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# 1<sup>st</sup> Annual PennDOT Archaeology Day

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The spirit of volunteerism and support for the Commonwealth's past are alive and well in PennDOT Engineering District 9-0. The district, headquartered in Hollidaysburg, has a long tradition of public involvement and volunteer participation in transportation environmental projects. Over the years, volunteers have planted over 80,000 trees and shrubs in newly created wetland areas as part of the district's efforts to involve the public in its environmental program.

This year, for the first time, the district involved the public in its historic preservation program launching Archaeology Day at District 9-0. As part of the planning effort for a proposed maintenance stockpile area, an eight acre area along S.R. 26 near Whipple Dam required an archaeological inventory. District environmental and historic preservation staff thought the project represented an ideal opportunity to involve the public in the preservation of their own past, as well as a chance to educate the public and district staff

in the importance and practice of archaeology and transportation projects.

As designed, the Archaeology Day project would use volunteers working under the supervision of professional archaeologists working for the Department or its consultants. Volunteers would spend their day excavating small closely-spaced test pits in an effort to accurately locate previously undiscovered archaeological sites that were suspected to occur in some parts of the project area.

The project was unfortunately scheduled for September 17, 2005, the day Hurricane Ivan slammed into the Commonwealth. The heavy rain did not appear to dampen anyone's enthusiasm however, and the weather actually moderated as the day went on. Thirty-five student volunteers from Juniata Valley High School as well as volunteers from the District 9-0 staff, several consulting firms, other PennDOT offices, and a variety of state and federal agencies including the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, the US

Army Corps of Engineers, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, and the US Environmental Protection Agency all participated in the day-long event. Volunteers excavated approximately 80 test pits and located two very small Native American archaeological sites on the property. The project saved the taxpayers over \$80,000, and gave many volunteers their very first encounter with Pennsylvania's buried past.

This first experiment in introducing the public to the past was a success, and the District is planning to try it again next year, possibly during the Commonwealth's annual Archaeology Month celebrations in October 2006. If you would like more information about the project, please contact Bill Savage, the district's Assistant Environmental Manager at (814)696-7227 or via e-mail at [wisavage@state.pa.us](mailto:wisavage@state.pa.us) or contact Eric Scuoteguazza at (724) 357-2081 or via e-mail at [escuotegua@state.pa.us](mailto:escuotegua@state.pa.us). ■