2026. You are not required to have an additional membership with a local SPA chapter although it is encouraged.

(<https://www.pennsylvaniaarchaeology.com/Membership.htm>).

The second requirement of your participation in the SPA/PAC Field School is to learn and abide by the mission statement and founding principles of the SPA as a group of avocational and professional archaeologists (<https://pennsylvaniaarchaeology.com/about-society/>). Participants whose actions or words go against these principles will be immediately dismissed from the Field School, and your membership with the SPA will be reviewed. Please also consult the most recent Society for American Archaeology (SAA) Principles of Ethics <https://saa.org/Member/SAAMember/Career-and-Practice/Principles-of-Archaeological-Ethics.aspx>.

Field School students will conduct themselves with professionalism and respect for the discipline, other participants, and the heritage we have the opportunity to study.

Participants will waive liability for the landowners of the site properties, field school staff, the Pennsylvania Archaeological Council as well as the Society for Pennsylvania for any injuries or harm caused by their participation in the field school. A waiver form must be signed upon acceptance.

We will be accepting up to 24 participants for the week-long field session. The PAC/SPA Pennsylvania Archaeological Training Program Committee with review applications and notifications will be made on a rolling basis beginning March 15.